



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
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**JANUARY 26, 2010
BUDGET MEETING
MINUTES**

FLAG SALUTE – Mayor

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Seher

Also Present: Mayor Elco, Terry Dolan, Jessica Thompson, Carie Crone

Notification of Meeting – Lynn

Terry – I was asked to check on some things after last meeting and we talked about the fire inspection fees and they were increased in 2007 and feels they are current.

Jerry – maybe check with other towns to see what they charge.

Terry – verified the sewer charges do expire at the end of 2010 and we would need to revise them sometime in before the end of the year for 2011.

Fred – will put that on for discussion on the June meeting for Public Works and Sewer Dept.

Mayor – when did we increase last? Was that because they were low or for more revenue for the town?

Terry – we did the increase for 5 years or so in a row.

Fred – we needed our pumping stations in working order so we needed to build up our surplus again.

Jessica – there is another reason and that's our wastewater fees to ACUA has also been increasing every year and that is the bulk of the whole budget. It's been \$4 a quarter for each year. This would be the first year to use it start building of the fund balance. In the past, the increases went entirely to the wastewater bill. We've just been keeping up with those.

Mayor – does an explanation go out to the homeowner with the new bills?

Terry – basically they go out in November and it's a bill with a notice of the clean water act.

Lynn invited the next speaker to address council.

Walter (Murph) Brangenberg – 3023 Cedarbridge Rd. - Northfield – but he grew up on E. Wyoming Ave and then on Euclid Drive and moved a few years ago when his daughters became of high school age. Thanked the Mayor and Lynn for supporting our group who started talking about the Kunkeley property. We wanted to talk about some preliminary funding and maybe your vision and maybe we can get something going there. We understand the fiscal times are not right but I think if you act boldly you could capitalize on a lot of things that could go in our favor. If you decide to go forward, we have some interesting resources that want to help. The original committee is made up of David Rhoads, Russell Davis, myself, Glenn Hayden, Ed Goldman, Barry Hackett and Mayor Elco. Jim Keeping was brought in to try and give us the negatives on why we shouldn't do this project. He was then convinced we should

move forward and gave us some contacts. We met with the office of Fish and Wildlife who deals with the ramps and funding you received prior years in developing that property. The state did want to put more parking in but we convinced them that we would take it to a level higher than just a parking facility. Gave a brief history of the property. They would like to raise the property 2 or 3 ft., which would require bulk heading; securing water and sewerage connection to Lisbon Avenue to put adequate bathroom facilities in; a building that could have public use with a structure out to the water so people can use it to have parties and it could have an educational function. We have spoken to Stockton who is interested in this and the Absecon Saltwater Sportsmen's Group is interested in doing some stewardship work as far as boater education. We have talked costs with the city engineer and we have a list of basic things to get the property secured and the number is high and it's on a smaller scale. If we had a sand launch area, it would accommodate jet skis, non-powered craft, such as canoes, kayaks and sailboats; it would lend itself to possibly 40 additional parking spots. Thinks it's about 7 acres in question and he then went over the plans with council and showed where he was talking about. Thinks it would get a lot of use and a worth pursuing. We might be able to get some funds from the Fish and Wildlife and there is someone we talked to who does grant writing for environmental projects like this, Michael Catagna. We would permit one time for the whole project with all the phases and then build as we can.

Lynn – asked about the building.

Murph – we don't want to create a building where you have to employ somebody. If you can put it in the hands of the fisherman's club who would maintain it, check the bathrooms, clean them and then if a group would come in to use the facility, it would be ready. Stockton was interested in having a facility down there on the creek to do educational seminars and a place to get in out of the weather if they are studying down there. The fishing club wants to expand their programs too.

Fred – is the parking for cars only or with the boat trailers attached?

Murph – 40 with the trailers attached, but we are thinking they all won't have trailers. There is always going to be an issue with parking in that area.

Fred – what is the time frame for all approvals?

Murph – 1 ½ to 2 years and we've gotten some indication it could go quicker.

Bobbie – is \$25,000 what we would spend in permits?

Murph – yes, I think it would cover us for all phases no matter how long it takes.

Lynn – wants to be clear about the money. The money needed to hire an engineer is \$10,000 so we can't get grants for that. We would need to put initial money up to get it going.

Murph – passed out an estimate of the initial work but not the building and went over the plans. The state already knows the area with the ramp and they enjoyed working with this body and Terry. We had a great discussion when we met with Dave down there. Russell Davis is always talking to them.

Jerry – is it possible to get money from the DEP or somebody else?

Murph - We will be assigned one person from the state to walk through with the engineer and whoever from council and show them our plans. They will handle us through the whole process.

Jerry – what would be the city's obligation in the best case scenario.

Murph – don't really know; possibly the engineering fees, the permit fees and hopefully that's it.

Terry – I'm not sure if they'll build the structure.

Murph - Maybe Stockton could be our bargaining chip for the educational facility. At first, we didn't even know they would be interested. The figures will go up because we want to expand the bulkhead area now.

Back to budget meeting.

Terry – at last meeting we spoke about the salary for the Zoning and Planning Secretary has always been in the planning board budget, so we are going to revise it and separate it between planning, zoning, clerk and administration now. We met today so we can now focus on the departmental requests. They have requested legal fees of \$2,000 as opposed to the 2009 budget of \$1,000; they've requested fees of \$9,200 for the planning board planner that is why you have a break down from Rob of what he wants. The

most detailed piece of that is on page 3 of his report and the fee is broken down into items 1 through 6. Item 6 is the review of the Mobile Home Park approval. Henry and Glenn told me they don't know if there will be litigation pursuant to the zoning board's approval for the mobile home park, so I just put an item in there for other litigation, that they asked for but no number. The other line item numbers are the same that you saw a couple of weeks ago.

Glenn – not sure how the litigation will go with the Mobile Home Park. Hopefully the residents of the Shores will get their own attorney and this will be resolved, so our numbers are not there yet. We won't discuss it till our next meeting.

With the Master Plan numbers, traditionally every 6 years you are required to review it. We want to start now to not have all the cost in one year. Our approach is to do a little each year.

Fred – when is it due?

Terry – the final reexamination was approved by the PB in 2006 so I assume 2012 it is up.

Drew – the 2006 date when it was finalized but it was finished in 2005. It had to go to council too. The one before that was the largest reexamination we had in 1999.

Lynn – the 6 years is not a law, if we find we can't start it this year with

Henry – basically it's every 6 years and we want to work up to it. It's a work in progress.

Lynn – if we don't start working on it this year and consider next year to start it, there is no down side to the city, especially knowing the budget problems.

Glenn – we spent a lot of time on the last one and we don't want to do that. It should be done. We didn't do anything in 2008 or 2009 and they are gone now.

Terry - The reexamination of the Master Plan was \$1600 requested.

Lynn – but there is another line item of \$1400 for developmental ordinances.

Glenn - They came out of the last Master Plan and we want to bring those to your attention to start implementing them.

Lynn – questioned the increase in legal of \$1,000. Why the \$2,000 for legal?

Glenn – thinks that has to do with starting the ordinance recommendations.

Lynn - And litigation would be something against the planning board?

Glenn – we don't know yet.

Drew – it could be against the planning or zoning.

Terry – asked Henry in the last Master Plan review there was an age-restricted overlay as part of your review; there was a train station overlay as part of the review. Are those the ordinances you plan on bringing back to council?

Glenn – probably the overlay for the train station would be part of it.

Terry - The age-restricted is out on the WHP near the Safety Bus property.

Glenn – I don't see that as critical but I will talk to Rob and the rest of the board. We will be prioritizing them.

Mayor - One was the Safety Bus area and the other out by the drive-in and they were to be 55 age restricted.

Jim – you had attended our Economic Development meetings, you were interested in COAH being in with the overlay and on 1/22 it came up and the state is probably going to shoot it down. The bill would abolish any state coalition on COAH. Jim read an excerpt from it.

Terry – it is what it is. The last time we met, we told you our revenue projections for 2009 had come in close to target. We also said we would end 2009 with basically a balanced budget; we won't be in a deficit position. All of that is still true. We also spoke about uncollected taxes as of December 31st were in the neighborhood of \$700,000. It's a big number and that is why I put it out there. It's still that now. What Jess and I had not calculated on was what that number meant to our reserve for uncollected taxes in the next year. He then explained how that is calculated. Last year's reserve for uncollected taxes was \$460,000 roughly. This year it will be \$630,000 or maybe closer to \$800,000.

We can anticipate some of the money from tax sale and we will, but we still have to raise this reserve for uncollected taxes. Last year at this time, the uncollected taxes were roughly \$400,000 and some. We

anticipated all that revenue being collected in 2009 and we put it in the budget. In addition we had to put a reserve for uncollected taxes on top of that. Thank god we put it in twice because here we are at the end of December and we didn't collect \$700,000 in taxes. That reserve saved us. This year just to cover our reserve we are looking at 1.7 cents.

Jessica – explained how this effects our fund balance and negatively.

Terry – we don't yet have a library number but Jessica is assuming a \$10,000 increase.

Jessica - It's a plug in number because we don't know have the number from the State. She wanted to see where we stand at this point.

Terry – with these recommendations tonight, the largest reduction is in the police dept. Other than personnel, we have reduced it by \$50,000 of last year's budget number. Putting all those numbers in and the library and being generous on state aid, we could fund the whole thing, stay within our ability to raise taxes at 5%, you would end up with a fund balance of \$180,000. Are we going to get any additional revenue, I strongly doubt it. Does not think the state aid will stay the same.

Fred – asked where the monies go that we received from tax sale and what account does it go?

Jessica - Whatever we collect in 2010 is going to reflect in the following year's budget or let's say if we only collect \$200,000 off our \$700,000 we would have a big hole next year. It will sit in our account and help us to pay our bills in the short term but it will be a part of the fund balance equation next year. Last year we ended the fund balance at \$280,000. The debt service is coming down each year. As far as the levy cap, we take a hit on that due to the low debt service. We have two bonds now – one will be done in 2012 and the other 2018.

Pete – asked if everyone got a copy of his budgetary items. Some were: Kunkley property; old pool site, knows it tight this year but we need to keep it in mind; beautification of New Jersey Ave. from Mill Road, met with Eddie Dennis and waiting for engineering fees; new tot swings at the parks; Veteran's Park new sign, spoke to some citizens and thinks we could take it to another level maybe through donations; beautification of the municipal complex at the entranceway; website design; ABTV, good idea Jim about the library helping out possibly and we still need to do something about the microphones. We still have a weak system.

Terry – when public works has time they will start replacing the ceiling tiles; some painting; the brass rail in chambers and he has seen this get polished and it's now tarnished. Looking into getting it dipped and sealed and then bringing it back in with a new finish.

Next budget meeting is Feb. 11th at 6:00 p.m.

Motion to open to public – Councilman Falivene – second – Councilman Fishman

All were in favor. No public comment.

Motion to close – Councilman Fishman – second – Councilman Falivene

All were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

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

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Carie A. Crone, Clerk

Approved: _____