

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

WORKSHOP MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2016

9:30 AM

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Pote called the meeting to order at 9:38 A.M. and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG, SILENT PRAYER, AND ROLL CALL

Joren [P] Black [P] Nehls [P] Gibbs [A] Mobus [P] Sopko [P]

Also present were Administrator Tom Atkins, CFO Bill Hance, and Clerk Michelle DeRocco. Although not present at Roll Call, Councilman Gibbs arrived at 10:09 A.M.

There were no members of the Public present.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION:

Review of 2016 Department Budget Requests

Administrator Atkins provided a general budget overview which included a detailed explanation of AFS (Annual Financial Statement) Sheet 19 (Results of 2015 Operation – Current Fund) and Sheet 21 (Surplus – Current Fund and Analysis of Balance December 31, 2015). He explained what makes up surplus, and the Council discussed the recommended surplus amount, which Mr. Atkins said a comfortable amount is 15% to 18%. Mr. Atkins explained the 366 day rule, and the special circumstance when an “interfund” account was established.

Watchung Fire Chief Jon Erber discussed his Department’s requests, citing maintenance and repairs as the bulk of their expenses, and said he is requesting more money for training. Mayor Pote questioned the current protocol for physicals, and Councilman Black, the Fire Department liaison, said this will be discussed at their next meeting, scheduled for March 18th.

Barbara Diem and Betty Jean Aldrich discussed the needs of the Historical Committee, in particular the needs of the Texier House Museum. Mrs. Diem read a prepared statement in regard to what the Committee plans to do for the future, and what their current concerns are. Councilman Nehls explained that the Public Works Committee will address some of the maintenance issues, and Councilman Gibbs said that their list needs to be prioritized and outlined in a five-year plan. Councilman and Historical liaison Mobus explained that the replacement lighting is the first priority, and with that the replacement of the ceiling tiles which is not a big job.

Administrator Atkins explained that in this year’s Buildings and Grounds Operating budget, the implementation of a new FOB security system for Borough Hall, the Public Works Building, and Police Building, at an approximate cost of \$18,000. will be done this year. Supervisor Bob Burns said money must be in the budget for snow and ice, and also in this budget is \$12,000. for pump station maintenance as we are anticipating a contract with PARSA this year. Bob said the bioxide that this is needed for the sewers (odor control) is costly and maybe this can be reduced with a PARSA take over. Mr. Atkins said the Borough will request regular reporting from PARSA if we contract with them. The sewer Bob also said at least 2 HVACs (Police Department) will have to be replaced. Councilman Black asked if any unexpected costs will be coming from Berkeley Heights this year and Mr. Burns discussed outside infiltration. Councilman Nehls recommended some of these lines be “tv’d” to detect any problems or concerns.

CERT President Carolyn Solon and Emergency Management Coordinator Gary Greves, explained their request for their \$5,000. budget, focusing on the need for a couple of radios. Mrs. Solon gave an overview of the training sessions the team has attended and will participate in the future, and also additional training requirements. Their volunteers accumulated 329 hours of service in 2015.

Administrator Atkins gave an overview of the Police Department budget, reminding all that labor contract negotiations will be starting soon, for the Department's 29 Officers, and also for the 4 Dispatchers (separate contract). Chief Joe Cina discussed the ongoing uncertainty of the radios and the anticipated lack of licenses and available frequencies, saying that there are no straight answers at this time. He said that the process of electronic fingerprints will no longer be acceptable, and the cost to implement a new system is anticipated to be between \$35,000 to \$40,000. Councilman Gibbs asked if the monies allocated for overtime were realistic, and the Chief said they were, although no one can predict a storm, etc., however, the Department has one Officer out for 4 months now, and 2 new Officers in training, and one set to retire soon. He confirmed that there are two vehicle requests in the Operating budget this year. All complemented the Chief on the color-coded hand-outs he provided.

Council liaison Dave Mobus, and Administrator Atkins talked about the Recreation Commission's budget request, which is \$4,000. less than last year's. All agreed that the requests were reasonable. Councilman Mobus outlined some Capital improvements that need to be done such as repairs and painting at the basketball court, the floor in the Pavilion, and the mulch in the playground area. Councilman Mobus said that the Commission is working to provide more programs, such as a bus trip to see a play.

Councilman Nehls had one comment that he does not understand why computer and copy expenses are in each Department's line items, and feels it should be under one separate account. Mr. Atkins and Mr. Hance said they were not sure if that would be acceptable under State regulations, but in the meantime, Mr. Hance was able to print a report that gathered the computer and copy expenses and Councilman Nehls said that this was what he was asking for.

It was the consensus of the Council to move forward with this budget as proposed, and introduce on March 17, 2016.

PUBLIC PORTION

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, this meeting was adjourned at 1:00 P.M. to the Call of the Chair and the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Council to be held at 7:30 PM on Thursday, March 17, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Clerk