

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH  
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES  
SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2021**

The Meeting was called to order at 9:04AM by Council President May who read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement as prescribed by law. Notice was emailed to The Record and The Ridgewood News for Information Only on February 26, 2021 and advertised in The Record on Wednesday, March 2, 2021 stating this meeting would be held via Zoom Audio/Video Conference on Saturday, March 13, 2021 at 9:00AM.

Notice of this Meeting is posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board. The Minutes of this Meeting will 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**

A Moment of Silence was observed for those who served and those who are serving in the military both here and abroad. It is because of their valor and bravery that we can hold meetings such as these.

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

Also present were Business Administrator Benjamin Kezmarsky, Chief Financial Officer Joseph Kovalcik and Clerical Assistant Carolyn George.

**PUBLIC PORTION**

On a motion by Paz, seconded by Ervin, the Meeting was opened to the public at 9:06AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

On a motion by Paz, seconded by Bolan, the Meeting was closed to the public at 9:07AM. All in favor. Motion carried.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

May extended thanks to all of the dedicated Volunteers of the Township's Fire Department. He thanked them for the many hours of hard work and challenges handled during 2020.

Fire Chief Cord Meyer and First Chief Assistant Tom Loretto were in attendance to discuss the Fire Department Budget.

Fire Chief Meyer stated there were 718 Fire Calls in 2020 totaling 7,496 Manpower Hours. Fire Chief Meyer stated the Fire Department Budget believes they are being fiscally prudent with the 2021 Budget.

**G02-211 Uniforms and Clothing**

Paz asked why this Item decreased from 2020. Fire Chief Meyer said Trench Coats were not needed in this year's Budget.

Paz asked what does CAFR stand for within the Budget. Chief Financial Officer stated CAFR stands for Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Wong asked if the Fire Department has enough Personal Protection Equipment or any other COVID-19 equipment. Fire Chief Meyer said the Fire Department currently has enough equipment.

### **G02-202 Equipment**

Ferguson asked if the Ipads or computers could be included in the Capital Budget for Information Technology. Chief Financial Officer will research if the computers could be moved into the Capital Budget.

Ferguson asked if the Ladders could be moved out of Operating Budget and placed as a Capital Budget expense. Chief Financial Officer stated previous Ordinances were very specific. He will review moving these Items to either an Ordinance or Capital Budget for 2022. Fire Chief Meyer stated some Fire Equipment may have a Useful Life of 20 years but needs to be inspected yearly and replaced if fail Certification Testing as being defective. Chief Financial Officer stated future Ordinances will contain generic Fire Department funds to include ladders, hoses and other equipment.

Ferguson asked if the Fire Department needs anything that is not included in this year's Budget. Fire Chief Meyer stated 2021 Budget is okay. He explained the 2022 Budget will need Solar Firefighting equipment and foam for electric car battery fires.

Ferguson asked if there is enough fire hydrant coverage in the Township. Fire Chief Meyer stated there are areas requiring more hydrants such as Stag Hill and areas near Route 287.

May asked if some Items can be received through the 1033 Program. He would also like to see if there is any Grant money available for the Fire Department. Fire Chief Meyer stated the Fire Department has been communicating with Lieutenant Blondin regarding the 1033 Program. The Fire Department has received substantial Items through this Program.

May stated a Meeting was held with the Business Administrator, Fire Chief Meyer, Second Assistant Fire Chief Stricker and Department of Public Works Director to review what the Township could do to help offset the cost of Regular Maintenance Costs for the Fire Trucks and maintain Annual General Maintenance. Fire Chief Meyer explained the Fire Trucks currently receive Annual Preventative Maintenance every 18-24 months.

Wong asked the turnaround time for a Fire Truck to be serviced. Fire Chief Meyer stated a Standard Preventative Maintenance for an Oil Change and Lubrication is approximately 3 days. Larger repairs may take one month.

Fire Chief Meyer stated the Township's Department of Public Works would not do any specialty repairs. Mechanics need to be certified. He also explained the Department of Public Works has helped the Fire Department in Emergency Repair situations like replacing a Battery.

Ariemma asked if Bergen County could assist with the Fire Truck Repairs. Fire Chief Meyer stated they have contacted the County. It is not an option because they are not certified for repairs.

Fire Chief Meyer explained Paramus charges \$200 Filing Fees per Vehicle sent in for repair or maintenance.

May asked for the Pickup and Drop-Off Charges when Fire Trucks are serviced for any Maintenance in Paramus. Fire Chief Meyer stated the Travel Charge for two Paramus Employees is \$85 per hour totaling approximately \$200 per repair.

Ariemma is concerned about the Department of Public Works extensively servicing the Fire Trucks. Fire Chief Meyer stated it would be for Basic Maintenance like changing of lightbulbs, wipers and oil changes.

Paz asked if the Fire Department requires Special Training regarding Electric Car Firefighting. Fire Chief Meyer stated Tesla came to the Township and provided a free Training Seminar for Electric Charger fires. Training continues as technology and vehicles change.

May asked if Bergen County is adjusting the training based on new technology. Fire Chief Meyer answered yes. The next class on explosives will be for free in April.

### **CAPITAL BUDGET**

#### **Radio Upgrades**

Bolan asked for clarification regarding the Replacement of Radio Equipment. First Assistant Fire Chief Loreto stated the Fire Department Radios used for Mutual Aid calls are 20 years old. The Radios are used when the Township responds to fires in other towns. The Township has 60 radios. The radios are out of production with no ability to receive replacements or repairs.

#### **Fire Company #4 Diesel Exhaust System**

Bolan asked for clarification regarding the Diesel Exhaust System for Company #4. Fire Chief Meyer explained this is necessary when the Fire Trucks are started within the Fire Station. He stated Fire Company #1 has a Fire Truck with a hose connected for ventilation. Fire Company #4 requires the update due to Clean Air Technology Standards.

Wong asked if the other Fire Companies will require this updating in the future. Fire Chief Meyer stated yes.

Paz asked what is the approximate cost for installation of the remaining Diesel Exhaust Systems. Fire Chief Meyer stated approximately \$40,000 in years 2022-2025 for the remaining Fire Companies.

#### **Replacement of Engine 425**

Paz asked for clarification regarding the Replacement of Engine 425. Fire Chief Meyer explained numerous repairs have been performed on the Vehicle. The future repairs needed are very costly for the Vehicle. He stated it is not worth the cost to repair the Fire Truck.

Wong asked if the Fire Department can handle an Electrical fire now with the current equipment. Fire Chief Meyer stated not every Fire Company has the current equipment but the Township can respond. All Township Fire Companies should be equipped with Foam so the resources are not limited.

Ervin asked if the foam is considered Hazardous Waste. Fire Chief Meyer stated it is not.

### **C09-203 Repairs and Maintenance**

Ferguson asked if the extensive repairs to the Fire Companies could be placed in the Capital Budget so the Operating Budget is not increased. Chief Financial Officer will review if it is possible. Fire Chief Meyer suggested some Councilmembers and Chief Financial Officer join

him on a tour of the Fire Companies to review the repairs to see if there is a way to combine the repairs for a future Capital Budget Item.

May asked for clarification regarding the Radio Upgrades. Fire Chief Meyer stated the Radios are used for outside of the Township during Mutual Aid Fire Responses. May asked if other Towns are changing Radios. Fire Chief Meyer stated the Northwest Bergen Mutual Aid is in contact with the Municipalities to make sure all Municipalities are communicating and operable.

May asked if the Replacement of Mask Fit Test Machine could be reimbursed under COVID-19. Chief Financial Officer will review. Fire Chief Meyer stated this machine can be shared with the Emergency Services.

### **POOL COMMITTEE**

May explained the 2020 challenges the Pool encountered are due to COVID-19. There were many changes in procedures. May extended thanks for the saved Pool Season in 2020.

Mr. Donald Hoover, Pool Committee Chairman, Mr. Mark Sidowski and Mr. Brian Clapp were in attendance to review the Pool Committee 2021 Budget.

Mr. Clapp stated the Pool worked with the Public Library to have outside events in 2020. He would like to reach out to the Senior Center and Access For All to provide the Pool for any of their outdoor events in 2021.

Mr. Clapp stated the Pool is in need of major repairs. Replastering, painting, decking and filtration system are some areas in need of repair or replacement.

Mr. Hoover would like to enhance the experience of the Township Pool for its Members. Membership was down 10-20% due to no Swimming Lessons and Swim Team in 2020. Mr. Hoover explained the various restrictions for 2020 for the Pool were challenging but successful.

Mr. Hoover is awaiting the 2021 Pool Restrictions from Bergen County.

Mr. Clapp is concerned about the condition of the Pools after this past Winter once they open the Pools up for the season.

May asked if there is a full Income and Expense Sheet for the Pool listing various Income Sources and Expenses. Mr. Hoover stated he does not have the information available.

Ferguson asked if there are Items currently in the Operating Budget that could be moved to the Capital Budget such as the Pool Repair extending the life of the Pools.

Mr. Hoover explained the overall Operating Expenses for Payroll is approximately \$85,000 per year. The Net Income covers approximately 2/3 of that expense. Over the past five years, the Pool has stabilized the overall Income Receipts.

May believes there are additional opportunities to expand Revenues.

### **N01-203 Repairs and Maintenance**

Ervin asked if some of the Repairs and Maintenance can be placed in the Capital Budget. Mr. Clapp stated the Total of this Line Item has always been flexible because the condition of the Pool is not known until it is opened in the Spring. Chief Financial Officer explained the

Preliminary Design of the Pool is currently with Boswell Engineering. If the Bid comes in lower, he will move funds to other Pool Sections.

Chief Financial Officer stated \$5,000 was reimbursed for Salaries and \$7,000 for Repairs were received from CARES, which were reinvested into the Pool Budget.

Ariemma asked the status of painting the Pools. Mr. Clapp stated the Pools were painted in 2018 but due to inclement weather the paint was not sufficient.

Ariemma asked the approximate cost of plastering the Pools. Mr. Clapp stated the cost is approximately \$100,000.

Ariemma asked why a new Filtration System is needed. Mr. Clapp stated the Department of Public Works currently helps with changing the filters. However, there is a need to have a healthier Filtration System. A Sand Filtration System is best for the Pools.

Mr. Hoover performed a Survey of local Municipal Pools and the Township's costs are similar.

Ariemma asked what if a Member turns 18 years of age during the Summer. Mr. Clapp stated the Member pays for their Age Category during Registration.

#### **N01-102 Permanent Part Time**

Paz asked for clarification regarding this Line Item. Chief Financial Officer stated this is the Hourly Range Rate with expected increases. Mr. Clapp explained an additional Employee was required in 2020 and in 2021 entitled a "Social Ambassador." This Employee was a Senior Guard. The Employee would review Social Distance concerns and clean as necessary.

Paz asked the status of Out-of-Town Members in 2020 and 2021. Mr. Clapp stated the Pool was not open to Out-of-Towners in 2020 due to Social Distancing. He would like to see the Limits increased in 2021 so Out-of-Towners could be Members. Mr. Clapp will receive guidance from the State regarding Social Distancing Guidelines of higher capacity in the near future.

Paz asked if they could rank the top Projects in order of most importance for the Pool. Mr. Hoover said the top three Projects are the plastering of the Pools, Filtration System and Intermediate Pool repairs.

Bolan is concerned the Pool needs to get more funding possibly through more Events. Bolan asked if there are untapped resources beyond Membership to raise funds. Mr. Clapp stated the Pool is always interested to get more groups to rent the facilities for their functions.

Ferguson asked if there are other Revenue Streams other than Membership. Mr. Clapp stated it is difficult to attract others if services are not provided. Mr. Clapp would like more Township events held at the Pool.

Ferguson suggested an Early Bird Renewal Plan or other creative ways to entice Membership. Mr. Clapp stated previous Pre-Season Registrations Renewals received a Guest Passbook. This is not offered in 2021. Mr. Clapp suggested the Pool could offer new Resident Discounts or give them a Free Day Pass.

May suggested an increase in communication between the Recreation Committee and the Pool. He suggested the possibility of the Food Truck Festival be held at the Pool in 2021. He also

suggested the Pool hold a Membership Drive at Mahwah Day with Special Rates for new Members.

Mr. Sidowski suggested setting up a Registration table at some Recreation Commission games to increase Pool Membership.

May would like the Pool Commission to reconsider providing Membership to Oakland Residents.

Ariemma asked if there have been any Pool Newsletters mailed to Residents. Mr. Clapp stated nothing has been mailed since 2018. May suggested information be included in the upcoming Spring Township Newsletter.

#### **N01-203 Repairs and Maintenance**

Bolan asked for clarification regarding \$50,000 in the Line Item for Repairs. Mr. Hoover explained it is difficult to forecast due to the unknown condition of the Pool until opened in the Spring. Mr. Sidowski added until the pumps are started in early Spring not sure what has changed over the Winter.

May asked if there were any repairs from last season. Mr. Clapp stated one of the heating and A/C units could be replaced at \$15,000 and the Starting Blocks for the Swim Team needs replacing.

May would like a breakdown of specific repairs with estimated costs be provided to the Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Hoover stated he can gather the information and provide the data. Chief Financial Officer stated he will meet and review the data with the Business Administrator.

May also suggested the following information be provided to the Chief Financial Officer: a Current List of Capital Projects, Profit/Loss Statement, Regular Repair List, Repair Schedule spread out over a number of years, Membership Trends and Township versus Out-of-Town Memberships comparison.

On a motion by Paz, seconded by Wong, the Meeting was adjourned at 12:30PM. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

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