

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

Monday, March 14, 2022 – 5:32 p.m.

PROPER STATEMENT OF NOTICE – Deputy Mayor Ruger 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 March 11, 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,
Deputy Mayor Michael Ruger

ABSENT: Mayor Courtney Peters-Manning

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator/Public Works Director George Snyder, Municipal Clerk Laurie Gompf, CFO Julie Troutman, Director of Community Development/Engineer James Hutzelmann, Health Officer Dawn Marling

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG – Deputy Mayor Ruger led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Deputy Mayor Ruger read an email from Director Karmazin which requested that old, out of service, bullet proof vests, formerly used by Hopewell Township Police officers, that would normally be destroyed, be transferred to the Ukraine via an FBI vendor. Deputy Mayor Ruger explained that if the Township Committee was in agreement, a Resolution would be drawn up to allow the donation and that it would be placed on the upcoming Regular Committee meeting for a vote. He then asked for their consensus to have the Resolution drawn up, to which all agreed.

2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Deputy Mayor Ruger explained that the meeting will likely end at approximately 7:00 p.m.; that a Resolution would be considered; that there would be time for public comment; and then turned the meeting over to Committee Member Kuchinski.

Committee Member Kuchinski explained that the largest departments' operating budgets had been reviewed in prior meetings; that the remainder of the departments will be reviewed; and that the budget should be ready for introduction in the coming weeks.

Ms. Troutman began by reviewing the Health Department's budget and sharing a spreadsheet with the department's actual budget expenditures from 2018 through 2021 and the requested budget for 2022.

Ms. Marling reviewed the Health Department's budget and explained that it was reduced from the 2020 budget largely due to a reduction in professional services and database fees.

Ms. Troutman shared a spreadsheet with Community Development's operating budget from 2018 through their budget requests for 2022. She did not review past professional service agreements as they had been previously considered. Advertising, printing, and equipment maintenance were briefly reviewed. Mr. Hutzelmann explained the funding requests for the Comprehensive Farmland Plan update. Ms. Troutman continued explaining the department's requests for contingent services, other services, office supplies, dues, training, meetings and minor equipment. Mr. Hutzelmann clarified that the increase in minor equipment was for a replacement laptop and a wide format scanner.

Ms. Troutman then reviewed the Engineering operating budget, explaining that the professional service agreements have been previously approved for Ferriero Engineering and Van Cleef Engineering; and that a contingency amount had been built into the budget should any emergency arise for professional service agreements.

Mr. Hutzelmann explained that the Historic Preservation Committee is overseen by Community Development and that they do incur nominal costs, such as advertising and printing. Ms. Troutman indicated that a possible reason the 2021 expenditures were low could have been due to the fact that there were fewer applications during the year and indicated that there might be more applications this year.

Mr. Hutzelmann explained that the Environmental Commission's Dues/Training/Meetings line item of the 2022 budget is mostly comprised of ANJEC dues, forestry training for commissioners, and Public Works fees; and that the Water Monitoring line item was to pay for the company, USGS, to do water monitoring of a monitoring well on Scotch Road.

Ms. Troutman explained that the Green Team is technically budgeted under the Legislative budget, but it is managed by Community Development and that last year they had a \$500 budget of which they spent \$200 on things like recycling programs. Mr. Hutzelmann explained that the 2022 requested amount would enable the Green Team to advertise and notice events.

Ms. Troutman reviewed the Recreation budget and explained that the budget is for the full time staff that run the Recreation programs and that the budget request included a new laptop computer. A discussion ensued regarding the utilization of an existing Township laptop. She also noted that the Special Public Events line item is higher than last year due to more public events being provided by the department.

The Senior Services budget was review by Ms. Troutman who explained that the 2022 increases requested were due to a bulk rate postage increase; a printing services increase; and that there was a request to add an additional pamphlet to each newsletter mailing for Seniors who could not utilize social media. Mr. Snyder explained that the request for the pamphlet came from the Citizen's Equity Advisory Committee. A discussion ensued regarding the pamphlet, it was decided that the Newsletter was sufficient to transmit the appropriate information to the Senior population. Committee Members also discussed the possible purchase of a document folding machine to offset the printing costs of the Newsletter.

Ms. Troutman explained that within the Parks Maintenance budget, the Operating Supplies line item has been separated out from the Equipment Maintenance line item this year and that the budget is more than requested in 2021. She described the items that would be included under the Equipment Maintenance, Operating Supplies and Maintenance Services line items; that the reasons for the requested budget increase is due to increased maintenance costs for the fields; that there is more wear and tear on the fields causing more maintenance; that the cost of field paint has risen; that disposal fees for the dumpsters have increased; that the Township has had to pay "contamination fees" due to people dumping items into the dumpsters that don't belong there; and a 12-month Port-O-John rental at Woolsey Park.

Discussion ensued regarding the increased amounts in the budget. It was suggested that the departments involved come back with justifications for the increases.

Mr. Snyder provided updates to questions which were asked during the last budget meeting and answered the following:

- Pennington Borough does not have radios, but if they make radio purchases in the future, they would be willing to purchase ones that interface with Hopewell Township.
- Hopewell Borough also did not have radios, but would be willing to interface with the Township if they were to purchase same.
- Provided a comparison of parts prices from last year to this year showing that parts costs have risen.
- Provided a spreadsheet from 2017 to 2020 delineating curbside recycling collection

tonnage.

Mr. Snyder reviewed the Administration budget indicating that there is an increase in postage due to higher postage rates; an increase in printing due to the addition of more newsletters; an increase in Equipment Maintenance due to a CCTV update; one of the Professional Services Agreements was reduced to the bid threshold; suggested that the office space study be cut from the budget; that the budget includes additional funding for IT updates; and removed the requests for services from Constant Contact and Meltwater from the budget.

A discussion ensued regarding lowering the cost pertaining to the email provider.

RESOLUTION #22-109. Read by title.

Motion by Kuchinski, seconded by Chait to adopt Resolution #22-109.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

R E S O L U T I O N #22-109

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENTS

WHEREAS, there exists a need for professional services for the following: Conflict Attorney; and

WHEREAS, the estimated cost of the contract is not to exceed \$2,000.00 (2-01-20-115-028) for Conflict Attorney Services; and funds will be available in the 2022 budget appropriations for this purpose certified by the local finance officer encumbered in the accounts referenced above; and

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.) requires that a resolution authorizing the award of contracts for "Professional Services" without competitive bids and the contract itself must be available for public inspection.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hopewell, as follows:

1. The Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute the attached agreements with:

Edwin W. Schmierer of Mason, Griffin & Pierson for Conflict Attorney Services

2. The contracts are awarded without competitive bidding as a "Professional Service" under the provisions of the Local Public Contracts Law N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5 (1)(a) as a contract for services to be performed by persons authorized by law to practice recognized professions that are regulated by law and it is not possible to obtain competitive bids.

3. A notice of this action shall be published once in the official newspaper as required by law.

PUBLIC SECTION

The following members of the public spoke during public comment:

Jon Edwards, a resident of Pennington Harbourton Road, questioned if monies in the budget have been allotted to fire services, schools and the County, that he alleges will not be forthcoming due to the PILOT program; indicated that he didn't know how to "join" the Township's senior program; inquired as to how to "join;" and questioned if the Township will discourage Pennington Borough from allowing a Cannabis retail store to open within 1,000 feet from a school.

The detailed public comment may be viewed at www.hopewelltp.org in the video library.

At 6:48 p.m., motion by Purandare, seconded by Chait to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

The detailed public meeting may be viewed at www.hopewelltp.org in the video library.

LAURIE E. GOMPF
MUNICIPAL CLERK