

1. The February 28, 2007 special budget meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Mayor Hodson in the Municipal Building, 111 River Styx Road, Hopatcong, NJ.
2. Moment of silent reflection.
3. Pledge of allegiance to the Flag of the USA.
4. Mayor Hodson announced this meeting is held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-1 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.
In accordance with NJUFC, please note there is one exit that should be utilized in case of emergency or fire.
5. Roll call. Councilmembers present: John Armeno (arrived at 6:08 p.m.), Richard Bunce (arrived at 6:25 p.m.), Marie Galate, Estelle Klein, Madeline McManus & Sylvia Petillo. Others present: Administrator Steven Ward & Clerk Lorraine Stark.
6. Meeting Open to Public for Comments. Jim Sorensen, Butch Mendyk & Tom Young (members of the Hopatcong Ambulance Squad) were present to discuss a request for a new rig in the 2007 budget. Currently, the Squad has 4 vehicles, two that are used for transportation, one as a backup, and the fourth as a utility truck only. The age of the trucks range from 2003 – 1973 with the mileage ranging from 23,000 to over 70,000. They explained that their committee has obtained specs, and quotes for a new vehicle with the cost ranging from \$156,000 to \$189,000; they prefer a Chevy to a Ford, and would not require 4-wheel drive. Councilperson Bunce arrived at 6:25 p.m. The committee recommended that the 1973 & 1985 vehicles be traded-in or sold. Jim Sorensen said that the Squad was pursuing a grant to equip the new rig, which would save the Borough money. He thanked the governing body for their time and consideration in this matter.
7. 2007 Municipal Budget: continue discussion on Capital and General/Salaries. Mayor Hodson reported that he has placed \$12,000 in the budget for a skate park attendant, and \$19,000 in contractual services for 'Kidsafe'. Mr. Ward also noted that John Young & Jen Siegel would be speaking at the March 21st meeting regarding the Skate Park and Kidsafe Program; making recommendations about both programs at this time. Councilmember McManus revealed that Chief Swanson was looking to proceed with the rules and regulations for the skate park as well as the identification cards.
Mayor Hodson said that after consideration, he was not going to recommend a reduction in the work force for 2007. Councilman Bunce questioned the Pitman Schedule used by the Police Department and the escalating overtime costs; he would like to see a review of the Pitman Schedule, and the issue of overtime addressed. Mr. Ward reported that he would have Chief Swanson detail the overtime situation, and why there is an increase; Chief Swanson has taken some action by adjusting the schedule for court appearances.

Mayor Hodson informed those present that the present budget increase is 4.2 tax points (old tax points), and that this did not include the Open Space Tax or 1.4 tax points. This tax is something that could be re-implemented in the future.

Mr. Ward reviewed the Budget Summary, an increase of \$477,275 in 2007, and noted that last year capital surplus was used to off set the 2006 increase, and that there was not much available for down payments in 2007, including cancellation from old ordinances. He also reviewed debt service and the impact on the 2007 Budget.

Mr. Ward reported that the Water Utility has a healthy surplus balance, and discussed capital projects recommended by Mr. Ruschke. Several opinions were expressed about the River Styx Bridge water main and whether or not the line should be relocated to the lake bottom. Those present agreed to include \$35,000 in 2007 for this project; other items included water main replacements (\$70,000), Marine Well Upgrades (\$25,000), Ingram Tank Painting (\$280,000) & Water Garage Improvements (\$10,000).

There was a discussion pertaining to the General Fund Capital items: the list presented for this discussion contains items of approximately 1.1 million dollars. The governing body did not wish to incur this amount of debt, and following a review agreed on \$913,000; items removed from the 2007 list included: Fire Chief's vehicle, ambulance, reduction in Police Department requests to \$150,000, and windows for Municipal Building; increase in road paving by \$50,000. Councilwoman Klein moved authorization for Mr. Ward to proceed with the necessary Bond Ordinances for Water & General Capital, seconded by McManus. The vote was unanimous.

8. Council President Petillo moved to adjourn at 8:48 p.m., seconded by Klein. Those present voted affirmative.

Respectfully submitted: