

**HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING  
VIA ZOOM VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS**

**Monday, February 28, 2022 – 5:34 p.m.**

**PROPER STATEMENT OF NOTICE** – Mayor Peters-Manning called the meeting to order stating that notice of the meeting had been posted on the municipal bulletin board and forwarded to the Hopewell Valley News, The Times, the Trentonian and the Hopewell Express (the official newspapers) on February 25, 2022, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

**ROLL CALL:** Those answering the roll call of the Municipal Clerk:

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Chait, Kevin Kuchinski, Uma Purandare, Michael Ruger, Mayor Courtney Peters-Manning

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Administrator/Public Works Director George Snyder, Municipal Clerk Laurie Gompf, CFO Julie Troutman, Director of Community Development/Engineer James Hutzelmann, Police Director Robert Karmazin

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG** – Mayor Peters-Manning led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

**RESOLUTION #22-88.** Read by title.

Motion by Kuchinski, seconded by Chait to adopt Resolution #22-88.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**AYES:** Chait, Kuchinski, Purandare, Ruger, Mayor Peters-Manning

**NOES:** None

**R E S O L U T I O N #22-88**

**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A  
TEMPORARY CAPITAL BUDGET**

**WHEREAS,** The Township of Hopewell desires to constitute the 2022 Temporary Capital Budget by inserting therein a Supplemental Appropriation for the below listed items.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Committee of the Township of Hopewell approves as follows:

Section 1. The 2022 Temporary Capital Budget of the Township of Hopewell is hereby, constituted by the adoption of a schedule to read as follows:

**Temporary Capital Budget  
Township of Hopewell  
County of Mercer**

**Projects Scheduled for 2022**  
**Method of Financing**

<u>Purpose</u>	Appropriation & Estimated Cost	Estimated Maximum Amount of Bonds & Notes	Period of Usefulness

<p>a) Department of Public Works</p> <p>1) The acquisition of a jet vac truck, a mason dump truck, a utility truck for Parks and Recreation and a pick up truck, including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.</p> <p>2) The acquisition of a brush cutter, a compact loader and light towers, including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.</p>		<p>\$475,000</p> <p>\$135,000</p>	<p>\$451,250</p> <p>\$128,250</p>	<p>5 years</p> <p>15 years</p>
<p>b) Buildings and Grounds</p> <p>1) The construction of a salt barn and the acquisition of an electronic door lock system, including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto and further including all work and materials necessary therefor and incidental thereto.</p> <p>2) The replacement of exhaust fans and heat pumps/heating, ventilation and air-conditioning upgrades, including all work and materials necessary therefor and incidental thereto and further including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.</p>		<p>\$148,000</p> <p>\$40,000</p>	<p>\$140,600</p> <p>\$38,000</p>	<p>10 years</p> <p>15 years</p>
<p>c) Administration</p> <p>1) The acquisition and installation of information technology network switches and the replacement of information technology servers, including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.</p> <p>2) The acquisition of sport utility vehicles for the municipal building staff, including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.</p>		<p>\$40,000</p> <p>\$66,000</p>	<p>\$38,000</p> <p>\$62,700</p>	<p>5 years</p> <p>5 years</p>
<p>3) The Emergency Services Future Needs Study, including all related costs</p>				

and expenditures incidental thereto.	\$45,000	\$42,750	15 years
d) Police Department 1) The acquisition of crossover utility vehicles, including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.	\$155,000	\$147,250	5 years
2) The acquisition of portable radios, handguns, a station/door intercom system, mobile radios and an alcoltest system, including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.	\$124,000	\$117,800	10 years
e) Historic Preservation Repairs to the Distillery Whiskey House, including, but not limited to, repointing and carpentry and further including all work and materials necessary therefor and incidental thereto.	\$6,000	\$5,700	10 years
f) Streets and Roads 1) The 2022 Chip Seal Program, all as set forth on a list on file in the Officer of the Clerk, including all work and materials necessary therefor and incidental thereto.	\$1,455,500	\$1,382,725	10 years
g) Parks and Recreation Refurbishment of tennis courts and basketball courts at Independence Park, the installation of a perimeter fence at Independence Park and Skate Park and the planning and design of Woolsey Park, including all work and materials necessary therefor and incidental thereto and further including all related costs and expenditures incidental thereto.	\$189,875	\$180,381.25	15 years
Total	\$5,929,075	\$4,863,000	

Section 2. The Township Clerk is authorized and directed to file a certified copy of this resolution with the Division of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey, within three days after the adoption of these projects for the 2022 Temporary Capital budget, to be included in the 2022 Permanent Capital Budget as adopted.

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**RESOLUTION #22-89.** Read by title.

Motion by Ruger, seconded by Kuchinski to adopt Resolution #22-89.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**

**R E S O L U T I O N #22-89**

**RESOLUTION URGING THE SWIFT PASSAGE OF  
S-330 WHICH RESTORES ENERGY TAX RECEIPTS**

**WHEREAS**, taxes on gas and electric utilities were originally collected by the host municipalities to be used for local purposes and to compensate the public for the use of their rights of way; and

**WHEREAS**, when the State made itself the collection agent for these taxes, it promised to dedicate the proceeds to municipal property tax relief; since, just as municipalities collect property taxes for the benefit of school districts, counties, and other entities, the State is supposed to collect Energy Taxes for the benefit of municipal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, for years, though, State budget makers have diverted funding from Energy Taxes to fund State programs; and instead of being spent on local programs and services and used to offset property taxes, the money has been spent as successive Legislatures and Administrations have seen fit; and

**WHEREAS**, the diversion of dedicated energy tax receipts to the State's General Fund further jeopardizes this critical property tax relief funding in future years; and

**WHEREAS**, by reducing Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Act (CMPTRA), which is also comprised of revenues that should be returned to municipalities, State Budget makers have been able to continue collecting Energy Taxes, while keeping additional revenue that should have been returned to provide property tax relief; and

**WHEREAS**, the cumulative impact of years of underfunding has left many municipalities with serious needs and burdensome property taxes; and

**WHEREAS**, local elected officials are in the best position to decide the best use of these resources, which were always intended to fund local programs and services; and

**WHEREAS**, Senator Singleton and Senate President Scutari have introduced legislation (S-330) that will restore, over a five-year period, Energy Tax Receipts to municipalities;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Township Committee of the Township of Hopewell in the county of Mercer, State of New Jersey urges the Legislature to swiftly pass this legislation and Governor Murphy sign the legislation prior to passage of the FY2023 State budget; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this Resolution is forwarded to Senator Shirley Turner, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds Jackson, Assemblyman Anthony Verelli, Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari, Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, Governor Philip Murphy, and the League of Municipalities.

**2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Committee Member Kuchinski explained that the Committee intends to introduce the 2022 Capital Budget Ordinance; that the public hearing for that budget will be at the March 21, 2022 Regular Township Committee meeting; that before the Ordinance is introduced, Ms. Troutman would review the budget that has been prepared; that the Township has a principle that it should not take on more debt than it retired the year before; and that Ms. Troutman will review the actual Capital Budget that is reflected in the Ordinance.

Ms. Troutman shared a spreadsheet of the 2021 Principal Paydown payments for the General fund, Affordable Housing debt service, Current Fund principal payments and the Open Space principal paydown which totaled \$5,810,000. Committee Member Kuchinski explained that the goal this year was to get the Capital Budget below \$5.455 million in order to reduce the Township's debt over time.

Ms. Troutman shared the summary of the 2022 Capital Budget which prioritized each request. Committee Member Kuchinski explained that items with a shorter useful life were transferred from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget; that grant money was taken into account in the budget; that Ms. Troutman reviews prior year's Capital Ordinances to find funds that might be repurposed in 2022; and that Ms. Troutman found excess funds from last year's roads program; that the excess funds were due to bidding early which led to obtaining lower bids. He announced that the total proposed Capital Budget for 2022 would be \$4.863 million which is just under \$600,000 less than

what was paid off last year.

Committee Member Kuchinski reviewed the items which were removed and changed and recommended that the Township Committee move forward with the introduction of the proposed Capital Ordinance.

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**ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING**

Mayor Peters-Manning read by title the ordinance for introduction.

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$5,929,075 THEREFOR, INCLUDING \$530,000 PROCEEDS OF OBLIGATIONS NOT NEEDED FOR THEIR ORIGINAL PURPOSES, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$4,863,000 BONDS OR NOTES TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF.

Motion by Kuchinski, seconded by Chait to introduce the ordinance on first reading.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**AYES:** Chait, Kuchinski, Purandare, Ruger, Mayor Peters-Manning

**NOES:** None

**ORDINANCE INTRODUCED**

Second reading, public hearing date March 21, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

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**2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET DISCUSSION CONTINUED**

Committee Member Kuchinski explained that with the 2022 Capital Budget completed that it was time to turn to the 2022 Operating Budget; that each Department Head, with members of their team, present their requested budget and rationale for 2022 beginning with Public Works, Buildings and Grounds, Fleet Maintenance and the Police Department.

Other important updates on key 2022 budget inputs Committee Member Kuchinski shared were:

- The Township has been advised that municipal aid from the State is expected to be flat.
- The State will allow a 2.5% COLA Appropriations Cap for in-Cap Expenditures for 2022 which is up vs. a 1% COLA in 2021.
- The Township’s 2021 Tax Collection Rate (to be confirmed by auditors) has recovered from last year’s dip which was driven by COVID-19.
- The Township’s total ratables base has also increased modestly versus last year.

Mr. Snyder shared his operating budget requests that included expenses for:

- Requested an increase in the 2022 Operating Budget for printing costs, professional services, uniforms, street signs, and ice and snow.
- Equipment maintenance, other professional services, office supplies, dues/training/meetings, minor equipment, operating supplies, and road materials requests remained the same as in 2021.
- Rentals was a new funding request for 2022. It was unfunded in 2021.
- The 2022 budget request is \$75,000 more than 2021.

Ms. Troutman shared a spreadsheet showing the history of the Public Works budget beginning in 2018 through the 2022 budget requests. Discussion ensued regarding the receipt of FEMA funding for damages incurred during Hurricane Ida and where those monies would go.

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Mr. Snyder presented the Buildings and Grounds 2022 Operating Budget requests which were as follows:

- Maintenance services, equipment maintenance, professional services, other professional services and uniforms 2022 requests remained the same as the 2021 budgeted amount.
- Operating Supplies 2022 requested increase from the 2021 budgeted amount.

Ms. Troutman shared a spreadsheet showing the history of the Buildings and Grounds budget beginning in 2018 through the 2022 budget requests. She explained that money was transferred out of the 2021 budget to support other budgets at the end of the year and that some years were impacted by COVID.

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Mr. Snyder presented the Fleet Maintenance 2022 Operating Budget requests which were as follows:

- The 2022 request for the account used for the maintenance of approximately 200 pieces of equipment remained the same as the request for the 2021 budgeted amount.
- The 2022 request for operating expenses remained the same as the request for the 2021 budgeted amount.

Mr. Snyder explained that additional funds needed to be transferred into the 2021 operating budget and hoped that it wasn't going to happen again, especially because the Township was purchasing new vehicles. Ms. Troutman shared a multi-year spreadsheet for the Fleet Maintenance budget which indicated the budget transfer referred to by Mr. Snyder.

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Ms. Troutman reviewed the Solid Waste and Recycling budget multi-year spreadsheet which indicated the budget utilized for dumpster pickup and recycling pickup at the Township building and is then reimbursement to Brandon Farms. She indicated that the 2022 budget would be slightly higher than 2021.

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Director Karmazin presented the Police Department's 2022 Operating Budget requests as follows:

- Operating Budget request areas that were the same in 2022 as in 2021 were Advertising, Printing, Equipment Maintenance, Dues/Training/Meetings, Uniforms, Capital Outlay, Minor Equipment, Operating Supplies, Rentals, and Uniform Cleaning.
- Professional Services 2022 request was lower than the 2021 budgeted amount.
- Office Supplies and Range Recovery 2022 requests were greater than the 2021 budgeted amount.
- Items transferred from the department's Capital Budget request to the Operating Budget request included 3 Mobile Data Terminals, 9 Desk Top Computers, and 2 Radar Units.

Ms. Troutman shared a multi-year spreadsheet beginning in 2017 through the 2022 budget request. She explained key items that were pertinent to each line item; reviewed police vehicle cost and replacement; explained that items brought out of the capital budget are usually placed in the minor equipment category of the Operating Budget; that there is an interlocal offset with Hopewell Borough that does not have a final number as of yet; and that once that number is determined, it will become an offset to the Police Operating Budget.

Committee Members questioned the budget for uniforms; and if the vehicle replacement cost of the vehicle lost during Hurricane Ida could be covered by FEMA, to which Mr. Snyder answered it was covered under the Township's insurance.

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## **PUBLIC SECTION**

The following members of the public spoke during public comment:

**Jon Edwards**, a resident of Pennington Harbourton Road, questioned what compensation in the budget is being made for Fire and Emergency Medical Services; queried whether the Township will contribute to the School District's demographic study; questioned if the Township has set

aside money for the School District in light of the PILOT agreement; and asked if the Township has set aside PILOT money to direct to the County.

The detailed public comment may be viewed at [www.hopewelltp.org](http://www.hopewelltp.org) in the video library.

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION RESOLUTION.** Read into the record.

Mayor Peters-Manning stated that the regular meeting may reconvene following the Executive Session.

Motion by Chait, seconded by Ruger to go to Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations, real estate, legal and personnel matters.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**

## **R E S O L U T I O N #22-90**

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary for the Township Committee to discuss contract negotiations, real estate, legal, and/or personnel matters; and

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 permits the Township Committee to conduct a meeting from which the public is excluded in order to discuss such matters; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee wishes to discuss the following:

- Personnel
- Real Estate
  - Leased Properties

**WHEREAS**, the time when and circumstances under which discussion conducted in executive session may be disclosed to the public is when appropriate.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, on this 28<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2022 by the Township Committee of the Township of Hopewell, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that the Township Committee shall forthwith conduct an executive session to discuss the above.

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At 7:03 p.m. the Executive Session was held.

At 7:37 p.m. the Special Budget meeting reconvened.

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At 7:37 p.m., motion by Chait, seconded by Ruger to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**

The detailed public meeting may be viewed at [www.hopewelltp.org](http://www.hopewelltp.org) in the video library.

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LAURIE E. GOMPF  
MUNICIPAL CLERK