

February 10, 2022
Municipal Building
121 Evergreen Road
New Egypt, NJ 08533

The Special Meeting of the Plumsted Township Committee was called to order by Mayor Bowen. 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."

Clerk Witham read the following statement regarding remote meetings:

Please be advised that this meeting is being held remotely according to DLGS guidelines as presented in Resolution No. 2020-351 that was adopted at the December 28, 2020 Township Committee meeting. Participants' audio will be muted until the public comment portion of the meeting. We ask that each participant mute themselves as well to avoid any interference in the recorded meeting.

There will be an opportunity for public comment during the regular session of the meeting which shall be limited to 5 minutes per person. At the time you wish to make public comment, you may unmute yourself accordingly.

Should there be any disruption from the public during the remote meeting, they will be warned and should the conduct continue, they will be muted or removed from the public meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

THOSE OFFICIALS PRESENT WERE:

In the Meeting Room:

COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO COMMITTEEMAN CUOZZO
DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI MAYOR BOWEN CLERK WITHAM

CFO Madden was also present. Deputy CFO Gower was in attendance via Zoom.

The meeting was opened with the flag salute.

Mayor Bowen said the purpose of the meeting is to conduct a Budget Workshop. No official action will be taken this evening.

Bowen announced that the Municipal Building will be closed on Monday, February 21, 2022 for Presidents Day and the Recycling Center will be closed on the previous Saturday, February 17, 2022.

Bowen introduced CFO Madden to speak about the budget.

Madden said she will go through the packet of papers in the order that they are in.

She said the first page contains the revenues for 2022. The budget is in good shape as far as following the statutory requirements. She spoke about the amount to be raised by taxes and the amount of money banked. There is a four percent increase over last year's amount to be raised. It represents 1¼ cent increase in the amount to be raised. One cent is about \$79,000.

Anticipated surplus is about what it was last year. The rule of thumb in Plumsted is to try to keep it to fifty percent. Local revenues; you cannot anticipate any more revenue than you brought in

the previous year. Planning Board fees and municipal court revenue are going down; that revenue is anticipated to be lower for 2022, as are interest and the cost on taxes. Everything else is neutral.

State aid is flat. We have not been told that we are going to get more state aid so it is kept at what it was at last year.

Uniform Construction Code will probably raise as much this year as it did last year. She did not want to anticipate the entire amount. Revenues and expenses in construction have to equal each other. Grilletto said that he thinks the budget is too low and should be raised a bit higher. There was a discussion about changing the construction budget so money could be put into surplus.

Special items of revenue – grants; at the beginning of the year when we get ready to adopt the budget we already know certain grants we are getting. When we get other grant monies during the year, we add them to the budget by amending the budget through Chapter 159. The last column represents the grants we know right now that we have in hand, or have been paid for, or we have received letters that we are going to receive a grant.

Section G, Special Items of Revenue; Madden spoke about the off-duty trust fund; the battery storage facility; New Hanover Shared Services Agreement; PILOT revenue; sewer R&R fund, which is a capital fund that the township is required by the NJIB to start funding in 2023. It is in the 2022 budget because it is due by January 1, 2023.

She spoke about lost revenues for 2020 and the township's ARPA funds. It is very specific as to how ARPA funds can be spent. The budget will show how the funds are used to offset lost revenue.

Capital Reserve for debt service; this is money in the township's capital fund that will be anticipated in this budget. The money will be moved from the capital fund to cover the debt service owed to the NJIB for the sewer project. It represents principal and interest payments for this year on that project.

Committeeman Cuozzo asked about the NJ Department of Transportation project on Lakeview going up by \$80,000. Madden explained how transportation grants work.

Bowen asked about PILOT payments and capital reserve offsets. There was a discussion about capital reserve offsets.

Madden spoke about the balance of the surplus from 2020; how much was used in the 2021 budget; excess revenues; MRNA; and 2020 appropriation reserves, which is money from two years ago that was not spent that goes into the surplus; school deferred taxes; the unaudited fund balance; and the redevelopment PILOT revenue.

Cuozzo said he agreed with Grilletto to see if there is a way to use funds to not raise taxes. Grilletto said it his belief is that the tax base should be the payer of last resort.

Madden said that the township is going to be struggling with the CAP issue; she explained what is included in inside CAP and in outside CAP. Madden said this budget does not have the EMS issue. Cuozzo said they are negotiating for a net neutral situation with EMS.

Madden said she is going to highlight the line items that were cut in the budget. There was a discussion about utilization of PILOT funds for the shared services payment to the school. Grilletto asked for updated quarterly projections of PILOT payments.

Madden spoke about salaries and wages, which reflect a 2 percent increase approved by the township committee. Some of the line items have already been reduced. Grilletto spoke about

the funds not spent by the Municipal Clerk's Office from the previous year. Madden asked if the items could be circled so they could be discussed at a later time. Committeeman Calabrese asked about Mayor and Township Committee "other expenses" and his request to obtain cellphones for the committee's use. Bowen asked about options other than cellphones, i.e. current telephone system and VPN. Madden said another issue is OPRA requests when using a personal cellphone for township matters. Cuzzo said he has the same concerns about OPRA.

Madden said the salary and wage line item for finance was reduced because she is working one day a week; Sharon is full-time at her salary; Tara is full-time at her salary. It had included initially a part-time person 2-3 days a week for the whole year. It was decided to push that off until July. In the meantime, Tara is picking up 5 hours a week at her hourly rate, so that has saved their department some money.

Madden spoke about a reduction in auditing costs; a reduction in salary and wages in the tax collector's office as well as in the tax assessor's office because the township has a new tax assessor. Grilletto said he would like to reduce costs in the tax assessor's office.

There was a discussion about cutting the budget and having less funds left over to flow into surplus. Madden said the budget involves a lot of planning.

Madden said that engineering costs are down. Salaries and wages were reduced for Downtown Economic; the finance committee suggested hiring an independent contractor rather than hiring an employee for Downtown Economic.

There was a discussion about budgets for the Land Use Board; the Zoning Officer; insurance; public safety director; the police department; buildings and grounds; the board of health; the dog trust; the environmental commission; public assistance/Catholic Charities/domestic violence counseling; the arts council; the recreation department; gasoline, heating oil and diesel costs; insurance deductibles; municipal court, inside CAP; outside CAP; the construction office, including the Uniform Construction Code and inspector's salaries; shared services agreements for courtesy busing and the New Hanover construction department; matching funds for grants; bond anticipation note payments; interest charges; debt service for NJIB; reserve fund collected taxes; capital outlay; storm drains and sewer hookups for the municipal building; emergency system utilities vendors; and dam repair. Calabrese asked about the possibility of budgeting money for contingency costs.

Madden said the debt service projections are in the committee's packets. She spoke about the revised Open Space budget; grounds and field maintenance, including irrigation work and any equipment that needs to be purchased for maintenance of grounds and field.

Madden said the budget needs to be adopted by March 31st or at the next regularly scheduled meeting thereafter, which would be April 7th. She spoke to the RMA about the budget so he can review it; she has to do the levy cap workbook. Once the budget is satisfactory to the governing body, because the township is State exam this year, she would like to send the budget to the State and ask them to look at it, knowing that EMS still needs to be added to the budget. Maybe even adopt the budget and do an emergency ordinance after the budget is adopted to add EMS, so it will not hold up the budget.

Madden will get together with the finance committee after reviewing her meeting notes.

There was a discussion about sewer hookups for the municipal building and emergency work and critical callouts. The township needs to get the sewer work done quickly so it does not have to pay connection fees. Calabrese asked if the township has gone out to bid for the sewer work. Witham

said the specifications were written by the previous engineer and are being reviewed by the current engineer before going out to bid.

Madden asked if there were any questions or comments on the budget.

There was a discussion about the four percent increase in the amount to be raised by taxes and the average increase per annual household. Madden said she will provide that once the budget is finalized. There was further discussion about the use of ARPA funds by the township.

The committee thanked Madden for her presentation.

Bowen asked for public comment.

Chief Earl Meroney, Plumsted Police Department, spoke about the need for security software for the computers in the police department. Madden said that cybersecurity involves getting additional software for the police department. It will not be cheap, but it will not cost the township \$25,000. Meroney said he will get the request over to finance.

Meroney commented on Committeeman Calabrese and Committeeman Cuzzo's cellphone request. He said he contacted AT&T Firstnet to find out what it would cost to add three cellphone lines for the police department; one for the duty phone so the officers working on duty would have a direct line assigned to them daily; and a phone each for the Chief and the Lieutenant. AT&T Firstnet provides a discount because they provide Internet services for all of the car computers.

Meroney spoke about salaries for the police department. He said found out today that another three police officers have applied to Jackson Township. He asked about filling Officer Nani's spot and getting one or two Class II officers to fill in if the officers do leave. Depending on when they are hired, it puts the department behind as far as filling patrol officer shifts.

He said he is working with the Mayor, Committeeman Grilletto and the fire department to try and figure out some way to take over EMS. If the district doesn't want it, it is going to cost the township a lot of money. It is a very viable service that is needed. EMS answers a lot of calls. Lack of EMS is going to be a big hit to township residents.

Bowen asked if there were any other public comments. There were none and Bowen closed public comment.

Bowen asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

Respectfully Submitted,


Jennifer Witham, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk