



**TOWNSHIP OF ROCHELLE PARK
151 WEST PASSAIC STREET
ROCHELLE PARK, NJ 07662**

**MINUTES – BUDGET MEETING – May 3, 2010
Meeting to begin at 7:30 PM**

Call to order 7:30 PM

Open Public Meetings Act – According the law, this meeting has been posted and is being taped.

Roll Call:

Comm. R. Davidson
Comm. K.J. Kovalcik - Absent
Comm. J. Scarpa
Comm. P. Strohmeyer
Mayor F. Valenzuela

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mike Levitsky

Mayor Valenzuela asked that everyone remain standing for a moment of silence remembering those in the military stationed overseas.

A motion was offered by Comm. Strohmeyer and seconded by Comm. Davidson to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a voice vote – all voting “Aye”.

Discussion:

Defeated Midland School #1 Budget

The Township Committee met with representative of Midland School Board of Education. In attendance were: Superintendent Dr. Fredrik Oberkehr, Principal Cara Hurd, Business Administrator Theresa Guastello, President Patricia Dee Bilka, Vice President Mrs. Barbara Ann Gleeson Maurer, Members – Mr. Sam Allos, Mrs. Teresa Cravello, Mr. Jay Esposito, Mr. Mark Scully, Mr. Robert Verhasselt

Mayor Valenzuela advised the specific figures regarding the defeat of the budget. He also congratulated Mr. Scully and Ms. Dee Bilka for their election and reelection to the School Board. Defeated Midland School Budget 4-20-10. Valenzuela cited difficult economic time with the municipality as well.

Due to the Board of Education entering into negotiations, exact figures were not readily available. Dr. Oberkehr advised that programs were cut and teachers were laid off. The total came to 8.5 in personnel removed. The BOE presented the Township with the most efficient budget possible without a lot of room for reductions.

Comm. Kovalcik entered the meeting

Dr. Oberkehr advised that himself and the Principal were not taking a raise this year, however, the Business Administrator was currently in negotiations possibly looking at a 2.5% increase in salary. He also advised that the school as lost approximately \$500,000 in state aid.

The Township Committee reviewed the proposed budget line by line asking questions regarding salary increases and class size. Possibly teacher salary freezes would be on the horizon. The Committee asked for specific explanations regarding increases in line items. They suggested combining services with other school districts, possibly joint purchasing.

Dr. Oberkehr asked that the Township Committee advise him of their budget reductions by May 12th as he would have to notify personnel by May 15th of lay offs. He realizes that the Township Committee has until May 19th for their final decision.

The PTA President spoke regarding the excellent school system in place in Midland School. She advised giving all children every opportunity to become successful. Midland School is special.

The Board of Education will provide any information requested by the Township Committee shortly.

Mayor Valenzuela advised that he would like to make the unpopular decision to free teachers salaries for the upcoming year. He feels we must share the sacrifices.

A motion was offered by Comm. Strohmeyer and seconded by Comm. Scarpa to open the meeting to the public. Motion carried on a voice vote – all voting “Aye”.

Ann Gordon – 29 Grove Avenue – Advised that she agreed with the feelings of the Township Committee and stated that it was unfair to penalize a small town and cut so much aid while giving the majority of the aid to the cities, such as Newark and Jersey City.

Donna Denacola – 50 Howard Avenue - Save the child, freeze the pay.

Diane Vitale – 21 Durand Place – Asked if teachers pay was frozen, would it save jobs? Hopefully teachers job can be saved so classes can remain smaller.

Karen Sarro – 58 Crescent Street – Advised that she is a state employee who has had her salary frozen and had furlough days for the past two years. She asked the Township Committee plan for the future to fix the problem. She was advised that the employees have tried to maintain their jobs, departments have been cooperating. With interlocal agreements, furloughing, and ambulance 3rd party billing a possible savings will be recognized.

Jean Rogers – 58 Susquehanna – Remarked about the Superintendent and Principle not accepting raises this year. She hopes the rest of the school will do the right thing.

Melissa Sanchez – 57 Madison Ave – Suggested paying a fee for playing sports programs within the Township.

Frances Pascarella – PTA president – 32 Thiem Ave. – Stated that she felt the School Board had done a great job preparing the budget as it stood. She hopes Midland School retains the small town feel. She also felt that raising taxes was easier then sending children to private school. She asked the Township Committee to be fair.

A motion was offered by Comm. Strohmeyer and seconded by Comm. Davidson to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried on a voice vote – all voting “Aye”.

A motion was offered by Comm. Kovalcik and seconded by Comm. Davidson to open the meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote – all voting “Aye”.

2010 Municipal Budget – Impact on Services and Personnel

Roy Riggiano – CFO – Advised that since the introduction of the 2010 Budget, departments throughout the municipality had been meeting with himself and departmental liaisons to try and meet the financial obligations of their departments without incurring personnel losses. He stressed that this introduced budget had no breathing room and that time is of the essence and decisions needed to be made at tonight’s meeting. Attorney Rotolo advised that RICE notices were not required for employees if they were laid off.

Frank Di Maria – Municipal Auditor – discussed in detail the following departments finances:

Ambulance Corp.

Captain Roland Jacobsen researched third party billing. The application has been submitted to the State and the rigs are being inspected to meet all state requirements on both ambulances. Dr. Kashishian and Dr. Saccaro will be medical directors, available for consultation and to review medical charts if needed. Roland's new responsibilities will be determined at a later date.

Library

The Library Director will be furloughed 8 days on Fridays in July and August. She was also instructed to cut back her volunteers hours by 10 hours each biweekly. Payroll amounts will have to be strictly monitored.

CFO Riggitano will provide the department heads as well as the Township Committee a payroll report, detailing where each department stands on their budgeted payroll amounts.

Police

Comm. Davidson met with the police department on numerous occasions attempting to come up with a solution, instead of laying off two officers. Their plan consists of laying off one dispatcher and capping overtime at \$85,000. The police also agreed to contribute 1.5% of their base salary towards health benefits. Davidson appreciated the assistance of the police. He also advised that negotiations should begin shortly for their new contract.

The following resolution was offered by Comm. Davidson and Seconded by Mayor Valenzuela and reads:

Resolution #2010-84

A Resolution – Authorizing Agreement with Rochelle Park Police Superior Officer's Association (SOA) and Patrol Officer's (POA)

Whereas, as a result of various factors, most significantly the reduction or elimination of significant portions of state aid provided by the State of New Jersey, the Township of Rochelle Park has experienced a significant budget crisis for the current year; and

Whereas, in addition to these reductions in state aid, state law requires that the Township introduced a budget within a spending cap imposed by the State of New Jersey; and

Whereas, the Township Committee has engaged in substantial efforts, over many weeks, in order to comply with the requirements of state law and develop a budget for introduction which complies with state law yet continues to offer the high level of services that have always been provided by the Township to its residents and taxpayers; and

Whereas, in furtherance of that objective, the Township Committee has conducted numerous special meetings, engaged in many discussions and has reviewed this matter in detail with the Township Auditor and Chief Financial Officer; and

Whereas, in addition to the foregoing efforts, the Township Committee, through various subcommittees, has reached out and met with all department heads and union leaders in an effort to work with those departments and unions to address this significant budgetary issue; and

Whereas, the Township Committee has successfully worked with various union members, department heads and other employees in an effort to avoid layoffs, in most cases, and to continue to provide necessary services to the Municipality; and

Whereas, Township Committee member, Robert Davidson, who serves as Police Commissioner, has engaged in exhaustive discussions and negotiations with members of Rochelle Park Police SOA and PBA in an effort to arrive at a joint resolution of the issues that may impact upon the Township of Rochelle Park Police Department; and

Whereas, as a result of the cooperation between the Township Committee and the Rochelle Park Police Department and agreement has been reached which will result in significant cost savings for 2010 and will, therefore, avoid the necessity of layoffs of two police officers an action with was initially thought necessary by the Township Committee; and

Whereas, this agreement is set forth in the attached "Memorandum of Agreement" which outlines the various concessions made by the two police bargaining units; and

Whereas, the Township Committee believes that it is in the best interest of the residents and taxpayers to approve such an agreement.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, by the Township Committee of the Township of Rochelle Park, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. A "Memorandum of Agreement", in the form attached to this resolution, be and is hereby approved and authorized.
2. This "Memorandum of Agreement" shall serve to amend and modify the current collective bargaining agreements between Rochelle Park Police Superior Officer's Association and the Patrol Officer's Association.
3. This "Memorandum of Agreement" is a temporary agreement and all terms, conditions, and obligations set forth in it shall expire as of midnight on December 31st, 2010, the date on which the current collective bargaining agreements expire.
4. The Mayor and the Township Clerk be and are hereby authorized to execute any and all documents, contract or memoranda which may be necessary in order to effectuate the provisions of this resolution which shall be satisfied by the execution of a copy of the "Memorandum of Agreement" which has been previously signed by all members of each of the aforesaid collective bargaining units.

Now therefore be it further resolved that the Township Clerk be and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward certified copies of the within Resolution to:

- (a) the Rochelle Park Superior Officer's Association
- (b) the Rochelle Park Patrol Officer's Association (PBA)
- (c) the Township Auditor
- (d) the Township Chief Financial Officer
- (e) the Township Attorney

Attest: Virginia De Maria

A motion was offered by Comm. Davidson and seconded by Mayor Valenzuela to adopt the above resolution. Motion carried on a roll call vote – all voting "Aye".

The following resolution was offered by Comm. Strohmeyer and seconded by Comm. Davidson and reads:

Resolution #2010-85

A Resolution – Authorizing Layoff of Employee

Whereas, as a result of various fiscal actions taken by the State of New Jersey including, without being limited to, a virtual elimination of all State aid, the Township has been forced to make various difficult decisions, including personnel decisions; and

Whereas, the current Municipal budget has been evaluated during the course of many weeks and various meetings, discussions and negotiations have occurred in an effort to avoid reductions in personnel, layoffs, or other actions which may impact upon the services provided to the Municipality; and

Whereas, although the Township Committee has been successful to a large degree, in avoiding such layoffs, unfortunately there must be a reduction in force among police dispatchers in order to comply with the mandates of State Law and in order to submit a budget which complies with those mandates

Now, therefore, be it resolved, by the Township Committee of the Township of Rochelle Park, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Township Committee hereby authorizes and approves a reduction in force among police dispatchers
2. This reduction in force shall result in the layoff of one employee which shall be determined based upon seniority among police dispatchers.
3. The interim Township Administrator is hereby authorized and directed to prepare a layoff notice and deliver the same either personally or by certified mail to Michael LaFalce which notice shall advise this employee that his services as a police dispatcher for the Township of Rochelle Park will end on June 4, 2010; and

Now therefore be it further resolved that the Township shall maintain this individual's name and personnel records in order that he will be considered for re-employment if and when circumstances permit such consideration for re-employment.

Now therefore be it further resolved that the Township Clerk be and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward certified copies of the within Resolution to the

Township of Rochelle Park Police Department, the Township Auditor, the Township Chief Financial Officer and the Township Attorney.

Attest: Virginia De Maria

A motion was offered by Comm. Strohmeier and seconded by Comm. Davidson to lay off dispatcher Michael LaFalce. Motion carried on a roll call vote – all voting “Aye”.

Court

The Township Committee discussed financial remedies with Court Administrator Lynda Lasini. All avenues were discussed, such as combining two court sessions into one, cutting the Judge’s salary and making a full time position, part time. The department is still short by \$8,000.

Attorney Rotolo advised completing an amended salary ordinance.

Comm. Scarpa asked the Administrator to cancel Nextel phones which are not being used.

Building Department

Construction Code Bolan came up with plans for shared services. It was agreed that the sub-code officials’ salaries would be reduced to \$5000. There is a possibility of sharing services with Little Ferry with possibly 3 days in Rochelle Park and three days in Little Ferry. Mayor Valenzuela advised having set hours. Mr. Bolan suggested possibly increasing his hours to 8 per day instead of 6. All of the details would have to be spelled out by resolution. Administrator De Maria will meet with Mr. Bolan to discuss the building department’s solution to the budget problem. This department is currently short of funds.

DPW

The members of the DPW met with Comm. Davidson and agreed to 8 staggered furlough days and a cap on overtime. They also agreed to reduce their stand-by hours from 5 to 2 and contribute 1.5% towards their health benefits. Unfortunately, a DPW worker must be RIF’d.

The following resolution was offered by Comm. Davidson and seconded by Comm. Strohmeier and reads:

Resolution #2010-86

A Resolution – Authorizing Layoff of Employee

Whereas, as a result of various fiscal actions taken by the State of New Jersey including, without being limited to, a virtual elimination of all State aid, the Township has been forced to make various difficult decisions, including personnel decisions; and

Whereas, the current Municipal budget has been evaluated during the course of many weeks and various meetings, discussions and negotiations have occurred in an effort to avoid reductions in personnel, layoffs, or other actions which may impact upon the services provided to the Municipality; and

Whereas, although the Township Committee has been successful to a large degree, in avoiding such layoffs, unfortunately there must be a reduction in force in the Department of Public Works in order to comply with the mandates of State Law and in order to submit a budget which complies with those mandates

Now, therefore, be it resolved, by the Township Committee of the Township of Rochelle Park, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Township Committee hereby authorizes and approves a reduction in force in the Department of Public Works.
2. This reduction in force shall result in the layoff of one employee which shall be determined based upon seniority in that department.
3. The interim Township Administrator is hereby authorized and directed to prepare a layoff notice and deliver the same either personally or by certified mail to Robert Passarella which notice shall advise this employee that his services for the Township of Rochelle Park will end on June 4, 2010; and

Now therefore be it further resolved that the Township shall maintain this individual’s name and personnel records in order that he will be considered for re-employment if and when circumstances permit such consideration for re-employment.

Now therefore be it further resolved that the Township Clerk be and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward certified copies of the within Resolution to the Township of Rochelle Park Police Department, the Township Auditor, the Township Chief Financial Officer and the Township Attorney.

Attest: Virginia De Maria

A motion was offered by Comm. Davidson and seconded by Comm. Strohmeyer to adopt the above resolution. Motion carried on a roll call vote – all voting “Aye”.

The Township Committee discussed combining the Planning and Zoning Boards. The Zoning Board will be dissolved. 2 members of the Zoning Board may join the Planning Board. Comm. Strohmeyer advised Municipal Planner Chuck McGroarty by re-examining the Master Plan is fixing the Township Zoning laws.

A motion was offered by Comm. Scarpa and seconded by Comm. Strohmeyer to open the meeting to the public. Motion carried on a voice vote – all voting “Aye”.

No Remarks from the Public

A motion was offered by Comm. Scarpa and seconded by Comm. Strohmeyer to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried on a voice vote – all voting “Aye”.

A motion was offered by Comm. Davidson and seconded by Comm. Kovalcik to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote – all voting “Aye”.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia De Maria
Municipal Clerk