

BYRAM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETING - JANUARY 10, 2012

CALL BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION TO ORDER

Mayor Oscovitch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting has been made in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-6.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Oscovitch, here; Councilwoman Raffay, here; Councilman Luaces, here; Councilwoman Kash, here; Councilman Olson, here. Township Manager Joe Sabatini, CFO Terry Vervaet and Municipal Clerk Doris Flynn were also present.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Joe Sabatini explained that as Manager it is his responsibility to submit to the council a recommended budget. He stated that he requires all department heads to submit requests for appropriations for the ensuing budget year.

Officially, during the month of November, the budget process starts when department heads appear before the manager in public hearing to present their budget requests. The public budget hearing was November 22. However, the Township’s budget process for the 2012 budget started in July 2011. All department heads were asked to present a budget that supports no more than a 2% increase including Salary and Wages and Operating Expenses.

For some departments, this is not an achievable goal without staff reductions. All collective bargaining negotiation agreements expire in 2012. These contracts were negotiated when there was a 3.5% appropriations Cap and 4.0% levy Cap. The manager is confident the department heads have provided responsible budgets that satisfy the needs of the community and serve the best interests of the Township.

Municipalities by law are required to adopt balanced budgets. The challenge with this budget and future budgets is to maintain the same level of services while costs continue to increase, rateable base remains restricted and State Aid is being reduced.

The Council has been provided the budget in a similar format as the state document with supporting details (sub accounts).

Introduction and Adoption of Budget – Non Referendum	Statutory Date	Revised Date*
Mayor/Council Faulkner Act (Executive) budget transmission to governing body	1/17	2/3
Municipal introduction and approval of budget meeting)	2/10	2/29 (or the next Council meeting)
Municipal adoption	3/20	4/20

Joe Sabatini also reviewed the December 19th budget memo he prepared for the Council.

There was discussion by the Mayor and Council regarding a few line items. Scott Olson had several questions regarding the cap bank and fuel costs. Carlos Luaces questioned the tipping fees and the recycling charges. He suggested doing our own recycling with a company directly to save money. Joe Sabatini stated that this would be something we could consider for the next garbage contract—our current contract expires January 31, 2013.

Jim Oscovitch asked if we could use our open space trust funds for any of our expenses. Marie Raffay stated that something needs to be done about the trickle effect from the county.

The Manager had several suggestions to bring the tax levy down but he would have to verify with the auditor if they would be allowable. If the auditor agreed, he stated that the tax levy would be at 4-

1/2%. He feels this is the best he could do with the 2012 budget without instituting layoffs. The Manager looked to the Council for direction.

Scott Olson understands the problems the manager faces with the 2012 budget, and although he is not in favor of raising taxes, he doesn't see any other solution. Many cuts have already been made across the board.

Marie Raffay acknowledged that reductions have been made in many of the line items and the operations of the township are being run very lean. She doesn't think much more can be done. Marie is not in favor of raising taxes either, but feels it is necessary. Nisha Kash agreed.

Carlos Luaces does not want to see a 4-1/2% levy increase, but if it is the only option, he will go along with it. He hopes the manager can tweak the budget and get it a little bit lower.

Jim Oscovitch would like to have another budget meeting to give the Manager a chance to talk to the auditor and also hear the Governor's State of the State Address. He is not happy over the levy increase, and is hopeful that the Governor will reinstate the return of the energy tax to the municipalities. Scott Olson was not opposed to another budget meeting but felt that the Council should set different goals so that they are not looking at the same budget proposal at the meeting.

The Council agreed on another budget meeting on January 31st at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Councilman Olson, second by Councilwoman Raffay to open to the public. Art Bowles, Assistant Fire Chief, asked what the septic trust fund was and what the money could be used for. The Manager explained and stated that he will look further into what the money could be used for.

Skip Danielson, 18 Hunter Lane, stated that there was good discussion here this evening and commended Joe Sabatini for doing an excellent budget presentation. He did agree that the trickle down from the state and the county is an issue. He reported that emergency squads will have to pay 400-500% more for EMT training because of a new state law.

Joanne Smith, 157 Lake Drive, stated that she was glad to hear that the Township was looking into debt service. It is the time to get money at a very low interest rate. She suggested that we should look at reducing the consumption of gasoline.

Pat Moschella, 3 Mountain Ave, commented on the budget. She felt that the township should look closer at recycling, office supply expenditures, and other miscellaneous items. All the little things add up.

Motion by Councilwoman Raffay, second by Councilman Olson to close to the public. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilman Olson, second by Councilwoman Kash, to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Doris J. Flynn, Clerk

James Oscovitch, Mayor