

BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
WASHINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES – Budget Meeting
February 26, 2013

The Budget Meeting of the Borough of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey was held in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall at 7:00 P.M.

Mayor McDonald read the following Statement into the Record:

“The requirements of the ‘Open Public Meetings Law’ P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 have been satisfied in that adequate notice of this meeting has been published in the Star Gazette and posted on the Bulletin Board stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting as required by law.

Mayor McDonald led everyone in the flag salute.

ROLL CALL:

Roll Call: Higgins, Thompson, Conry, Gleba, Torres, McDonald

Absent: Jewell

Also Present: Kristine Blanchard, RMC Borough Manager/Clerk
Natasha Turchan, CFO

BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Manager Blanchard stated that after the last budget meeting, her and CFO Turchan went through and made the changes to the budget as requested by Council. Manager Blanchard also stated that there are two items unsettled at this time, the CWA contract negotiations and the Washington Township Police shared services numbers. Manager Blanchard spoke to Kevin McCarthy, the Washington Township CFO and should have the final numbers tomorrow. CFO McCarthy said it would likely be a two percent increase, however there is still a four percent increase in the budget until it's finalized.

Manager Blanchard stated that the other items that were added into this year's budget include \$25,000 for air conditioning in the fire hall and \$200,000 for a road project. The Streets Committee will meet on Monday to discuss possible road projects. Councilman Higgins asked Manager Blanchard to contact Morris County Co-op for an estimated cost per mile of road. Also added was \$37,000 for a generator for Borough Hall. Manager Blanchard stated that there is an excellent grant opportunity to obtain a generator for the municipal building at twenty five percent of the cost. Also, \$35,000 was placed back in the budget for tax appeal reserve. It is important to build this reserve in order to decrease

any burden on future budgets. \$30,000 was added to salary settlements reserve to prepare for any future retirements. The Borough needs to build a reserve for future retirements in order to decrease burdens on future budgets. Also added was \$50,000 to legal to cover the costs of litigation. Lastly, \$500 to administration to help cover the costs of our Tax Collector search. The Borough has had to re-advertise for the position.

Right now, the impact on the budget is a reduction of \$5,600 and Manager Blanchard expects it to come down even lower once the police shared services numbers have been received and the CWA Salaries have been settled. Councilwoman Gleba stated that she would like to see some of the surplus go towards a reduction in taxes for the taxpayers.

CFO Turchan stated that in the budget, Recreation currently has \$7,000 in operating expense and \$7,000 in capital. Also, Recreation has \$40,000 in salaries and wages. The Recreation Department is looking for an increase in capital to enable them to replace the fencing at the grandstand, repair/paint the existing pool surface, purchase new lounge chairs and assist with the cost of background checks. Councilwoman Gleba stated that she is in favor of raising the amount budgeted in recreation's capital account to replace the fence and paint the pool. However, Councilwoman Gleba is not in favor raising the amount in capital to assist with the background checks and new lounge chairs.

Councilwoman Gleba made a motion to increase the amount budgeted in the Recreation Capital account by \$5,200, seconded by Higgins, and approved.

Roll Call: Gleba, Higgins, Thompson, Torres, Conry, McDonald
Ayes: 5 Nays: 1 Torres
Motion carried

CFO Turchan suggested Recreation consider trying to get new lounge chairs through donations from local businesses. Mayor McDonald stated that Recreation could try to work through the BID to see if there is any interest.

After Council discussion regarding the Borough's fund balance, Councilman Higgins stated he would like to see at a bare minimum a two cent reduction in taxes. CFO Turchan stated that the Borough is still waiting on the CWA salaries negotiations and the Police Shared Services numbers from Washington Township. CFO Turchan also stated that she would like to be conservative to maintain a healthy fund balance. CFO Turchan also stated that the municipal budget will be introduced at the March 5th Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business to come before, it was moved by Higgins, seconded by Gleba that the meeting be adjourned at 7:55pm.

Ayes: 6, Nays: 0
Motion carried.

Scott McDonald, Mayor

Kristine Blanchard, RMC
Borough Manager/Clerk