



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
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**JANUARY 14, 2010
BUDGET MEETING
MINUTES**

FLAG SALUTE – Fred Green

ROLL CALL

Present: Fishman, Green, Falivene, Vizthum, Gorman, Caterson

Absent: Mayor

Also Present: Terry Dolan, Jessica Thompson, Carie Crone

Notification of Meeting – Lynn

Lynn – before budget discussion, she read a resignation letter from Joe Marczyk. She then read a letter from the Republican Club, stating the 3 nominations for Joe's position. If a consensus is meant, we might be able to act on it at the Jan. 21st meeting.

Terry - Discussed graph of the 2009 expenses. The police dept. is the largest budget at \$2.5 million. Explained the new defined pension system for councilpersons. The next higher ones are ones that the city can't really do anything about it. We will end 2009 in a much better position than we were a year ago and our revenues are a little above where we thought we would be. The biggest unknown is state aid.

We don't know the library number for this year yet, but last year it was \$330,000.

We do know what our debt services will be and they will go down by \$22,000 only.

The trash removal is set and we will recommend we leave it next year's budgeted amount. The cost of it went down a little due to the reduction to once a week and there was less trash. Our collection fees will not be going up. The recycling collection went down a little but the rates have gone up.

The pension rates will be \$613,000 and last year they were \$582,000. Most of it is in police and fire pensions. The cost of pension for police in Absecon is \$18,000 a year per person and a comparison cost for Jessica and myself are \$4,000 a year.

We are in the state health plan and we anticipate a \$75,000 increase.

Lynn – asked if they knew the amount or rate of uncollected taxes and is there any significant amount or are they a lot of people adding up to that?

Terry – doesn't deal with rates more than he does whole numbers, but right now the amount of uncollected taxes is \$750,000, which means the collectable rate will go down and drive the uncollectable tax rate higher. The Foxmoor Visions project is \$255,000 of it. The other is Pinnacle at \$85,000 and with them being in bankruptcy, we can't put that in the tax sale at all. We increased fire hydrants a little bit and we left utilities the same.

Public Works was increased by \$10,000 due to snowstorm this year and being caught down to the wire this past year. Lloyd wants to put an electric gate in the public works yard to control access in and out.

No gypsy moth spraying will be done and the heavy rains of 2009 saved us.

Sewer is planning on staying the same; they stand alone with their own revenue and expenses. There is no debt; we pay as we go. If things break, we pay for it out the current fund. It's been working very well. The only to stay that way is to increase the rates a little bit every quarter. We've been doing this for years now and the current ordinance expires the end of 2010. Will look into raising these and the late fees for sewer bills too.

Worker's comp is what it is and for a couple of years, we've had some very expensive losses. In 2008 they exceeded \$250,000 and in 2009 they were less than \$60,000.

It was decided that the Police Dept. – Dispatch and capital account would be discussed separately at the next meeting most likely.

Lynn - asked what everyone thought about an ordinance changing the words in the police dept and the number of higher-level officers like lieutenants and sergeants. For example, there "may" be instead of there "shall" be, making it permissive rather than mandatory.

Liability insurance only went up a little so we will know those numbers. We did have a rash of windows being kicked out of the police cars but now the cars are being retrofitted for gates.

Recommending an increase in the construction office budget of \$5,000 for the demolition of properties or primarily the cutting of dead trees. If a resident refuses or can't do it and they are a danger, we will have to take them down. It's just a buffer, because it is expensive to take down trees.

Municipal Court – request was a little lower. We had a new maintenance fee of the video-conference system, which was \$1200 last year and that was not for a full year.

Legal Services – left it the same as last year.

Engineering Services – there was \$42,500 that we added to what we put in last year's budget and that is for the streetscape additional engineering. Towards the end of last year, in order to complete the federal grant, we had to get surveyors out in the street to begin work. Talked to public works committee and the proposal was the \$42,500 mentioned.

Fire Dept. – they put in for a new floor, because when it gets wet it is very slippery. They want to get it sandblasted and a rough service floor installed. This is going to come out of the capital budget.

Ambulance Service – we need to see their profits and losses but we were cutting down by \$5,000 and we can also cut back a third of their gas expense and then cut it each year. Just reminded everybody that they aren't just getting \$15,000, but we also are paying the debt service for their trucks of over \$50,000. Hopefully in 3 years, they should sustain themselves. Discussion was held about their gas costs and how to handle it and also how many are volunteers and some paid.

Motor Vehicle Maintenance – under contract for another year. It is going down and that's due to the fact that the fleet is newer but the public works is going up since there is aging. The budget is going up \$5,000.

ABTV – what we decided to do last year was a good move. We are cutting it a little bit only because the machinery is working now.

Planning & Zoning – went down about \$200 each.

Auditors – we are going to offer what we did last year.

Recreation – same as last year

Fire Prevention – same as last year

Technology – this is the company that does our computers and a little bit in case something breaks.

Animal Control – we have had a contract with the same company for many years and I received a call from someone else who is interested. If Terry gets another interest, he recommends we go out to bid for it.

Clean Communities – most charged to a grant

Public Defender – will look at the salary

Jessica – received a letter saying that the cities have until March 31st for introduction of budgets.

Glenn Hayden – 133 Webb Road – asked Terry and Jessica that when they met with Henry didn't he ask for an \$8,000 budget.

Jess – well actually, he said he would like to have an additional 4,2 6 thousand but there was nothing specific in writing by line item. He didn't say I would like this amount for this specifically.

Terry – he can certainly submit something in detail.

Glenn – the Planning Board is a volunteer group and we might need some help. This is only his second year.

Terry – I called Henry and asked if he would like to come back in like he did in 2009 and he said yes. He generally said he would like more money for the Planning Board but not a lot of detail to it of what he wanted.

Glenn – how did you come up with the \$4,000?

Lynn – we look at what was budgeted last year and what was spent.

Glenn – I will make sure that you get a detailed list. We are going to need to start the Master Plan. Every 6 years we have to do it but you don't want it worked on all in one year and get a bill for \$30,000. We've never done it that way.

Are there any proposed budget cuts for personnel, furloughs, salary reductions, anything? Other towns have mentioned doing it.

Lynn – not yet. We don't know where we stand yet, but we are not in a deficit either.

Glenn – has city hall or the school done energy audits?

Terry – I know the school did a lot of heating and ventilation work in the last 12 months.

Glenn – do you meet with the school board any more?

Terry – we haven't in year.

Glenn – to the trees, if you are going to push for one to be taken down, it's the one at Hobart & Pitney Rd. It's just dangerous.

Asked how much of Tina's salary is budgeted to the clerk's office.

Jess – 10 hours is clerk's office. What's the difference how it gets split up or not?

Glenn – for tracking purposes. As to the budget, you don't want the master plan done all in one year.

Asked for a copy of the zoning board budget.

Motion to close public – Councilman Green – second – Councilman Fishman

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting – Councilman Fishman - second – Councilman Green

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Carie A. Crone, Clerk

Approved: _____