

BOROUGH of GARWOOD
Special Budget Meeting
MINUTES of the
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
March 19, 2015

The Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers and called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Mayor Lombardo. He asked all present to participate in a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag.

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Cranford Chronicle, advertised on March 6, 2015, notification was sent to the Star Ledger and prominently posted on the municipal public bulletin board and filed in the office of the municipal clerk informing the Public of the time and place according to the Provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975).

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Lombardo (Not voting), Councilman Martin, Councilman Mathieu, Councilman Petruzzelli, Councilwoman Tarantino, Councilwoman Todisco and.

Also Present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina Ariemma, Borough Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer Sandy Bruns, Warren Korecky & Bill Swisher, Auditors from Suplee Clooney.

Council President Nierstedt was excused.

Mayor Lombardo announced the purpose of this meeting is to continue discussion of the 2015 Municipal Budget.

Councilman Petruzzelli read the following statement:

I'd like to welcome the Mayor, my fellow Council people, and the residents to the second special meeting being held for the purpose of discussing the 2015 municipal budget. At our last special budget meeting, we went through the budget line by line and were able to shave back the budget even more. We were able to reduce the tax impact from \$96 on the average home to \$85, where the budget stands before everyone tonight. This was done while facing rising costs and some big-ticket items and this was done without reducing services.

Tonight, I would like us to focus our discussion on the capital item requests that we distributed to the Council for review. However, before we get to that, I'd like us to discuss the Planning Board budget. Councilman Nierstedt reached out to the Planning Board and informed the Council that he discussed the independent parking study with the Chairman and he is comfortable with us reducing the Planning Board budget by \$4,500. The Finance Committee recommends this funding be moved to the Municipal Clerk's budget for the purpose of establishing a Records Management program. I will comment further on this later in my report.

Back to the capital items—the Finance Committee met again this week and we spent much time discussing these requests by department heads. We recommend the Council accept the Administrator's capital request for a sidewalk repair program and we suggest doing this as part of our DOT project's bond ordinance in 2015. The Administrator and Engineer will price this out and we can make a determination later if we would like to do all the work, or fund part of it. The preliminary estimate is approximately \$60,000-\$80,000, however can be scaled back when we discuss the actual road projects. The Committee also recommends we act on the Police Chief's request for a dispatch console for about \$41,000 and a Dictaphone for \$18,000. This console will replace the one we have, which is from 1995, and the Dictaphone will replace one that is 8 years old. The Fire Chief also supported these recommendations, as it will assist for better communication between the two departments.

The Administrator/Clerk also requested that we allocate money to digitize our tax maps and to bring our record keeping system up to date. More research needs to be done on a records management system and plan, but we wanted to make sure the Council understands the importance of this for the future. The Committee took a look at the current record storage and this is not something that should not be ignored as there are state laws that govern how records are stored, maintained and disposed of. They contain valuable history and are required to be maintained. There is not enough space here, and also preservation of these records is vital. Ms. Ariemma will be attending her spring conference next month and will be obtaining more information on vendors that can provide this service. In the meantime the committee recommends moving the \$4,500 from planning board to clerk so the clerk may hire an intern/temp to begin the purging process. The \$4,500 will only put a dent in the volume of records, but it is a start to this process. The Finance Committee recommends that the Council appropriate money for digitizing the tax maps. We've seen the conditions of these maps ourselves and the system for working with these tax maps is very time consuming for the staff. The service of Digitizing maps would be spec'd out and the service is

done by professionals. The cost could range from \$20,000-\$30,000 and can be funded in the next 5 years of municipal budgets. This work can begin in 2015 however council can decide this later in the year. The clerk will also assess vendors etc., at her conference next month. She will provide a report after her conference.

The Fire Department requested a replacement truck for its 1997 Suburban, which is used as fire police and on fire inspections. The Fire Prevention Department also requested to replace the Ford Explorer, which is used for inspections and also responds to fire scenes. The Finance Committee sees the pros and cons to these purchases and we wanted to get a sense of how the Council felt about these.

The finance committee welcomes further discussion on the items you see before you, these capital requests and any other related matters.

The council discussed the capital matters at length.

Discussion included purchase of vehicles, police dispatch equipment, records management, sidewalk repairs, bonding, tax maps. All agreed to move \$4,500 from planning to clerk for records management, to prepare for bonding of road and sidewalk projects and purchasing of police equipment. Bonding to be further discussed at subsequent council meetings.

Councilman Mathieu mentioned the LOSAP increase and also suggested council restore the Senior Director's salary which was reduced earlier in the year. Brief discussion followed regarding CDBG funding and the upcoming cuts the borough is facing. It was not recommended to restore the salary without increased grant funding.

MINUTES: NONE

COMMUNICATIONS: NONE

ORDINANCES: NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS: NONE

OFFICER'S REPORTS: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bruce Paterson 325 Willow Avenue suggested the Open Space Trust Fund be utilized for preservation of records. Brief discussion followed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE

RESOLUTIONS DELETED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS: NONE

ADJOURNMENT:

The Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on, **TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2015**, in Council Chambers at 7:15 p.m. Workshop Session to start at 7:00 p.m.

At 8:05 p.m., a motion was made by Councilwoman Todisco, seconded by Councilman Petruzzelli to adjourn the Workshop Session.



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood