

April 22, 2020  
Municipal Building  
121 Evergreen Road  
New Egypt, NJ 08533

The Special Meeting Budget Workshop of the Plumsted Township Committee was called to order by Mayor Marinari. Due to the emergent situation with COVID-19 and the municipal building being closed, the meeting was conducted through Zoom.com for the public to participate.

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

**THOSE OFFICIALS PRESENT WERE:**

In the Meeting Room:

MAYOR MARINARI	COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO
DAVE LEUTWYLER, CDC	MUNICIPAL CLERK WITHAM

Calling in through Zoom:

COMMITTEEMAN BOWEN	COMMITTEEMAN TROTTA	
DEPUTY MAYOR SORCHIK	BA ELLEN PRIVETT	CFO MADDEN

Mayor Marinari asked everyone to rise for the flag salute followed by a moment of silence.

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AS FOLLOWS:**

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY DEPUTY MAYOR SORCHIK, RESOLUTION NO. 2020-177 – AUTHORIZING THE READING OF THE 2020 BUDGET BY TITLE ONLY WAS ADOPTED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

**BUDGET PRESENTATION:**

The budget was presented by Committeeman Bowen a member of the township’s Finance Committee. He said the materials being reviewed this evening are available on the Township website, plumsted.org., click on the meeting calendar, agenda, 2020 user-friendly budget and 2020 budget PowerPoint presentation. Bowen asked CFO Madden to explain the user-friendly budget.

Madden said that the user-friendly budget that is on the website is the adopted version. This version shows the amendment that will be proposed tonight to the introduced budget. Madden explained each section of the user-friendly budget; i.e. information about the governing body and the professional staff; comparison between 2019 and 2020 tax levy; total taxable valuation; the average residential assessment; comparison between 2019 and 2020 revenues; revenues for the general budget and revenues for the open space budget; appropriations summary comparing appropriations for 2019 and 2020; structural budget imbalances; revenues that might be at risk; non-occurring appropriation reductions; assessed property evaluations; number of tax appeals; long-term tax exemptions and PILOTs; personnel costs; comparison of 2019 and 2020 health benefit costs; accumulated absences liability; outstanding debt; shared services; and a list of township authorities and fire districts.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET:**

Bowen utilized a PowerPoint presentation for the public hearing portion of the budget. The presentation is also available on the website. It highlights the budget over the last several years, as well as the proposed budget. He said there is a resolution tonight that will add \$10,000 to the police budget for expected personnel expenses this year. He spoke about the reasons for the increase. He discussed the effect of personnel changes to the budget and the obligation to meet the personnel needs of the township. There are some increases in the budget this year, particularly fire and police pension contributions. The pension amounts are stipulated by the State. There is also an increase in group health insurance and salaries and wages. There is an increase in debt service and engineering and legal services as well.

Bowen described the impact of the proposed budget on the average homeowner. There is a projected increase in the average value of a home in Plumsted, which increases township valuations. He spoke about the effect of an increase of 1 cent on the tax rate. He talked about the overall tax expense for the community and provided a breakdown of the average property tax bill. The township's portion of the taxes paid are approximately eleven percent. Eighty nine percent goes to other entities, including the school, county, fire district, and open space.

Bowen then turned the presentation over to Committeeman Grilletto, who is also a member of the Finance Committee.

Grilletto said it was a pleasure to work on the finance committee with Bowen and Madden. They did their best to keep the taxes as low as possible and keep a sharp pen on the expenses.

The meeting was turned over to Mayor Marinari for public comments and questions.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN BOWEN, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE 2020 BUDGET. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES

Bernie Haney, 62 Hampshire Court, New Egypt, New Jersey, asked where the money is coming from for the budget. The Governor spoke today about borrowing money from the federal government, but at no point were the towns included in that discussion.

Madden said that the bulk of the township's revenue comes from taxes.

Marinari said that the township will continue to collect taxes until told differently.

Haney asked what the township's plan is if it cannot collect taxes due to people being out of work.

Bowen said you create a budget on how it comes together both on revenue and expense. There are many unknowns. Most homeowners who have a mortgage and have already paid their mortgage, would include the property taxes in their payment. He is not sure how it will impact the May 1 property taxes. Where we are in 90 days is an unknown.

Bowen said he believes the money the governor is referring to is in the next stimulus package passed by the Senate. There is money in there for the States and municipalities. The township has been advised to document all of its additional expenses, which is being done. There is the potential that the money will be reimbursed. It is being tracked in case that is an opportunity, but that is an unknown.

Bowen said the township has to adopt a budget. This is the one that the committee believes accounts for everything that can be accounted for at this time. The unknowns will have to be worked through as a township; hope for the best and hope that the stimulus money will help the people it is supposed to help. He does not know, and does not think anyone knows, how all of this will impact property taxes. It will not be known until it is time to collect them. He said Mr. Haney is correct that there are many unknowns that have to be worked through.

Haney said he appreciates the efforts that are being made by the township. He said contrary to what Bowen said, the current bill has no money for States and no money for towns. The governor was talking about the States borrowing money from the Federal Reserve. Towns do not have the option to borrow money directly from the Federal Reserve. The town he works for is doing their budget Monday night and he wanted to see what Plumsted Township would do with their budget tonight. He wished the township well.

Haney also complimented the Chief and the officers of the Plumsted Police Department. He said they are always pleasant, in and out of the neighborhoods, and are doing a great job. He asked the Chief to commend the officers for just being there. If they see you in the street, they will stop to see how you are. They are phenomenal. He loves living here and loves the job everyone is doing and to keep up the good work.

Grilletto said that the government has sent out stimulus checks to individuals to help pay taxes. Senior citizens have their pensions and social security. Some will be affected, but it is hoped that the majority of people will be able to pay their taxes. Most people with mortgages have escrow money for taxes. Unless they fall behind in their mortgage, then the mortgage company would have to deal with them and give them a grace period and pay their property taxes for them. We do not know and are trying to our best with what we know right now. Hopefully, everything will turn out alright.

Chief Meroney thanked Haney for the compliment.

Marinari asked if there was any other public comment on the budget. There was none.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY DEPUTY MAYOR SORCHIK THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE 2020 BUDGET WAS CLOSED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES

**RESOLUTIONS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AS FOLLOWS:**

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR SORCHIK, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN TROTTA, RESOLUTION NO. 2020-178 – TO AMEND THE 2020 BUDGET WAS ADOPTED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY DEPUTY MAYOR SORCHIK, RESOLUTION NO. 2020-179 – AUTHORIZING SELF-EXAMINATION OF THE 2020 BUDGET WAS ADOPTED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN BOWEN, RESOLUTION NO. 2020-180 – ADOPTING THE 2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET WAS ADOPTED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES, EXCEPT NAY VOTE BY COMMITTEEMAN TROTTA.

Marinari asked for any old or new business from the committee.

Bowen said he would like to thank all of the small businesses that have been going the extra mile, to the restaurants that are trying to do no contact and safe distancing with their takeout and delivery and to the New Egypt Marketplace and others who are providing groceries. They are doing a terrific job of supplying the needs of the community, as well as doing it in a safe way. He appreciates their flexibility to add precautions, which has taken a lot of time and effort. A lot of farms are selling fresh produce online. They are doing a terrific job of meeting the needs of our community and also allowing additional assistance to people who need it. Trying to do it with the recommended protocols and safety features. He wants to thank them publicly for all of their extra effort.

Committeeman Trotta had one last thing he wanted to read. “I am resigning from my position on the Plumsted Township Committee effective as of midnight tonight April 22, 2020. Sincerely, Jack A. Trotta”. Sorry Eric, everyone have a good night. Committeeman Trotta left the meeting. Mayor Marinari said that he was sorry to hear that.

Marinari said there was an MUA meeting last night in which some vitally important issues came up to be discussed. If the committee had not been (physically) separated and would have been together, there would have been some resolution to vitally important questions that took place and were not voted on last night. He asked that the committee look at the May meeting and hopefully by then we will have more information about what is happening town-wise, state-wise and nationally that maybe in some way we could meet together. He said Trotta must have had some issues with the budget because he voted no on it. If the committee is able to be together it will be able to discuss things a little more fully. It seems we are getting deeper and deeper into issues and are not able to discuss them. The most important thing to being on the committee is to be able to discuss issues.

Marinari asked for any other business from the committee. There was none.

Marinari asked for any public comment. There was none.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN BOWEN, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES, WITH COMMITTEEMAN TROTTA ABSENT.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Witham, RMC, CMR  
Municipal Clerk