

The February 19, 2008 special budget meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Mayor Petillo in the Municipal Building, 111 River Styx Road, Hopatcong, NJ 07843.

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, Estelle Klein, Madeline McManus & Robert Modick. Absent – Marie Galate. Others present: Auditor Dave Evans, Acting Administrator James Roberts, CFO Kelleyanne McGann & 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). None was forthcoming.

Discussion of the 2008 Municipal & Capital Budget – Mr. Evans explained that \$315,000 adequately represents the average home assessment in Hopatcong. For every dollar collected by the Borough, 25 cents goes to support the Borough; the others you have no control over. He reviewed the three options and informed those present that there was a good possibility that a CAP & Tax Levy waiver would be granted. Regarding Extraordinary Aid, Mr. Evans explained why he did not believe that Hopatcong would be receiving this; in 2007, 85 municipalities applied and only 3 in Sussex County received the Aid. The tax rate increases for those three ranged from 12 ½ to 27%. Since the Borough was looking at a 10% increase, it didn't seem likely they would qualify. Mr. Evans also noted negatives associated with Extraordinary Aid and how it would adversely affect the tax collection rate. The consensus was to not apply for Extraordinary Aid in 2008. Mr. Evans reported that the Governing Body should be comfortable with the spending plan, and since they were not applying for the Aid, they had time before introducing the budget. Those present thanked Mr. Evans.

There was a discussion pertaining to non-collar salary increase; consensus was for 2%. In addition, those present felt that the background checks for coaches, although it was something they would like to do, the \$10,500 should be removed from the budget. Ms. McGann reported that with the new cuts of \$209,000 the tax increase was \$9.88 per month for average home.

Councilman Francis revealed that the Recreation Commission was sensitive to the financial situation, and would be increasing recreation fees to become more self-sufficient.

Councilmember Modick raised the issue of privatization for garbage collection; firmly believes that this should be reviewed.

Mayor Petillo said that she would like to address the matter of the Municipal Building roof in the near future.

Mr. Roberts discussed the need for better purchasing controls and the hiring of a part-time purchasing agent for one or two days per week. Mayor Petillo indicated that Stanhope might be interested in sharing an individual.

It was reported that the County has suspended their Open Space Tax for 2008, and Hopatcong would like to re-instate some token amount; Mr. Ursin would be consulted in this matter.

Mr. Roberts informed those present that nothing has been done about capital items; agreed to leave in the \$170,000 for communication center, new bay doors for Fire Company #2 and well filters. Mayor Petillo noted three DPW items: paving, truck washing facility & removal of underground tanks. Councilperson Modick revealed that although the tanks are fiberglass water is getting into cracks in the pavement. Therefore the tops need to be repaired. Ms. McGann commented that there was already \$12,500 in our Capital Improvement fund, \$49,000 could be cancelled from old ordinances, and these monies used for down payment.

Fire Department Bills – Mr. Roberts reviewed the bills, the service was performed, and the price seems reasonable. He suggested that Mr. Ursin provide the governing body with a separate resolution at the next meeting authorizing payment to Mr. Byron.

Councilman Bunce moved to go into closed session at 7:48 p.m., seconded by McManus. Those present voted affirmative. Absent – M. Galate. Mayor Petillo reported matters to be discussed pertained to personnel.

Councilperson Bunce moved to adjourn at 8:04 p.m., seconded by Francis. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted: