

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016**

AMENDED 03/31/16

The meeting was called to order at 8:00PM by Council President Roth who read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement as prescribed by law. Notice was advertised in The Record on February 18, 2016 stating that the meeting would be held in Conference Room #319 at the Richard J. Martel Municipal Offices, 475 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, New Jersey on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 8:00PM.

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 once they are approved by the Township Council.

Salute to the Flag.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR VETERANS AND THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Moment of Silence was observed for those who served and those who are serving in the military. It is because of their bravery that meetings such as this one can be held tonight.

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

Also present were Mayor William C. Laforet, Business Administrator Brian Campion, and Deputy Municipal Clerk Jan Fox.

PUBLIC PORTION

On a motion by Hermansen, seconded by Wong, the meeting was opened to the public at 8:05PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Being no comments were made from the public, on a motion by Wong, seconded by Amoroso, the meeting was closed to the public at 8:06PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Chief Batelli, Captain Jaffee and Captain Blank were present.

Chief Batelli said the Police Department Budget this year has a major increase in two categories but otherwise remains flat.

Councilmembers asked various questions which were answered.

Account #6-01-F30-219 – Police Cars: Hermansen asked why the Police request was for \$191,000. and the recommendation was for \$40,000. Captain Blank said 4 new vehicles are needed. He stated with the recommended budget he does not know what he will be able to purchase. Ideally, they would like to be able to purchase two utility vehicles and one

Expedition. He mentioned he has priced out these vehicles and a utility vehicle is around \$27,500. An Expedition which is a heavier vehicle is approximately \$33,000.

Captain Blank said it also costs to change over equipment from the old vehicle to the new vehicle. He mentioned all the police vehicles get much wear and tear putting on high mileage. Captain Blank said most vehicles average approximately 33,000 miles per year and the average mileage on some vehicles are over 80,000 miles. Hermansen said they would try to find another \$27,500 from another department as they progress with the Department Budget Meetings.

Captain Blank commented it would be much more expensive for maintenance repairs on the present cars versus buying new ones.

Hermansen asked for clarity on the Police Department purchasing new cars last year. Captain Blank explained he only had one day to order cars for the price he was quoted so he did it right away and the cars showed up before the Budget was adopted. He said the state did not budget for cameras in the cars so they had to wait to buy cameras. Captain Blank said the money for the cars was in the Budget but not for equipment to be put in the cars. Hermansen suggested taking \$51,000 out of the Equipment Line Item to put the equipment in the cars. Hermansen said the question is do we get two small utility vehicles.

Chief Batelli commented it looks like they can get a car and a half. He added his Department deserves decent police vehicles with good equipment in them. He said the Municipal employees have a great building to work in. It is upsetting to him that his officers cannot have decent, safe cars to drive in. The cars are used 24/7 and the officers are in their cars at least 12 hours per day. He also mentioned that a lot of the seats of the vehicles need repair as the officers are sitting in them for long periods of time.

Account #6-01 F03-106 – Outside Detail: Hermansen asked about the actual amount spent which was \$37,125 and why money was not requested or recommended. The Chief said this is due to money that is collected during the year from outside vendors so the amount varies.

Amoroso asked the difference is between an Explorer and an Expedition. Captain Blank said the Expedition is a much heavier and larger vehicle and 4 wheel drive which they do need.

Captain Blank mentioned if they did purchase new vehicles a couple of their old, with lesser mileage, could go to OEM.

Roth asked how much patrol cars cost. Captain Blank answered \$26,000 each plus equipment. Captain Blank said he feels this car issue and the money allocated is setting a bad example.

Hermansen stated the Council is not involved with the recommendations made on the budget, but the Council is trying to work with all the department's on the budget set up.

Chief Batelli commented they did have one car donated as they are trying to save the Taxpayers' money and their intention is to reduce their budget.

Hermansen asked if some money could be taken out of the Dispatcher funds for a car purchase.

Hermansen asked the Chief if he is fully staffed. Chief Batelli said three officers are out now but two are due to come back shortly.

Hermansen asked if \$10,000. could be taken from 6-01-F02-101 for cars since the actual last year was \$92,536. This year, he said, the request and recommendation is for \$73,000.

Account #6-01-F03-106 – Patrol Overtime: Hermansen said the actual amount of overtime was \$360,517. and the requested amount is \$404,000, but Administration's recommendation is \$360,000.

Wong questioned what contributed to the success in reduction of \$360,000. in overtime.

Chief Batelli said overtime depends on what happens during the year. They have no control over their time and do their best to keep the overtime down.

Sbarra mentioned the Police Department did a great job with their overtime this past year and commended them.

Roth said he feels the Police Department managed their overtime very well.

Hermansen commented he would like to see one utility vehicle and one Expedition purchased in this budget year. And that there is the ability to get more money to get a third vehicle.

DiGiulio mentioned the Township has a very active Police Force and safety is a large issue. The Police Department should have decent vehicles.

DiGiulio asked if 52 officers is where they should be on their staffing. Chief Batelli answered that this should be discussed at a later date when the Mall is due to be built.

Account #6-01-F04-105 – Dispatch Overtime: Wong asked why the 2015 Actual Amount increased to the Requested and Recommended Amount of \$62,000. Chief Batelli said the dispatchers that are hired are paid per diem and they are short term employees.

Account #6-01-F05-105 – Detective Overtime: Wong said he knows there are large investigations but why was the Detective Overtime requested amount \$53,000 and the recommended amount from Administration increased to \$70,000. Captain Jaffee answered the department cannot predict overtime as it depends on their investigations. Chief Batelli said what his schedule is for Patrol and Detective Overtime is different than how Finance figures it.

Chief Batelli said he will have Captain Blank go back out to look at price cars. If it is possible to cut costs they will.

DiGiulio asked how many cars the Police Department has requested in past years. Captain Blank answered four vehicles and this year they are actually asking for six.

Chief Batelli mentioned they are looking to submit the Municipal Alliance Grant for 2016 to the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. He said he believes this item is on the Council Agenda, with a resolution, for February 25, 2016.

Chief Batelli said they are working on a LEADS Program. DiGiulio stated this is great what they are doing due to all the drugs in the Township and it will also keep parents informed of what is going on.

Sbarra mentioned that he agreed with the past comments that the vehicle issue has to be worked out for the Police Department.

Account #6-01-F01-205 – Training & Seminars: Sbarra said he needed clarification on seminars as the actual amount last year was \$19,000 and has increased by \$11,000. Chief Batelli answered that this is for the officers to go back for College Education courses.

Sbarra mentioned Travel was up significantly. Chief Batelli said this was due to the training courses officers are required to take.

Account #06-F01-214 – Rental Agreements: Sbarra said the final appropriation in 2015 was \$48,500 and the request is for \$57,650 going up 19%. Chief Batelli answered this was for Leads On Line and Cellebrite Maintenance which downloads data from cellular phones. The increase for the Johnston Communication Maintenance Contract was for the 911 phone system.

Amoroso asked if the Chief has set goals for the staffing this year. Chief Batelli said he set goal numbers for the community this year due to narcotics and safety. He said SRO's are to be implemented and they are setting up a PSU Team so the residents' service get improves.

Ariemma said there was an advertisement in the newspapers that there is a 1.8% tax increase and she feels we owe it to the residents in the Township to keep the tax rate down. She also said the Council should take the Budget Recommendations of Administration as they are hired to do that job.

Ariemma said she does not feel we should replace cars as their mileage is really not a lot as her car has over 100,000 miles and runs fine. Taxpayers want to be able to afford living in this Township and should have their taxes down. Chief Batelli said the police vehicles are driven fast and hard. He feels the officers are entitled to a decent working environment as they sit in their cars for 12 hours per day. He further stated, their office and the full picture has to be looked at, that brings revenue into this Township.

Hermansen interjected and said the Council has always lowered the budget.

Mayor Laforet stated in 2012 the fleet was aging and the goal was four cars per year. In 2015, four cars were purchased in either April or May and sat at the Police Station until December. He said he feels they could have put cameras in the cars. Only eight weeks ago, the four cars were put into commission. He stated that is why the goal is not to purchase four new cars this year.

Roth stated that other vehicles were also getting older even if four cars sat there. Safety, he said,

is the priority.

Sbarra said he does not understand why the recommendation is only \$40,000 and an Expedition is what is budgeted for.

Captain Blank stated he brought into the Township a \$120,000 contract for leasing of space for a cellular tower. All the Township had to do was sign the contract. This offer to get on the New York Stock Exchange just came to him. In years to come, this contract could be worth \$1M per year.

Account #6-01-F02-101 – Permanent Full Time: Roth asked why the recommendation was for \$73,000 decreased from \$92,536.73. The Chief said the employee in the Records Department retired.

Account #6-01-F01-205- Professional Services: Roth questioned the \$51,790. spent last year and this year only \$7,075 was requested and recommended. Chief Batelli said this is for the Matrix System.

Account #6-01-093-221 – Consultant: Roth questioned in the General Line Item, why was there a \$7,000 amount and a \$35,000 amount for the IT Consultant. Chief Batelli stated it was broken down into two different areas. Roth asked what the \$3,500 WiFi amount was for. The Business Administrator said he would get back to Council with an answer.

Roth referred to the Computer Replacement Program that listed all the computer terminals.

Account #6-01-F01-231 – K-9 Unit:– The question was raised about the requested and recommended amount for the K-9 dog. Chief Batelli answered the dog is a great dog. The expenses are for training and all new equipment that is needed.

A conversation started about security guards, police and unarmed guards that would improve the school security and safety in the Township schools.

Captain Jaffee spoke about the SRO's. He said they want to have more security officers assigned at the schools. He also commented Security Officers cannot carry guns but retired police officers can.

Hermansen asked the Police Chief if we would qualify for an additional School Resource Officer through a Grant.

Roth interjected that this is not a Budget Item.

Chief Batelli commented the department is big enough and an application can be submitted for the Grant. The Grant is for 5 years. After the 5 years the Township would need to determine whether to continue with the position or remove it. Chief Batelli said he feels having police officers at the schools was a good thing.

Sbarra asked if Superintendent of Schools Dr. Schoen would have to agree with this. Chief Batelli answered yes and he will look into that.

Ariemma stated the last thing needed in the schools is another police officer with a gun. The kids are nervous enough with video cameras everywhere. She said there is more security than at a maximum security prison. Nor, she said, do they need a police officer with a gun. She said she could see if Paterson had all this security but not Mahwah. Captain Jaffee disagreed with Ariemma. He said all shootings in schools have been in suburban areas. There have been no shootings in urban towns like Paterson.

Ariemma continued her conversation against so much security and said the students are already nervous with the video cameras everywhere—the outside and inside of the school building, in the hallways, entrances to the bathrooms. Ariemma said there is no need for additional SRO officers at the schools because the Police Department has some already in place. She said that she knows that the police have people up there and that somebody told her that they thought they saw a gun in one of their offices' when he opened his drawer real fast and closed it real fast.

Captain Jaffee advised Ariemma she cannot go by what someone else says as that is hearsay. Ariemma responded it was not hearsay and that someone told her.

Roth interjected and told Ariemma this is not a budget conversation and not to speak.

Roth asked Captain Blank to look into vehicle costs and look at the overtime number to fund a vehicle. He said there are more Department Meetings and nothing can be decided this evening on their budget. Roth asked Captain Blank to come back on March 3, 2016 with his finding on new pricing of vehicles.

On a motion by Wong, seconded by Amoroso, the meeting was opened to the public at 10:43PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Being no comments were made from the public, on a motion by Wong, seconded by Amoroso, the meeting was closed to the public at 10:44PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

On a motion by DiGiulio, seconded by Hermansen, the Meeting was adjourned at 10:55PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



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