

**FEBRUARY 20, 2024**  
**BUDGET WORK MEETING**

The Work Meeting of the Hope Township Committee convened at 2:30 P.M. at the Hope Township Municipal Building with the following members present: Mayor Timothy McDonough, Committeeman Christopher John Kruk, and Deputy Mayor Terry Urfer. Also present were Municipal Clerk, Robin Keggan, RMC; Donald Whitmore, DPW Foreman and Kathleen Reinalda, CFO.

**FLAG SALUTE AND SUNSHINE STATEMENT**

Under the provisions of the “Open Public Meetings Act”, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing notice in the New Jersey Herald and Express Times New Jersey Edition and by posting notices in the Hope Post Office and on the Township Web and Bulletin Boards.

**Roll call: Mr. Urfer- present**

**Mr. Kruk – present**

**Mayor McDonough- present**

A moment of silence was held in observance of the Marines who lost their lives in a helicopter accident, as well as the loss of life of a young resident in Blairstown and ex-committeeman Ron Pederson in a neighboring municipality.

**2024 Budget Work:**

Ms. Reinalda provided the Committee with worksheets that showed the true 2023 budget after all transfers had been made to bring any overspent line items to zero. It was noted that there is \$136,000 in the capital fund as of this meeting.

Mr. Whitmore discussed his DPW budget and what the upcoming capital expenses looked like as far as DPW equipment is concerned. It was noted that a new dump truck and roadside mower are in the near future as our equipment is aging out. The amount that is being put into capital at this point is \$90,000 and we will adjust from there once all other numbers are input so that we can get a better picture of the landscape of the 2024 budget. The DPW budget consists of: \$59,000 for salt/grit; \$21,000 for oil, parts, etc.; \$15,000 for cold patch/asphalt; \$5,000 for tree trimming/removal and \$6,000 for tools/paint and repairs of garage. The Committee also authorized Mr. Whitmore to purchase a push box for pothole paving out of the ARPA funds for an amount not to exceed \$8,000. Mr. Whitmore will look into finding a vendor that we can purchase one from. Also approved was the purchase of the remaining 3 DPW garage doors in the amount of \$11,200. A capital ordinance will be on the next Township Committee meeting agenda for this expense.

Several budget items were discussed as follows: Line Items:

Tax Assessor - \$2,000 for tax map updates

Environmental Commission - \$1960

DPW - \$106,000

Capital Improvement - \$75,000 (with \$35,000 earmarked to be put towards a roadside mower and \$35,000 to be put towards a new dump truck)

Creative Team - \$4300 requested, but further clarification needs to be made by the Chairperson before that number is solidified in the budget.

The Township Committee also agreed that the remainder of the ARPS funds (approximately \$10,000) should be sent to tar and chip North Locust Lake Road.

The Hope Volunteer Fire Department 2024 donation was discussed and due to the fact that Frelinghuysen will no longer be using the HVFD (once their VFD is up and running) it will impact the HVFD

monetarily. The Fire Department donation from the Township for 2024 is requested to be \$23,600. The contribution to the Blairstown Emergency Squad is estimated to be \$13,350.

Discussion took place regarding the playground needing repairs at Swayze Mill per the insurance company's inspection report. Mr. Whitmore will need to call the playground manufacturer to ascertain what the cost of those repairs looks like (may be able to take the repairs for that out of Open Space).

2.5% salary increases were put into the budget worksheet as a starting point to get a truer look at the budget overall.

Discussion took place regarding the various Township-run activities (i.e, Township picnic, Halloween, etc.) and how to handle the costs of those activities moving forward. It is noted that many donations are received from various companies and businesses that are used towards these functions and the taxpayer impact is very minimal for these events to be held.

Several grants are in the process of being secured pertaining to the Stormwater Management work that the Township will need to undertake due to State/DEP guidelines rolling out.

The cost of the telephone service was noted and the Committee asked the Deputy Clerk to take a look into that to see if there are any further savings that can be found.

Ms. Reinalda will submit the numbers that have been discussed to the auditor for input and to ascertain what the budget will look like at this juncture.

**Public Participation:**

No members of the public were present.

Seeing there was no other business for tonight, this meeting of the Hope Township Committee was adjourned at 4:47 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Urfer; seconded by Mr. Kruk. Motion carried.

Robin L. Keggan, RMC  
Municipal Clerk