

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2022**

The Meeting was called to order at 8:03AM by Council President May who read the Opening Public Meetings Act Statement as prescribed by law. Notice was sent to The Record and The Ridgewood News on March 11, 2022 and was advertised on March 15, 2022 in The Record and for information only to The Ridgewood News stating that this Meeting would be held in the Honorable Judge Anthony J. Gianni, Jr. Chambers at the Richard J. Martel Municipal Center located at 475 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, New Jersey on March 26, 2022 at 8:00AM. Electronic Notice of this Meeting was provided through the Internet by posting the Agenda on the Township's Website on March 24, 2022.

Notice of this Meeting is posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board. The Minutes of this Meeting shall be available in the Municipal Clerk's Office once they are approved by the Township Council.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR VETERANS AND THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Moment of Silence was observed for those who served and those who are serving in the Military both here and abroad and for those affected by the Coronavirus.

Present: Councilmembers Ariemma, Bolan, Ervin, Ferguson, Paz, Wong, and May

Also present were Chief Financial Officer Joseph Kovalcik, Assistant to the Chief Financial Officer Corinne Hockman, Deputy Clerk Carolyn George and Clerical Assistant Leslie Wen.

PUBLIC PORTION

On a motion by Ervin, seconded by Paz, the Meeting was opened to the public at 8:05AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

On a motion by Ervin, seconded by Ferguson, the Meeting was closed to the Public at 8:06AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

2022 PROPOSED MUNICIPAL BUDGET

B1. POLICE DEPARTMENT

May extended thanks to the Police Department for all that they do in keeping the Community safe.

Chief Jaffe, Captain Blank, Captain Bussinelli and Lieutenant Chevron were in attendance to discuss the Police Department Budget.

May asked what can the Forfeiture Account be used for. Chief Jaffe explained the State is making it more difficult to use this Account because of the Legislative Law changes. Chief Jaffe said he has ordered five Message Boards out of this Account.

Ferguson asked if Chief Jaffe requires more Police Officers. Chief Jaffe responded he would like to see an increase of one or two more officers.

May asked when do Body Cameras go into effect. Chief Jaffe stated by April. Training is still needed for Officers. \$35,000 was needed to purchase equipment for face blurring and redacting.

Ferguson asked if crime is up in the Township. Chief Jaffe responded yes. Auto theft of high-end cars is up 80% in Bergen County. Burglary is up too. Chief Jaffe explained the Police Department can no longer pursue car chases. He also stated Criminal Justice Reform has made it very hard for the Police Department to do their job.

Ferguson asked if the Township will be recruiting a Female Officer. Chief Jaffe explained they did offer a position to a female recruit, but she declined the offer and decided to work for another town. They have had no other female applicant who has qualified as of yet.

Wong extended a thanks to the Police Department. He asked Chief Jaffe what Policies have changed the Budget. Chief Jaffe stated mandated training for all Officers. All training must go through the Bergen County Police Academy. Chief Jaffe also stated OPRAs have increased by 30%, he is very concerned with the use of Body Cameras and OPRAs. Chief Jaffe mentioned Township Attorney's Associate Sue Sharpe has been a great help to them processing OPRAs.

Wong asked how many years does the Police Department have to keep their information in the cloud. Chief Jaffe responded 90 days minimum, up to three years.

Paz thanked the Police Department for all they do. She asked if the Holding Cell is completed. Chief Jaffe responded Phase I has been completed, he is waiting for Final Inspection. Phase II will be starting in the next few weeks.

Paz asked if the School Resource Officer needs to wear a Body Camera. Chief Jaffe responded the School Resource Officer must have it with him, but does not have to wear it all the time. He also mentioned that Police Officers do a walk through to every school in the district two times per day.

Ferguson asked if a Police Officer can also do a walk through at the Library. Chief Jaffe responded yes.

Paz asked about the Grant Writing Process. Chief Jaffe responded the Police Department has a Grant Writer now, but Grants are not easy to receive.

Paz asked is driving under the influence of Cannabis still a problem. Chief Jaffe responded yes.

Ervin commended the Police Department. He stated it has become a very challenging job working with all the Legislative Law changes.

Ariemma asked how many new cars has the Police Department received. Chief Jaffe responded 4 cars in 2021 and 4 cars in 2022.

May asked if the K-9 Unit still exists. Chief Jaffe responded no, the K-9 Dog has retired and will not be replaced.

B2. MAHWAH EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

May thanked MEMS for their dedication and hard work for all they do to service the Community.

Ms. Clarissa Stricker, Ms. Liz Villano and Mr. Walter Seaman were in attendance to discuss the Mahwah Emergency Medical Services 2022 Budget.

Ms. Stricker explained how MEMS is working with all the COVID changes. They are continuing to wear their masks and are still answering calls for COVID. Ms. Stricker also mentioned they are having difficulties getting volunteers to answer COVID calls.

Ms. Stricker stated there has been an increase of over three hundred calls last year in 2021, an increase of 22% from 2020. MEMS has also experienced an uptake in Domestic, Opioid Overdoses and Psychiatric Emergency Medical Calls.

Ms. Stricker explained how MEMS has also seen Hotel Calls double from 2020 due to the fact that more people are living in hotels as a permanent residence.

Ms. Stricker explained that MEMS is once again answering County Calls. The County was originally using paid agencies for their emergency calls, but the response time was too long.

May asked if the Township is the sole ambulance service for County Facilities. Ms. Stricker responded yes. Ms. Stricker also mentioned MEMS had 6 calls within the first two months at Ramapo College.

Ms. Stricker stated there is a high volume of calls from Assisted Living Developments. She added, the places within their Developer's Agreements are suppose to use private agencies but have been using MEMS. She is very concerned with the Monarch Development coming into the Community creating an ever-higher volume of calls in Assisted Living Developments.

May stated the Monarch Development has to have a private service for their emergency calls. He also mentioned Monarch Development is donating a dollar amount with specifics on buying a new ambulance for the Township.

Bolan asked if the Township could charge these County Facilities for using our ambulance service. Ms. Stricker explained there is not enough paid agencies in and around other townships so MEMS has to respond into surrounding areas. The Valley Hospital is not equipped with

enough ambulances. Ms. Villano stated paid agencies are going out of business and are no longer available.

Bolan stated she would like to see a Shared Agreement between the Township and County.

Ms. Stricker stated another area of increase are non-emergency related calls from nursing homes, hotels and Ramapo College. More education is needed for residents to not make these non-emergency calls.

Ariemma asked how many non-emergency calls does MEMS receive. Ms. Stricker stated 50% of all calls are non-emergency calls. True emergency calls are not able to take first priority because of all the non-emergency calls being answered.

May asked if Ms. Stricker could break down the number of Out-Of-Town Calls MEMS receives. Ms. Stricker stated yes. She will forward the information to the Council.

Ferguson asked if MEMS answers calls from Suffern, New York. Ms. Stricker responded MEMS cannot cross over state lines, but can transport to Good Samaritan Hospital in Suffern, New York.

Mr. Seaman stated MEMS is requesting two new ambulances and a two-bay garage to park their two First Responder Vehicles in. He informed the Council that their two newest ambulances are already six years old with approximately 50,000 miles on each one. Mr. Seaman also stated each new ambulance will cost approximately \$350,000 each, but he will also be looking for a trade in value for each old ambulance. Lead times for ordering a new ambulance is approximately 2 years, therefore, Mr. Seaman is recommending ordering one ambulance this year, and the second ambulance after the first of the year in 2023.

Due to his absence, Bolan read a statement from the Business Administrator on his recommendations on how the Township should proceed on ordering new ambulances. Administration recommends replacing one for 2023, the second for 2024 and the last for 2025. The fourth ambulance will eventually be replaced with the monies being donated from Monarch Development. This plan will help smooth out the outlay for future years.

Ariemma asked if MEMS does any fundraising. Ms. Stricker responded yes. She also mentioned MEMS has tried to receive Grants for the purchase of new equipment but has not been successful in receiving any as of yet. She also stated MEMS does not receive many Corporate Donations, most donations come from the residents of the Township.

Ms. Stricker stated MEMS is also requesting their Uniform Allowance be increased from \$14,000/year to \$35,000/year for those members who volunteer over 500 hours. Ms. Stricker mentioned that the Uniform Allowance has not been increased in years. She stated MEMS' members have to buy their own uniforms and this allowance increase would help them with that cost.

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May responded he cannot commit to increase the Uniform Allowance today, but will keep it in mind.

Ferguson responded the Council can look into staggering increases over time as an option.

May stated the Municipal Budget will be introduced at the Council Meeting on April 7, 2022.

On a motion by Paz, seconded by Ferguson, the Meeting was adjourned at 11:13AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathrine G. Coviello, RMC/CMC/MMC
Municipal Clerk