

**BUDGET MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2014
6:00 P.M.**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6: 15 p.m. read the following statement led the flag salute.

NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS GIVEN BY NOTICE PUBLISHED IN THE ATLANTIC CITY PRESS, ON JANUARY 15, 2014, AND SENT TO THE EGG HARBOR/HAMMONTON NEWS AND HAMMONTON GAZETTE AND POSTED AT TOWN HALL.

Roll Call:

Committee Present: Edward Hagaman, Barbara Rheault, Mayor Brown

Committee Absent: Anthony Gabris, Larry Riffle

Municipal Clerk: Kimberly Johnson

CFO: Dawn Stollenwerk

Police Department: Chief John Thompson

Supervisor Public Works: Steve Sperlak

Public Discussion: None.

Budget Discussion: CFO reported we are currently at an 11.9 cent tax increase. Mayor asked about Garden State and Clean Communities Funding from the State. CFO stated we will receive Clean Communities, but she is doubtful regarding Garden State Funding. Mayor expressed his concern regarding our reserve for uncollected taxes which is approximately \$700,000, noting in comparison to similar communities our number is extremely high. CFO stated other communities have accelerated tax sales; our tax collection rate is low. Mayor Brown asked the advantage of accelerated sales. CFO stated it is one shot revenue increase, we anticipate \$425,000 in receipts for delinquent taxes, which would go away, and our interest on cost on taxes is \$65,000 which would go away. Ms. Stollenwerk stated most of the tax sale listings are vacant properties with not a lot of value. CFO stated at this time she did not feel an accelerated tax sale would be beneficial, but foreclosures would be, which is included in this budget. CFO suggested streamlining our process and begin to sell properties.

Mayor noted revenues are down in the Construction Office and suggested not increasing the salaries of non-contractual employees, as well as recommending cutting the hours of the Zoning Officer from 24 hours to 18 at the 2013 salary rate. Mayor suggested cutting Engineering costs back \$5,000; CFO stated that increase was based upon anticipation of a DOT Grant. For Public Safety Mayor Brown suggested the following: cut other expenses back \$2,000, remove the Special Officer, and keep additional clerk at \$12.00 hr. and add 100 hours (savings of \$16,000). Mayor suggested holding police overtime at \$85,000. CFO stated last year the expenditure was \$105,000. Chief Thompson questioned reimbursement to his department due to workers compensation and disability. CFO reported the municipality is reimbursed 75% for workers compensation and the officer is paid what we receive from disability. Chief stated with 13 officers \$85,000 is a goal, and suggested meeting with the PBA regarding concessions due to our financial hardships. Committee briefly discussed concessions to change the scheduling. Mayor questioned the increase of maintenance costs. CFO explained costs are up due to e-ticketing and new equipment. Chief stated as a Department we are on the higher end based upon the amount of officers and the number of tickets written. This has been reflected by the award of a Distracted Driving Grant, which was only awarded to 3 departments in Atlantic County. Chief Thompson

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stated there is a deficiency to not having a Special, but he is trying to correct that. Chief stated himself; Captain Zeck and Ms. Johnson are working on developing an Ordinance to address downgrading of certain tickets. Mayor asked about clothing allowance and clothing uniforms. CFO reported clothing allowance is contractual and clothing uniforms addresses if officer's items are damaged in the line of duty.

For Public Works Mayor suggested decreasing maintenance of motor vehicles \$2,000 and noted other contractual items increased by \$9,000. CFO stated the \$9,000 increase was due to the parting of our former Superintendent of Public Works, because he was certified in fertilizing, etc. for the fields. Upon his departure we then needed to contract out for those services. Discussions ensued regarding maintenance of recreation fields. It was suggested to requests proposals for these services to save on costs.

Mayor asked if we need two police cars. Chief stated mileage wise two cars are ready for replacement; however, he will work with Committee to keep costs down. Mayor stated he is looking at every penny, and suggested removing one vehicle. Mayor suggested we look at our surplus. Ms. Stollenwerk stated we started the year with \$877,000 and last year with 1 million, noting we are down \$181,000, utilized less as revenue, and we are not regenerating. CFO informed the Governing Body our added assessments are up to date, unfunded mandates by the State have increased, she can adjust health costs due to any employee waiver, will adjust everyone back to 2013 expenses, except for finance due to banking fees. CFO stated based on discussions she could get the budget down to approximately 6 cent increase. Committee discussed ways of generating revenues and reducing costs, for example, solar projects, selling lands, increasing fees for permits, cutting costs at the Transfer Station, and promoting residents to increase recycling efforts. CFO reported court revenues and Uniform Construction Code fees are down. Ms. Rheault removed herself from the meeting. Mayor stated the court requested additional sessions, which cannot be granted. CFO stated the caseload is down, criminal cases are down, and revenues are down \$7,000 from last year. Chief stated additional court sessions were due to conflicts which should mostly be resolved, which also affected his department's overtime. Mayor stated we need to begin to explore shared services. Ms. Rheault returned. Committee discussed the costs at the transfer station, which include, tipping fees, hauling, compost piles, tub grinding, permit fees, etc. Ms. Stollenwerk to prepare a cost analysis for the Transfer Station.

Public Discussion: None.

Mr. Hagaman so moved to adjourn seconded by Ms. Rheault. RCV: Yeas: All voted yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Johnson,
Municipal Clerk