

The special January 12, 2009 budget meeting was called to order by Mayor Petillo at 6:37 p.m. in the Board of Health Building, 111 River Styx Road, Hopatcong, NJ.

Mayor Petillo announced this meeting is held in accordance with the 1975 Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-6 et seq., special notice having been forwarded to the New Jersey Herald/New Jersey Sunday Herald, the Daily Record, The Star Ledger, and posted on the bulletin board maintained in the Municipal Building for public announcements.

ROLL CALL – Councilmembers present: Richard Bunce, Michael Francis, Marie Galate, Madeline McManus, Robert Modick & John Young (arrived at 6:43 p.m.)

Others present: Administrator Joseph Moskovitz & Clerk Lorraine Stark.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT: Meeting open to public for comments on items on the agenda for which no public discussion is provided. (Comments limited to 5 minutes). Mayor Petillo thanked the public for coming. No public comments were forthcoming.

- Preliminary 2009 Budget Discussion – Mayor Petillo commented that the recession was predicted to be long-term with each year being more difficult. Last year the Borough reduced its staff by 5 full-time and one part-time employee. There were no additional cuts that could be made without a reduction of services, as they now exist.

Police Chief John Swanson was present to discuss possible reductions in the Police Force: he noted one retirement in 2009 and the possibility of laying-off 3 Officers. Councilman Young arrived at 6:43 p.m. Chief Swanson revealed that there would be a net cost savings of \$34,632; this number was arrived at by taking the salary savings in the amount of \$130,000, reducing it by the loss of grant money and payment to employees for unemployment. The savings generated by the one retiring officer would be \$43,000. Chief Swanson commented that the real savings would be in 2010 estimated at \$232,000. Regarding future retirements there would be 3 officers eligible for retirement in 2010; he did not know the intent of those individuals at this time. Chief Swanson revealed that with any reduction in force size there would be a reduction in services provided to the community. Those present wanted to get input from the Hopatcong School Board regarding the School Resource Officers and Community Service Officer.

Mayor Petillo distributed some preliminary numbers; the actual numbers from the State would not be available until the middle of March. It appears that the 2009 budget cut should be \$930,000, one-half of that is due to a decrease in revenues. Mayor Petillo remarked that if people cannot pay their taxes the Borough would continue to loss revenue; this was something that was happening all across the State of New Jersey. In addition, we expect the State Aid to be decreased by at least \$187,000, which was the reduction in 2008. It was noted that the State might enforce a deferred pension program and charge 8.25% interest on this deferral. Mr. Moskovitz commented that we might have to consider this deferral because there was not adequate money to pay the full pension fees.

- Garbage – Discussion Bulk Pickup. Mayor Petillo informed those present that with the change in commercial garbage collection the Borough would be saving \$100,000, 40% of that is contributed to the schools. Councilman Bunce reported he has spoke with school officials and they would pursue the outsourcing. Those present agreed that changes in how business was being conducted needed to be implemented regardless of who was doing the collecting; we had to reduce the cost of doing business. There was a concern expressed about non-residents using the recycling facility, and how this should be controlled by proof of residency. The consensus was to move forward with the change in commercial garbage collection, and to get the recycling newsletter out to residents as soon as possible.

Open to the public for comment. A resident said that she read in the Herald that Mayor Petillo said no other municipalities collected garbage. Mr. Moskovitz responded that was not an accurate quote. If there were a reduction in the DPW staff it would be eight individuals. Mr. Greg Mason questioned the number because he thought it was seven. Mayor Petillo explained that there were three trucks with three workers; one employee was not replaced from last year. Regarding the Recycling Center, Mr. Mason suggested that the two employees be scheduled during those hours so that overtime did not have to be paid. He also raised the question of having three firehouses, two in close proximity to each other, and the number of ambulances, which he said was four. Councilperson Modick said that the Fire Department works well the way it is currently structured. A resident questioned the number of garbage cans since she lives in a 4-family residential unit and did not feel that 3 cans per property was fair. They would look into this matter because there were other legal multi-family dwellings in Hopatcong.

Council President Galate moved to go into Closed Session at 7:45 p.m., seconded by Bunce. The vote was unanimous. Mayor Petillo announced matters to be discussed pertained to a contact with Millennium Strategies, LLC, and real estate negotiations. Mayor Petillo thanked the public for their input.

Council President Galate moved to adjourn at 8:06 p.m., seconded by Bunce. Those present voted affirmative.

Respectfully submitted: