**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**January 8, 2022**

**Budget Meeting #1**

A SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING of the Stillwater Township Committee was called to order by Mayor Scott at 9:06 a.m. noting the meeting date, time and place were sent the New Jersey Herald and posted at the Town Hall, on the Township’s website and advised those present that this meeting was being held in compliance with provisions of P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, Sections 4 & 13.

The flag was saluted.

Roll Call: PRESENT: Mr. Barta, Mrs. Rumsey, Mr. Fisher, Ms. Chammings and Mayor Scott. Others presents were: Mrs. Leonard, CFO, Tom Dixon, Zoning Officer and Fire Department Representatives

Mr. Dixon was in attendance to discuss the requests in his memo to the Township Committee for four (4) additional hours per week brining his weekly hours from ten (10) to fourteen (14).

Mrs. Rumsey recommended giving the zoning officer the hours requested. Mayor Scott told the clerk to have a resolution on the agenda for the next meeting on February 18, 2022.

Mr. Fisher said he would like to see a report from the zoning officer to see what has been accomplished before he votes on allowing extra hours. Mr. Fisher also asked where the $40,000.00 salary request on the zoning officer’s budget request. The CFO answered Mr. Dixon requested the salary amount on his budget request form. Mr. Fisher reiterated he would like to see a report before he agrees to more time. Mayor Scott asked Mr. Dixon to provide a 4th quarter (October, November and December) 2021 report and asked if he could provide the report prior to the next meeting. Mr. Dixon said he would provide the report.

The Township Committee thanked Mr. Dixon for speaking with them and Mayor Scott called for a five-minute break before the Fire Department would present their budget request.

The CFO noted there was an unexpended operating fund balance for the fire department in the amount of $1961.67 and asked the Township Committee how they wanted to handle the balance and suggested the balance be kept in reserve for future large purchases the fire department would need. The Township Committee unanimously agreed to keep the unexpended balance in a reserve for the fire department.

The next section of the fire department budget is vehicle maintenance. The fire department did not ask for an increase for vehicle maintenance but shift a good portion of their vehicle maintenance funds to concentrate on one truck per year. The Township Committee agreed with the vehicle maintenance budget request.

The fire department is asking for a cost of living increase in their LOSAP. The amount of the budget request has not changed but the request if for more funding for each percentage. The Township Committee agreed with the LOSAP change.

The fire department is looking to replace turnout gear in accordance with their capital plan of five sets of turnout gear per year. The CFO said the township could use the Capital Improvement funds for the purchase.

The other fire department capital item is a new “Jaws of Life” extrication tool in the amount of $46,571.36. The current tool is approximately 24 years old and parts are no longer available. The fire department is also looking to purchase the demonstration model if possible to get a reduced rate on the product. The CFO said the new “jaws” would most likely be bonded for purchase.

The Township Committee agreed with both capital purchases.

Ms. Chammings asked Mr. Sugar about the grant writer they hired to write the grant for their air packs. Mr. Sugar said it cost $3,000. Ms. Chammings asked Mr. Scaduto to forward the clerk the contact information for the grant writer.

The Township Committee thanked the fire department representatives for their time.

The departmental operating budgets will be discussed next. There will be no discussion of salaries at this time.

The next section discussed was General Administration. The CFO noted there is a $1,800 decrease in the section because Stillwater no longer contracts for its own Swift 911 subscription because Stillwater can now piggyback on the Sussex County subscription.

Mayor and Committee budget: Ms. Chammings noted she would like to honor employees who retired during the COVID years and asked to raise the gift and award section from $750 to $1250. There were no other changes in the budget in this section.

The Clerk budget was increased to include a contract with Global Relay for e-mail, facebook, and zoom file retention and archiving. This service will allow everyone to keep their e-mails without having an over limit from the e-mail provider. The clerk is asking to be able to contract with Global Relay as soon as possible to ensure the retention scheduled required by the State be followed. The Township Committee agreed to contract with Global Relay and the clerk will put a resolution on the February 1, 2022 agenda.

The Finance budget was the next discussion. The CFO is interested in changing the fixed asset vendor for another who is highly regarded by CFOs. The current vendor is not very responsive. The cost is a little bit more to start because they would not take the current inventory at face value and require they review. The Township Committee agreed to the vendor change.

The CFO noted if the township committee decides to change auditors she would like to increase the education line item because the current auditor provides many classes free of charge. The line will be held until the township committee decides on an auditor.

The computer budget and the tax assessor budgets remained the same for 2022.

The Planning Board will be re-examining the Master Plan in 2022 and RFPs for planner have been received. Ms. Chammings recapped the RFPs for the committee and Ms. Chammings recommend the RFP provided by Van Cleef Engineering be accepted as is not to exceed $12,000 and the township is already familiar with the firm. The clerk also asked if the planner could also help with the COAH reporting the State requires. The Township Committee agreed. A resolution awarding the planner contract will be on the January 18, 2022 agenda for action.

The CFO asked if the Township Committee wanted to keep the $10,000 in the budget for the Gallagher Property (992 Fairview Lake Road). A brief discussion of the two LSRP proposals received was held and it was decided the clerk will call the third company and get an additional price. The funding will remain in the budget.

The next discussion was to be the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Mrs. Rumsey discussed the possibility of going from two boards to one board as most of the other municipalities have done. Mrs. Rumsey said these other municipalities are far busier than Stillwater and are efficient with the one board. Mr. Fisher agreed with Mrs. Rumsey. Mayor Scott also feels this would be a good time to combine the boards. The clerk noted this is the year to do master plan. Mrs. Rumsey said it will be the best time for combine because all the board members would work together on the plan. Ms. Chammings said she would like to wait until 2023 to start the land use board. Mrs. Rumsey asked the discussion to be put on the agenda of the February 15, 2022 meeting.

The budget discussion for the Planning Board and Zoning Board operating expenses are put on hold until after the February 15, 2022 discussion.

The building department discussion was next and the budget request is down from $4900 to $4500. The township committee accepted the building budget request.

The OEM budget was discussed. Ms. Chammings is the OEM and told the CFO she would not be taking a salary for OEM again this year and neither would be Mr. Wolfe the Deputy OEM. Mr. Scott said he would like to put some more deputies on the OEM team such as the DPW Supervisor, Fire Chief, CFO and Clerk who work on FEMA paperwork. Ms. Chammings noted the issues with FEMA paperwork were caused by the FEMA personnel who had personal emergencies at the same time. Mrs. Rumsey thanked Ms. Chammings for all she has done as OEM – especially since COVID. Mr. Scott agreed but feels more individuals should be put on the team.

Environmental Commission budget has been increased by $1000 for water testing. The water testing costs have risen greatly. The CFO has put a range of $2500 to $5000 for the new secretary depending on experience. Ms. Chammings would like the environmental secretary should be offered the lowest $1750 salary which will equate to $150 per meeting. Mr. Fisher though $200 a meeting would be better. The township committee agreed to leave the low range at $2500.00.

The CFO has created a new salary ordinance with ranges of salary for each position.

The Recreation Commission would like to reallocate $2,000 to the community events line from the fireworks line bringing the community events line to $3,500. Mrs. Delaney, Chair of the Recreation Commission, noted the Recreation Commission and Stillwater Historical Society are looking to work together for Stillwater Day and the Bicentennial Celebration in 2025. The fireworks may come back but for the time no funding will be added to that line. The Recreation Commission has asked to increase their secretary’s salary to $3,000 from $2,150 because the secretary works very hard and deserves the increase. The township committee agreed with the Recreation Commission’s recommendation. The Recreation Commission’s capital budget will be discussed at the regular meeting of the township committee on February 15, 2022.

The Planning Board absorbing the Zoning Board of Adjustment will also be discussed on February 15, 2022.

There being no further business, Mr. Scott made a motion to adjourn the budget meeting at 11:20 a.m., seconded by Mr. Barta. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Knott, RMC