

**TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON  
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**Special Session/Public Portion**

**May 27, 2014**

The Township Council held a Special Session/Public Meeting in the Municipal Building, Pascack Road. The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Council President Thomas Sears with the Clerk leading a salute to the flag. Members present: Glenn Beckmeyer, Peter Calamari, Steve Cascio, Thomas Sears. Also present: Janet Sobkowicz, Mayor; Ken Poller, Attorney. Absent: Richard Hrbek, Councilman; Catherine Steinel, Administrator.

Mr. Sears states that this Special Session was called together on miscommunication between the Council and the coordination of how the budget was presented. Mr. Sears states he felt a need to have a Special Meeting so we can all be on the same page.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act this meeting was listed in the Township Council Annual Meeting List which was published in the Ridgewood News, forwarded to the local newspapers, posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

**GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

A motion was made by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Dr. Cascio to open the general public discussion.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Calamari, Cascio, Sears.

Nays: None.

**Joe D'Urso, 12 Viola Terrace** – Mr. D'Urso spoke of the fact that last week himself and former clerk questioned the budget being done incorrectly. Mr. D'Urso feels the vote should have been tabled that night. Mr. D'Urso further states that when he asked the Mayor if the auditor was ok with this the Mayor replied yes. Mr. D'Urso feels that this degrades the auditor's reputation. There was a discussion on the appointment of the new administrator, the salary, and the new administrator's experience. Mr. D'Urso also spoke of the new clerk appointment and the blatant mishap that occurred. There was a conversation with regard to the new clerk's qualifications and experience. Mr. D'Urso also spoke of the fact that the clerk was in the room when another person was interviewed for the clerk's position and heard the questions being asked. Mr. Sears states the position of clerk calls for the clerk to take minutes at meetings. Mr. Sears feels the current clerk is a great asset to the community. The clerk's salary was discussed and what line item in the budget it is being drawn out of. Mayor Sobkowicz states that the position of tax collector is being advertised. Mayor Sobkowicz also explained her position with regard to auditor, in that she did not contact the auditor directly.

**Sandy Philips, 321 Hudson Avenue** – Ms. Philips expressed her concern with regard to the Township and the financial status without a CFO and treasurer. Ms. Philips also spoke of Bond Ordinance 13-11. There was a discussion with regard to a red house located on Washington Avenue. Mayor Sobkowicz explained the history of the red house that the Township uses the garage for storage and the front of the home is rented. A discussion was had with regard to the automatic door openers. Ms. Philips also asked with regard to the \$30,000 line item for the construction of a new municipal building. Mr. Sears states he has not read ordinance 13-11. There was a discussion with regard to the part time Acting CFO and the Acting Treasurer.

**Fred Goetz, 587 Washington Avenue** – Mr. Goetz asked multiple questions with regard to the CFO, her hours, the amount of work she does and if she is part time or full time. Mayor Sobkowicz explained her hours, that she is paid an hourly rate and checks in with the police department. There was a discussion with regard to how much the CFO was paid last year and blue

vouchers. There was a conversation with regard to the CFO attending budget meetings. There was also a discussion that the auditor is present and will be able to answer any questions at the public meeting of the budget. There was a discussion with regard to the acting CFO/Treasurer and the council's approval of that position. There was a discussion of who signs payroll checks. Mr. Goetz states that according to the charter the treasurer is the only one who must sign payroll checks. There was also a discussion with regard to advertising of the positions of CFO and Treasurer.

**Agnes Smith, 646 Valley Court** – Ms. Smith spoke of Judy Curran, the CFO position and Judy Curran's employment history with the Township. Mayor Sobkowicz states she is not considering hiring Ms. Curran for a full time position. There was a lengthy discussion of employment positions that are being advertised in the Township of Washington. There was a lengthy discussion with regard to the administrator that was hired, his work experience, and salary.

**Mary Ann Ozment, 960 Adams Place** – Mrs. Ozment states that the tape would reflect that Mayor Sobkowicz did state that the auditors were contacted. Mrs. Ozment spoke with regard to the posting of the meeting in The Record by the Council President and that she had never seen a Council President calling for a meeting. Mrs. Ozment then went on to state the process of posting meetings and ordinances that were posted very late. Mrs. Ozment then spoke of the process of Annual Financial Statements and Annual Debt Statements. Mrs. Ozment then asked who is doing the Township's investments. Mayor Sobkowicz replied that Mrs. Cunningham is. Mrs. Ozment spoke of the position of CFO and that the CFO is supposed to sign in with the Police Department. Mrs. Ozment states that one day she did see the CFO come in and she did go in to the Police Department. The CFO went straight upstairs.

**David Snyder, 91 Windsor Circle** – Mr. Snyder wants to bring to the attention of council that the sick time compensation in the budget is over \$500,000. There was a discussion with regard to the status of televising council meetings. Mr. Snyder feels the Township is not going the right way. Mr. Snyder asked with regard to the CFO, how much her hourly rate is. Mayor Sobkowicz replied \$50.00 per hour. Mr. Snyder would like to OPRA request the blue vouchers for the CFO. There was a lengthy discussion with regard to who signs the blue vouchers. Mayor Sobkowicz states that the administrator's last day is Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Snyder feels the Tax Collector and the new administrator connection is very strange and he is concerned about nepotism. Mayor Sobkowicz states there is no nepotism. Mayor Sobkowicz states she conducted interviews and picked the most qualified candidate. Mayor Sobkowicz further states with regard to the Clerk, she did not participate in the interview process, the council picked the clerk.

**Bob Bruno, 697 Hillcrest Road** – Mr. Bruno asks with regard to the budget process, how are the expenses from last years compared to this year. There was a lengthy discussion with regard to what the auditor prepares and does not prepare. Mr. Sears gave an explanation of the budget process, the review process and it is done on a line by line review. Mayor Sobkowicz explained the process of the budget book, and the administrator, who has CFO classes, does go through everything. There was a lengthy discussion with regard to the frequency of the auditors coming in throughout the year to certify what is there. There was also a discussion with regard to the auditors preparing and issuing an opinion as to whether the records are accurate or not. Mr. Bruno states that he did volunteer his time but has not heard from the Mayor. Mr. Bruno feels that the residents should be given time to speak.

**Bill Thomson, 560 Hoover Avenue** – Mr. Thompson would like to know how much money was spent on the parade this year. Mr. Sears states he does not have the final figures. There was a discussion with regard to what line item in the budget police overtime would be in. Mr. Thompson states that he does not understand why police are being paid overtime since we are all

volunteering for the parade. There was a lengthy discussion with regard to the town road improvements and township engineers. Mayor Sobkowicz states at this time we have Mr. Azzolina and Mr. Statile. Mayor Sobkowicz also states bids went out this week, all the specs were done and a grant for Colonial Boulevard was received. There was a discussion with regard to the fund balance sheet balance, and the surplus at hand. Mr. Thompson asks at regular council meetings, does council see a breakdown of bills being paid. Mr. Sears states there is no breakdown; it is just a flat number.

**Michael Ullman, 2 Clark Avenue** – Mr. Ullman asks what is the significance of the June 30<sup>th</sup> date. Mr. Sears states the June 30<sup>th</sup> date is when the public can address the auditor. Mr. Ullman asks with regard to the capital programs, how they can those projects start if we do not have an engineer. There was a discussion with regard to the road program; Phase 1 was approved by the prior council. Mayor Sobkowicz states as soon as the bids come back for Phase 1, then recommendations will be given for Phase 2. Mr. Ullman asks if the Board of Education was invited to any of the budget meetings. Mr. Sears replies no, they were not. There was a discussion with regard to inviting the Board of Education; Mr. Sears feels it is a good idea, that there should be dialogue. Mr. Ullman asks with regard to the VFW, what is the status. Mayor Sobkowicz states they are working with Habitat for Humanity for veteran's homes, but the latest report is that may not work there, so we may have to come up with a different situation. Mr. Ullman states we need additional visibility as to what we are budgeting here.

A motion was made by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Dr. Cascio to close General Public Discussion.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Calamari, Cascio, Sears.

Nays: None.

## **RESOLUTION**

A motion was made by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Mr. Calamari to approve a resolution Authorizing Inclusion in the Bergen County Community Development Program.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Calamari, Cascio, Sears.

Nays: None.

WHEREAS, certain Federal Funds are potentially available to the County of Bergen under Title 1 of the Housing and community Development Act of 1974, as amended and HOME Investment Partnership Act of 1990, as amended; and

WHEREAS, the Grantee of unit of general local government that directly or indirectly receives CDBG funds may not sell, trade or otherwise transfer all or any such portion of funds to another metropolitan city, urban county, unit of general local government, or Indian Tribe, or insular area that directly or indirectly or indirectly receives CDBG funds in exchange for any other funds, credits or non-Federal considerations, but must use such funds for activities eligible under Title 1 of the Housing Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.

WHEREAS, the current Interlocal Services Agreement contains an automatic renewal clause to expedite the notification of the inclusion process; and

WHEREAS, by June 20, 2014 each municipality must notify the Bergen County Division of Community Development of its intent to continue as a participant n the Urban county entitlement programs noted above; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Township of Washington and its residents to participate in said programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and the Township Council of the Township of Washington, that it hereby notifies the Bergen County Division of community Development of its decision to be included as a participant municipality in the Urban County entitlement programs being the Community Development Block Grant Program and the Home Investment Partnership Act Program for the Program Years 2015, 2016 and 2017 (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2018); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Bergen County Division of Community Development and US Department of HUD no later than June 20, 2014.

#### **ORDINANCE #14-06**

The Clerk read Ordinance 14-06 entitled: CALENDAR YEAR 2014 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK.

A motion was made by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Mr. Calamari to introduce and pass Ordinance 14-06 at first reading by title.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Cascio, Calamari, Sears.

Nays: None.

The following resolution was presented and adopted on a motion by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Mr. Calamari.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Cascio, Calamari, Sears.

Nays: None.

WHEREAS, Ordinance 14-06 entitled: CALENDAR YEAR 2014 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK was introduced and passed at first reading at a meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Washington on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2014;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that further consideration for final passage of public hearing of said ordinance shall be held on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2014 at 7:30 o'clock in the evening, prevailing time, or as soon thereafter as said matter can be reached in the Municipal Building, 350 Hudson Avenue, Township of Washington at which time and place all persons who may be interested will be given an opportunity to be heard concerning said ordinance;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Clerk is authorized to advertise in The Record, a newspaper circulated in this Township, the introduction and notice of further consideration for final passage and public hearing of this ordinance as required by law.

#### **RESOLUTION RESCINDING OF THE 2014 BUDGET INTRODUCTION**

A motion was made by Mr. Calamari, seconded by Mr. Beckmeyer, to approve the Rescinding of the 2014 Budget Introduction Resolution of May 19, 2014.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Calamari, Cascio, Sears.

Nays: None.

WHEREAS, the Township Council met on May 19, 2014 and affirmatively voted on the introduction of the 2014 Township Budget; and

WHEREAS, certain budget resolutions were not included on the agenda and were not submitted to the Township Council for review and ratification prior to their consideration of the budget introduction; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council desires to modify the Mayor's 2014 Budget prior to the Council vote on the 2014 Township Budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Township Council hereby rescinds the budget introduction resolution as voted on by the Township Council on May 19, 2014.

**BUDGET INTRODUCTION**

A motion was made by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Mr. Calamari, to approve the following resolution increasing the Mayor’s Budget:  
 Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Calamari, Sears.  
 Nays: Councilperson Cascio.

**Therefore the resolution increasing the Mayor’s Budget was not approved.**

A motion was made by Mr. Beckmeyer, seconded by Mr. Calamari, to approve the following resolution decreasing the Mayor’s Budget.  
 Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Calamari, Cascio, Sears.  
 Nays: None.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Washington that the following items of budget submitted by the Mayor for the year 2014 be and are hereby decreased by the Township Council by the amounts set forth below:

	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
<b><u>REVENUES</u></b>		
Amount to be raised by Taxes for Support of the Municipal Budget	\$ 9,006,396	\$ 8,946,259
<b><u>APPROPRIATIONS:</u></b>		
Municipal Clerk		
Other Expenses	15,500	14,500
Revenue Administration		
Salaries & Wages	45,562	44,562
Other Expenses	9,150	8,950
Legal Services		
Council	79,000	65,000
Department of Public Affairs		
Other Expenses	16,600	15,800
WCTV Expenses	7,000	6,000
Land Use Administration		
Planning Board		
Other Expenses	6,959	6,659
Zoning Board of Adjustment		
Other Expenses	8,169	7,969
Police Department		
Salaries & Wages	2,894,744	2,825,221
Other Expenses	68,150	55,150
Car Cameras	5,000	3,000
Police Dispatching		
Salary & Wages	150,000	144,663
Fire Department		
Other Expenses	32,410	34,310
Buildings & Grounds		
Building Maintenance	38,200	37,200

Public Health Services		
Other Expenses	17,205	17,005
Recreational Services Programs		
Salaries & Wages	98,011	94,611
Maintenance Parks		
Parks & Other Expenses	74,300	71,500
Statutory Expenses		
Public Employees Retirement		
System of New Jersey	151,106	135,702
Police & Firemen's		
Retirement System of New Jersey	582,031	544,400
Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	863,532	847,683

**Therefore the Introduction of the 2014 Municipal Budget was not approved at the May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. Next Special Council meeting to re-introduce the budget will be held on June 17, 2014.**

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Elaine Erlewein, Acting Township Clerk

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Thomas Sears, Council President

