

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH
BUDGET WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 9:02AM by Council President Roth who read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement as prescribed by law. Notice was advertised in The Record on February 16, 2015 stating this meeting would be held in the Municipal Offices, 475 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, New Jersey at 9:00AM.

Notice of this meeting is posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board. The minutes of this meeting shall be available in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

Salute to the Flag.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR VETERANS AND THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Moment of Silence was observed for those serving in the Armed Forces and those who served. It is through their bravery and dedication that we can meet in freedom today.

Present: Councilmembers Amoroso, Ariemma, DiGiulio, Hermansen, Roth, Sbarra, and Wong.

Also present was Business Administrator Brian Campion, and Deputy Municipal Clerk Jan Fox.

PUBLIC PORTION

On a motion by Sbarra, seconded by Amoroso, the meeting was opened to the public at 9:06AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

On a motion by Sbarra, seconded by Amoroso, the meeting was closed to the public at 9:07AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS

Mr. Dan Mairella, Director of Department of Inspections and Construction Code Official and who is also the Building Sub-Code Official was present.

The Business Administrator explained that Mr. Mairella who was the former Building Inspector has been with the Township for 14 years. He mentioned the department has had a lot of transitions but he did work with the past Code Official on the budget at the end of 2014. The Business Administrator explained to the new Councilmembers and the Construction Official about the Central Account pages, Salary and Wage pages, Organization Chart, Line Item digit numbers, the breakdown of Line Items and Revenue.

Roth asked if they were replacing the Building Inspector's vacancy. The Business Administrator said there will be no additions to the department and the staffing level will remain the same. He said Mr. Mairella is moving up from Building Inspector and the vacancy created will be the Building Inspector position.

The Business Administrator mentioned that the revenue in the Uniform Construction Code Account is less than projected for 2014 which was \$1.2M. He said in 2009 the Revenue in this department hit a high due to the New York Stock Exchange. He stated that the regulation in the state is that a Township cannot anticipate more in a current than was collected in Revenue the previous year. Also, he said, he does not see any big projects happening this year.

The Construction Official said, considering the state of the economy, he feels they did well on permits in January. He mentioned the Sheraton is going to do \$1M worth of repairs on their parking garage that will be in five phases. This should produce decent income on permits. He further stated that 25% to 30% of the Sheraton's office building is empty. Tenants, he said, are flocking here from other Townships.

Roth asked if building renovations will impact the revenue number. Mr. Mairella said it should help carry the department. Roth asked if the \$1.1M amount the Mayor projected should remain. The Construction Official said he would not adjust it higher.

Sbarra asked if on Anticipated Revenue have there been permits issued for the Assisted Living Building that is being built. Mr. Mairella said the permits are included in the 2015 Budget. Sbarra mentioned that 500 Affordable Housing Homes have come off the market and asked if any permits have been taken out for fixing these homes up. Mr. Mairella stated he has not seen permits for homes. He stated there are more commercial renovation permits being taken out than home renovations.

DiGiulio asked have there been permits taken out for the 34 single family homes being built in Apple Ridge. The Construction Official said he has not seen any.

Ariemma asked the Business Administrator to explain the three rows listed under the Line Items in the Budget which the Business Administrator did.

Amoroso asked how permit fees are set. The Business Administrator answered by a Municipal Ordinance which the Council adopts. He stated the fees were increased two years ago on permits.

Amoroso asked if the Township markets commercial buildings in Mahwah and do we have an Economic Development Coordinator. The Business Administrator answered we do not have an Economic Development Coordinator and we have a reputation of being business friendly.

Account #5-01-J01-201 – Materials and Supplies: Sbarra questioned the requested amount of \$1,500 and could it be reduced by \$500. to \$1,000. Council agreed it could.

Account #5-01-J01-202 – Equipment: Sbarra questioned the requested amount of \$2,000 and could it be reduced by \$500 to \$1,500. Council agreed it could.

Account #5-01J01-205 – Training and Seminars: Sbarra questioned why the requested amount is increased by about \$3,000. Mr. Mairella said there is training to be done for the staff and it has not been addressed but needs to be.

Wong said he would like to know the percentage of building occupancy in the Township. Mr. Mairella said he did not know but would get back to him with the information.

Account #5-01-J03-101 – Permanent Full-Time: Roth asked why this requested amount is up 8% from last year. The Business Administrator said he thought it was due to the new hire of the Plumbing Inspector but was not sure and will get back to the Council with the answer.

Account #5-01-J03-103- Temporary Part-Time: Roth said the Plumbing Part-Time amount last year did not come close to the requested amount this year of \$3,000. He asked if it could be reduced by \$1,000 to \$2,000. Mr. Mairella said he may need a Temporary Part Time person but it would only be on an “as needed basis”. Council agreed amount could be reduced to \$2,000.

Roth asked if we charge a premium for permits for inspections on Saturdays. The Business Administrator answered that we do not as per the Department of Community Affairs. He said the only thing we could do would be raise all permit fees to cover the weekend inspections.

Account #5-01-J01-214 and 245– Rental/Maintenance Agreements: Roth questioned that \$2,000 was spent last year and why is the request for \$10,000. The Business Administrator explained this is for software for document archiving that was not done or funded in the last year due to the changes in the office. He said the archiving has to be done. The Department is running out of storage space.

Roth asked if Mitchell Humphries has an archiving component and why are we not using it for archiving documents. Mr. Mairella said they will be archiving this year as it is state required to retain records during the life of the building. Sbarra agreed with Roth that archiving needs to be done.

Account #5-01-J01-245 – Vehicles/Equipment: Sbarra asked if a new vehicle is needed. The Business Administrator answered yes and this would replace the last old vehicle.

Hermansen asked why the recommended amount for the vehicle is \$22,000 and the Department has requested \$26,000. The Business Administrator said the last vehicle purchased was \$22,000 but now it could be at least \$26,000.

Account #5-01-J01-105 – Overtime: Hermansen asked about the request for \$8,000 in the Overtime Line Item. The Business Administrator said this is used to help expedite the inspections for businesses in town and anticipated weekend inspections if the corporation has to shut down.

Account #5-01-J01-207 – Travel: DiGiulio asked why the requested amount and the recommended amount is more than last year. Mr. Mairella explained there will be more training of the staff.

Wong said he would like the percentage of building occupancy in the Township. Mr. Mairella said he did not know but would get him the information.

Account #5-01-J02-102- Permanent Part Time: Hermansen asked why the Actual Appropriation for 2014 was \$7,000 less than anticipated. The Business Administrator explained Mr. Montroy felt they needed a part-time Building Sub-Code Official and in July of 2014 they realized they could eliminate the Part Time Inspector. The Business Administrator said they will move \$8,000 of the \$13,000 recommended in this Line Item into Account #5-01-J02-103– Temporary Part-Time.

Account #5-01-J01-200: – Demolition: The Business Administrator explained that the Township purchased property on Island Road and the intention is to demolish the building which is next to Fire Company #2. They want to sell of a portion of the four lot subdivision and add an area for the future development of Fire Company #2. The Business Administrator mentioned that when he has a better idea of cost he will come back with recommendations to the Council.

ZONING DEPARTMENT

Mr. Mike Kelly, Administrative Officer was present.

The Business Administrator explained about the Zoning Department's Budget with reference to the Organizational Chart, Department of Land Use and Property Maintenance. He reviewed the Part-Time Escrow Account position and mentioned that a full time Escrow position not in the Budget.

Account #5-01-B50-102 – Permanent Part-Time: The Business Administrator stated \$9,000. was spent on a Part Time position that is no longer needed. The other amount is for the Recording Secretaries and the Part-Time Escrow Clerk.

Account #5-01-B50-101 – Permanent Full-Time: Roth asked why there was a 6% increase from last year. The Business Administrator answered he will check with the Chief Financial Officer on this and get back to the Council. The Business Administrator commented that there has not been a settlement with the Unions on a contract yet. He said the Mayor, through contract negotiations, offered a proposal to the Union but they rejected it.

Account #5-01-B50-204 – Professional Services: The Business Administrator explained that the Township Land Use Ordinance is very old. They are recommending a Planning Consultant to redo the Ordinance. Due to the turmoil in this office, they did not redo this last year. Roth asked for a breakdown of this recommended amount of \$150,000.

The Business Administrator said the contract would be \$65,000 to hire a major Consultant or Planner. He said the Administrative Officer's salary is in this Line Item also. The benefits are \$44,000 and the Attorney's fee would be around \$41,000.

Account #5-01-B50-214 – Rental Maintenance Agreements: The Business Administrator stated this is for Mitchell Humphrey and Company to provide maintenance support services to this department. He said the files are ready to be archived.

Ariemma asked why money was transferred. The Business Administrator said the Department feels they need more money for the recording system. If there is extra money it will go into surplus.

Amoroso asked how one knows when to update a Land Use Ordinance. Mr. Kelly said he is an Engineer for many Townships for the last 15 years and from all updates he hears from time to time he knows.

Amoroso asked how this Ordinance would be approved. The Business Administrator explained it would be introduced to Council then go the Planning Board and they have 35 days to review it and then return to the Council for a hearing.

Roth said he has a hard time understanding paying \$44,000 for Professional Services as the Line Item is up 6% from last year. The Business Administrator explained that they decided last year to only have a Part-Time person with no benefits.

Roth asked if archiving can be merged together in both the departments. The Business Administrator answered it is a continuous job activity and they need approval from the state before destroying documents. He said they are basically merging as they are using the same system and company.

Sbarra also questioned the breakdown of \$150,000. The Business Administrator broke it down again and stated a lot of money was spent on litigation.

Account #5-01-B50-209 – Legal Advertising: Sbarra asked if the number could be reduced to \$2,000. Mr. Kelly said he would like to leave it at \$2,500 as it is a safe number and there are many notices that have to be advertised.

Account #5-01-B40-219 – Miscellaneous: Engineering Division: Hermansen mentioned \$90,000. was requested and the recommendation was \$105,000 and asked why. The Business Administrator explained it was due to two items. One being the two rivers clean up which would cost the Township \$36,000. The other item is the demolition of the property that they want to sub-divide and sell off as that would need major engineering design work.

Hermansen asked if the \$2M is in capital for the outlay or demolition of the new DPW Building. The Business Administrator said there is not funding in place for the demolition.

MEMS

Mr. Robert Klingen, President, Mr. Walter Seaman Treasurer, and Mr. Robert Murken Chief were present.

The Business Administrator explained the MEMS budget to the new Councilmembers. He said Ambulance Company #1 and Ambulance Company #4 merged and are now Ambulance Company H03 in the Budget book.

President Klingen explained that they had a great year and are off to a great start from the merger.

Chief Murken said they have dedicated volunteer members. Everyone is working together. He gave the statistics on calls in 2014. He said there were 1,635 calls with an average response time of 14.24 minutes. They had 27 mutual aid responses out of town that they responded to. They had 23 mutual aid in-calls complete in the Township and 17 were second rate calls. The percentage of calls that were covered was 98.6% and the mutual aid calls was 1.4% on the 23 calls. President Klingen said several times they had two ambulances out at the same time.

Treasurer Seaman stated \$14,000. is requested and recommended for Uniforms and for General Operating, the budget, with the Township's contribution is \$70,000. He said they may be incurring \$20,000 for legal fees. On their fund drive they made approximately \$60,000.

Mr. Seaman explained that their Budget for 2014 was \$117,700 and they actually spent up until November, \$113,435. Their big item of expense was for rig repairs of \$30,670, Medical Equipment for \$19,725 and Portable Equipment for \$21,540.

DiGiulio asked why they have to go to an Attorney and pay legal fees as the Council created the problem. The Business Administrator said they are a separate legal entity. DiGiulio then stated that the Township should pay for their legal fees.

Amoroso asked how legal fees are figured as they are a non-profit organization. The Business Administrator said since they are an independent corporation, they are responsible for their own counsel.

Ariemma thanked everyone for their service.

Roth said he deeply appreciates the Ambulance Corp's service for what they provide and the time they give up.

Roth asked if and how the Township can contribute more than the \$70,000. The Business Administrator said there is a state statute in place should a Municipality authorize giving more than the \$70,000. Roth stated if we elect to give more to MEMS they would have to provide an Auditor. A gentleman from MEMS, in the audience, stated the Township can contribute up to \$105,000. They are allowed an additional \$35,000 for extraordinary circumstances but would have to give reasons and most likely be audited.

Roth said he would like to propose giving an additional \$10,000 to MEMS for a Rig which would be a total of \$80,000.

Mr. Seaman went over the Ambulance Corp's five year plan. He said their equipment is very old as the ambulances take a lot of wear.

President Klingen said he would like to start phasing in newer rigs. Roth asked how many miles are on the rigs now. Mr. Seaman said what the mileage was and stated mileage on ambulances is much different than regular cars as they take a lot more wear and tear.

Wong asked what would happen to the old ambulances if new ones were purchased. The Business Administrator stated they would trade in or most likely auction off on our government online site.

DiGiulio said she would like them to purchase new Rigs. Amoroso agreed and feels the old ones are a safety issue.

Amoroso asked who owned the rigs. The Business Administrator said they are owned by Mahwah but MEMS does the maintenance and buys the fuel.

On motion by Sbarra, seconded by Hermansen, the meeting was opened to the public at 12:28PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

On a motion by DiGiulio, seconded by Amoroso, the meeting was closed to the public at 12:29PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

On motion by Hermansen, seconded by Sbarra, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathrine G. Coviello, RMC/CMC/MMC
Municipal Clerk

Meeting Minutes Prepared and Typed by Deputy Municipal Clerk Jan Fox

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