

The Special Meeting/Budget Hearing of the Township Council of the Township of Franklin, County of Somerset, New Jersey, was called to order by the Mayor at 7:05p.m.

Mayor Levine read the following statement: "In accordance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, be advised that adequate notice of this Special Meeting/Budget Hearing of the Township Council of the Township of Franklin, County of Somerset was made by the posting on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex and by faxing to the officially designated newspapers, a notice indicating that the Special Meeting/Budget Hearing would take place in the Large Conference Room of the Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. on July 20, 2005."

Everyone present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Township Clerk called the roll.

Present: Ms. Ashley-Williams Ms. Danile (arrived at 7:20 pm), Ms. Eberle, Mr. Levine, Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Regan, Ms. Ritchie, Mr. Sumter.

Absent: No one.

Also present: Louis N. Rainone, Esq., Township Attorney, Kenneth W. Daly, Township Manager, Ann Marie McCarthy, Township Clerk

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL WARD 5 SEAT

Mayor Levine asked the Township Clerk to read the names of the nominees for the Council Ward 5 Seat submitted by the Municipal Democratic Committee. Township Clerk Ann Marie McCarthy read the following names: Javier Ramos, Russ Warner and James Vassanella.

Deputy Mayor McKenzie nominated James Vassanella to be appointed to the Council Ward 5 Seat term to ending December 31, 2005. Said nomination was seconded by Ms. Ritchie.

Mayor Levine nominated Russ Warner to be appointed to the Council Ward 5 Seat term to ending December 31, 2005.

The Township Clerk called the roll for the appointment of the Council Ward 5 Seat as follows:

VASSANELLA

Ashley-Williams
Eberle
Levine
McKenzie
Regan
Ritchie
Sumter

WARNER

The Township Clerk administered the oath of office to James Vassanella.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Motion was made by Mr. Regan and seconded by Ms. Ashley-Williams to open the meeting for public discussion. Said motion carried unanimously upon voice vote.

There being no comments from the public, a motion was made by Mr. Regan to close the meeting for public discussion. Said motion was seconded by Ms. Ashley-Williams and carried unanimously upon voice vote.

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Daly reported the FY06 current fund proposed budget is one of the more unique budgets he has worked on, unique in a positive sense.

He reported that with respect to the capital budget, during this past year the Township received one time funds from two sources: \$546,000 from the sale of liquor licenses and \$1.2 million in construction code revenues over budget. Additionally, it is anticipated that this year's construction code revenues will exceed code enforcement expenditures by \$700,000. As required by State Law, the NJ Department of Community Affairs is insisting that these code revenues be spent on code-related items. Mr. Daly proposed that these one time revenues be spent on the following capital assets:

- The liquor license revenues be used to cover additional funding for the animal shelter and the remaining funds should be spent on park improvements to be determined by Council.
- The construction code revenues should be used as follows: \$700,000 towards the document imaging system; \$300,000 to offset costs of the municipal building expansion; \$280,000 towards the furniture, phones and computers for the building and \$144,365 towards new vehicles for the department.

Mr. Daly recommended that Township Council act to cut the deficit in the number of police officers in half by adding ten (10) officers over the coming fiscal year. He outline his plan for the subsequent years.

Mr. Daly stated that other service improvements proposed in the budget include:

- An additional animal handler in Animal Control.
- Increase of \$24,000 for temporary, seasonal employees in the Recreation Department for the covering the increase in minimum wage, and to provide adequate staffing for the Naaman Williams pool and other summer programs.
- Reorganization of our Information Technology Department, reassigning the director to focus on FTTV 25 station management, GIS, telephones and the document imaging project proposed in the capital budget. Additionally, \$24,000 is proposed in the IT budget for hourly payments to videographers to tape various Township meetings.
- A full-time position to support the Township Manager in his role as Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Daly reviewed the revenues chart as outline in the FY2006 proposed budget. He stated that the draft current fund budget is within the 3.5% CAP with a tax increase for the average homeowner of \$76.60, a little less than \$6.40 per month.

Mayor Levine added that Council take note that as per discussed at the Council Retreat, the Departments have provided lines of business and future outlooks. He also noted that the Township is continuing their plan to use one time money on one time projects.

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET REVIEW

Economic Development

Mr. Daly gave a brief overview of the Economic Development Office and Budget. Mr. Hasner stated that the only change in his budget is the shift of funds from the marketing budget to the mailing and printing budget. He noted there is a slight adjustment in the association

dues budget. He also noted that his lines of business often overlap and make it difficult to calculate salaries and wages to lines of business.

Mr. Hasner spoke on the continuance of global interests coming to the Township. He spoke on the Hamilton Street Revitalization and noted that the streetscape improvement plan would be completed within the month. He spoke of the various and many grants received by the Township, business owners and residents.

Ms. Ritchie asked how the new employee is reflected in the budget. Mr. Daly replied he is not in the budget because his salary is fully funded by grants.

Deputy Mayor McKenzie asked about the Hamilton Street Special Improvement District issues. Mr. Hasner replied the ordinance was adopted this year. He stated the budget would be ready in July 2006. He stated that businesses will see results prior to being assessed.

Ms. Ashley-Williams asked why the appropriation for the marketing campaign decreased. Mr. Hasner replied that portions of that line item has been redistributed to printing and mailing.

Deputy Mayor McKenzie asked where the hotel tax is designate. Mr. Daly replied in the general fund.

Mr. Sumter asked if the traffic on Hamilton Street was going to be addressed. Mr. Hasner replied it was addressed in the Pedestrian/Traffic Circulation Plan. He stated that the County recommended the striping of on-street parking spots; pedestrian expansions and crosswalks. Mr. Vassanella asked if handicapped parking and taxi stands were also addressed. Mr. Hasner replied they were not, however the streetscape called for bus stops.

Ms. Ashley-Williams asked for clarification of Association Dues for Sister Cities. Mr. Hasner replied it is an international association that makes publications and other items available to municipalities in connection with global business. He noted these dues were in the Manager's budget last year.

Mayor Levine spoke of the \$100,000s in grants obtained for the Township and businesses as a result of efforts of Mr. Hasner and Ms. von Ohlen. Mayor Levine asked if the \$55,000 appropriated was for the Redevelopment Administrator for a full year. Mr. Daly replied yes.

At this time, the proposed position of the Redevelopment Administrator was discussed. Mayor Levine stated that at this time he does not feel that funding this position is not the best use of the Township's tax dollars. He stated that he does not dispute that the Township Manager needs help with the redevelopment area. During this discussion, Mr. Daly explained that much of his time is used working on the redevelopment area and as a result he has not been able to address other matters, such as completing his annual report. He thanked the Finance Officer for doing a great job of getting the budget prepared. He stated that in prior years he spent a lot of time preparing the budget. As a result of not being able to spend more time on the budget, Mr. Daly explained that he is not as up to speed on the budget as he was on previous budgets. Ms. Danile opined the money spent for the Redevelopment Administrator should be considered an investment in the Route 27 development area and that it would provide returns to the Township in the way of higher valuations and tax revenues in the future.

Mr. Regan asked that further due diligence be conducted on this matter. He recommended that an alternate option for this position would be hiring a consultant instead of a full-time employee. He stated that this position should become a thirty year position. He suggested that the consultant position be modeled like the Open Space Consultant. Mr. Daly stated that he would be getting more data to Council during the budget process on this matter.

Ms. Ritchie disagreed with Mr. Regan's alternative. She stated that it is a long term position and that she would be more comfortable having a staff person who would know the

people and understand the businesses and neighborhood. Mr. Regan disagreed and stated that this staff person would eventually leave Franklin for a larger city and we would be training someone to leave.

Ms. Ashley-Williams agreed with Ms. Ritchie and noted that a consultant may be more costly than a staff person. She stated that there is a lot to do in the redevelopment area and they would move from section to section. She stated that a consultant would not give as much commitment as a staff person. Ms. Eberle agreed that it may be more costly using a consultant.

Mr. Vassanella suggested the use of a staff person for three to five years and then transitioning the position to a consultant for the long term. Mr. Daly stated that could be looked into and noted that has been done before with other positions.

Fire Prevention

Mr. Daly gave a brief overview of the Fire Prevention Department and budget. He spoke of the aid given to fire companies and rescue squads. He noted that he changed his recommendation regarding additional aide to the East Millstone Rescue Squad because they provided full financial disclosure and are the most reliable. He stated that they are the most active and are the only all volunteer squad.

Mr. Hauss reviewed the cumulative fiscal year activity report. He reported that housing inspections would improve since his department is currently fully staffed. He explained that inspections starting in November 2005 would include inspections to ensure fire extinguishers are located in kitchens when selling a home. A brief discussion ensued regarding state fees versus local fees. Mr. Hauss reported that local fees have not been increased since 1992. Mr. Daly noted that prior Councils resisted increasing fees because they felt the taxpayers were picking up the costs and that increasing fees was the same as increasing taxes.

Ms. Ashley-Williams asked for clarification regarding the increase in complaints/violations. Mr. Hauss replied they had several large complaints such as Molecuwire; 90 Old Georgetown Road and an illegal junkyard.

A brief discussion ensued regarding false alarms and the ordinance that provides the procedure to warnings and fines.

Mr. Hauss reported his budget is a flat budget.

Parks and Recreation

Ms. Osipowitz made the following budget presentation:

“When talking about Recreation I think it’s important to look not only at what we are doing but why and basically the benefits:

- We are providing programs and facilities that allow people to enjoy the community and meet new friends
- We are about fitness and helping to keep health care costs down;
- We are keeping our older population active, healthy and involved members of the community;
- We are providing young people with positive role models and opportunities for learning, skill development, social interaction, and achievement and we are helping them become involved and contributing members of their community.

We have Programs for residents of all ages different age groups including: toddlers and preschoolers, elementary age youth, teenagers, adults and senior citizens. And the Programs are offered either seasonally, year round or as a one time special event or trip. In the past year the department ran more then 50 different successful programs, such as:

- wide variety of sports,
- exercise/fitness activities,
- arts & crafts,
- prevention education programs, and
- socialization opportunities.

We generated approximately 7,000 program registrations and \$180,000 in program revenue. Some of our new programs included Tai Chi for 55 and over and the Youth Council for Teens. We also expanded several programs including:

- The therapeutic recreation sports program for preschoolers. "Play Program "
- One Stroke Painting for Seniors.
- The Boys Junior & Intermediate Basketball League
- The Basketball League and
- Youth Tennis Instruction

Scheduled 200 evening and weekend dates in the Community/Senior Center for 40 Township organizations. We also issued approximately 75 park permits for one day events/functions. We also Began producing Recreation public service programming for Channel 25 and we received \$75,000 in grants from various sources for Therapeutic Recreational Opportunities for the Disabled and a wide variety of juvenile delinquency and substance abuse prevention programs.

The Program budget is a list of the major programs that are offered. The Recreation Programs are either supported through Trust Fund Revenue or by the general fund budget. The program budget shows you the individual line items, the total budget cost for each program, and the total revenue generated and expended for each program.

- **A 5% increase of \$926 in the Senior Citizen activity budget** is also requested to support trips, events and activities that the individual clubs run.
- **Minimum Wage Increases**
The minimum wage rate is anticipated to increase to \$6.15/hr and \$7.15/hr respectfully in September 2005 and September 2006. It is anticipated that this will have an impact on most par rates currently established between \$5.25 and \$12.00/h,r which is the range of most of the seasonal/temporary employees that work for the Recreation Department. While some of the increase can be covered by fees, the Department activity fees have peaked in many cases and cannot be raised. Therefore, the Department is recommending an **increase of \$10,000** to help offset seasonal/temporary staff costs.
- **The Skate Park**
It is anticipated that the Skate Park will open some time this fall. While the Advisory Recreation Council is recommending that this not be a supervised activity, the Recreation Department would like to recommend an allocation of \$4800 to provide for supervision on the weekends for 5 months (September & October 2005 and April, May and June of 2006). We believe that we should make every effort possible to get youth to wear safety gear when using the Skate Park. We do not anticipate the fee for the skate park permit to cover the staff cost, since we will waive the fee for youth attending a safety clinic.
- **Kingston School**
The Kingston School and the Skate Park are two new facilities that the Recreation Department is responsible for. The Recreation Department recommends that approximately \$2,000 be budgeted for Recreation Seasonal Staff to provide for community access to Kingston School. This would allow for approximately 25 dates throughout the year.

- **Therapeutic Recreation Program for physically disabled residents**

The Department has received numerous requests for a recreation program to meet the needs of physically disabled residents. We would like to offer a program that would meet for 18 sessions over the fall, winter and spring seasons. While we anticipate charging a fee for the program we also anticipate that approximately 50% of the participants will request fee waivers. Therefore we would like to **request \$1,000 to support this new program endeavor.**

- **Criminal history background checks**

The staff of the Recreation Department would like to recommend that the Township initiate a procedure to **conduct criminal history background checks for all employees and volunteers** that work for this department. The cost for a background check is approximately \$35 per person to contract for the fingerprinting and state and federal records check. The Recreation Department anticipates a start up cost of **approximately \$9,000 for 250 volunteer coaches** and seasonal employees. This could be followed by an annual budget of approximately \$5000 that would cover new hires and updating the background checks on a rotating basis every three years for employees that stay with the department.

- **Administrative Aides position**

The Recreation Department has been without Full-Time clerical support for approximately 10 years. During this period seasonal/temporary employees have provided some of the support needed. However, the 4 full-time Recreation Administrators have taken on a considerable amount of clerical and accounting responsibilities upon themselves to keep the Department Operational. During that time period the Department also took on the responsibility of the Community/Senior Center which has added considerable demands to reception to the center and support for individual senior citizens and senior activity support. This department has truly taken on more with less. We are still technically below our staff level of 1990 when we had two full-time clerical employees. Additional requirements to improve cash handling procedures has also prompted our request for this position. The Department feels that it can free up approximately \$10,000 a year for this position. If an **Administrative Aides position** at \$32,000/year started in January 2006, **the impact on the FY06 budget would be approximately \$11,000.** Unfortunately, without this position a lot is lost in continuity and transition with seasonal/temporary employees, which means additional work on the 4 Recreation Administrators for follow-up and training.

- **Contract for case management services for gang involved youth**

The Town experienced a significant increase in youth gang related activity in FY04 & FY05. A coordinated agency effort during the summer of 2005 helped to involve approximately 8-12 youth in alternative activities. JJDP grant funding had been available to support the program in 2005. That funding is no longer available. Should youth gang activity escalate into the spring and summer this year **it is recommended that approximately \$2,600 be allocated for supervision** of these youth from 3-6 pm, 3-4 days a week, in July and August when the youth are out of school. This could be managed through a professional services agreement with a private non-profit agency.

Council asked various questions regarding different line items in the Parks and Recreation budget. A brief discussion ensued regarding the possibility of having the pool at Naaman Williams Park opened later. Ms. Osipowitz explained the pool is opened in conjunction with the summer program and that the children registered in the pool (140) use the pool in the morning for lessons and the afternoon is open swim.

Mr. Regan left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Mayor Levine expressed his wish that the Fourth of July Celebration be celebrated on July 4th. He also expressed his wish to have a town fair/celebration. Ms. Ashley-Williams

reported that the Human Relations Commission is holding Diversity/Day of Remembrance event on September 11th.

Community Development

Mr. Daly stated that this department has gone through a reorganization and transition over the last year. He stated that there is a new team in the Planning and Zoning Department. He reported that they have hired a Community Development Coordinator aka Zoning Officer. He stated that zoning applications have been moving along much more expeditiously.

Mr. Lupo reviewed the new organizational chart for the Community Development Department. Mr. Daly commended Mr. Lupo and the Township Engineer for re-establishing the Technical Review Committee to expeditiously process applications that only need administrative approval.

Deputy Mayor McKenzie asked how the extended hours worked in this department. Mr. Lupo replied that the office has always been opened 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. He stated that he did not conduct inspections during the 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm because he did not want to start inspections on an interim basis. He stated that if inspections were to be conducted during this time, it would generate considerable overtime costs. He reported that over 50,000 inspections were conducted last year by eighteen (18) inspectors as well as the office fielding numerous complaints.

He reviewed staffing figures recommended by the State. He stated that he does not need that number of staff in the office because he has the staff working more efficiently. For example, the township has been divided into sections and these sections are only inspected on certain days, therefore keeping inspectors in one area instead of driving back and forth across the Township. He is also obtaining radios to provide better communications between the field inspections and the office staff.

Mr. Lupo reviewed the items that would be purchased with the code enforcement revenue as previously reported by the Township Manager. In response to questions regarding the permit expediter, he stated that this staff person has an added title of Assistant Zoning Officer so there is always a Zoning Officer in the office.

A brief question and answer period ensued regarding various line items in the Community Development budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion made by Deputy Mayor McKenzie, seconded by Ms. Ashley-Williams and unanimously approved, meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie McCarthy
Township Clerk