

BUDGET MEETING JANUARY 27, 2015

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Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. read the following statement led the flag salute.

IN COMPLIANCE WITH CHAPTER 231 PUBLIC LAWS OF 1975, NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS GIVEN BY NOTICE PUBLISHED IN THE ATLANTIC CITY PRESS, THE HAMMONTON GAZETTE, EGG HARBOR AND HAMMONTON NEWS, ON JANUARY 21, 2015 AND POSTED AT TOWN HALL

Roll Call:

Committee Present: Anthony Gabris, Barbara Rheault, Christopher Silva, Mayor Brown

Committee Absent: Larry Riffle

Deputy Municipal Clerk: Ann C. Lupinetti

CFO: Dawn Stollenwerk

Police Department: Chief John Thompson

Public Discussion: None.

Budget Discussion: CFO reported that this year the budget is eligible for local examination; therefore, it will not require Division approval. We are required to introduce by March 13th and adopt by April 24th. Ms. Stollenwerk stated with this budget as presented, including all Departmental requests, is \$164,000 over the levy cap, and reflects a 12 cent tax increase. CFO stated to reduce the tax increase by 10 cents, either expenditures need to be decreased by \$290,000 or increase revenues by \$290,000.

Ms. Stollenwerk noted in 2001 our State Aid was \$783,000 or 20% of our revenues and now we receive \$493,000 or 9% of revenue. The Township has been offsetting the decrease in state aid with increases in property taxes and the use of surplus. Available surplus has been declining and not regenerating each year. For the 2015 budget we have \$100,000 less surplus to use as revenue in the 2015 budget, and even less will be available for use in the 2016 budget.

Mayor Brown stated our tax collection rate is at 95.5% and suggested an accelerated tax sale, which most communities are turning to, which may help our budget. CFO stated the net gain of \$100,000, is a one shot deal and will be affecting more of our homeowners instead of just vacant property owners. Mayor Brown asked everyone to consider accelerated sales, noting the other communities have been keeping their tax collection rate up because of this change. Committee discussed at length tax sales, foreclosures, tax collection rate, land sales, leasing of public lands and pocket liquor licenses.

Mayor Brown suggested decreasing the police salaries and wages line due to the loss of the Sergeant position. Chief Thompson stated he will need to replace that position, noting there will be approximately a savings of \$15,000.00. Mr. Silva questioned the main increases; CFO explained the step increases. Mayor stated that the increase in the Police Department budget is for salaries and two new police vehicles. Mayor Brown made the following suggestions: continue to utilize the hand scanner for the court and not purchase the magnetometer for \$5,000.00; lower the EMS line item to \$5,000; decrease legal services by \$2,000; decrease engineering by \$15,000; decrease fuel by \$5,000; review the need for an accelerated tax sale.

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Chief Thompson stated at the next meeting he would like to address mandates, specifically regarding police radios and the capital budget requests. CFO also referred to an analysis regarding court consolidation. Mayor moved to have a Budget Meeting on February 10th at 6pm seconded by Ms. Rheault. RCV: Yeas: All voted yes.

Public Discussion: None.

Mayor Brown so moved to adjourn seconded by Ms. Rheault. RCV: Yeas: All voted yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Johnson,
Municipal Clerk

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