

March 16, 2021

A Budget Meeting was held by the Township Council of the Township of Roxbury on March 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 led 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 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 March 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, 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; (Michele O'Halloran, Executive Assistant; Brett Douglas, Recreation Director; Radwa Ali, Library Director; Shannon Geddis, Court Administrator; and, Mike Kobylarz, Township Engineer, were in attendance remotely)

Public: Four (4) members of the public were in attendance remotely

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

A. Proposed 2021 Operating Budget

Council members reiterated that keeping the tax increase to an absolute minimum remains a priority. General Council review and/or discussion occurred with regard to budget accounts as follows:

Snow and Ice

- Increase in operating budget
- Snow Trust Fund

Capital Improvement Fund

- Increase Road Paving Program
- Ledgewood Pond Dam Project
- Reduction in Tax increase

Public Assistance (Social Services)

- Operating budget is comparable to 2020
- Mayor DeFillippo asked if funding for improvements at the Social Services building is reflected in the budget. Mr. Shepherd stated that the entryway project was already fully funded over the past two years.

Senior Activities

- Senior Citizen Transportation
- Operating funds for Senior Groups

Recreation

- Leisure Activities – programs are offset by fees collected

Library

- No discussion

Municipal Court

- No staffing changes
- Contractual salary increases

Mayor DeFillippo asked if there is a start date for court to resume in person proceedings. Ms. Geddis replied that the state has not yet decided, but in-person or hybrid proceedings may possibly resume in June. Mr. Shepherd added that declining court revenues can be attributed partially to the pandemic, but also to policy changes at the state level. Ms. Geddis noted that municipal courts continue to await guidance from the state on several matters, including marijuana legislation.

Engineering

- No comments/discussion

Water Utility

- No changes in staff
- No tax increase or rate changes (this refers to for Roxbury's water system customers only; New Jersey American Water rates are separate and not included in the municipal budget)
- Increase attributable to costs associated with new NJDEP well-testing requirements (must test for additional contaminants)
- Line maintenance fluctuates from year to year (water mains, hydrants)
- Increase in Engineering Consulting Services also related to the study of contaminants per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in wells (new NJDEP well-testing requirements)
- Increase in Contracted Services attributable to the cost of exploring how contaminants can be treated or concentration of such can be decreased and providing an estimated cost analysis of alternative measures.

General discussion occurred with regard to changes in standards and testing responsibilities of property owners who have wells. Mr. Shepherd suggested providing a link to an information fact sheet for homeowners with private wells.

Sewer

- No rate increases
- Debt related to low interest loans has been absorbed into the existing budget
- Capital projects proposed for 2021 have no associated debt or notes
- Same number of operators

Mr. Shepherd complimented the water and sewer departments for a job well-done during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sludge Hauling

- Sewer utilities – additional utilization in comparison to previous years since residents have been spending more time at home (pandemic)

Consulting Services

- Anticipated judicatory hearing with New Jersey Department of Protection (NJDEP)

Musconetcong Sewerage Authority

- No change – same as 2020

Councilman Rilee requested a review of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority contract to be included on an upcoming agenda.

Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Kobylarz commended the Water and Sewer Departments for their level of customer service. Mayor DeFillippo asked Mr. Kobylarz to relay Council's appreciation to the staff for their efforts and hard work, especially during the pandemic.

Discussion occurred regarding topics to be included on the next budget meeting agenda.

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.*

Ann Mauro, 7 Picardy Road, Succasunna – Ms. Mauro spoke about the American Rescue Plan and asked what Roxbury plans to do with the federal funds. Mr. Shepherd stated that federal guidelines will accompany any disbursement of funds. When that occurs, the Township will review options. Councilman Rilee further explained that funds not previously received cannot be anticipated in the budget. Ms. Mauro asked if the public be shown what is being done with the money when it is received. Mayor DeFillippo reminded Ms. Mauro that all expenditures are discussed at public meetings.

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)*

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

Corine Borrero, 97 Eyland Avenue, Succasunna – Ms. Borrero asked about the Blue Diamond contract increases. Mr. Shepherd said the new five-year contract with Blue Diamond increased by approximately 20%. The increase is largely attributable to the cost associated with the disposal of recyclables. Mr. Shepherd noted that cost of alternative recycling options was even higher than the amount Blue Diamond is charging. Mayor DeFillippo pointed out that the Township has saved a lot of money throughout the years since outsourcing sanitation collection services. Ms. Borrero expressed her hope that remote accessibility of Council meetings will continue post-pandemic.

Brian Considine, 289 Emmans Road, Flanders – Mr. Considine asked about options for interest on investments. General discussion occurred regarding the lack of investment opportunities in the current and recent financial climate. Mr. Considine asked if the Township experienced any cash flow problems in 2020. Councilman Rilee confirmed that there were no cash flow issues.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:05PM, Councilwoman Albrecht made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Carey 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