

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH  
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES  
SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017**

The Meeting was called to order at 9:05AM by Council President Hermansen who read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement as prescribed by law. Notice was advertised in The Record on February 27, 2017 stating this meeting would be held in the Council Chambers at the Richard J. Martel Municipal Offices, 475 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, New Jersey on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at 9:00AM.

**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 both here and abroad. It is because of their valor and bravery that we can hold meetings such as these.

Present: Councilmembers Ariemma, Hermansen, Sbarra, Wong, Wysocki

Absent: Councilmembers Ervin and May

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

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Ken Warnet, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief Michael Roe, Rescue Captain Eric Moritz and Dive Team Coordinator Tim Andro were present.

Hermansen congratulated the new Chief and Officers. He stated the Township owes a great amount of gratitude to the volunteers and it is his honor to thank them for all that they do.

Chief Warnet said his Operation Budget has not changed-he just moved the money around. There are some requests for deductions from Administration and he has no issues.

**7-01-G02-203 – Repairs and Maintenance**

Sbarra said they are requesting \$20,750. which is \$6,000. more than they spent last year. He asked for an explanation on radio repairs and upgrades and asked if they cost \$6,000. The Chief said he thought this was for the pagers. Sbarra said he is not sure if this amount is justified.

Mayor Laforet said it would be prudent to leave this amount in this Line Item as when they repair the radios they will have a cost.

Sbarra asked if there was a warrantee for Airpacks as he thought they were just ordered. The Chief said he is sure there is but this \$6,000. is for some retro fittings that have to be completed. Mayor Laforet said the maintenance they have been doing the past few years is routine and it has now paid off. It is -0- flat line.

**7-01-G02-202 – Equipment**

Wysocki asked if the Compact Skid Unit will have a pump. The Chief answered yes it has a pump and a water tank. It is going to Company #4 as they had an ATV unit donated to them.

7-01-G02-214 – Rental/Maintenance Agreements

Wong asked if the annual Software License will be a fixed cost. Chief Warnet answered he does not have the exact fixed number so he would like to leave his request the way it is.

Mayor Laforet said they are in the midst of a CSI Program change over so that is probably where the amount is coming from.

Hermansen asked for an actual cost for this Agreement as the Agreement should list how much it would be. He said the Department asked for \$12,000. and \$10,000. is recommended.

The Business Administrator stated his understanding is the Annual Agreement is for \$19,500. Hermansen questioned the confusing way the figures are in the Budget and next year would like it the old way. The Business Administrator said he will check with the CFO to see if they changed the way the actual figures in the Budget program are entered in.

Hermansen asked the Chief what his opinion is on the Radio System. Chief Warnet said they have certain issues, but they always have, and they work around it. There are spotty areas where there could be an issue. One such area is Fardale Avenue. Assistant Chief Roe said it could be the cell towers in certain areas that cause the problem.

Hermansen asked what the actual cost of the Rental Agreement is. Chief Warnet said they only pay a quarter of the annual cost.

7-01-G02-211 – Uniforms & Clothing

Wong questioned spending \$6,000. for jackets and how many they will purchase. Chief Warnet said they started purchasing them last year and the jackets are part of the uniform and actually protect the uniform. They will be wearing them in rainy and cold weather. Eventually, he stated they will only be buying them for a new fireman as right now they are trying to outfit the entire department.

Ariemma thanked the Fire Department for their service.

7-01-G02-203 and 204 – Repairs and Maintenance and Professional Services

Hermansen commented he knows they never know what will be breaking, but if a radio broke what would be the cost of a new one. Chief Warnet said it would depend on what is wrong with it.

Captain Blank mentioned some radios cannot be repairable and new ones would cost from \$2,500. to \$5,000. If the radio can be repaired it can cost \$500. to as high as \$2,000. Batteries are needed for the portable radios also and cost approximately \$50.00. Some radios they send out for repair and some they give to him.

Hermansen said they asked for \$24,000. and Administration recommended \$21,000. He asked if this was a fixed cost. The Chief said the amount varies every other year. This past year they just tested hoses on the trucks and this year they have to test everything so it depends how much hose they test.

**Capital - Fire Department**

Chief Warnet mentioned a large item he has is the Dive Team equipment and two fire engines. The dive equipment was priced out as a bulk item. If this was to be broken out over two years, the price would increase substantially, plus there would be a 5% to 10% increase if they wait another year. There are certain items if they break it out to \$20,000. and \$14,000. next year, they will not be able to outfit everyone. They need to be in service as a Dive Team. To keep the Dive Team in service this year the Chief stated he would like the whole amount of \$34,000. in his Budget.

Hermansen said there was a conversation with the County Executive that the County wanted to get rid of their Dive Team. He said there was also a discussion that the County should reimburse us for any equipment that we use. Hermansen asked the Mayor to make sure he reaches out to the County, as there was an agreement with the Council, that if we pick up the job they have to figure out a way to offset the cost for us doing this job.

Chief Warnet said to keep the Dive Team in service and buy the correct equipment they need another \$14,000. added to the \$20,000. budgeted.

Hermansen reiterated if Mahwah is paying for the Dive Team, he wants a reimbursement from Bergen County as that was the agreement they made.

Dive Team Coordinator Tim Andro explained he has been dealing with the County as a Middle Man between them and the Task Force. The County equipment is not being promised. They are just letting us use their equipment and they are servicing it. They are backing up the letters of intent for providing us with a \$25,000 Line Item for training and equipment to use for the \$14,000. for the training for underwater criminal investigation classes.

The Dive Coordinator said if the equipment is not used it gets rotten and fades in time, as the County only gets five calls a year. The County is doing inventory on their equipment to see what is usable for the Dive Team and then will distribute to them.

Mr. Andro stated the County is sending a County Officer to be on the scene with us at all times and all their equipment and truck will be used on County calls. He cannot get parts for the Towns equipment and his last two dry suits were bought seven years ago. He commented he has 18 members and two dry suits.

Hermansen stated we should tell the County what we need to fill our Letter of Intent and obligation as we do not want to use their stuff. Right now Mr. Andro said he works off a \$3,000. Budget and the equipment is in such bad shape he does not want to put the guys in the water. He is concerned about their safety. He said if we have our own equipment it would be better taken care of.

Sbarra mentioned in this year's Capital Budget there is a request for \$20,000. Mr. Andro said he requested \$36,970.15, a bulk rate for new dry suits and equipment, and then they will not have to service anything. He said he was unaware about the \$20,000. Sbarra said he sees no problem with adding \$17,000. in this Line Item and put in a letter for reimbursement to the County.

Hermansen agreed and said, if we add the \$17,000., it is now our equipment and we will have to maintain it. He asked what the life expectancy would be. The Dive Coordinator said \$3,000. for the Rescue Budget will maintain this new equipment. All the new equipment can be serviced in-house and they get at least 10 years out of it and it will be fitted properly. This, he said, will save money over time as they will not have to do many repairs.

Ariemma asked if we can charge Towns that do not have Dive Teams and then be reimbursed. Hermansen answered not if we are getting reimbursed from the County as that is considered shared services.

Hermansen said right now the equipment from the county is not efficient enough to man the Dive Team. Hermansen said we are looking for the County to cover the cost since we are doing the dive recoveries.

Wysocki said we can go after the Insurance Company to pay back if we assist another town with a diving rescue.

The Business Administrator commented on an insurance reimbursement the Chief Financial Officer can credit the same account. Once the reimbursement is sent to the Township it will be surplus. If we receive the reimbursement quick enough it can then be applied to the Line Item.

The Dive Coordinator said he will meet with the County Director when the official date of the transition is taking place. There is a meeting on March 7, 2017 with the County at which time they can find out what the actual date of transfer is. He also mentioned the County is picking up the cost of the Under Water Criminal Investigation training for our Dive Team. Hermansen said he would like Administration to keep on top of this.

On a motion by Hermansen, seconded by Sbarra, a Straw poll vote was taken to add \$17,000. for the Dive Team Equipment, changing the request from \$20,000. to \$37,000. Straw poll vote: Ariemma, yes; Ervin, absent; May, absent; Sbarra, yes; Wong, yes; Wysocki, yes; Hermansen, yes.

Chief Warnet mentioned two large engines are due for replacement. Hermansen said Engine 117, the Rescue Pumper, has been approved as it being used more.

Sbarra asked if Engine 222 can last two more years as this year's Capital Budget is higher than most years. Chief Warnet asked if this will always be the issue as only getting one replacement a year. The Business Administrator said he is sympathetic with the Fire Department but right now it is already a higher Capital Plan than previous years. In the next couple years he said they may have to consider purchasing two in one year.

Hermansen said this year they have to fund radios which will be an advantage to the Fire Department. Chief Warnet said he will analyze further to see if he can do any adjustments. Technology, he said is so different from 1998 and safety for the occupant of the truck is important. Hermansen recommended that four department heads should get together and come up with a list of what is important.

Mayor Laforet said we started this year off with \$3M in debt and how does the Township pay off

the debt. This happens to be a year with a more pressing issue with radios.

Wysocki said when the Fire Chief does his breakdown it would be important to list when the truck is used and not the year of the truck.

Chief Warnet mentioned technology today compared to 1999 is tremendous and a lot of the changes are for the safety of the occupant of the truck.

Hermansen suggested the Chief meet with Captain Blank and the other four Department Heads and come back before Council with recommendations before meeting with the OEM.

Hermansen asked him what the most important thing for the radio is for the function of his department to be best to work. The Chief said it would probably alleviate dead spots and they will have communication no matter where they are. Hermansen asked the Chief to come back after meeting with the four departments, with a list of what is important and what has to be addressed. He would like this done before the OEM Budget Meeting.

Wysocki asked the cost of the portable radios. Captain Blank said \$3,000. The Chief said every seat will be fitted with portable radio and there are eight members generally in the seat

The Business Administrator commented that Administration's proposal for this year is infrastructure not radios. Hermansen asked Chief Warnet if he would rather have the radios or the infrastructure upgrade.

Chief Warnet said they need the infrastructure first as they need that to utilize the portable radios. The system proposed will not work unless that is in place.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Batelli, Captain Jaffe, Captain Blank and Lieutenant Dino were present.

Hermansen thanked the Police Department for keeping our Township safe. They are a well respected force and we have the best police force in Bergen County. He said they also give one of the best Budget Presentations.

Chief Batelli gave an overview of the Operating Budget for the Police Department that reflects the fiscally responsibility and detailed Line Item Work Sheet that allows them to continue to rise to the level of Law Enforcement Services that the community has come to expect. For years the Police Department has endorsed the concept of a sound Township Business Model and incorporated this belief in how they operated and functioned in a highly restrictive and unrealistic 2% cap. He stated they try to adhere to the 2% mandate. They do not want this Cap to have an impact on the services they provide to the community. They attempt to seek out low bids from vendors but sometimes expenditures are not controllable expenses as they are a business necessity.

Chief Batelli stated over the years they have become one of the most scrutinized and evaluated Departments in the Township. In 2003 the Department started in the CALEA Program and have had active participation each year.

In 2016 the Township Council allocated \$45,000. in tax payers funds to allow the Police Department to be reviewed by the Matrix Group. Chief Batelli said the findings in their report recognized CALEA. The Department is accredited nationally through the CALEA for a Commitment of Excellence. They were recognized with their high stability, recognized for the cost effective 12 year shift schedule, recognized for their active participation in community events, recognized for their good reputation in the schools and the Bergen County Prosecutors office, and on service and special skills training with no use of overtime. They were also recognized for the Communication Center that provides dispatching 24/7 with a minimal amount of staff. Their average department works 35.5 or 40 hour work week.

Chief Batelli said the funding they are asking for in this 2017 Budget cannot be compared to any Department as they provide services 24/7. Their Police Department provides a variety of public services to the community and the day to day tasks make measurements more difficult and make this department more unique than any other Township Department.

#### 7-01-F30-219 -- Miscellaneous Police Cars

Ariemma asked how much is appropriated for Police cars. The Business Administrator answered five stripped down vehicles were requested for \$144,000. This was for four utility vehicles at \$28,000. and one Ford Expedition for \$32,000. The Business Administrator said he put in a recommendation for \$148,500. with the vehicles fully equipped out. When buying new vehicles you are transferring a lot of equipment. The \$148,500. recommended represents three marked vehicles estimated at \$117,000. and one unmarked vehicle estimated at about \$31,000.

The Business Administrator stated, in January, the Council approved a Temporary Budget Amendment of \$109,500. which represented two marked and one unmarked car. The decision is how many vehicles are to be replaced and whether they should be marked or unmarked.

Hermansen recollected they were going to do the three patrols and use the old car as a new unmarked car that did not have as much mileage as the three patrols.

The Business Administrator said if they want to fund three patrol marked cars the number is \$117,000. He would recommend leaving this amount in the F30 Line with the Equipment in the cars. Everything else could be taken out of the Equipment Line, F01-201-202 in the amount of \$19,000.

Sbarra questioned if they should go for three vehicles for \$117,000. or go for four vehicles at \$144,000.

The Business Administrator mentioned in the past couple of years the Police Department has been purchasing three vehicles per year. If they go back more than a couple of years, they were regularly buying four, five or six vehicles per year. They are now off of that pace.

Hermansen mentioned last year the recommendation was for only one car and the Council found the money for three cars. Chief Batelli said ten years ago they were in a good cycle with cars. He said they do not like to put a lot of repairs into cars with high mileage. The Officers put in 12 hours a day and sit in the car for 12 hours. He said when they get to the 85,000 mile mark it is not cost effective to maintain these cars. Hermansen said the Township has to be fiscally

responsible to the taxpayers and also work with the Chief. Chief Batelli agreed the Council has to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers, but they also have to be safety responsible for the for the Officers driving the cars. Also, he said, with reasonable miles on a car they can maximize the trade in value when they turn them in.

Captain Jaffe mentioned they have not ordered an unmarked car in over 6 years. There has to be a car kept as a spare which is sometimes used for schools. They need a decent unmarked and not a Police package car and one they do not have to paint and do other repairs on.

Chief Batelli stated he does not know what other Department in the Township buys used cars for their staff.

Sbarra commented that \$109,500. was earmarked for three vehicles. He said the Chief is asking for a total of \$144,000. for five vehicles and this does not include money to retrofit cars for the road. The reality is to put these vehicles on the road is more than \$144,000. Hermansen said they will put in for four cars which would be one unmarked car and three patrol cars.

The Business Administrator stated Administration is recommending \$148,500. and that is for a fourth vehicle; three patrol cars and one unmarked car.

Straw poll was voted on: to change Line Item which will go down in the amount depending on what the Business Administrator tells us the number is: Ariemma, yes; Ervin, absent; May, absent; Sbarra, yes; Wong, yes; Wysocki, yes; Hermansen, yes.

#### 7-01-F01-229 – Police Testing

Wong said he sees on this item the Police Department did not get the amount they requested. Chief Batelli said they signed an Agreement with a company that will make for more efficient Testing. That can lower their costs.

#### 7-01 –F01-224 – Weapons and Ammunition

Lieutenant Dino stated they are providing for more training of officers in the Department so they can improve their skills. They are asking for more ammunition for this shooting training. They recently had an FBI Instructor come to provide this training. With increased skills comes increased liability. They would like to increase their Ammunition Training Budget. They need extra money which is like an insurance policy as it reduces the Township's liability when the Police Officers are better prepared and perform better. Chief Batelli said some training is practice and some is classroom but does require more ammunition to be purchased. Lieutenant Dino stated they have two new Officers going to Fire Officers Instructor School this year and that will cost a lot more for extra ammunition. Captain Blank said \$9,000. would get them through the training they need.

Straw poll was taken to increase the recommended amount by \$1,000. for a total of \$9,000. Straw poll vote: Ariemma, abstain, Ervin, absent; May, absent Sbarra, yes; Wong, yes; Wysocki, yes; Hermansen, yes.

Ariemma said she sees where other countries teach how to deescalate and asked if we have that kind of training. Chief Batelli said they have to train for everything. There is a wide spectrum

of training and they want their Officers to have all the training they can get. Chief Batelli stated they are bringing in various groups to train on sensitivity as each Officer needs five hours of training each year. He said in the past few years our Township as well as other Towns are facing more violent and dangerous crimes. The Chief stated if they have to use force the situation has to be reviewed and closely scrutinized.

Sbarra said he feels our Officers are the best trained officers and he feels that Chief Batelli makes sure, if funds are available, that his Officers are well trained.

Mayor Laforet said the Patrol Services Unit Team is working and is a whole new facet to this Department.

Hermansen thanked the Police Department from the Council, that there is never any negativity in the newspapers about the Police Department.

#### 7-02 F01-231 – K-9 Unit

Wong asked why the K-9 unit Line Item is \$550. less than what they requested.

Chief Batelli said the K-9 Unit was funded by the Mahwah Municipal Alliance and they have backed off a little.

Wong questioned the revenue received from the County Prosecutor. Captain Jaffe answered that is money from seized funds.

#### 7-01- F01-211 – Uniforms

Hermansen questioned why the amount is going down for Uniforms and do we have enough money for them. Chief Batelli said in the discussions he had with the Mayor and Administration they determined they would have to cut back a little. They decided they could cut back a little in this area. Chief Batelli said they have a Grant for Body Armor but that also has been reduced in the past few years.

#### 7-01-F01-214 – Rental Maintenance Agreements

Hermansen said they spent \$56,000. last year and this year they are up to \$80,000.

Chief Batelli commented that this was the first year with CSI coming off the warrantee and that is the bulk of the increase. In prior years there was \$26,000. annually in the Budget for CODY. Also, he said their 911 network contract went up from \$9,000. to \$13,000.

#### 7-01-F01-229 – Police Testing

Hermansen had concerns that the Police Department requested \$5,500. and the department was only given \$1,500. Hermansen said the testing is a benefit to us as we make money from this. Therefore, Hermansen said he does not understand why we will not give the department the money for their testing. Chief Batelli explained the Police Department has to lay out money up front for the on-line testing company before the testing is done. It is problematic because the department has to pull money from other accounts. Going with the police testing on-line site for testing, the company can collect the revenue from the candidate and the Police Department can charge what they want. The on-line program handles everything and sends the Township a check. This does cut the costs for testing as the Police Department does not have any Administrative costs. When the money comes in, the Police Department can reimburse the other



accounts.

7-01-F03-106 – Outside Detail

Hermansen explained to the new Councilmembers that on the Account of Outside Detail it is not money that the Department is paying it is money that is coming in to the Department as revenue.

7-01-F03-105 – Patrol Overtime

Hermansen said the Police Department did a tremendous job last year with their overtime. The only question he has is why are they requesting \$390,000. when they were at \$332,000. last year with overtime. Hermansen said he feels a request for \$350,000. or \$360,000. would be efficient. Sbarra interjected and stated they actually budgeted \$380,000. last year.

Chief Batelli said he appreciates their acknowledgement but they cannot control the events that control their Overtime. Last year they were fortunate in many areas that allowed them to come in in the allotted amount. They watch their overtime very closely, but if a need is generated for overtime they will do it. The Chief said the new Criminal Justice Reform Program that was just implemented will increase overtime. He said he will not know the impact of this for at least a year. He feels the Council should leave their request of \$390,000 as it is a realistic and safe figure.

Hermansen said they used to get a breakdown of what is going on from the Police Department but have stopped getting these reports. Chief Batelli says they do give a breakdown report to the Finance Department at every pay period.

Hermansen stated he would like to see what the Police Department's trend is. Chief Batelli mentioned the Detective Bureau's overtime increased last year. Now, he explained, reports have to be finished the day of an arrest and that could mean overtime depending on the time. The Chief feels they have managed overtime conservatively over the years and cut back when they can. He mentioned there is a lot of unforeseen overtime, especially now, as there is a back log of court cases. A lot of calendar dates were cancelled completely.

Hermansen said he would like a 10% to 15% reduction from the \$390,000. requested. Chief Batelli said if the Overtime Budget is cut and it comes to November and a public safety issue comes up he will not put off overtime. Hermansen said if that happens they can transfer money after November. The Chief commented again that a good assessment of overtime would be seeing what happens this year with the Criminal Justice format.

Sbarra said he is okay with the Police Department's request of \$390,000., but looking at previous numbers they came in at a lot less.

The Chief agreed to reduce the requested amount to \$380,000. Hermansen said they will review this Line Item again after they receive the First Quarter numbers.

A Straw poll was taken to reduce the \$390,000. to a pending amount of \$380,000. Straw poll vote: Ariemma, yes; Ervin, absent, May, absent, Sbarra, yes; Wong, yes; Wysocki, yes; Hermansen, yes.

Captain Jaffe mentioned seasonal is also a factor in overtime as arrests ramp up in the second and third quarter.

7-01-F04-105 –Dispatcher Overtime

Hermansen asked if the Police Department has a full time Dispatcher instead of Per Diem. The Chief answered yes and if they want to reduce that Line Item the Council can. Hermansen said they requested \$62,000. last year and spent \$47,000. in overtime. He said he feels they should have less overtime as they are hiring a full time Dispatcher.

Captain Blank said they have six full timers and two Per Diem Dispatchers at the present time so this allows some flexibility.

The Police Department requested \$62,000. and Hermansen asked if they can reduce this number by \$7,000. to \$55,000. Straw poll vote to reduce this Line Item to \$55,000.: Ariemma, yes; Ervin, absent, May, absent; Sbarra, yes; Wong, yes; Wysocki, yes; Hermansen, yes.

7-01-F05-000 –Detective – Juvenile Bureau

Chief Batelli explained they are down by the Table of Organization from three to two Detectives. The Juvenile position has always been filled by a Detective or Detective Sergeant.

Captain Jaffe said it has been five or six years without a rank of Detective Sergeant and they have had a practice of rotating assignments. He said they need to find the right fit that works with the schools, students and the parents. A year ago they chose Gerald Falatico to fill this position. They are looking to fill this position with a Detective slot but so far it has been a Senior Officer. If a Senior Officer is chosen, they receive a \$2,500. increase after 23 years, if not it is a \$4,000. increase.

The Business Administrator stated they projected, based on a May 1<sup>st</sup> change, eight months of the year and it will be a \$1,500. impact. Hermansen said if the difference is \$1,500 it has to be moved. Straw poll was taken to add \$1,500. to \$590,500., totaling \$592,000. for Line Item Permanent – Full Time. The Business Administrator further explained the Police Officer's salary will be moves the last eight months of the year so Patrol will then go down by \$1,500.

7-01-F05-105 – Detective - Overtime

Hermansen said last year \$73,000. was spent on Detective Overtime. This year the Department requested \$70,000. Captain Jaffe stated \$12,000 of overtime last year was supervisory shift shortage.

Capital– Police Department

Hermansen asked about the Air Conditioning Installation in the Server Room in the Communications Command Center. He said he understands they are trying to keep the computers cool but why can't they just rezone the room to strictly put the temperature wherever they want. Captain Blank said there are 15 computers in the room and in the back of room are three servers. They have to maintain the back of the room at one temperature and the front at another.

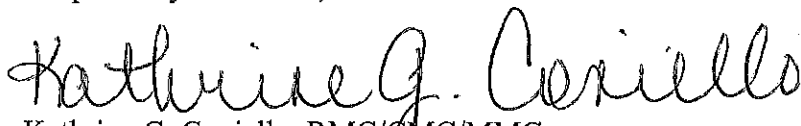
Hermansen suggested putting a wall up since one area is cold and one area is warm. Chief Batelli suggested the Mayor and Council President Hermansen come look at the room as the room is small. They brought in an Engineer to evaluate this area as they are trying to get the most effective and the less expensive way to alleviate this situation.

Hermansen mentioned a Councilman who is absent today, asked for an explanation on the failing Hydra Phone System. Captain Blank explained that the phone system is 17 years old and is failing. They have to reboot the system quite often and when the phone system is down it affects the computers. If there was an emergency phone call this would also be a problem. Therefore, Captain Blank stated, the phone system needs to be upgraded.

Hermansen asked if the new Radio Communication Infrastructure tied into OEM. Captain Blank answered yes it is all new equipment.

On a motion by Wysocki, seconded by Wong, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathrine G. Coviello".

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