

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH
BUDGET WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2023**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Council President May who read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement as prescribed by law. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this Meeting has been provided by sending notice to The Record and The Ridgewood News and posting notice on the bulletin board of the Honorable Richard J. Martel Municipal Center located at 475 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, New Jersey. Electronic notice of the Meeting has also been provided by posting the agenda on the Township Website.

Formal action may be taken. The minutes of this Meeting shall be available in the Office of the Township Clerk.

This Meeting is being videotaped.

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, Donigian, Ferguson, Paz, Wong, and May
Absent: Councilmember Bolan

Also present were Mayor James Wysocki, Business Administrator Benjamin Kezmarsky, Acting Chief Financial Officer Corinne Hockman, Deputy Clerk Carolyn George and Senior Clerk Leslie Wen.

PUBLIC PORTION

On a motion by Ferguson, seconded by Wong, the Meeting was opened to the public at 7:02PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

On a motion by Ferguson, seconded by Wong, the Meeting was closed to the public at 7:02PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

**2023 PROPOSED MUNICIPAL BUDGET
FILM, ARTS and MUSIC COMMITTEE**

Mr. Scott Rubin was in attendance along with other members of the Film, Arts and Music Committee. He spoke about the FAM Committee and the upcoming events they would like to sponsor. The FAM Committee is requesting \$3,000. to sponsor an Oktoberfest Fundraiser. The monies would be used to purchase food, advertising, entertainments services, audio equipment rental, and office supplies.

Paz mentioned HD Photos of various locations will fall under Administration's Professional Services 2023 Budget.

Wong asked if the FAM Committee has any corporate sponsors. Mr. Rubin stated businesses have given gift cards to the Committee to give away as prizes.

Wong asked if FAM will be sponsoring a Trivia Night for fundraising. Mr. Rubin responded there will be at least two Trivia Nights scheduled within the year.

May asked if the audio equipment rental will be for one event. Mr. Rubin responded yes. May requested information to purchase the audio equipment instead of renting. Mr. Rubin will look into this.

Ferguson is in favor of giving the FAM Committee \$3,000. for this year, but they will need to fund themselves next year.

On a motion by Ferguson, seconded by Paz, a Straw Poll was taken to fund the FAM Committee \$3,000. Roll Call Vote: Ariemma, yes; Bolan, absent; Donigian, yes; Ferguson, yes; Paz, yes; Wong, yes; May, yes.

SENIOR CENTER

Ms. Ali Duroy, Director of Senior and Human Services, spoke about the services the Senior Center provides for the Township's Senior Citizens.

Ms. Duroy stated membership has been growing in 2023. Seven new trips have been added to the calendar this year for the seniors. She also stated the numbers have been growing for Access Transportation for those seniors that cannot drive. Ms. Duroy explained there are not enough drivers to meet the demand of requests for transportation. She is requesting an additional part-time driver to meet these transportation needs.

Wong questioned the significant increase for Professional Services. Ms. Duroy stated the increases are for raises, and to add two additional classes, an Art Class and a Self Defense Class to the Senior Program.

May asked how many buses are used for the Access Transportation. Ms. Duroy stated she has four buses, one is undrivable.

Ariemma asked if Grants could be found to pay for another driver for the Senior Center. Business Administrator responded he will look into this, but is not sure a Grant can pay for a salary.

Paz asked if Access Transportation can be expanded past 4:00pm. Business Administrator responded no.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

Chief Stephen Jaffe, Captain Guido Bussinelli and Captain Scott Cherven were in attendance to discuss the Police Department Budget.

Chief Jaffe thanked the Council for their support. He spoke about some incidences that have occurred within the Township throughout the past year. Chief Jaffe stated there are currently 53 active officers, 2 officers on leave, and he is requesting an additional officer to bring the current level up to 56 officers. Chief Jaffe is also requesting an additional patrol car. He mentioned he still has not received the three patrol cars that were ordered from last year.

Paz asked about the cost of the Body Cameras. Chief Jaffe responded a Grant is covering the cost of the cameras for the next five years, with redacting capabilities included. Chief Jaffe mentioned the Police Department had a trial run during the week with the cameras, and will be implementing this program in full sometime next week.

Paz asked if the School Resource Officer's salary increase is paid equally between the Township and Board of Education. Business Administrator stated yes.

Ariemma asked about the Opium Epidemic. Chief Jaffe spoke about all the programs that are offered within the Township.

Ariemma asked what happens to the old Police Cars not being used. Chief Jaffe stated they are auctioned off and the monies are returned to the General Fund.

Ariemma questioned the number of Police Officers. Chief Jaffe explained why he was requesting an additional police officer.

Ferguson stated he is in favor of hiring an additional Police Officer. He would also like to see more School Resource Officers.

Wong asked about the changes to the Forfeiture Account. Chief Jaffe explained the State is making it more difficult to use this account because of the Legislative Law changes. Chief Jaffe stated restrictions are even tighter this year than last year.

Wong asked if the Police Department will be looking into Electric Cars. Chief Jaffe stated no. He mentioned he is still waiting for the three Patrol Cars that were ordered from last year.

Donigian is in favor of hiring an additional Police Officer.

Donigian asked if the Police Department can receive money from the 1033 Surplus Program. Chief Jaffe responded no, only equipment.

May stated since fuel costs have increased, Electric Cars for traffic detail may be something to look at in the future.

May stated he is in favor of hiring one Police Officer. He asked Chief Jaffe to put together calculations on what the budget would look like for hiring one or two additional Police Officers. He would also like Chief Jaffe to make revisions to the Personnel Appointment Ordinance to have more flexibility to hire additional Police Officers in the future. Chief Jaffe will look into this. May stated this information will be discussed at a future Budget Meeting.

On a motion by Ferguson, seconded by Paz, the Meeting was adjourned at 9:45PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn George, RMC
Municipal Deputy Clerk