

**MINUTES OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEETING
OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

APRIL 3, 2012

SPECIAL CAPITAL BUDGET MEETING

A Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council was held in the Municipal Building on April 3, 2012.

Mayor Bivona opened the meeting at 10:00 A.M. and Borough Clerk, Sally Bleeker, read the Sunshine Law Statement.

ROLL CALL

The following Council Members and Professional Staff were present: Mayor Bivona, Councilman Kelly, Councilwoman Lota, Councilman Smith, Borough Administrator Hart and Chief Financial Officer Pike. Council President Kahwaty, Councilman Pedone and Councilwoman Ramsey were absent. Also in attendance were Fire Chief Denny Knubel, Captain Ryan Dodd and Lieutenant Jeremy Donch.

PUBLIC'S OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK

Motion to open the time for public comment was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Lota. Discussion – none.

No one from the public came forward and a motion to close the time for public comment was made by Councilwoman Lota. Seconded by Councilman Smith. Discussion – none.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Hart reported that the Finance Committee met last week to review Capital Budget items and they recommended hearing from departments that have capital budget requests. There are five Fire Department purchase requests consisting of the Assistant Chief's vehicle, Special Services Support vehicle, radios and pagers, turn-out gear and hoses that need to be addressed.

Denny Knubel, Fire Chief, said that there is a need for several items this year particularly pagers and portable radios. The FCC has required emergency services to be upgraded to a "narrow band" which necessitates upgraded equipment and the reprogramming of existing equipment. Mr. Donch explained that any equipment over eight years of age is not eligible for upgrading and the department has numerous pieces of equipment that will not comply with the FCC requirement. The department cannot respond to calls without pagers and it is imperative to have updated communications equipment to allow for safe operations.

Regarding turn-out gear and hose replacement, Mr. Donch stated that the Fire Department has been working diligently with the WOLF group to get the best possible pricing. Turn-out gear, consisting of items such as coats, pants, boots, gloves and helmets is on a constant rotation per OSHA guidelines and the Chief has deemed that another six sets are needed to ensure compliance with both national and state requirements. Mr. Hart asked that backup be submitted for these items.

Mr. Donch spoke about the request for a joint purchase of a new hose through the WOLF. Additional hose is needed due to the lack of fire hydrants in certain areas of the Borough. The Borough needs 5,000 feet of hose in good condition and readily available. The State carries out an annual test of every piece of hose by an independent agent and anything that does not meet current standards is removed and cannot be used for firefighting. The department has made a \$15,000 request for replacement hose for lines that have been damaged during fires or during the normal course of operations.

Councilman Kelly questioned whether the Fire Department had considered defraying the cost of the turnout gear by means of a donation. Mr. Donch said that while the Fire Department recognizes the merits of donations to offset certain costs he would not recommend that operational items be dependent on donations. Mayor Bivona pointed out that hose and turn-out gear replacement are ongoing items and are therefore non-capital. Councilmembers agreed that over time, these items should become part of the operating budget.

Regarding the Southside Headquarters and the exhaust system, Mayor Bivona stated that the Council is working on a long term public safety fund and that would fulfill safety needs of all building in the Borough. A Public Safety Trust Fund has been formed and the Council will work to prioritize various projects. Chief Knubel confirmed that an OSHA violation was noted for lack of required space.

Mr. Donch stated that the Fire Department is requesting a replacement of the current 2005 Tahoe which has a mileage of 90,150 and is used by the Assistant Chief. He explained that during an incident or situation, this vehicle becomes the command post and brings equipment needed to safely run the operation. These vehicles are used during storms and are an important asset to the Department. Councilman Kelly questioned whether a standard SUV would be adequate to carry this portable equipment. Mr. Donch stated that a full size SUV is ideal for this situation because of the amount of equipment that has to be transported. The department could consider vehicles available under State contract that would serve the needs of the department. Chief Knubel said that he and the Assistant Chief have vehicles that travel to every incident and each vehicle carries a substantial amount of equipment including portable radios, command tents and books with a description of every building in the Borough detailing sprinkler locations, etc. This equipment could not be carried in the fire trucks and Mr. Donch explained that the job of the Chief and the Assistant Chief is to establish a command and operational platform to ensure the safe outcome of any incident.

Mayor Bivona asked if the Fire Department would be paying for these vehicles. Mr. Donch asked that the Borough cover the cost of the command and operational vehicles as a budgeted replacement item. Mayor Bivona commented that the Council needs to have a better understanding of the Fire Department's finances in addition to details relative to money received through fund raising efforts. Mr. Donch stressed the need for this vehicle and said he hoped that the Council and the Fire Department could work on this together.

Councilman Smith left the meeting at 10:45 A.M.

Mr. Hart asked why the vehicle needs to be replaced now and Mr. Donch indicated that the vehicle is not reliable and that it has had mechanical problems. The vehicle has a considerable amount of mileage and information on repairs to the vehicle could be provided. Councilman Kelly questioned alternatives that would be less than the \$65,000 that has been requested. Mr. Hart explained that they are trying to make specific capital budget decisions in specific amounts. In the past, the Fire Department would cover the purchase price of the vehicle and the Borough would pay to outfit the vehicle. He wondered why they would depart from this practice and if there is a legitimate reason why the vehicle needs to be replaced this year. Mr. Hart pointed out that the DPW doesn't generally get new vehicles until the existing vehicles are completely inoperable and the analysis that vehicles are not replaced until they need to be replaced should be the analysis that is used for all Borough departments. Mr. Hart reiterated that more information is needed on the condition of the vehicle and if the Fire Department has money, they should be contributing to these types of purchases.

Mayor Bivona emphasized that the Council needs to know how the Fire Department is spending their money. Mr. Donch said that the standard practice is that the department asks the Borough for command and operational vehicles and the Borough always says that they cannot fund these purchases. Mayor Bivona reiterated that the Council must be aware of the financial situation of the Fire Department if they want the Borough to fund purchases.

Mr. Donch described a "Special Services Support Vehicle" and explained why it is needed using a brief power point presentation. This vehicle would enable the department to provide various services to the Borough. In addition to protecting lives, the Fire Department protects property and home damage which includes dewatering operations as well as storm and special needs response.

Mr. Donch explained that several years ago, the Fire Department became aware of the need for a support vehicle and they had been using a vehicle that had previously served as an ambulance. This ambulance is now old, outdated and unreliable and it doesn't make any sense to invest additional money in repairs. As call volume continues to rise and Fire Department services increase, it becomes apparent that a new vehicle is not only needed but would also be a valuable asset to the Borough. The vehicle would be used to respond to vehicle accidents, isolate hazard areas, spill control, transportation of generators and other special services. As construction continues in Franklin Lakes, drainage becomes a more important issue and the vehicle would carry pumps used to assist with flooding problems in basement areas. The new truck would have a flatbed area to transport equipment along with a generator to run the equipment. This vehicle will be more expensive to operate because it is designed for emergency response and support and will also have the ability to tow the recently purchased boat and any other auxiliary equipment. Chief Knubel concluded that this vehicle would allow the Fire Department to protect life and property under any conditions and would be a perfect addition to the Borough. He asked that the Council consider the purchase of this vehicle which has become a necessity.

Chief Knubel offered several examples of how a vehicle of this type would have provided great assistance to residents during recent severe weather in Franklin Lakes. Chief Knubel and Mr. Donch, along with other members of the Fire Department, have begun a plan for a proposed apparatus replacement schedule and there is a possibility that the fleet could be downsized; however, they need to meet with the ISO who provides insurance ratings for the Borough. ISO findings determine the rate that residents pay to insure their homes for fire protection. This rating will give an accurate reading of the fire fighting capabilities of the Borough and provide information on what can and can't be eliminated.

Councilman Kelly asked where the vehicle would be stored and Mr. Donch said it would be stored outside. Councilman Kelly was concerned about vehicle deterioration, however, Mr. Donch explained that this is not a frontline piece of equipment that would respond to every call. Any equipment stored inside the vehicle would be sealed from the weather.

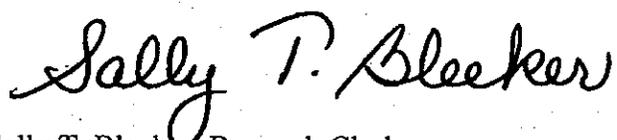
Mayor Bivona left the meeting at 11:00 A.M.

Councilwoman Lota concluded that the full Mayor and Council will have to discuss the capital needs of the Fire Department.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 AM was made by Councilwoman Lota, seconded by Councilman Kelly. On voice vote, all in favor, motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Sally T. Bleeker, Borough Clerk