

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

FEBRUARY 19, 2013

SPECIAL MEETING

A Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council was held in the Municipal Building on February 19, 2013.

Mayor Bivona opened the meeting at 8:00 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, Councilperson Kahwaty, Councilperson Kelly, Council President Lota, Councilperson Ramsey, Borough Administrator Hart and Chief Financial Officer Pike. Councilperson Lambrix and Councilperson Pedone were absent.

PUBLIC'S OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK

Mayor Bivona said that no one from the public was in attendance to speak this morning.

DISCUSSION

• **2013 BUDGET - PERSONNEL NEEDS**

Mr. Hart referred to several documents that would form the basis of today's discussion noting that these are the recommendations of the Budget Committee. He suggested working through the Budget Projection as a guide for discussion. Mr. Pike referred to the anticipated surplus which had been reduced by \$485,000 as a result of pension payoff. He noted that \$296,561 was returned to the Borough from the Library in 2012 and put into a special reserve account to be used to reduce taxation. The amount to be raised through taxation is \$11,201,103. Regarding appropriations, Mr. Pike pointed out that relative to salaries and wages, there is a 3 ½% increase and a 2% increase due to the need for an additional Electrical Inspector and part time support for the Recreation Department. Group insurance is up slightly due to new medical insurance and employee contributions. Mayor Bivona commented that they are making progress relative to the goal of funding capital improvements out of the operating budget. Mr. Hart reminded everyone that next year they will not have any funds returned from the Library to add to the budget. The Borough's debt continues to be paid down and there are projects that can be done without raising debt.

Mr. Hart reviewed the three primary objectives:

1. Stabilize the use of surplus.
2. Keep normal tax increase at 2% or less.
3. Maintain debt service.

Mr. Hart referred to work sheets for personnel requests and capital. There is another work sheet for Discretionary Expenditures – Non-Capital which are items not currently included in the budget; and another sheet for Discretionary Expenditures – Non-Capital which are included in the budget. Mr. Hart said that there are items that both he and Mr. Pike felt were more policy related decisions than the day to day operating expenses of the Borough. Mr. Hart stated that they hope to introduce the budget at the meeting of March 5th and there is another budget meeting scheduled for next Tuesday. The Borough's engineering firm intends to make a presentation concerning the merits of GIS which would involve the digitizing of Borough tax maps and the Tax Assessor is scheduled to present a position in support of his request to do an annual reassessment. These two requests would be a significant part of this budget.

Mr. Hart referred to the Discretionary Expenditures work sheet and stated that none of the personnel requests are within the proposed budget. Each of these requests was reviewed by the Budget Committee and the recommendation is not to move forward with these additional personnel needs requests. Mr. Hart reviewed the requests for other items including library payroll which is presently done by the Finance Department. The objective here would be for the Library to administer their own payroll and the quote from Action Data Services (ADS) is consistent with what the Library pays the Borough at this time. This is a resource issue and Mr. Pike says that his departments spends a lot of time going back and forth with information and he recommended that this should be part of the Library's operating functions. The Council agreed and Mr. Hart will speak to the Library about this change.

Mr. Hart spoke about the field laptop for the assessor which means that the assessor could input information while in the field rather than taking notes and doing paperwork when he returns to the office. This is recommended by the Budget Committee. Regarding GIS software, Mr. Hart said that this will be looked at in the near future but probably not this year. The request for Police Accreditation is no longer a top priority and could be deferred. The Council decided against funding for outage mapping software and the Firemen's Convention. The Fire Department has asked for \$5,000 for out of state training and the recommendation is to keep it at \$1,000. The Fire Department has other sources for training and have not demonstrated that personnel are legally required to have additional specific training. Councilperson Ramsey suggested that training done for the Fire Department should also apply to the Ambulance Corps. Mr. Hart said that the Ambulance Corps also has an appropriation for training.

Mr. Hart stated that the police had requested \$78,000 for the purchase of an additional patrol vehicle and a SUV. The recommendation is to move forward with the purchase of the SUV. The Construction Official could then use the existing police SUV which has about 45,000 miles. Two new police vehicles have been purchased with donated funds and it has been decided to recycle Borough vehicles for Recreation purposes as well as the Construction official.

Mr. Hart said that there are four requests from the DPW, three of which are considered capital items. He suggested taking the small capital items which are basically requests for equipment and listing them under the operating budget. The DPW is asking to purchase software, however, they have not provided back up information as yet. Mr. Hart stated that he would hope that an upgraded or new software system would enhance controls over DPW records relative to vehicle maintenance and the purchasing of parts for buildings and grounds as well as purchases at hardware stores. He said that there is a program called "Pub Works" targeted exclusively for municipal Public Works departments that tracks purchases, the time it takes to do specific tasks, etc.

Mr. Hart commented that if this specialty software is purchased there will be a resource issue and some assistance will have to be offered to the DPW. Going forward, he suggested the following:

1. Propose a \$3,000 stipend for the Recycling Coordinator and remove this work from regular day to day routine.
2. Recommend taking the DPW out of major building projects because they are too time consuming.
3. Take the DPW out of larger road patch projects since they don't have the time and equipment necessary for this type of work.

Mayor Bivona indicated that he is open to any and all suggestions. Mr. Hart reminded everyone of the meeting next Tuesday and said it would be the last meeting before the budget is introduced. He encouraged Councilmembers to submit any questions or requests for further information before Tuesday so that final decisions can be made on these items. There are several requests for salary increases and RICE notices may be necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilperson Kahwaty to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 A.M. Council President Lota seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: Councilmembers Kahwaty, Kelly, Lota and Ramsey

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent: Councilmembers Lambrix and Pedone

Motion Approved

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally T. Bleeker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sally T. Bleeker, Borough Clerk