

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

A **SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING** of the Stillwater Township Committee was called to order by Mayor L. Chammings at 6:03 p.m. Mayor L. Chammings stated that this meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, Secs. 4 & 13 the Sunshine Law and that adequate notice of the meeting has been published in the New Jersey Herald as to the time, place, and date of meetings, and is posted in the usual location of posted notices in the municipal building as well as electronically on the township website and Facebook page.

ROLL CALL: Committeeman D. Manser, Committeewoman D. Delaney, Committeewoman V. Rumsey, Mayor L. Chammings

Also Present: Township CFO Tammy Leonard

Absent: Committeeman G. Scott

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Budget Items: Other Expenses

CFO T. Leonard stated that this is the remainder of the Basic Budget; no Capital is included. Municipal Clerk had a 15.8% increase due to having to do social media archiving for the Township Facebook page. The cost to archive Facebook is \$4,200 per year. The Committee agreed that the Township Facebook page is not utilized enough to justify \$4,200 per year to back up considering the other avenues available for doing advertising such as the Township Website which is updated consistently. They discussed whether or not that would mean that the Recreation Commission would need to close their Facebook page as well and decided that would need to be determined by the Township Attorney.

Finance had a 29.5% increase. There was also the addition of QPA services that will be provided by Mr. Ron Tappan but it should equal out close to the \$3,000 per year that was paid to former Municipal Clerk L. Knott for her QPA services.

Computers had a 14.6% decrease due to all the big changes being completed in 2023.

Legal Services had a 5.4% increase due to adding a line item for 992 Fairview Lake Road. An additional \$2,500 was added to that line.

Engineering Services had a 13.8% decrease due to Stormwater Grant funds still being available for use for some of the engineering costs.

Land Use had a large increase in case the township needs to demolish the structure at 992 Fairview Lake Road. The estimation to demolish the structure is approximately \$20,000. The Open Space/Recreation Plan also needs to be done and will cost between \$13,500 and \$16,600. CFO T. Leonard stated that hopefully the auditors will approve the funds being taken from the

foreclosed/vacant properties monies to use towards the Open Space/Rec Plan. They are also hoping for find money from another source to cover demolishing the building at 992 Fairview Lake Road.

Telecommunications had a 78% increase due to switching over to Planet Networks. Their cost is also higher than the previous company. Hopefully more people will be joining Planet Networks as connections become available at their homes so that the costs will be lower for those in the area.

Statutory Costs had a 3.25% increase due to an increase in the pension. The increase came from the State of NJ.

Capital Page of the Basic Budget

CFO T. Leonard stated that there was a 71.4% increase in the capital improvement fund due to taking \$50,000 out of fund balance for our projects. That covers anything that was discussed at the Capital meeting held on February 27th. The estimate for the pickleball court is \$47,000.

Reserves had no change from 2023, it has the same amounts just different line items. More will be going towards paving this year.

Debt Service had a 7.7% increase due to increase in BAN interest rate from 2.74% - 4.35%.

CFO T. Leonard stated that there was a 6.9% increase overall but that number doesn't figure what's inside and outside of the CAP; everything has not been configured yet so that number can go down.

Other Discussion

CFO T. Leonard stated that the Fire & EMS training has significantly increased from previous years. She's aware that the classes cost more now but that's one of the large increases. Committeewoman V. Rumsey stated that they merged Firefighter 1 & 2 into 1 class which increased the price as well.

Mayor L. Chammings stated that she will be attending a meeting with the Township Engineer on Friday and will ask for quotes on the parking lots which may need to include drainage. She stated that Mt Benevolence Road paving has been split into 6 stages so that it is fully funded by State grants. They are up to phase 3 and will be applying for phase 4 this year.

Mayor L. Chammings asked if it is in the budget to hire a 6th DPW employee, that the DPW used to have 6 employees but are currently at 5. CFO T. Leonard stated that they have enough in the budget to cover a 6th employee, but not for the whole year.

CFO T. Leonard stated that there is \$100,000 in reserves that can be used for paving if an emergency comes up. The Township also has its own hot box and paver now so they are able to do the work themselves, it does not need to be contracted out or pay to rent equipment.

Mayor L. Chammings asked to receive another quote on the Open Space and Recreation Plan from Jessica Caldwell who did Newton's Open Space Plan.

Mayor L. Chammings opened the budget discussion to the public at 6:38 p.m. There was no public comment so public session was closed at 6:39 p.m.

CFO T. Leonard hopes to have the Budget Introduction at the March 19th meeting or the April 2nd meeting at the latest. The budget will be introduced at the regular meeting. She does not feel at this time that an additional meeting will need to take place.

A MOTION was made by Committeewoman V. Rumsey and seconded by Committeewoman D. Delaney, with all members in favor, to suspend the meeting until 7:00 P.M. at which time the Regular Meeting will commence.

Respectfully submitted by,

Valerie Ingles
Municipal Clerk