

**TOWNSHIP OF MANSFIELD  
BURLINGTON COUNTY  
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES  
February 27, 2019, 4:00PM**

The Special Budget Meeting of the Mansfield Township Committee was held on the aforementioned date with the following in attendance: **Mayor Sean Gable, Deputy Mayor Michael Magee, Committeeman Frederick Cain, Township Administrator Michael Fitzpatrick, Chief Financial Officer Joseph Monzo, Deputy Treasurer Bonnie Grouser, and Municipal Clerk Linda Semus. Committeewoman DiGiuseppe and Committeeman Higgins** was absent from tonight's meeting.

**Mayor Gable** called the meeting to order at 4:56PM, followed by the following opening statement read by **Municipal Clerk Semus**:

**Public notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act NJSA 10:4-6 to 10:4-21 has been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given to the Burlington County Times and the Trenton Times, filed with the Clerk of the Township of Mansfield, posted on the official bulletin board at the Municipal Complex, filed with the members of this body and mailed to each person who has prepaid any charge fixed for such service. All of the mailing, posting, and filing having been accomplished as of February 7, 2019.**

The above was followed by the Flag Salute and a moment of silence.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Laverne Cholewa, 43 Vandevere Lane, stated that the Mansfield/Springfield Senior Citizens organization used to have financial support from the municipality. Currently, Springfield Township is providing the organization \$500 per year. Accordingly, Mrs. Cholewa suggested that the Governing Body consider reestablishing financial support to the organization. **CFO Monzo** explained that \$300 was made available in last year's budget, but the same was never paid out. Mr. Monzo stated that he will consider her public comment to be an official request for funds, and will have the \$300 provided to the organization.

There being no further comments, the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

**BUDGET DISCUSSIONS**

**CFO Monzo** inquired about the status of the shared service agreement with Southampton Township for Municipal Court services so he may adjust the budget accordingly. **Township Administrator Fitzpatrick** stated that a meeting was held with Eileen Fahey, Esq., who will be providing legal services on behalf of the township for same, and it is anticipated that the agreement will not go into effect before adoption of the budget. On a separate topic, Mr. Monzo stated that the cable television fees were received in the approximate amount of \$49,000, which is a decrease of \$7,000 from last year's budget. Furthermore, Mr. Monzo stated that the Tax Assessor noted that Mansfield's taxable assessed value is \$1,000,365,864, making \$100,000 of assessed value approximately 1 tax point. Finally, Mr. Monzo inquired as to the status of the sale of the former municipal complex and the sale of 537 White Pine Road, as it was anticipated that revenue from same will be able to be incorporated into this year's budget. **Mayor Gable** stated that the township is still waiting for a closing date to be decided by the buyers of the former municipal complex, and that he is hoping the closing can officially take place before the budget adoption. Regarding the sale of the White Pine property, Mr. Gable stated that this matter will be discussed at the next meeting in order to move forward with the sale as soon as possible.

**CFO Monzo** explained that in making adjustments to the budget from the above discussions, the tax rate will be 2.9 cents higher than last year's budget. Mr. Monzo stated that this increase puts the budget over the levy CAP by \$52,000. Therefore, the township will not be able to adopt the budget until there is a way to increase revenues or decrease expenditures to offset said amount. Mr. Monzo continued by stating that though the township is currently above the levy CAP, it is below the spending CAP by approximately \$73,000.

**Public Works Department**

Jef Jones, Public Works Superintendent, stated that the Public Works Department will need an increase of \$40,000, mainly for the mowing and maintenance of the park at Country Walk once the development is completed. Mr. Jones explained that once this occurs, the township will then

become responsible for maintaining the park at 24 cuts a year, which is anticipated to cost around \$25,000 a year. Additional funds will be needed for tree cutting, mulching, pond maintenance, etc. **Mayor Gable** questioned if there is a set date on when the township will assume responsibility for the park. Mr. Jones responded that there is not a planned date, and that the same depends on when the final Certificate of Occupancy is issued. Mr. Jones continued by stating that the majority of the park services will be outsourced, as the Public Works Department does not have enough manpower or the proper equipment. Mr. Monzo stated that said services will need to be bid.

On a separate topic, **CFO Monzo** inquired about the power-washing and carpet cleaning expenses in Mr. Jones's budget requests in the amount of \$15,000. Mr. Jones stated that the same is not a priority compared, and can be accomplished if extra funds happen to be found in the budget. Mr. Jones noted that one of his priorities is having a contract approved by Township Committee for heating and air conditioning maintenance, as the units have been proving troublesome. Slight discussion ensued on same. Mr. Monzo suggested bringing the contract before Township Committee for approval so funds can be appropriated for said services.

**CFO Monzo** stated that out of the \$35,000 budgeted for snow removal in the 2018 budget, only \$17,000 was utilized. If necessary, Mr. Monzo stated that the appropriated funds for snow removal can be decreased in the 2019 budget for cost savings.

**Committeeman Cain** stated that complaints have been made by residents in the Four Seasons development regarding the need for road repairs. Accordingly, Mr. Cain inquired if this is something Mr. Jones and his employees will be able to accomplish this coming year. Mr. Jones responded that there are plans to rent a specialized machine to complete minor road repairs in neighborhoods throughout the township. Additionally, Mr. Jones stated that the Public Works Department has changed the brand of asphalt used for minor road repairs to one of a better quality in an attempt to extend the life of certain roads in desperate need of total resurfacing. Regarding Railroad Avenue, which is on the list to be resurfaced in the near future, Mr. Jones commended Lippincott & Lippincott for making repairs to the same to correct damage done by the company's machinery.

**CFO Monzo** stated that Ordinance 2017-7 authorized \$50,000 to be appropriated for stormwater inlet replacements, and that approximately \$30,000 has been utilized. Mr. Monzo inquired if the project was ongoing. Mr. Jones confirmed and expanded upon same.

### **Police Department**

Police Chief Ron Mulhall explained that his budget requests include the purchase of two police vehicles (one marked and one unmarked) to replace two vehicles from the current fleet that are either deteriorating or high in mileage. Additionally, Chief Mulhall stated that he would like to hire an additional Class II officer at \$18.00 per hour at 20 hours per week to assist with traffic complaints, special events, quality of life issues, and court security. **Mayor Gable** inquired if the Class II officer will be able to assist in the decrease of overtime pay. Chief Mulhall stated that officer may be able to assist in the reduction of overtime pay only in certain areas, as Class II officers are not qualified for certain responsibilities such as patrol. Chief Mulhall also requested that there be no decrease in the Police Department's operating budget.

**Mayor Gable** and **CFO Monzo** discussed funding new police vehicles through capital funds. **Committeeman Cain** inquired about leasing police vehicles through a cooperative agreement with another agency. Chief Mulhall stated that this option was utilized in the past, but referred that decision to the Township Committee. **CFO Monzo** stated that depending on the leasing rates, it would most likely be cheaper to purchase the vehicles via capital funds.

Regarding the hiring of additional officers, **CFO Monzo** explained that there is a budgeted amount to fill a full-time officer vacancy, but no additional funds have been included to hire a part-time Class II officer. However, if the full-time officer begins employment mid-way through the year, the remainder of the funds set aside for an entire year's salary can be put towards the hiring of a Class II. Regarding same, **Mayor Gable** voiced concerns that the budget must be decreased by \$52,000. **CFO Monzo** recommended that neither a full-time officer nor part-time Class II should be hired until the budget is adopted.

## **Recreation**

Paul Narwid, Recreation Coordinator, stated that generally, the Recreation Department receives a budget of approximately \$17,000 to cover the cost of expenditures that don't fall within the scope of the trust fund and sports registration fees. Mr. Narwid stated that for many years, revenues received from field rentals were placed in the trust fund. However, that process changed in recent years, when said revenue was placed in a MIRNA account to be transferred to Recreation's operating budget. In 2018, \$11,780 was added to the operating account based on the rentals fees from the year prior. However, more than half of that amount was spent on utility bills, when the initial intention was to utilize the money to expand the sports programs. Accordingly, Mr. Narwid would like the utility bills to be covered by the township's current fund, as these bills are covered for the Franklin Fire Company and the Ambulance Squad. **Mayor Gable** inquired if organizations who rent the athletic fields are charged a lighting service fee. Mr. Narwid confirmed that organizations were charged \$15 for use of field lights, but that fee has recently been increased to \$50. **CFO Monzo** stated that he will examine Recreation's budget and restructure same to prevent shortages in certain accounts. Slight discussion ensued. Finally, Mr. Narwid stated that the Recreation Committee will start to rest fields in order to save on maintenance costs.

On an unrelated topic, **Township Administrator Fitzpatrick** inquired there will still be a shortage of \$52,000 in the budget even with anticipated revenues from the sale of municipal property and the shared service agreement with Southampton Township. **CFO Monzo** confirmed same. Mr. Monzo continued by stating that the current fund balance is low due to an increase in delinquent taxpayers, and therefore recommends that the township finds a way to cover the \$52,000 without pulling from surplus.

## **Tax Assessor**

Jeff Burd, Tax Assessor, stated that he put in a request to purchase rolling cabinets for file storage. **CFO Monzo** noted that \$10,000 were already provided for in previous bond Ordinance 2017-7. On a separate topic, Mr. Burd stated that would like to hire a part-time individual to work one day a week to help with filing and phone calls during busier times of the year. **Deputy Mayor Magee** questioned the amount of money spent on appraisals in Tax Court. **CFO Monzo** responded that the amount was \$1,500. Overall, Mr. Burd stated that the current ratio is 81.80% with a coefficient of 9.6%. Mr. Burd expanded upon same and discussed in detail a possible reevaluation in the future in the amount of \$250,000 (around \$60 per line item) if Mansfield takes part in the County's revaluation instead of conducting one independently. Regarding tax maps, Mr. Burd received an estimate from Remington and Vernick in the amount of \$80,000 to update same; however, Mr. Burd stated that if the tax maps are updated during a reevaluation, the cost of the maps can be bonded over a period of five years. **CFO Monzo** noted that the State allows municipalities to adopt a special emergency temporary appropriation to cover the costs of a reevaluation and to update tax maps, which can be funded over a period of five years. Said appropriation will not require a down payment. Mr. Burd stated that the township has not had a total reevaluation since 1989, but has completed smaller and localized reassessments. Discussed ensued on same.

**Committeeman Cain** inquired about the collection of delinquent taxes. **CFO Monzo** stated that a tax sale will be held in April of this year, which will allow the township to collect the majority of delinquent taxes. For those properties who do not pay delinquencies in full at the tax sale, a lien will be placed on the account.

**Mayor Gable** stated that the discussion on the Franklin Fire Company's budget had to be postponed, as only three Committee members are present and he must abstain from the conversation.

Brief dialogue ensued on miscellaneous matters.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was offered by **Deputy Mayor Magee** and seconded by **Committeeman Cain** to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:12PM.

**Prepared by:**

---

**Caitlin Midgette, Deputy Clerk**

**Respectfully submitted by:**

---

**Linda Semus, Municipal Clerk**

**APPROVED:**