

## **BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK**

### **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**MARCH 26, 2019 – 6:33 PM**

IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor; Council Members (Councilwoman Kim-Chohan 6:52PM); Borough Administrator; Borough Clerk; Chief Financial Officer.

Borough Administrator Jover noted the following:

- 7.84% increase in municipal budget.
- \$230.53 difference to the average homeowner

Mayor Brill Mittler explained that there are 3 different goals for 2019:

- Downtown development.
- Infrastructure – Department of Public Works, Water & Sewer & Roads.
- Quality of Life – Police, Recreation, Library, Aging, Teen Center.

School budget numbers are only preliminary at this time and the County numbers need to be obtained before budget can be introduced. It would be \$137.54 additionally in taxes for the additional 1% for the library.

CFO Gardner went over items in the budget. Shortfall in Municipal Court of \$73,650. Shortfall in Code Enforcement of \$191,109.

Discussion about interest on investments. Need to do RFP for banking services once we get a new CFO. Investment Bank gives more in interest rates and gives money for ADP. Using \$125,000 in general capital surplus to offset loss in Court and Code Enforcement and that money will not be there next year.

Amount to be raised by taxes is \$950,590.69.

Discussion about surplus being \$1.8 million dollars. Suggestion to have someone come in and take a look at the budget to see what would be a suitable surplus amount. Significant discussion about legal OE budget. Councilman Fine does not want to have Borough Attorney at every Council Meeting to save money.

Discussion about PBA contract and the amount of steps to be included in salary guide. Labor Attorney is doing a 3-year look out for the contract.

Discussion about First Aid Squad and fact that an RFP needs to be done.

Discussion about Fire Department and the need for a Full Time Paid Firefighter during the day. This would involve additional costs for pension and benefits.

Discussion about recycling and the decrease in the amount of money the Borough.

Motion made by Councilman Fine, seconded by Councilman Hale and carried by affirmative voice vote to go beyond 8:00 PM.

Discussion about elimination of Court Clerk position and movement of that employee into the Tax Office. There will eventually be a layoff of this position as the Borough needs to hire a Full Time Tax Collector.

Discussion of Library Board of Trustees and a meeting that was held with them. They are going to vote on a strategic plan that includes renting out rooms and more book sales. They also plan to do a fundraising gala. They have a jar for optional fee for DVD rentals. Will have additional discussion about permanent fee for DVD rentals. They want Borough to go past last

year's funding and requested a \$25,000 increase. Having seen the budget and where the Borough is at, the Council does not feel comfortable with the increase due to the current budget increase of 7.84%. Result of Borough not giving them extra funding would mean a layoff. The Borough gives the Library \$545,000 to \$550,000 over what is required and have done so for quite some time. The real issue is the budget was cut last year and would be kept flat this year.

Nora Krieger, representative from the Library Board of Trustees, appeared at the meeting. She noted that the Library's budget was cut \$30,000 last year and they kept hours of operation the same and they did not do any layoffs. They cut their book budget and will offer less book options. They are planning to put together development board and will be putting out a donation box. Low income families and veteran's take out the DVD's. The fines account has all the fines in it. Cannot put gala together this year. If they lay someone off, it would affect the hours of the Library.

Councilwoman Welkovits left the meeting at 8:42 PM.

Discussion about possible reductions to the budget:

- Police S&W - \$10,000
- Fire Department OE – Borough Administrator to check with Fire Department Supervisor.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Squad - \$15,000
- Teen Center - \$5,000
- Legal OE – Down to \$357,000
- Boards & Commissions – reduced to \$9,500
- Electric Service OE
- Social Security OE
- Street Lighting

Budget introduction is April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Budget public hearing/adoption is May 7<sup>th</sup>. Suggestion to have budget presentation done at the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and advertise such presentation on social media.

Borough Administrator Jover handed out a Capital Expenditures Sheet outlining the recommendations for capital expenditures for 2019.

The Water & Sewer Budget for 2019 is very tight. The Borough Administrator to make changes to the budget and that will be the budget that is introduced.

On motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Foster-Dublin, and carried by affirmative voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings, Borough Clerk