

**TOWNSHIP OF MANSFIELD
BURLINGTON COUNTY
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
ZOOM MEETING
March 30, 2022
6:00pm**

The special meeting was called to order on the above shown date with the following in attendance **Mayor Mojena, Deputy Mayor Ocello, Committeeman Sisz, 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 6:00PM, 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 March 15, 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:

Mayor Mojena explained that at the previous meeting all of the Department Heads had come in with their budget requests. In the time since, the Township Administrator and CFO have been working with the various Department Heads to figure out what can fit into the budget with the funds that are expected. He asked CFO Grouser to discuss same.

CFO Grouser thanked everyone for their patience as the budget is a process. She went over the different attachments that she had sent to the Township Committee. The first attachment was revenues. She brought up the fund balance and the Township is anticipating using \$800,000 worth of fund balance to balance this budget. This budget as is presented right now is coming in at a 0% municipal tax increase. The fund balance at the end of 2021 was \$1.6 million.

CFO Grouser went over the next attachment which was labeled "Budget Model as Presented". When doing a budget the revenues equal the appropriations. The appropriations side is broken into two parts; in-cap appropriations and out of cap appropriations. The in-cap appropriations are the operating expenses to run the Township such as salary & wages, other expenses, professional services and utility bills. The out-of-cap expenses are debt services and statutory expenses. The Division of Local Government Services every year puts a cap on the in-cap appropriations and only allows a municipality to increase their in-cap appropriations by 2.5%. Back in January the Township Committee passed a COLA Ordinance, which allows the Township to increase their in-cap appropriations by 3.5%. With all of this information a budget model was put together as presented. In the budget model are some items that were not able to be included, because the Township was over the in-cap appropriations. She recommends to the Mayor and Committee after much consultation with the Township Auditor and the DLGS, that the Township delay the budget introduction and therefore the budget adoption. The reason being there is going to be a second PILOT Program and the CO is expected to be issued in April, which would allow the PILOT billing to begin the first of the month. The amount for said billing will be \$245,000 and the Township could then increase the in-cap appropriations by that amount. This would allow more to be accomplished in the budget.

Administrator Fitzpatrick asked CFO Grouser to explain how only half will be used this year.

CFO Grouser explained that every time a new PILOT program comes on, the Township is aloud to increase the in-cap appropriations by the first year. Because this PILOT Program would be coming on at about half the year, half of the PILOT Program would then be recognized. The \$245,000 is only half of what the Township would get for the year. The other half could be recognized in the 2023 budget. In-cap appropriations can be increased by the first year of the PILOT program to increase services or whatever else may be needed.

Mayor Mojena added that there were a number of projects and requests from the different departments that could not fit into the in-cap because of the in-cap limitations. Maintaining taxes with a 0% increase was very important. Looking at the additional projects and requests listed, additional funding is needed and this could presumably come from the warehouse revenue that is expected; however, it is not here and now therefore the goal is to delay the introduction of the budget until those funds are received.

Committeeman Tallon agrees with the recommendation of the CFO.

Deputy Mayor Ocello questioned what date the budget would need to be submitted by.

CFO Grouser stated statutorily introduction is supposed to be at the end of March or first meeting of April, however that will be delayed. There will be no repercussions.

Deputy Mayor Ocello stated he also agrees with said recommendation of the CFO.

Mayor Mojena added there will be an additional \$245,000 that would be realized when the CO is issued. He feels it is a good idea to delay the budget therefore, he also agrees with the recommendation of the CFO.

Committeeman Sisiz also agreed.

CFO Grouser mentioned the Capital Projects and equipment. In January the Department Heads provided their capital equipment and project requests. The Public Works Department was asking for capital projects in the amount of about \$6.8 million. After much discussion, that was brought down to \$2.9 million in this budget; from there a Public Works 5 year Capital Plan was created. The Capital equipment projects as presented about 86% is Public Works, however it is more for infrastructure not for the purchasing of equipment. The remaining 14% of Capital is for OEM, Fire, EMS and Police. If the Township Committee chooses to approve any of the Capital projects, more money would need to be added to the budget presented for the 5% down. In doing that, a bit more of the surplus would be utilized.

Administrator Fitzpatrick explained that the infrastructure is key to get some of the roads fixed. In addition, there will be additional revenues coming in from the other projects as well.

Mayor Mojena added that there were about 38 critical projects originally submitted by Public Works for infrastructure repairs. That would've been the \$6.8 million dollars previously mentioned. That number and the number of projects have been reduced to about \$2.9 million. The remaining departments would be getting a minimal amount, but again there are some significant infrastructure problems that need to be addressed. In addition, there is a plan to address all the concerns as time continues and revenue continues to increase.

Administrator Fitzpatrick explained that although 86% is going to infrastructure and 14% is going to other; the requests from OEM, Franklin Fire Company, EMS and the Police Department will also be addressed, except for some things that were added to the five year plan. The other departments are not being cut out. He added that included in this budget is the study of the roads. A map will be created grading the roads on their condition and showing the roads that are most concerning.

Mayor Mojena thanked Administrator Fitzpatrick and CFO Grouser for doing a good job on the budget.

CFO Grouser explained the budget process moving forward. Once the CO is issued, the budget would be introduced at a regular meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Carl Schwartz, 40 Fitzgerald Lane – He asked when the budget would be available to the public.

CFO Grouser stated the budget would be added to the website when it is introduced.

Mayor Mojena explained the information would be posted in advance of the meeting so the residents may review it.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was offered by **Committeeman Tallon** and seconded by **Committeeman Siz**. Motion carried unanimously.

PREPARED BY:

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

Ashley Jolly, RMC, CMR
Deputy Clerk

Linda Semus, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk