

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING – MARCH 18, 2020

Mayor Lane called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and requested the Clerk to call the roll. The following members were present: Dr. Michael Brantley, Kevin B. McMillan, Carol Rizzo (via phone), Nicholas Williams, and Mayor Robert Lane, Jr.

Also present at the dais were Richard J. Cuttrell, Municipal Clerk, Vito Gadaleta, Business Administrator, and Michael J. Bascom, Chief Financial Officer.

In addition, Stephanie Oppegaard, Human Resources Director was in attendance.

Mayor Lane announced that the notice requirements of R.S. 10:4-18 have been satisfied by the publication of the required advertisement in the Asbury Park Press and The Coaster on March 5, 2020, posting the notice on the Board in the Municipal Complex, and filing a copy of said notice with the Municipal Clerk.

Mr. Bascom stated the budget will be introduced at the March 23th regular meeting. He provided a detailed explanation of the Annual Financial Statement. The total assessed valuation of the Township is \$4,239,464,300. Revenues in 2019 exceeded the revenues anticipated in the budget by \$1,921,854. The amount of \$152,577 was reserved in unexpended appropriations at the end of 2019 which is much lower than previous years. The remaining balance of this amount converts to surplus at the end of 2020 so the low amount of reserves is a concern for the 2021 budget. Surplus at the end of 2019 was \$5,083,657.01 and the tax collection rate in 2019 was 98.90%. Both the marina utility and sewer utility are self-liquidating. The Marina Utility has a surplus of \$268,680 and the Sewer Utility has a surplus of \$7,721,816, a portion of which will be used for additional capital projects. The Township is building surplus in anticipation of issuing long term debt in the near future and the need to offset any spike in the tax rate. In addition, should the current situation with the COVID-19 virus impact property values, the Township will be in a position to avoid tax rate spikes due to valuation decreases.

The proposed 2020 budget increases the amount to be raised by taxation from \$30,231,646 to \$31,220,939 for a 3.2% increase. The total appropriations are up 1.58%. The tax rate decreases from .749 in 2019 to .736 in 2020. This includes appropriations for full staffing and the transition of 8 to 12 part-time employees to full-time status in the Emergency Medical Services Department. The municipal tax for a home valued at \$400,000 will be \$2,945.74 which is down \$50.26 from 2019. Total appropriations are \$2,375,240 below the 3.5% appropriations cap and the tax levy is \$228,652 below the 2% tax levy cap. Total debt outstanding is \$19,980,000 in the General Fund, \$4,179,000 in the Sewer Utility, and \$863,000 in the Marina Utility. Health benefits costs have stabilized. The debt service payment in the 2020 budget will be up \$418,000 versus 2019.

Mr. Bascom reviewed the capital plan and will be recommending projects to move forward with the adoption of bond ordinances in 2020.

The Committee discussed changes to the Township Committee meeting schedule in light of the on-going national health emergency. The start time of March 23rd regular meeting will be changed to 4:00 p.m. The workshop meeting scheduled for that date will be cancelled. The April 13th workshop meeting and regular meeting will be cancelled.

Mr. McMillan offered a motion, seconded by Dr. Brantley to adjourn. All were in favor.

Richard J. Cuttrell,
Municipal Clerk