

## **BYRAM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 12, 2011**

### **CALL SPECIAL 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, absent; Councilwoman Raffay, here; Councilman Rafferty, here; Councilman Thompson, absent; Councilman Olson, here; Township Manager Joe Sabatini, CFO Terry Vervaet and Municipal Clerk Doris Flynn were also present.

### **BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Deputy Mayor Scott Olson opened the meeting.

Department Head Mary Beth Swanson, Adolf Steyh, Ray Rafferty, Janet Meisner and Greg Matthews were present in the audience.

Joe Sabatini stated that at the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, he gave a budget presentation. The Manager did a first pass of the budget with all the department heads. If the present plan would be implemented, it would require a \$340,000 increase or a 4.4% increase in the levy. A large amount of the increases are due to exceptions that are outside the cap.

The Manager stated that there will be several events occurring in 2012/2013 that will affect the 2013 budget—such as new labor contracts, greater health insurance contributions, greater pension contributions and the garbage contract expires in January 2013. It is possible that there could be several retirements in the next year or two. It is much easier to do staff reduction through attrition, which we have done several times over the past few years, then through a forced lay-off.

Joe wanted to emphasize that the 2% levy cap came into effect last year. Before that we were dealing with a 4% levy cap. The present labor contracts were agreed upon under the 4% levy cap.

Scott Olson had questioned doing garbage as a utility. Scott was wondering how much it would cost to administer it as a utility.

Marie Raffay stated that whenever we reduce our expense, it will only be a one-year fix.

Joe stated that he will be looking at the State Health Care Benefits with our benefit coordinator.

Marie Raffay asked what are considered non-essential services. Joe Sabatini stated anything besides police, DPW, and statutorily mandated positions within the town.

Joe Sabatini has looked at reducing certain line items that doesn't directly affect services, such as the Planning budget.

Dan Rafferty stated that when this budget is officially passed, he will not be a part of the council because he is not running for reelection, but he does feel the budget is fine as presented and does not want to lose staff. He expressed his frustrations regarding spending \$600,000 over the past ten years

reserving sewer gallons for the Village Center, which he has been against since becoming a member of the Council 4 years ago.

There was a discussion about the 40,000 gallons of sewage capacity reserved for the Village Center zone and the needs of the Township and how the reserved gallons should be paid by the property owner/developer.

Motion by Dan Rafferty, second by Marie Raffay to open to the public. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Eskil Danielson, 18 Hunter Lane, questioned the current status of the Consolidated School. Joe Sabatini stated that a religious group has shown a strong interest and they are doing an environmental study now. We will have to have a public auction.

Skip stated that regarding a builder's remedy, he doesn't think we would see that because we don't have the transportation infrastructure.

Motion by Dan Rafferty, second by Marie Rafferty to close to the public. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Marie asked about billing the property owner for the sewer gallons. Joe stated that we would have to seek legal advice.

Scott suggested increasing revenues by advertising. He asked if we could sell space on fences at CO Johnson. Janet Meisner suggested advertising on recycling cans.

Joe stated that we are looking into adjusting our fee schedule – we can make some minimal changes. Joe explained that if we are bringing down the expense side, we should be decreasing the amount of surplus that we are using.

Scott stated that he doesn't have an issue with the budget. He added that the Mayor was the one who suggested doing an exercise to see if we could go to 0%. Scott does not feel there is any way that we could do that with this budget, and Marie agreed.

Motion by Dan Rafferty, second by Marie Raffay to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

At this time, there was no longer a quorum. Scott Olson announced that we were going to continue in a public work session mode, and no action will be taken.

Joe reminded everyone that the municipal portion of a resident's tax bill is 27%. There was discussion regarding the reserve for uncollected taxes.

Scott Olson asked if anyone from the public wanted to make a comment.

Skip Danielson stated that the actual control that the municipality has over the budget is about 24% because the reserve for uncollected taxes is 3%.

The work session ended at 7:25 p.m.