

**WORK SESSION
MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**February 23, 2016
DELRAN, NJ**

Sunshine Statement: Be advised that proper notice has been given by the Township Council in accordance with the sunshine law in the following manner. Notice advertised in the Burlington County Times and Camden Courier Post on January 12, 2016 and posted on the bulletin board on the same date.

ROLL CALL: Mr. O'Connell, Ms. Pangia, Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Kolodi and Mr. Catrambone were present.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Paris, Mayor, Mr. Long, Solicitor, Mr. Hatcher, Administrator and Ms. Eggers, Municipal Clerk.

REQUEST FOR REFUND OF INTEREST & RETURN CHECK FEE- BLK 34, LOT 10

Mr. Catrambone stated that that we received a request from a resident for a refund of interest and the return check fee. The interest and return check fee was due to a bank error.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kolodi to authorize the refund. All were in favor, motion approved.

2016 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Catrambone thanked the Mayor and Mr. Hatcher putting the budget together. Mr. Catrambone asked Mr. Hatcher to highlight the areas of interest and then we will move onto review and questions.

Mr. Hatcher stated that to get to this point the Department Heads received budget requests in October and were required to submit those requests in November. Over the last month, the Mayor has sat down with each Department Head to discuss those requests and make the necessary adjustments. The Township has until March 18th to introduce the budget and Council intends to introduce it at a Special Meeting on March 15th. The budget must be adopted by April 22nd. Mr. Hatcher stated that he recommends we hold the public hearing and adoption at the April 12th meeting. Mr. Hatcher stated that the Auditor finished up the Financial Statement last week and we will update the worksheets to include the various grants for the next budget work session. We utilized the same number as we did last year for the reserve for uncollected taxes. That will be updated as we move through the process and get better numbers from the school and county. As the budget stands right now, we are in good financial shape. The financial plan could not have gone better over the last several years. We are starting 2016 with an \$8,000,000 surplus, which is up from \$6,900,000 last year. As he reported in the past, there will be a \$350,000 increase in debt service. The collection rate for 2015 was over 98% which has been consistent and there were also significant increase in the construction code office and court office. The areas of significant increase in the 2016 budget are the PFRS pension bill which increased over \$60,000. We added \$50,000 to Accumulated Compensation line, which needed to be replenished due to retirements. Money was also added to cover prior years which is included for Council's consideration. We are in the same position with the Sewer Department Budget. The surplus has been restored to \$4,500,000. There are major capital budget items that we need to keep on mind.

We have a lot of options as we go through the review. We can have a zero or very low increase, depending on what Council chooses.

Council reviewed line item of the presented 2016 municipal budget and requested additional information or made adjustment in the following areas:

- Catholic Charities (Providence House) – Council requested information from the Chief on the services they provide to the Township
- Legal Services – consider possible increase to handle additional work
- Recreation Special Needs Program – Council requested additional information on the expenditures for 2015
- Recreation Special Program – Council discussed the possibility of adding additional funds to add additional programs such as a movie night in the park or bringing back the Farmer's Market. Mr. Hatcher will reach out to Joe Parento, RAC Chairman to discuss this issue and report back at the next meeting.
- Recreation – Council agreed to add \$1,000 for grand opening of Delran Community Park
- Council agreed to pay the prior year bills included in the budget
- Green Team – Mr. Hatcher stated that he was contacted today about adding funding for the Green Team. He will get their request for the next work session.

Mr. Catrambone stated that we have come to the end of the municipal budget and can begin to review the Sewer Department Budget.

Council reviewed the line items with the Sewer Department Budget. At this time, no changes were made to the line items as presented.

Mr. Schwartz discussed that there have been some complaints from residents about receiving the sewer bill that includes all four quarters.

Mr. Hatcher stated that we would prefer to bill twice a year. That way the money would be collected within the same year the residents are being billed for. Council agreed to discuss this at a future work session since it would not impact the budget this year. Mr. Hatcher suggested that if a change was to be made, they would need to make that decision in the next few months.

Mr. Catrambone asked if we have rough numbers on what the total budget will be.

Mr. Hatcher stated that the Municipal Budget is roughly \$15,700,000 and the Sewer Department is roughly \$3,800,000 \$3,900,000.

Mr. Catrambone stated that he would like to discuss the one time sewer rebate of \$50. He would like this to apply to residential accounts only.

Mr. Hatcher stated that the cost would come directly from the surplus. Mr. Hatcher asked why we wouldn't want to apply the credit to commercial account.

Mr. Catrambone asked how many sewer accounts we have.

Mr. Hatcher stated that we have a between 6,000 and 6,500 accounts.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he is in favor of the rebate but he wants to make sure that there would not be a legal issue with the apartments.

Mr. Hatcher stated that he feels we need a legal opinion on this issue. He will report back to Council once he has the information. An additional billing will also be needed if this is approved.

Next Council reviewed the capital budget requests. The items requested by the Department Heads are as follows:

- Tax Assessor Monitor & Scanner – Council agreed to keep this on the list. Mr. Hatcher will get a cost estimate for the next meeting.
- CFO 3 Laptops \$3,000 and 1 Desktop \$1,000 – Council agreed to keep this on the list.
- Tax Office remodel for more comfort and security – Not approved at this time.
- Police Department
 - ALPR – License Plate Recognition System \$18,500 - Council agreed to keep this item on the list
 - Electronic Ticketing Computer \$42,508 - Council agreed to keep this item on the list
- Public Works
 - Service Truck \$70,000 – Council agreed to keep this item on the list
 - Municipal Building Roof \$1,400,000 – Council agreed to have the representative that evaluated the roof attend the next work session to present their findings to Council
 - Tow Behind Pothole Repair \$45,000– Council agreed to keep this item on the list
 - Flat Bed & Brine Truck – Council agreed to keep this item on the list and will do some research on the benefit before the next meeting
 - Municipal Building Parking Lot Light \$13,000 – Council agreed to keep this item on the list
 - Park Improvements \$105,500 – Council agreed to budget a total of \$48,500. The budget will include \$16,000 for improvements 90 foot field at Notre Dame Park, \$12,500 for Hockey Rink resurfacing and \$20,000 for Playground Equipment. Council would like Mr. DeSanto to provide a list of the playground equipment that could be updated for \$20,000
 - Entrance Furniture & Additional chairs for Council Chambers and Court Room \$6,000 - Council agreed to keep this item on the list.
 - Traffic Light repairs (Hartford & Fairview Blvd. and Fairview & Shop Rite Entrance) \$70,000 – Council agreed to keep this item on the list
 - TAR Property roof \$24,000 – Council agreed to keep this item on the list. Mr. Hatcher will try and get a more accurate number on the cost.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he sent out the proposal information for a potential project to address flooding in Riverside Park. He spoke with Mr. Hatcher regarding what exactly is needed from the Township. It appears what is needed is for the Township to commit to what we expect to be the estimated cost of the potential project. Mr. Schwartz stated that Mr. Hatcher was going to look into what is required for the commitment, whether it would be a commitment letter or a bond ordinance.

Mr. Hatcher stated that we are going to need to figure out exactly what we would be committing to in terms of a project. That will determine whether it can be a capital item or if the funds would need to be in the budget. If the project is a feasibility study and there is no project at the end then

the funds will need to be placed in the budget. If we know there is a project at the end, it can be a capital item.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the issue is they will not meet with us until we have made a commitment.

Mr. Catrambone asked if we have any idea what we are committing to financially and if we can back out if the cost are too substantial.

Mr. Schwartz stated that based on the estimates from CME Associates, total project costs were approximately \$4,000,000. The cost share from the Federal Government is expected to be 50%. How we protect ourselves, if the Army Corps come back with a \$15,000,000 project is to commit to a certain dollar amount. The catch twenty-two is the state is not willing to put a dollar amount into the project until the Federal Government agrees and the Federal Government is not willing to sit down until the Township has made a commitment. The next question is what shows that commitment. It may only require a letter of commitment.

Mr. Catrambone asked if we can get additional information.

Mr. Paris stated that he received information that there has been no commitment from the Federal Government for a 50% cost share. We have no commitment at the state or federal level.

Mr. Catrambone stated that his biggest concern is what we are committing to.

Mr. Schwartz asked what the Council needs in order to make a decision about moving forward. If Council wants to move forward, we need to determine what we would be willing contribute.

Mr. Catrambone stated that he does not feel comfortable committing to something unless we know what we are committing to and if there is an out. The letter indicates that they would pay up to \$100,000 for a feasibility study and then it is a 50% commitment from a non-federal sponsor.

Mr. Schwartz agreed that we have to determine a number we are committed to and if they will not accept that there is really nothing we can do at this point. We cannot leave this open ended.

Mrs. Kolodi asked if we have an idea on what a feasibility would cost.

Mr. Catrambone stated that he thinks it depends on how far they go.

Mrs. Kolodi asked who would perform the feasibility study.

Mr. Catrambone stated that he believes it would be the Army Corps. Mr. Catrambone stated that he would like to open the meeting to the public on this issue.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to open the meeting to public, seconded by Mr. O'Connell. All were in favor, motion approved.

Linda Gilbert, 75 Stewart Avenue, pleaded with Council to consider this proposal. They are trying to save their home.

Mr. Paris stated that if there is a commitment from the federal government for 50% then this is a different discussion but he does not believe that a commitment was made.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he will get Council additional information.

Mr. Catrambone stated that 50% is a great depending on what it is 50% of in terms of cost.

Mr. Paris stated that if it is a large number, we may have to put this out to referendum.

Mrs. Gilbert stated that we have been chasing this for five years and nothing has been done except for installing a valve that doesn't work.

Mr. Catrambone stated that the valve does work as it was designed.

Mrs. Gilbert stated that if something does not get done soon the residents of Riverside Park will be filing a class action lawsuit against the Township.

Bob Gilbert, 75 Stewart Avenue, stated that when they had an Engineer come out to evaluate their front porch, he found cracks that they didn't even see. It is not a question of if it will collapse, it is a question of when. When it does, someone is going to pay if someone gets hurt.

Mrs. Kolodi stated that she just had to have a contractor repair her front porch because it was sinking due to water issues. She has to pay for that repair.

Mr. Gilbert stated that his issue is due to the flooding. The home is still settling and it is over one hundred years old. They have only had a problem since 2011.

Mr. Catrambone stated that Council is well versed in the issues. The Township did not do anything to contribute to the flooding problem.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he understands what Council needs and he will bring back the information for the meeting in two weeks.

Phaedra Schwartz, 501 Brown Street, stated that when making a decision about Riverside Park, Council should consider that residents are abandoning their homes and not paying taxes and the rest of the residents are going to be affected.

Bert Hermansky, Delran Hockey, thanked Council for including the resurfacing of the hockey rink as a capital project. He questioned the timing of the project and whether this would be completed in the spring.

Mr. Hatcher stated that the only way this could be completed in the spring is if there is an existing ordinance for improvement to that park. Mr. Hatcher will report back to Council on this issue.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to end the public portion of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Kolodi. All were in favor, motion approved.

Mr. Paris mentioned that Congressman MacArthur wrote a letter of supporting a grant application for the Fire Department. He forwarded the letter to the Chief.

Mr. Schwartz stated that Senator Booker also wrote a letter of support.

Mr. Paris mentioned that some resident came to him regarding a concern with congestion at Delran Community Park with all the fields and Jake's Place at that location. They mentioned the possibility of moving Jake's Place to Notre Dame Park. Mr. Paris stated that it is something for Council to think about.

Ms. Pangia stated that they committed to Delran because of the parking at the new park.

Mr. Paris stated that he believes Jake's Place is going to draw more people than we think.

Mrs. Kolodi stated that the AA is also concerned about parking when all fields are in use.

Mr. Schwartz stated that this is something we may have overlooked. At other locations, if the parking lot fills up there is street parking.

Ms. Pangia asked what the agreement with Jake's Place says in terms of the location.

Mr. Hatcher stated that he would have to look but he would think it addresses the location. If we moved it to Notre Dame, we would lose two baseball fields.

Ms. Pangia stated that the playground was intended to be in conjunction with the all access ball field.

Mr. Catrambone stated that this is not a discussion for tonight.

Mr. Hatcher stated that with the changes in the Construction Code Office the salary ordinance needs to be amended for the new employees. Council agreed.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Kolodi. All were in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamey Eggers, Township Clerk