

BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK

BUDGET WORKSHOP

MARCH 13, 2018 – 6:00 PM

IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor; Council Members (except Councilwoman Foster-Dublin); Borough Administrator; Borough Clerk; Chief Financial Officer.

Borough Administrator Jover noted that the Council Liaisons will introduce their respective Department Heads; review the department's 2017n budget and explain the 2018 budget request. Department Heads will answer specific questions regarding department responsibilities, needs and budget requests.

1) Arts/Recreation Committee – Kim McGraw and Andrea Baay

- Discussion about breakfast program and expanding columns on spreadsheet to denote costs.
- Discussion of increase in salary for Social Worker and expanding her role with the Food Pantry. Mayor Brill Mittler asked them to think about the future with the loss of CDBG funding.
- Revised recreation fees were approved at the last meeting.
- More of the Recreation Program Coordinator's salary was built back into the budget. Part-time Recreation Assistant's salary is out guide for salary and wages.
- Trust fund is to be used to fund programming.
- Arts Commission cut their budget request. They need to look for more grants.
- Historical Commission needs a line item for grant they received from the County. They would like to have at least \$500 in their budget for 2018, but requested \$1,000.

2) Economic Development Committee – Scott Brescher

- Anticipating revenue of \$525,000 for 2018. Projection for 2019 is the same.
- Reorganize department – sub code inspectors are part time. Want to add extra day for inspections for increased workload.
- Discussion about Code Enforcement Director's salary and additional responsibilities. New title to be created along with a new job description.
- Wants to increase property maintenance inspections in 2018.
- County Health contract expires in 2019.
- Animal Control is handled by Edison. Discussion of using surplus money from dog account.
- Discussion of salary for Planning, Zoning and Redevelopment Clerk - \$21,000 annually.

Mayor Brill Mittler would like to see quarterly budget reviews done.

3) Public Safety Committee – Tracey Horan, Chief Stephen Rizco, Fire Chief Jay Littman, Fire Supervisor Andrew Berardo, Asst. Fire Chief Peggy Brookes

- Municipal Court budget consistent with 2017 request.
- Borough Administrator put together Fire Department budget request due to late submittal of their budget request.
- Discussion of volunteer incentive for reimbursement for clothing stipend. No one would receive more than \$599.
- There are 12-part time paid firefighters. Salary and wage budget will increase by approximately 3% due to increase in hourly rate for paid firefighters and for additional pay for holidays and training. There will also be an increase in salary for Fire Supervisor.
- Discussion of mandatory training that is needed. Some of the training can be handled by the Garden State Municipal Joint Insurance Fund.
- Discussion of equipment used by the Fire Department such as turnout gear, nozzles, hoses, etc. Have not purchased new nozzles since 1990.
- Volunteer Fire Department donations cover their uniforms and some equipment.
- Police Department S & W budget includes ½ year salary for 1 recruit and ½ year salary for promotions.
- Police Department OE budget was decreased by approximately \$3,000.
- Need to hire an additional Public Safety Dispatcher.
- OEM budget was decreased by \$3,000.

4) Public Works Committee – Donald Rish, Michael Wieczorkiewicz

- Maintenance Contract with TEMCO expires in July. Discussion about Buildings and Grounds Department doing day to day maintenance in the Public Safety Building.
- Discussion about motor pool budget and maintenance/repair of municipal vehicles. Superintendent of Public Works to explore possible shared service with Edison for repair of garbage trucks.
- Discussion of proper allocation of funds this year.
- Discussion about Highland Park being in the queue for an energy audit for all of the Municipal Buildings.
- Exterior lights will be changed out to LED lights at all Municipal Buildings.
- Discussion about tree budget and the Emerald Ash Bore tree issue.
- Discussion about street lighting and PSE&G bills.

5) Finance Committee – Jane Stanley

- Biggest part of Library Budget is salaries and wages.
- Discussion of e-books and possibly reducing number of books purchased.
- Library Director was asked to look at her budget and find cuts that could be made.
- Library Director noted that she met with Library Board about budget request and it is a 1% increase over last year. Discussion that the minimum library appropriation that the Borough has to give them is approximately \$448,000.
- The Friends of the Library handle the annual book sale and pay for a lot of the programs offered at the Library (\$10,000-\$15,000).
- Discussion about hours of operation and possible reduction.
- Library Council 7 Union contract is due to be negotiated in 2018.
- Finance Department S&W budget was cut by approximately \$22,000. Will check with Woodbridge Township for QPA Consultant.
- Discussion about banking services and possibility of checking out Bank of Princeton.
- Tax Assessor needs part time Clerk and there is a retired Assessor interested in the position. Total salary for position would not exceed \$20,000 annually.
- Discussion regarding outstanding bonds and payments due in 2018.
- Utilizing \$800,000 of \$1.1 million surplus, leaving \$350,000 balance.

6) Health and Human Services Committee and Administration Committee

- Human Relations Commission decreased their budget request.
- Budget process this year is more thorough than ever before. Reallocation of expenses to different line items makes for better accounting going forward.
- Administration budget includes additional funding in S&W for Assistant to Borough Administrator.
- Mayor and Council budget includes funding for an Assistant to the Mayor and Council.
- Administration budget includes HR Coordinator position with part of that salary including the Teen Center.
- Mayor and Council budget includes additional funding for training.
- Mayor and Council salaries will remain the same.
- Borough website needs updating and funding was put into the budget.
- Discussion of borough newsletter and possibly eliminating the printing and mailing of the newsletter and only having the e-newsletter. Consensus to cut out 2/3 of the cost for the newsletter (\$4,000) and only printing copies for the borough buildings.
- Central Services costs for office supplies will be monitored by the Borough Clerk's office.
- Information Technology RFP needs to be prepared and advertised.
- Legal budget has increased due to litigations. Two cases to be settled this year.
- Health Insurance Costs have increased but are beyond the Borough's control.
- Group Insurance has increased by approximately \$30,000.
- Discussion about talking to East Brunswick about what they did regarding insurance.

- Discussion about water and sewer budget issue regarding purchase of water. Budgeted for \$4.2 million and only collected \$3.5 million. 34% of water paid for is uncollected.
- Discussed issue with Middlesex Water and that rolled into asset management plan. Residential meters need to be upgraded. Apartment complex water meters not reading accurately.
- Discussion of infrastructure bank.
- Discussion about water and sewer rates and how to cover the deficit. Water and sewer rates have not increased since 2011. Paying more for water and sewer bills than we are collecting.
- Need to introduce ordinance to get water and sewer rates to proper level to cover deficit.
- To get to zero tax increase would have to cut \$500,000. Target is to cut \$200,000. Would like to see Library budget cut by \$100,000.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings, Borough Clerk