

**BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL**  
**TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY**  
**JULY 31, 2002**

The Budget Work Session of the Township Council of the Township of Franklin, County of Somerset, New Jersey, held at 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, was called to order by the Mayor at 7:08 p.m.

The Mayor read a statement indicating all requirements of P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 (The Open Public Meeting Act) had been met.

The Township Clerk called the roll.

Present: Mayor Eberle, Deputy Mayor Grippo, Ms. Barrier, Mr. Levine, Mr. Mazzola, Mr. McKenzie. Mr. Chivukula and Mr. Mettler were absent at roll call but arrived later in the meeting.

Absent: Mr. Sumter

Also Present: Kenneth W. Daly, Township Manager, Jean C. Pellicane, RMC, Township Clerk

**SFY 2003 EXTRAORDINARY MUNICIPAL AID PROGRAM**

Township Manager Daly advised Council that the Township might be eligible for this grant program for FY2003 to offset the anticipated tax increase. The Township Manager and Chief Financial Official suggest that we can apply for \$1.5 million. In order to apply for this aid, however:

1. The FY2003 budget must be introduced before August 30<sup>th</sup>. Council planned to introduce the budget in September.
  - a. The present schedule can be followed with the Financial Oversight Committee review being accelerated and a special meeting late in August to introduce; or
  - b. Council can introduce the budget on August 13<sup>th</sup> with the understanding that it is going to be amended between the time of introduction and the announcement of the aid figures by the State.
2. The introduced budget cannot be adopted until the aid figures are announced. Adoption before that time renders the application for aid abandoned. Also the budget cannot be amended after the aid figures are announced.

Council must decide tonight if it wants to pursue the grant application and introduce the budget on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

Council determined to pursue the grant application and August 13<sup>th</sup> budget introduction.

**DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET REVIEW**

***Police Department***

Chief Craig Novick, Lieutenant Jeffrey Carter & Sergeant Marie Bantlow appeared and reviewed with the Council the Department's Operating budget, the Functions/ Purposes, FY2002 accomplishments and FTY2003 objectives and goals for the various Divisions.

Mr. Mettler arrived at this time.

1. Current authorized strength is 97 officers. Current strength is 95 officers, 9 of whom are female (the highest in the central New Jersey area), 8 African Americans, 4 Hispanic. Eight of the last 10 hires are officers with diversity.

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The current level of staffing, considering the Township's growth, results in increased overtime, impact on morale, stress-related illness, and difficulty meeting community needs. Based on a 1997 recommendation from the Attorney General of 108 officers and the FBI basic minimum officer per resident ratio of 2.1 officers per thousand residents, it is recommended that the Township add two new officers each year for five years to bring us to the 107 range. Therefore, two new positions are included in the 2003 budget.

A Survey on the age of our officers indicates an average age of 37 ½. Twenty-one current officers are eligible to retire but are content to continue for the time being, but there is need to bring in younger officers for the future.

In response to questions from members of Council, Chief Novick and Township Manager Daly noted:

1. The budget proposed assumes the receipt of a COPS grant to pay a portion of the salaries of two new officers at a declining rate for three years. If the grant were not received, the hiring of the new officers would have to be delayed to later in the year.
2. The budget proposes an increase in the allocation for overtime from \$200,000 to \$330,000. The amount actually spent in 2002 was \$324,000, but the difference was covered by vacant positions.
3. There are currently sufficient civilians to cover dispatch activities entirely.
4. The use of police officers by contractors/private companies for police work is not covered in the budget since it is paid for by the user fee. The fees for these services are filtered through the Township, and the Township retains an administrative fee for wear and tear on cars, etc.
5. The budget does not propose a salary increase for school crossing guards. The crossing guards who have been on the job many years get health benefits; new hires do not. The crossing guards who do not get health benefits were given an increase last year commensurate with the increased cost of the benefits provided to the longer term crossing guards.
6. Huntingdon Life Science is still costing the department money. Discussions last year regarding a contribution from Huntingdon were not finalized since the Township did not want Huntingdon to think they could have a say in the police activities. They have not installed the fence they were required to install.
7. The budget for special police was cut to reflect actual expenditures in 2001. Mr. Mazzola noted that the special police program should be eliminated and so moved.
8. The civilian police specialist in the budget provides service to the Traffic Division.
9. The part time secretary position, shown as vacant, is not vacant.
10. There is need to continue the \$500.00 uniform allowance in the Emergency Management Division, especially now that the Division is becoming a viable entity.

### ***Fire Prevention***

Acting Director of Fire Prevention John Hauss appeared at the meeting. Township Manager Daly advised Council that Director of Fire Prevention John Baab has retired and is on terminal leave until the end of the year. John Hauss, Deputy Director, is serving as Acting Director. The Township is going to advertise and post this position as soon as possible. The transitioning from John Baab to John Hauss has been seamless other than working one man short until John Baab is off the payroll. The Budget provides for another deputy director appointment.

John Hauss presented the Cumulative Fiscal Year Activity Report for the Department and responded to questions from the Township Council.

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1. The Report shows revenues down slightly in one significant category - housing permit fees – from \$24,000 to \$9,500. The department is not accomplishing housing inspections because of insufficient manpower. Higher than anticipated revenues were received from hydrant testing fees since there was significant development and increased penalties for enforcement action against property owners.
2. The number of fire calls answered by the department employees to assist volunteers doubled in 2002 and represents 25% of the department's working hours. The reason for the increase is that two employees who are now retired, John Baab and Paul Bulla, did not respond to fire calls because of their ages. The newer employees are younger and do respond.
3. Housing inspections are now done part time evenings and weekends to accommodate homeowners. The position shown as vacant in the budget is not vacant and is being used 20 hours a week. A full time position could be used to increase housing inspections, but because of fiscal constraints, this position is not being requested this year.

Mr. Chivukula arrived at this time.

4. The department's operating budget is flat except for an increase caused by moving copy paper to this budget.
5. The amount budgeted for overtime provides for hours when inspectors are called out for fire investigations and complaints since they are on call 24/7.

### *Aid to Fire Companies*

Township Manager Daly advised that:

1. This account is basically a pass through for state aid plus a donation to the Fire Chiefs Association for activities they conduct in the schools during fire prevention week.
2. The Township provides life and accidental death insurance for volunteers. At the suggestion of John Baab, we went self-insured several years ago, with the unused money placed in escrow.

### *Aid to Rescue Squads*

Township Manager Daly advised that the Township asked the squads to provide backup materials as to how the Township donations are being spent. The squads did not respond, therefore, no increase in the Township's contributions is requested.

Marc Dashield, Assistant Township Manager, noted that the administrative functions of the South Bound Brook/Franklin Township First Aid Squad have been taken over by the South Bound Brook police. A letter was sent to the South Bound Brook police requesting additional information on whether they intend to continue operating the first aid squad and if they intend to provide coverage to Franklin Township. We are awaiting a response.

Mr. Mazzola questioned the intention of the South Bound Brook/Franklin Township First Aid Squad to become a paid squad by hiring a special officer and training police officers to provide the bulk of their response with the intention of charging the recipient's insurance for services. Mr. Dashield responded that he is seeking confirmation of that information.

Mr. Mazzola noted his objection to providing a donation to the squad if they will be charging for their services since we do not provide a donation to Rural Metro and questioned any legal ramifications of South Bound Brook police officers responding to calls in Franklin. Township Manager Daly responded that these questions are being investigated.

Mr. Levine questioned the use of Somerset Medical Center ambulances. Township Manager Daly responded that this possibility is part of what is being investigated. Assistant

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Manager Dashield has contacted the Medical Center regarding a possible shared service agreement among other towns.

In reference to the concern with how squads are spending the Township's contributions, Mr. Mazzola suggested:

1. The possibility of placing the squads' contributions in an escrow account and the submission of vouchers by the squads to cover the cost of acceptable expenditures to the Assistant Township Manager for review and approval. Mr. Mettler noted that some of the squads hold the Township's donations for future purchase of equipment and ambulances, so the continued ability to do this must be provided by the process.
2. Amend the Township's ordinance to require the squads to submit reports on the use of the Township's donation.

Mr. Hauss noted that the same procedure should be followed for fire companies.

Council took a brief recess at 8:23 p.m. Meeting resumed at 8:29 p.m. with all members present except Mr. Sumter.

### ***Municipal Court***

Maryann Nishamura, Court Administrator, appeared at the meeting and presented her July 31<sup>st</sup> report on activities in the Court and responded to questions from Council as follows:

1. The third court session approved by Council in 2001 went into effect in October, 2001, resulting in 2,371/62% more cases being handled in FY2002.
2. As a result of the third session, revenue goals were exceeded.
3. An amount of \$6,100 in public defender fees was also received.
4. The operational budget requests are basically flat except for a slight increase in postage and meetings/conferences. Renovations to the Court's computer system requires more training for staff, and the conferences required for training of staff are being held farther from the Township, increasing the cost of gas reimbursement. Also, the Associate Judge has opted to attend the League conferences. The increase in postage costs is due to postal rate increases and increased filings with the Court.
5. We are about to enter an Interlocal Service Agreement with Somerset County for arraignment video conferencing. We have been awarded a \$9,000 grant. The cost of the equipment has come down appreciably and we hope to have the program on line in October. The program will save tremendous police overtime for transport.
6. The Prosecutor's budget, which provides for the prosecutor and associate prosecutor, is basically flat except for an increase in conference/meetings.

Council reviewed the May 21<sup>st</sup> letter from Public Defender Dennis Auciello requesting a \$5,000 increase in the salary for this position. Ms. Nishamura noted that the public defender sits twice a month. Defendants against whom certain charges are placed must be represented, and the users are charged for the public defender's services based on income. Last year a total of \$6,121 was collected. This money is also used for expert witnesses or special equipment. A full day/third session with the public defender is desired to reduce staff overtime.

Mr. Levine questioned the inclusion of \$1,000 for Social Security in this budget but not in other budgets. Township Manager Daly responded that since Court expenses are outside the Cap, these expenses are charged directed to the Departmental Budget.

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### ***Health Department***

Walter Galanowsky, Director of Health, appeared at the meeting and presented a report of the department's accomplishments in 2001 including a 9% increase in revenue and responded to questions from Council as follows:

1. We have applied for Family Planning Grants; however, grants cannot be anticipated as revenue in the budget. When the grants are actually received, the budget is amended to accept the grants.
2. Funding for Health Clinics has been increased to accommodate the Middlesex County STD and Health Educator contracts. These amounts, however, needed to be moved to the matching grants account, which is outside the cap. The STS services are mandated by the State; no other agency offers these services.
3. Mr. Mazzola noted his discussion with the Advisory Board of Health that the number of health fairs scheduled is under serving the population, and there is need for additional health fairs. Mr. Galanowsky responded that the fairs are basically run by volunteers and/or staff who accrue compensatory time. The Staff is currently overwhelmed with inspections. The cost of a fair is about \$3,000, most of which is for informational materials for distribution. The cost of a health fair depends on what areas/activities are conducted. Many of the services are donated by local practitioners, but the Health Educator must be paid. The Health Educator is a part time contractual arrangement. To conduct more fairs would require a full time health educator at a salary of approximately \$45,000.00.

Township Manager Daly advised that if Council is of a mind to add to the budget the capacity to do more health fairs and services, the new position of full time health educator should be added to the budget for introduction. The Township can apply for grants and/or remove the position after discretionary aid figures have been announced. Mr. Levine questioned our ability to add this position and stay below cap without having to make a compensatory reduction. Township Manager Daly responded that we are currently \$100,000 under cap.

Township Manager Daly will prepare information for Council review on the full cost of a full time employee including benefits and the deductions from this budget that can be made by eliminating the contractual health education services.

4. A staffing change is proposed to change the existing zoning inspector position to an environmental health specialist.
5. The budget proposes the purchase of Polaroid Film. While digital and cheaper alternatives are available, the photographs are presented in Court and must be Polaroids to insure that they cannot be altered.
6. The Animal Control budget is decreased slightly by the retirement of a long time employee and replacement by an employee at a lower salary.
7. The amount provided for "Acting Allowance" is for employees who provide coverage when the Assistant Animal Control Officer is not available.

### ***Code Enforcement***

Jim Anderson, Construction Official appeared at the meeting and noted:

1. Revenues for FY2002 are slightly down from 2001 which was a banner year for three large residential developments. The 911 terrorist attacks had a negative impact on commercial development. The Department did operate in the black with a lot of construction in progress. Revenue for 2002 was anticipated for \$1.3 million; 2003 revenue is anticipated for \$1.1 million.

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2. The Board of Education will be proceeding with the nine school renovations and construction of the new high school. The Township does not collect any fees for these permits but must still do the inspections.
3. The Griggstown sewer project will create work for the plumbing and electrical departments.
4. UUC fees collected should be used for the operation of this office in compliance with State Law.
5. Operating expenses are down and have been maintained at last year's levels or reduced by \$1,800.
6. The vacant position shown on the budget is not vacant but has been filled by the plumbing inspector.

### ***Grants Coordinator***

Bonnie von Ohlen, Grants Coordinator, appeared at the meeting and reviewed the grants received by FY2000, FY2001 and FY2002. Ms. von Ohlen noted that next year, in addition to the grant applications, she will be moving previously approved projects along to their conclusion. There is no staff support in the Department. Assistance is obtained from part time help in the manager's office as well as other departments when needed. Township Manager Daly noted that we will be looking for a bookkeeper for the CDBG Program in conjunction with part time work in the Finance Department.

### ***Tax Assessor***

Burnham Hobbs, Tax Assessor, appeared at the meeting, reviewed the goals and objectives of the Department and noted that the 2003 budget is flat except for professional consultant services which is being increased from \$4,000 to \$44,000 to enable the hiring of an outside consultant for tax appeals. This item of expense was previously budgeted under a separate account named Tax Appeals.

### ***Tax Collector***

Carol Langone, Collector of Revenue, appeared at the meeting, reviewed the goals and objectives of the Department and noted that the 2003 budget is flat. The FY2003 collection rate was 98%, an important fact for the 2003 reserve for uncollected taxes.

Deputy Mayor Grippo questioned the half salaries in the budget and suggested that the NJDEP Commissioner's letter of commendation regarding our water restriction be sent out with the next water bill. Township Manager Daly and Ms. Langone responded that the other half of the salaries are charged to the water utility and that the sending of the commissioner's letter would be problematic since water bills are sent by post card and the next billing will also show the proposed water rate increase.

### ***Purchasing***

Joyce Miller, Purchasing Agent and General Services Administrator, appeared at the meeting, reviewed the department's FY2002 Performance Summary and responded to questions from Council as follows:

1. Ms. Miller received her Qualified Purchasing Agent designation in 2002, thereby permitting an increase in the bid/quote threshold.
2. The department also initiated the Edmunds computer program for purchasing/budgeting.
3. The General Services portion of this budget pays for photocopiers in this building, all paper, most postage, the Township's newsletter and utility maintenance. These items

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were budgeted by the department last year but have been returned to a central accounting system for FY2003.

4. The General Services portion also works with the Public Relations Committee and Community Celebrations Committee.
5. The proposed cost of conferences/meetings and professional dues have increased in line with fee increases.

Deputy Mayor Grippo questioned the cost of paper through State Contract versus a joint purchase with the Board of Education. Ms. Miller responded that the Township buys from State Contract, while the Board of Education buys from a School Board cooperative which the Township cannot use. Efforts to form a cooperative with the Board of Education, the Sewerage Authority and the Township were attempted, but after much effort, it was determined that the Township obtained better bid prices on its own and the project was abandoned. Ms. Miller will, however, look into the possibility of having the school buy extra paper and sell it to the Township if their prices are more favorable than State contract.

In response to a question from Mr. Levine, Ms. Miller noted that State statute has been amended to allow us to buy other than through bid or state contract by getting three quotes and obtaining a price that can save at least 10% over state contract price and if the store will take purchase orders, etc. If these conditions are met, the Township can obtain permission to purchase from the store by filing applications, proofs, etc.

Township Manager Daly advised that an amount of \$22,250 has been added to this budget for the Public Relations Budget. Council members noted items or purchases being considered from the public relations budget including increase in the number/size of newsletters, sign in front of the Municipal Building advertising coming events, video taping of Council meetings.

### ***Finance***

Jose Agosto, Chief Financial Officer, appeared at the meeting, reviewed the departmental budget and responded to questions from Council as follows:

1. The FY2003 budget is flat except for one additional staff member recently hired, and a joint bookkeeping position with CDBG.
2. The fee in the budget for review of the School Budget covers the fee to have the Township Auditor review the defeated school budget. The fee for the auditor in the budget appears greatly increased but is a correction of a prior procedure in an attempt to classified these items more appropriately.
3. The ADP Modifications budgeted is a combined program between Payroll and Finance.

### ***Human Resources/Assistant Township Manager***

Marc Dashield, Assistant Township Manager and Human Resources Administrator, appeared at the meeting, reviewed this departmental budget and responded to questions from Council as follows:

1. The \$14,000.00 E-time software program which provides automated time and attendance records, previously authorized by Council, is split between Payroll and Human Resources.
2. Efforts to put together reasonable and workable performance standards to provide for performance based salary increases are underway.

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***Insurance***

Liability and Workers Compensation Insurance with CNJIF increased 5% last year; and a 10% increase is anticipated for 2003 based on the 9-11 terrorist attacks. These, however, are projections only. Health Insurance costs are averaging increases in rates of 15% to 20%. Our overall rate increase was 11%. While the cost of Blue Cross/Blue Shield Prescription insurance increased 32% last year, we had moved to Benecard last year which increased 7% in 2002 and 13% in 2003.

Upon a motion made, seconded and unanimously approved, meeting was adjourned at 10:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean C. Pellicane, RMC  
Township Clerk