

February 16, 2021

A Budget Meeting was held by the Township Council of the Township of Roxbury on February 16, 2021, at the Municipal Building located at 1715 Route 46 in Ledgewood, New Jersey at 7:30PM; however, the Council Room was closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, the meeting was broadcast via Zoom Pro in order to allow the continuation of routine municipal business and provide the opportunity for public participation during public comment periods.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor DeFillippo lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Adequate notice of this Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Roxbury was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: On December 28, 2020, notice was published in the Daily Record. Notice was faxed to the Daily Record, Newark Star Ledger and The Roxbury Register on December 31, 2020. Notice shall also remain posted throughout the year on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building.

Due to the ongoing public health emergency as declared by the Governor, the location of this budget meeting of the Township Council has been changed to be held remotely via telephonic audio conferencing and recorded utilizing the Zoom Pro platform. Adequate advance notice of this change, as well as instructions for accessing the agenda and relevant documents, and making public comment was provided as follows: On February 12, 2021, notice was emailed and faxed to the Daily Record, the Newark Star Ledger, the Roxbury Register; emailed to TAPinto Roxbury; posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building and on the exterior door of Town Hall; and electronic notice was posted on www.roxburynj.us.

ROLL CALL (Present): Councilwoman Jaki Albrecht, Councilman Thomas Carey, Councilman Mark Crowley, Deputy Mayor Fred Hall, Councilman Jim Rilee, Councilman Richard Zoschak (*joined meeting remotely at 7:50PM*), Mayor Robert DeFillippo; **Absent:** None

Also Present: John Shepherd, Township Manager; Amy Rhead, Township Clerk

Staff: Robert Kuncken, IT Director; Lisa Spring, CFO; Valarie Wyble, Purchasing Agent; Richard Blood, Public Works Director; (Michele O'Halloran, Executive Assistant; Brett Douglas, Recreation Director; Shannon Geddis, Court Administrator were in attendance remotely)

Public: Five (5) members of the public were in attendance remotely

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISON REPRESENTATIVES, COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND NEW BUSINESS / OLD BUSINESS

Mayor DeFillippo commended the Department of Public Works and front-line workers for a job well done during the recent storm. Mayor DeFillippo stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused financial challenges, but the Council remains committed to proposing a budget with little or no tax increase, while at the same time ensuring the continuation of all essential services. He noted that the majority of property tax bills are attributable to school taxes.

A. Proposed 2021 Operating Budget

Mr. Shepherd noted that the goal for the 2021 Operating Budget is to keep tax increases to a minimum while also increasing the general operating fund by approximately \$117,980K (equivalent to 0.39 percent - less than ½ percent increase in the overall budget). Challenges in creating the budget, many directly attributed to the negative effects of the pandemic, were discussed, including operational costs that cannot be avoided and revenue shortfalls, most significantly from the courts and Hotel/Motel Tax. The proposed 2021 Budget keeps staffing levels the same as in 2020. Other topics of discussion included the following:

Increases:

- Salary of Township Nurse - additional hours attributable to issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic; some of the monies may be reimbursed at some point in 2021.
- Sanitation Services – increase associated with new 5-yr contract.
- Pension Contribution – increase in mandatory contribution.

Other:

- Group Health Insurance has decreased.
- Water Fund and Sewer Fund will be able to operate without a rate increase.

At 7:50PM, Councilman Zoschak joined the meeting remotely.

Deputy Mayor Hall asked if the elimination of travel expenses for classes and conventions had a positive impact on the budget. Mr. Shepherd advised that the Township maintains a training budget since employees are required to take continuing education classes remotely to maintain their certification and required training. Council proceeded with budget discussions by going through individual budget line items and accounts.

General Administration

- No comments/discussion

Central Stores

- No change from previous year

Council

- No increase

Elections

- Increase for 2021. Mayor DeFillippo asked Mrs. Rhead if the increase reflects changes that came to light during the previous Primary and General Elections. Mrs. Rhead replied, the costs associated with Elections vary from year to year, and are not known until the County bills the Township.

Township Clerk

- Increase of less than \$1K

Finance

- Finance budget increase of approximately \$4K

Audit

- Annual Audit increased by approximately \$770

Data Processing

- Mr. Shepherd and Ms. Spring attributed the increase in this account to items that did not exist in the 2020 budget, including the operational, maintenance and subscription costs associated with cameras and remote technology installed during the past year. Mayor DeFillippo asked if the Information Technology (IT) Department has the tools needed to keep connected in the new remote/digital meeting world. Mr. Shepherd confirmed that the Township's internet/technology systems are up to date.

Tax Collector

- Wage increases – attributable to contractual obligations
- Mayor DeFillippo inquired about the tax collection during the pandemic. Mr. Shepherd replied that the 2020 tax collection year ended well.

Tax Assessor

- Increase in 2021 as compared to the 2020 budget.

Legal

- No change
- Council discussion occurred regarding review of various litigation items and court operations during 2020. Mr. Shepherd summarized the operations of the court during the pandemic.

Historic Advisory

- No change

Planning Board

- Wage increases – attributable to contractual obligations
- Increase for planning studies

Councilman Rilee requested an itemized breakdown of fees associated with contractual services for both the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Economic Development Committee

- No change from previous year's requested amount

Zoning Board

- No change from previous year's requested amount

Construction Department, Director Shared Service Randolph Township

- Slight decrease in comparison to 2020

Construction Uniform Construction Code

- Deputy Mayor Hall inquired about the significant increase (\$40K to \$56K) for Uniform Construction Code (UCC) electrical inspections fees. Ms. Spring explained the increase in 2020 was due to new construction (Woodmont Development).

Other Insurance

- Slight decrease is liability insurance
- Mayor DeFillippo asked if rate reductions are a result of lack of activity. Ms. Wyble explained that Request for Proposals (RFPs) were sent out and the assessment from Garden State Municipal Joint Insurance Fund (GSMJIF) came in slightly lower than the previous year.

Group Insurance

- General Council discussion occurred with regard to topics including:
 - General rate stability over the past few years
 - Increase in health waivers results in a decrease in health benefit premiums
 - Disability insurance – reduction

State Unemployment

- SUI Trust Fund request is zero

Utilities

- Slight decrease

Reserve for Future Appropriations

- Air Pack Replacements - Fire Department/EMS

Social Security

- No comments/discussion

Pension

- Mandatory pension contribution
- Defined Contribution Retirement Pension System (DCRPS) is based on a formula

Capital Improvement Fund

- No comments/discussion

Bond Principal

- No comments/discussion

Note Principal

- No comments/discussion

Bond Interest

- No comments/discussion

Green Acres Loan

- No comments/discussion

Pooled Pension Loan

- 2021 is the last year for this loan.

MATTERS REQUESTED / REFERRED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS, MANAGER, ATTORNEY OR CLERK

None

PUBLIC PORTION (3 Minutes /1 Appearance per Individual)

Mayor DeFillippo reminded telephonic callers who would like to speak on any issues to press *6 (star six) to unmute their phone

Brian Overman, 214 Main Street, Ledgewood – Mr. Overman asked for an update on the Ledgewood Pond Dam Project and expressed concern for his property if the historic dam were to fail. Mr. Shepherd stated that the project is required due to recent New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) regulation amendments. Mr. Shepherd assured Mr. Overman that the NJDEP would not permit the project to be delayed if the dam posed an immediate concern.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor DeFillippo closed the Public Portion.

DRAFT ORDINANCES FOR DISCUSSION

None

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES

None

HEARING AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

None

INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

None

PERSONNEL CHANGES

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

PUBLIC PORTION (3 Minutes /1 Appearance per Individual)

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Hearing no comments, Mayor DeFillippo closed the Public Portion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:45PM, Councilwoman Albrecht made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Rilee seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: All in Favor – Yes; Motion carried unanimously, 7 to 0.

Submitted by:


Amy E. Rhead, RMC
Township Clerk

MINUTES APPROVED BY COUNCIL:

DATE: July 13, 2021

ROLL CALL: Councilwoman Albrecht - Yes
Councilman Carey - Yes
Councilman Crowley - Yes
Deputy Mayor Hall - Yes
Councilman Pottillo - Abstain
Councilman Rilee - Yes
Mayor DeFillippo - Yes