

**TOWNSHIP OF MANSFIELD  
BURLINGTON COUNTY  
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES  
January 27, 2022  
6:30pm**

The special meeting was called to order on the above shown date with the following in attendance **Mayor Mojena, Deputy Mayor Ocello, Committeeman Siz, Committeeman Tallon, Township Administrator Michael Fitzpatrick, Chief Financial Officer Bonnie Grouser, Deputy Clerk Jolly and Municipal Clerk Linda Semus. Committeeman Golenda was absent.**

**Mayor Mojena** called the meeting to order at 6:30PM, followed by the following opening statement read by **Municipal Clerk Semus** and followed by the flag salute: Notice has been proved for this special meeting and has been posted on the official bulletin board of the Township of Mansfield, noticed in the Burlington County Time and Trenton Times on January 16, 2022 and filed with the Municipal of the Township of Mansfield, notice of which contains the date, time, place and purpose of this meeting as so noted under NJSA 10:4-8 amended in 1981 and including sections 10:4-18 which addresses regular meetings of the public body which is addressed under annual notice.

**BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

**CFO Grouser** explained that this would be one of three meetings most likely. This meeting is to meet with Department Heads for their proposed budget for the year 2022. The Committee will review each proposal and return for a second meeting to discuss their presentation. In giving a basic overview, CFO Grouser said this budget for 2022 can be increased by 2.5% over the prior year but, since the Committee adopted a COLA ordinance, an additional 1% can be added, giving a 3.5 percent. The COLA ordinance also allows the township to bank what wasn't used the prior years. This year, we can increase our appropriations, with the 3.5% by \$223,000. In addition, there is a bank from 2020 in the amount of \$8,200, a bank from 2021 in the amount of \$145,000. Therefore, we can increase our appropriations over last year in the amount of about \$377,000.

Revenues this year appear to be the same as last year such as pilot money from Margolis Pilot money, Phase I & 2, State Aid, and Host Community Benefits from the landfill. However, we won't be able to recognize the sale of 190 Atlantic Avenue which was \$300,000. We can recognize ARP (American Rescue Plan-related to Covid based on revenue lost after 2019.) money to be received in the amount of \$446,000. The Surplus/Fund Balance is 1.6 million dollars. However, 5% of any capital project or purchases which might be approved has to be raised in the budget.

**Administrator Fitzpatrick** explained the procedure of the PILOT money inasmuch as we can only recognize Phase I and II of Margolis at this time. Roll Back taxes were questioned by **Deputy Mayor Tallon**. He was told they were received from the project on Route 206. They should be received this year on the Jones Farm (Segme).

**Clerk Semus** explained her request for additional funding including windows in both areas of her office space, shelving in the hallway, repair to tripping hazards in the hallway, fire proof cabinets, a computer monitor for the Deputy Clerk, shelving in the Land Use Department, additional money for elections, increase in advertising costs, increase in the Clerk's salary line item and various technology upgrades inclusive of Website upgrade and Hybrid Meetings. The overall request totaled approximately \$90,436.00.

**Administrator Fitzpatrick**, speaking on behalf of Special Events, said they are planning Movies in the Park, Field Day, and Farmer's Market. He explained this is a group of young ladies who give a lot of time and effort in our town bringing the community together. Their total budget is \$12,150.00, **Committeeman Tallon** felt this is a large amount of money but the organization brings our community together and felt it is a positive for the community. **Mayor Mojena** agreed that we should support them.

**Court Administrator, Suzanne Morales** thanked the Committee for the prior raises but felt they were not comparable to others in the county. Based on the volume and work load, they are the lowest paid in the County of Burlington. Therefore, she asked that her salary and those of her staff are raised so they are comparable to others in the county. **Administrator Fitzpatrick** explained future proposed vacancies in the court. In addition, he agreed that the salaries are low in comparison to other similar positions in the county.

**Fire Chief Douglas Borgstrom** explained that their inspection load is going to increase by about over a million square feet of retail space. More time is needed to do those inspections. **Mr. Borgstrom** requested an increase in his salary line item to enable him to bring in one or two more part time inspectors. This will help with the work load as well as supplementing their day time needs. Home resale inspections have doubled. He also proposed to replace the inspection software that they use which will lighten the load in the Clerk's office. **Mr. Borgstrom** asked for \$35,000 to have a study of our fire service and EMS which will enable the ability to evaluate the reliability of the fire department and EMS, the current cost for service and response statistics for the past 5 years and develop a Standard of Cover Document which will be a guiding document for the Committee to look into the future as to what needs to be done to maintain our volunteer fire department and possibly supplement it with daytime help or round the clock help. This will help with long term planning.

In discussing the Emergency Management Budget, he asked for \$15,500 for supplies. In addition, he would like between \$10,000 to \$15,000 for additional Emergency Funding for body armor for the first responders as they currently have no protection should there be an active shooter event. **Mr. Borgstrom** also asked for a Utility Terrain Vehicle, (UTV), to bolster their response capabilities for wooded areas and other areas not easily accessible by regular vehicles. Body armor would probably cost \$10,000.

**Alex Broder**, President of the Franklin Fire Company, asked for \$90,000 for operations, training, preventive maintenance on vehicles, and the incentive program. In reference to Capital Projects, the Tender they have right now used to protect areas without hydrants is about 32 years old. Since the NFPA rates and classifies vehicles and recommends replacement cycles. With safety concerns and rising costs of maintenance, he is requesting \$360,000 to replace that vehicle this year. They also asked for up to \$150,000 to replace the fire engine bay floor. For the next coming years, to begin to plan accordingly for capital projects, to replace the next pumper which is 25 years old would amount to up to \$700,000. To replace a 1999 brush truck, the cost would be \$150,000 to begin to plan for that capital project as well.

**Police Chief Ron Mulhall** reviewed his budget request referring to the biggest ticket item being a request for 2 additional police officers to supplement the force and allow 3 officers on each patrol shift. There has been an increase in time required for each officer to dedicate to each call. The additional officers would mitigate some overtime expense. Chief Mulhall is anticipating retiring at the end of the year which will require changes in the department. Due to the increase in daily responsibilities, a second full time position is being requested in the offices. The full time records clerk has left and that position was replaced with the part time person and he has already requested to hire a replacement but making the position be full time.

With a 2014 Tahoe, at 218,000 miles, currently being used on patrol requiring continuing maintenance and, for the safety of the officers, a lower mileage vehicle is preferred. With a proposed change in ranks during the year, budget money for testing is requested. A new server for the in car video

system is being requested, along with the video recorders. The total cost for 5 years under the new system would be just under \$70,000. **Chief Mulhall** requested funding for a second class II officer be continued from last year. The position was not filled last year. Capital projects include continued vehicle replacement for approximately \$55,000 per unit. Future replacement of service weapons should be considered. Conducted Energy Devices, commonly known as Tasers, are being utilized and have a specific useful life. Some should be replaced in the next few years. Replacement of the up and coming breath testing equipment should be considered. Plans should be considered to renew the contract for the body worn cameras or to find a replacement device in the 2025 budget year. A grant had been received and can be used to offset the cost of the replacement based on timing.

**Brandon Metz**, Public Works Department, in combining his budget with the parks budget and is proposing a budget in the amount of \$57,750, an increase of \$30,000. This is for various improvements to the parks. His buildings and proposed grounds budget is \$236,330, an increase of over \$40,000. The budget includes pumping septics, fire alarm inspection, improved heating facilities in the fire house, the streets and roads budget for 2022 is proposed to be \$309,486, an increase of \$55,000 for road assessment and repaving program, repair of ADA sidewalks in Manchester Court. The storm water budget has increased by \$52,500 because of necessary improvements to basin repairs. Vehicle maintenance is proposed to be an increase of \$5,000. His biggest part of the budget is capital equipment and projects in the amount of \$6,800,000. If it were to be bonded, a raise in taxation would amount to \$343,492.00 to be raised in taxation. Roads have been his biggest complaints received. Some have major pipe issues. Some streets have problems with the base causing the roads to collapse. Pot holes, roads falling apart, collapsed sidewalks, pipe replacement, guardrails, etc. need attention. **Mr. Metz** spoke of the parks and his main concern about the Mapleton Hockey Rink which is past its prime as well as the other parks. **Administrator Fitzpatrick** added that, for many years we depended on money from grants and we did only those improvements with grant money, letting the other items fall into more despair. It is time to play catch up and spend our own money. In speaking of his Building and Grounds Budget, **Mr. Metz** noted that the air condition and roof problems need to be addressed for this year as well as the second floor mold remediation. He had added in his budget money for an addition for the new equipment being purchased. \$15,000 has been added to his budget for a salt dome which is a DEP regulation. Added to his budget are funds for second floor sprinkler system. Repairs for basins in Mapleton for an estimate of \$100,000 as they are not up to current DEP standards.

**EMS Administrator George Senf** spoke of the need for medical supplies including oxygen delivery for \$10,000. Vehicle maintenance is proposed to be \$15,000. An ambulance which is on order from June of last year is still anticipated. Replacement of two vests is proposed. Under Capital expenses, he is requesting 3 striker power load systems and 2 power load stretchers. This totals \$124,026. The biggest expense would be for additional squad support. Due to Covid, grants in the amount of \$150,000 had been received in 2020 and 2021. However, those grants are no longer available and the deficit is amounting to \$140,000 this year. Mr. Senf noted that the building is owned by the township who also pays the insurance. To give job security and make everything easier for them, he requested the staff to become township employees. If this were the case, the township would receive all the revenue the squad received in the past. Mr. Senf noted how the squad helped out by attending community events, etc. Attorney Prime noted that this can be accomplished by ordinance.

**Mayor Mojena** felt that it incumbent upon everyone to work together to continue to support the EMS Squad.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Kristianne Goodenough**, 28126 Gaunt's Bridge Road, referred to making a long term plan for some of the budget items. She felt capital expenses have built up and when replacing many items at a time will be felt by the residents. She also felt there is a serious need for public safety in this township which

sometimes get pushed aside because they are not seen on a daily basis. She asked that these items be considered as we move forward.

**Carl Schwartz**, 40 Fitzgerald Lane, said it was positive to hear presenters speaking of a multi-year plan. Tied into that, he was concerned that there are a lot of projects proposed. He felt there should be a plan to determine how the projects can be completed when considering their daily plan. There should be a realistic view of how things should be done over the next year giving a realistic spend of the budget. He questioned whether things were done correctly in the past and recommended fixing items with the thought in mind that these are lasting permanent fixes rather than continuously patching things.

**Administrator Fitzpatrick** felt the days of patch work is over. With a full public works staff, it is different now. With the new committee, things are going to be done properly the first time. We will trust in our team to make sure they are, to make sure things are done efficiently, cost effectively and done on behalf of the Township and the taxpayers.

**CFO Grouser** said we have to introduce our budget by March 31<sup>st</sup> or the first meeting thereafter. It needs to be adopted by April 29<sup>th</sup> or the first meeting thereafter.

**Mayor Mojena** thanked everyone for their help.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

A motion was offered **Committeeman Sisz** and second by **Committeeman Tallon** to adjourn. Motion carried.

**PREPARED BY:**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:**

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**Barbara A. Crammer**  
Deputy Clerk

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**Linda Semus, RMC, CMR**  
Municipal Clerk