

MARCH 16, 2022
BUDGET MEETING

The Budget Meeting of the Hope Township Committee convened at 3:00 P.M. at the Hope Township Municipal Building with the following members present: Mayor Timothy McDonough, Deputy Mayor Christopher John Kruk, and Committeeman Terry Urfer. Also present were DPW Foreman Donald Whitmore; Municipal Clerk, Robin Keggan, RMC; Anthony Ardito, Auditor. Also present were members of the public Emily Brown, Jutta Jansen, Chris Rusin, Margo Biblin, Monica Sobon and Ann Rhinesmith.

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 Express Times New Jersey edition and the New Jersey Herald 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

To start off the meeting, Jutta Jansen gave a brief update on the 55 Plus Club and their financials. She noted that any donations made from their account are being made using funds from activities they sponsor (such as the Christmas Craft Market kitchen, Penny Fair, etc.) and are not from the Township’s donation to their Club every year. She briefly updated on the upcoming activities they will be doing and invited the Committee or anyone they deem appropriate to look over their financials if they deem necessary.

Discussion took place regarding the 2022 budget. Below are some notable items discussed:

Historic Preservation Commission was granted a \$950 budget this year to allow for CEU courses for two of their members as well as subscriptions and advertising.

Planning Board was given a \$5,000 budget with the understanding that they will be working on an ordinance update for the POP Zone by year’s end. Zoning Board budget was earmarked at \$1,500.

Zoning Officer, George Boesze, put a memorandum together for the Township Committee in response to their request for more hours from him in order to deal with Township business. It was decided that a \$50 per hour rate was acceptable for Mr. Boesze for anything over his weekly (2-5 pm) shift. He will fill out a payroll sheet to submit to the clerk notating his days/overage hours, which will be approved by the Committee. His budget of \$200 was approved which is mainly for his mileage due to inspections, etc.

North Warren Municipal Court – Anthony Ardito recommended leaving their budget numbers the same as 2021.

IT items were approved (current line item is \$28,000 – Mr. Ardito added an additional \$800 to cover additional recommendations received from IT).

Catch basin ordinance - \$1,751.00 left in this (Ordinance from 2015). Mr. Whitmore will use that to do work on Lake Just-It Road.

Environmental Commission – budget of \$1,945.00 was approved.

Backhoe Lease – after discussion, it was decided to pay off the backhoe once the budget is adopted in order to stay under the CAP. The clerk will get a payoff amount to be inserted into the budget.

Much discussion was had regarding the DPW budget. Two items are being targeted for capital expenses in the upcoming years (roadside mower and dump truck). \$70,000 will be set aside a year for these items.

Metal fire doors need to be purchased for the Community center and Grange. Mr. Urfer stated he believes that the Community Center grant will cover the fire door needed for that building. \$4,000 was earmarked for the other two doors based upon an estimate received from Mr. Whitmore. He will look into other vendors for better pricing before purchasing, but wanted the Committee to have a ballpark figure on the cost. Also noted was that the Municipal Building is in need of some new doors. It was determined that the Clerk's Office door and the Municipal Court door will be replaced this year at a cost of \$3,100 per door. The money for these doors (capital items) will be taken from the \$105,000 being set aside in capital this year.

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Mr. Urfer, seconded by Mr. Kruk and carried to adopt the Resolution to go into Closed Session at 4:31 PM.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P. L 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hope, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from that portion of this meeting
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - A. Personnel

As nearly as can be ascertained, the matter or matters to be discussed at this time will be disclosed to the public when such matters are resolved.

Time In: 4:31 PM

Present: Committeeman Kruk, Committeeman Urfer, Mayor McDonough, Anthony Ardito, Auditor, Donald Whitmore, DPW Foreman.

Also Present: Robin Keggan, Municipal Clerk

Time Out: 4:42 PM

A motion made by Committeeman Urfer, seconded by Committeeman Kruk and carried to return to regular session. No Official Actions were taken

A 3% wage increase was approved to be put into the budget. This wage increase is across the board. Discussion took place regarding the possibility of using ARP funds to "backfill" pay (using the Premium Pay option) increases to Township employees.

Open Space take will be held flat at a penny and a quarter again for the 2022 budget. There is currently \$179,000 in Open Space. It was noted that the \$37,500 the Township must match for the Community Center grant will come out of the Open Space account.

Wrap up discussions took place regarding introduction of the budget and what items must still be input in order to button it up.

Seeing there was no other business for tonight, this meeting of the Hope Township Committee was adjourned at 4:57 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Urfer; seconded by Mr. Kruk. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin L. Keggan, RMC
Municipal Clerk