

November 28, 2018
Municipal Building
121 Evergreen Road
New Egypt, NJ 08533

The Special Meeting of the Plumsted Township Committee was called to order by Mayor Trotta. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a Budget Workshop.

STATEMENT: “This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. It was advertised for publication in the Trenton Times and the Asbury Park Press and posted on the bulletin board.”

THOSE OFFICIALS PRESENT WERE:

COMMITTEEMAN JONES COMMITTEEMAN MARINARI MAYOR TROTTA
BUSINESS ADMIN REILLY-PRIVETT ACTING MUNICIPAL CLERK WITTHAM

Committeeman Lotito was absent and Deputy Mayor Sorchik was excused.

The meeting was opened with the flag salute and a moment of silence.

Mayor Trotta said the purpose of the meeting was to conduct a Budget Workshop. No formal action was to be taken.

Mayor Trotta passed the meeting on to the Assistant Treasurer Sharon Gower.

Gower said five departments will present today. We will be going line by line through their current fund budget.

Maureen Francis presented the budget for the Tax Assessor’s Office. Francis said she requested \$350 for office supplies to get all her files moved and organized. Postage and professional dues are standard. She put down \$400 for office machines. She only used \$100 this year and does anticipate an increase. She did not want to decrease the budget too much. She requested funds for subscriptions, seminars and expenses. She will need to take some seminars this coming year. Printing and forms are for postcards and farmland assessment forms, which are all statutory. She suggests keeping maps at \$2000 since it is not known what the actual amount is going to be. She asked the township engineer for a quote to digitize the maps, but he has not gotten back to her on it. Mileage and miscellaneous will remain the same.

Trotta said that according to Best Practices, the time is getting close for a revaluation. Francis said that a revaluation should be done after the sewers are in and the new development is constructed. Otherwise, it will have to be done again.

There was a discussion about Best Practices, revaluation and the loss of State aid versus conducting the revaluation when the State or county requires it.

Trotta asked if anyone had any questions. There were none.

Sandra Brodbeck presented the budget for the municipal court. Brodbeck said the biggest change to her budget is the callouts. The only other increase is for the public defender. Everything else is the same.

Trotta said the township is moving towards e-ticketing. There was a discussion between the Chief and the Mayor as to how many officers are utilizing e-ticketing. Trotta said there may be cost savings provided by not having to purchase ticket books.

Gower asked Brodbeck to describe the change in the climate of the court as to why certain costs might increase. Brodbeck spoke about the public defender fee and how in the event a defendant does not pay the fee; they will still be represented by the public defender. She has gone over past cases and found that a public defender could appear multiple times for the same defendant, who may or may not have paid the \$200 fee, because the case is adjourned. She said they are going through past cases trying to collect the fee. The court’s hands are tied because they cannot go after defendants if they do not pay it. The fee is to offset the cost, not to pay the public defender.

Trotta spoke about old judgments that have not been paid throughout the years. He said they contracted with a company to collect on the judgments and asked Gower to check and see if the township has received anything from them.

Brodbeck described some of the changes in the court, i.e. if a defendant has a warrant that is \$500 or less, they are automatically released on their own recognizance. They are let go with a new court date. The court cannot hold defendants in jail anymore or put the fee in their time payment. They cannot be put or jail or penalized if they do not pay it.

Marinari asked how many defendants pay the fee. Brodbeck said it depends. Some pay it the night they are assigned a public defender. She works in three different courts and cannot say for sure what the exact number is. She said there is a panel of judges who are overseeing as to whether old tickets should be dismissed.

Gower said the police department is the next department to present its budget. Chief Meroney said office supplies, postage, and office equipment are the same as in 2018. He has requested an increase in dues. There are no subscriptions. He has requested an increase of \$1000 for seminars and education so the chief and the lieutenant can complete their FBI training.

Marinari said they are both doing a great job and the committee wants them to take whatever courses they need because it will only benefit the community. The only way to keep up the great work they have been doing is to stay updated.

Meroney said they are asking for \$150 for printing and forms and \$5500 for maintenance contracts. There was a discussion about computer costs and the possible purchase of new computers and the use of e-ticketing. Meroney spoke about the cost to repair the generator.

Meroney and Trotta spoke about the clothing allowance. Trotta asked if Meroney would provide the committee with an estimate of the clothing allowance for the Chief and the Lieutenant. Trotta said he thinks that Madden overestimated the amount for clothing allowance, and he would like to bring that number down.

Meroney has requested the same amount for weapons and accessories as last year. They purchased new weapons last year and are looking to replace some older weapons this upcoming year. They would also like to purchase new equipment for the vehicles. They are requesting \$2000 for safety equipment. There was a discussion about the cost for vehicle calibration, vehicle repairs and the purchase of a new vehicle.

Meroney said he is requesting \$550 for new hire exams. Meroney and Trotta discussed a new hire to replace an officer who is leaving in January 2019.

Meroney said accreditation and miscellaneous will remain the same. Trotta asked for a list of what the \$500 for dues is being spent upon.

Meroney talked about purchasing a vehicle, with upgrades, to carry the new cones and rubber barrels that they purchased with grant money. Trotta said he wants to make sure the new vehicle falls under the capital project.

Gower spoke about the budget for the Environmental Committee. They are no longer a commission. They are now a committee. There are no major changes. They have requested \$1000 for signage for the entrance to the new preserve. There is a question in miscellaneous because 2014 is the last time they spent anything from that line item. Sustainable is out.

Gower said the last budget presentation is for Finance. She said there are no changes in the first three categories for office supplies or for office equipment. They have not spent anything on office equipment in the past few years, but they are starting to have issues with their printer, and it might need to be replaced. It is well within the \$500 budget.

They are asking for an increase in subscriptions and purchasing expenses because both she and Madden now have their certifications, so it is double the expense. Madden has requested up to \$4000 for seminars and education. Gower said she plans to take two, or possibly three, CFO classes this year. Funds will be needed for CEUs for both Gower and Madden.

Printing and forms are the same. Maintenance contracts are the same. Madden has requested an increase in computer expenses to \$1500 with a possibility of purchasing a new computer. Payroll processing includes normal increases in costs. Miscellaneous would stay at \$1000.

There was a discussion about the revenue sheets. Gower said Madden updated the 2019 budget, but she does not know if revenue was updated. Trotta questioned as to why revenue for alcoholic beverage licenses went down. Gower said November's numbers are not in yet, so they will have a revenue update for the December 29, 2018 meeting. Trotta said he does not want the December check for battery storage to go into next year.

Trotta said Madden is anticipating using almost \$784,000 from the township's fund balance next year, which is up from \$621,000 last year. She is not doing any school deferred taxes, which is something that can be considered for a healthier fund balance.

Trotta asked if there were any questions or comments regarding finance.

Witham mentioned that revenue for raffles would increase if the ordinance is passed next week. Fees will go from \$10 to \$20 per license.

Gower said that, as a place holder, Madden put \$88,000 into the budget requested by the school district for the courtesy bus agreement. Gower said, if needed, the amount can be lowered at the time of the budget.

Trotta said it is an increase from \$61,000 this year. Last year, he told them the township could give them a 25% increase this year, a 25% increase the following year, etc., for 4 years until it reaches 100% of courtesy busing. The school business administrator said he did not understand it. As far as he is concerned, he is playing dumb. The township is in the same position as it was last year. It cannot afford an increase from \$61,000 to \$88,000. The reason it had to be increased is because they realigned their schools. The township has no control over that. The school district has all the savings from it. The township is going to be hit with another increase in its budget because the school decided to move the grades around. It is not fair to the township. Trotta said that he thinks the township should stick with the 25% increase over 4 years because it does not have the money.

He asked the committee members to comment on the increase. Marinari asked if there would be any value in sitting down with the superintendent and business administrator to discuss it. Trotta said a meeting could be set up. Marinari said the meeting might not do any good, but at least everyone would know where they stand. Committeeman Jones said he knows it is about school busing, but he would like to know more so he can provide a point of view. Trotta said there can be a discussion about that another time.

Trotta asked if the committee agrees that the \$5000 increase is all the township can afford to do. Jones said yes, for the tax payers.

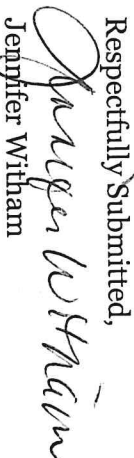
Trotta said Leutwyler and Business Administrator Reilly-Privett have been negotiating fees with the proposed new company for animal control. He said they accepted a lower fee. The contract needs to be checked to see that everything is correct. Their fees will be more than the township is currently paying, but less than what they proposed. As it stands now, the township will be moving forward with the contract.

Mayor Trotta asked for any other business for the budget workshop. There was none.

Trotta asked for public comment. Since there was no public comment, Trotta asked for a motion to adjourn.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN JONES, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN MARINARI,
THE SPECIAL MEETING WAS ADJOURNED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES

Respectfully Submitted,


Jennifer Witham
Acting Municipal Clerk