

**TOWNSHIP OF MANSFIELD
BURLINGTON COUNTY
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
January 30, 2023
5:00pm**

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

Mayor Mojena called the meeting to order at 5:00PM welcoming all to the first Special Budget Meeting for the year 2023 followed by Municipal Clerk Semus reading the open public meeting statement, flag salute and rolls call: Notice has been proved for this special meeting and has been posted on the official website of the Township of Mansfield, noticed in the Burlington County Time and Trenton Times on January 20, 2023 and filed with the Municipal Clerk 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 this would be one of several possible meeting wherein there will be a few department heads presenting their budget requests/requirements. There will be public comment following the presentations.

FIRST PRESENTER: **Administrator Fitzpatrick** begins with the Recreation budget. Last year Recreation was slated with \$18,125.00 wherein this year due to prices skyrocketing their request is for \$30,000.00, which is an increase of \$11,875.00, again due to inflation. This increase will be utilized in training, equipment, field prep and all the extra programs they put out i.e. easter egg hunt etc.

We are trying to grow and make everything work smoothly, efficiently and effectively. The Township, as we know, has hired a new individual (Sabrina Petrella) working in several different capacities and will need the additional funding to make this all happen.

The second item on this budget request is for Special Events. Special Events deals with an as sundry of things, i.e. parade, field day, movie night, farmers market, tree lighting, harvest fest (which may or may not be doable this year) etc. Last year their budget was slated with \$12,000.00 and with all the events they deal with, that funding was not sufficient to cover all their costs. Bringing them up to \$20,000.00 will help accomplish successful events for the Township.

The third item on this budget request is for Community Engagement. This is a new department of which is primarily Sabrina's position within the Township and an operating budget is needed for computer, a desk, joining outside departments with our new website and social media avenues etc. This request is for \$15,000.00.

The fourth item on this budget request is for Farmland Preservation. The Township is trying to have the Black Walnut Farm added to land under Farmland Preservation. The Township's share of acquiring this land would be approximately \$80,000.00 for this endeavor.

The fifth item on this budget request is for EMS. Mr. Senf is unable to be here this evening and Mr. Fitzpatrick was asked to speak on his/EMS behalf. The budget in itself is not changing very much. There medical supply budget is going from \$12,500 to \$15,000 due to price increases. Vehicle maintenance is going down, from \$20,000 to \$15,000. The drive cameras are something new to their budget. It is a 3 year contract for \$3,500.00

The capital expenditures for 2023 – there is an ambulance remount (a 2010 vehicle) for \$199,000 and a 2012 vehicle remount for \$167,000. For a total capital request of \$366,000. (Mayor Mojena explains the meaning of a remount to the residents)

The last item on this budget is for the Tax Assessor. There is a \$6,114.00 increase request from last year. \$67,629.00 to \$73,743.00 which totals a 8.29% increase in his budget from last year.

There were no questions by Committee on any and all of Mr. Fitzpatrick's presentations.

Mayor Mojena comments on Farmland Preservation. The County has formally provided an offer to Black Walnut Farms. If landowner accepts the offer than the process begins and the County will expect the Township to budget for the Township's share and also prepare a Resolution for approval. The Township's share will be 15%. The difference between the commercial value and the value of the farm itself, whatever that indifference is, which was after its long process of the appraising the land etc., that figure has been given by the county to the landowner and if accepted by the landowner, our guesstimate is approximately \$80,000. The committee will have to decide if they want to proceed with that, he certainly hopes so, but it will be discussed between the committee members.

He further states that he was happy to see the request for recreation and community engagement. He feels it is important as we invest in our new webpage and the hiring of our new individual who will be running this organization, that we invest what we need to make successful events and we can grow from this point forward.

SECOND PRESENTER: Chief Eric Campbell begins his request highlighting the police department's needs in addition to the expected 2023 operating budget. It includes items that will require funding (via either additional operating funds or as a capital expenditure) during the 2023 budget year.

Staffing/Police Officers: Due to the increase in calls and the growing demand on the patrol officers, he proposes the addition of one patrol officer to the authorized strength allowing to schedule three officers per shift. Current staffing is two members working patrol with a power shift, which entails an officer working an overlapping shift covering only a portion of day shift and a portion of night shift. Increasing the staffing level in patrol to three per squad will provide better police services, improve response times, officer safety and reduce overtime. To offset the cost, he proposed that instead of hiring an additional Special Class II Officer that was authorized in the 2022 budget, he suggests eliminating that position and make it a fulltime position instead.

Patrol Vehicles: Chief provided the Committee with a chart which depicts the current make-up of the fleet. They are awaiting the arrival of two vehicles from the 2022 budget cycle. The need to replace some of the high mileage vehicles is ongoing. They currently have three patrol cars that have over 140,000 miles. They will continue to use the Chevy Tahoe as a primary vehicle in the fleet and purchase under the cooperative pricing system. A vehicle with standard up-fit of emergency equipment from the dealer is \$65,900.00. The expense associated with ancillary equipment and installation is approximately \$5,000 for each of the marked vehicles (decals & in-car computer). Whenever feasible, the upfit expense for the vehicle will be mitigated by reusing existing equipment. Chief is requesting \$140,000 funding be allocated for two marked units.

Weapon Replacement: The department has utilized Sig Sauer P220 .45 caliber and P239.40 caliber handguns for many years. During this period, the handguns have functioned dependably and have proven to be a reliable choice for our officers. The purpose for this proposal is to consider the replacement option of aging inventory which were purchased back in 2009. The department currently has 18 P220s and 16P239s and the Chief would like to switch to 20 P320.9mm caliber pistol for duty weapon and 20 P365.9mm caliber for off duty. The pistol manufacturer currently offers the Law Enforcement Trade-In Program to law enforcement agencies that utilize Sig Sauer handguns. This program allows department to trade-in the Sig Sauer handguns in their arsenal for new one. The program gives an agency approximately

\$275.00 for each Sig Sauer P220 and approximately \$225.00 for each P239. The estimated balance of \$480.00 is the department's cost of each new duty handgun and \$392.00 for off-duty handguns. The estimated cost for trading in all of the departments P220 handguns would be \$4,950.00 and the P239 would be \$3,600 for a total of 8,550.00. The replacement is efficient, in that, the manufacturer sends the new handguns directly to the department upon receiving the order. The department may then issue the new handguns and reclaim the old ones. Once the exchange is completed, the department sends the handguns being traded in back to Sig Arms for the credit. Chief is requesting \$27,000 to be allocated for the replacement of the new handguns, new holsters and new magazine pouches.

Salary Increase for Clerical Staff: Due to significant increase in work volume and the disparity amongst the salaries of other township employees, the chief is requesting a salary increase for the Senior Records Clerk and Records Clerk. This request is within the parameter of other clerical staff that are currently employed by the Township and believe that an increase is warranted based upon their position and duties in our department. The Senior Records Clerk and Records Clerk position play a vital administrative role in the police department. These positions are critical to the success of the police department and believe they should receive and increase for the work they do.

Future Capital Projects: The following are future projects to be implemented within the next five years. These figures are current figures and may have to be refreshed and/or revised at the appropriate time.

*Continued Fleet Vehicle Replacements - \$65,000.00 per unit

*Replacement of Conducted Energy Devices - \$7,400.00

*Next Generation Breath Testing Instrument- \$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00

*Renewal of Body Worn Camera Contract in 2025- \$65,000.00 (the department have secured grant fundings that will help offset a significant portion of the renewal expense in 2025)

THIRD PRESENTER: Frank Parkerson, Public Works Foreman –

Buildings and Grounds - Requests are for additional cleaning services, landscaping needs for around the municipal building, buff and polish the municipal complex and EMS floors. A local landscaper donates flowers to the clock property and irrigation would help to maintain them. Top soiling of the municipal complex septic. Windows at the EMS building.

Streets & Roads – Removal of 11 large dead ash trees on Georgetown-Chesterfield Road within 5 feet of the road. Money for CWA clothing allowance for PW workers. Purchase of steam cleaner for the salt trucks as well as sharing with the Fire Department/EMS/Construction. Changing the banners on the poles in town as they are not in good condition.

Parks – Playground mulch for Hedding & Mapleton. Mower parts. Six foot green screen that goes along the fence where the residential properties back up to Columbus park to help block headlights. Vegetation control along the fence lines and parking lots to keep weeds down. Multiple fence repairs.

Stormwater – Administrator Fitzpatrick explained the MS4 permit process. A \$10,000 increase in budget for working with R&V on MS4 permit requirements. With the added work, an increase for Mr. Parkerson and Township Superintendent was added. \$5,000 was added for vehicle maintenance. Repair of the Greenbrook basin and will look into green infrastructure. Repairs to normal street basins which are on-going. Hoods and bicycle grates along roadways need replacement. GIS mapping as required by NJDEP.

Mr. Parkerson mentioned the money in the sidewalk fund that he would like to utilize for the sidewalk that runs East Main Street into the Columbus Park.

Personnel – Hiring of a full time person for the 2023 season. Requesting a \$5,000 raise for the administrative assistant.

Capital Equipment/Projects – The swale on Mill Lane needs to be cleaned as it is causing flooding. Mansfield Road East from Legends to Route 206 needs to be overlaid. Island Road from Mansfield Road East to the Township line as it is cracking severely. Wayne Drive, although not heavily traveled it is currently mud and is falling apart. Georgetown Road has eroding issues caused by the pipe that needs to be lowered so the water enters the creek at the same height. In regards to PW equipment 2 lawn mowers (12 ft. mower decks) to help cut down on mowing.

Park Improvements – Columbus Recreation Building needs a new roof.

FOURTH PRESENTER: Alex Broder – Franklin Fire Company #1 President asks the Committee for the full \$161,526.00 as permitted by law to continue our operations and to enhance our recruitment and retention programs. He references “REF_section 27 of P.L. 2015, c.95 amended NJSA 40A:14-34 and NJSA 40A:5-45-1a and Local Finance Notice LFN 2022-19 dated October 19, 2022.

The Fire Company continues to see dramatic increase in costs throughout the industry from vehicle maintenance, training, turnout gear and other miscellaneous needs which have seen a 7% to 35% increase in cost year over year.

Approximately \$20,000 of the requested budget will be utilized to replace again apparatus tires which are required to replace every seven years. Additional purchase for fire hose that has met life expectancy and to replace hose that has failed annual required hose testing.

The fire company continues to struggle with the national shortage of volunteers, the Franklin Fire Company has earmarked funding that will be used for the recruitment and retention program currently in place and are happy to report four new members that they have added to their roster.

They have always prioritized their funds, it has become and will continue to be a health and safety issue if proper funding is not received due to increasing costs, specifically to those who volunteer their time to our community.

Capital Projects:

- *Replace 33 year old tender - \$450,000.00 (build time 1 – 2 years – tender has already met life expectancy)
- *Replace 23 year old pumper with Quint Fire Apparatus - \$2,000,000.00 (build time 2 – 3 years, delivery in 2025 which is in line with life expectancy)
- *Replace 34 year old brush truck - \$150,000.00

FIFTH PRESENTER: Douglas Borgstrom OEM Coordinator and Fire Prevention- OEM has been working continuously this year to better protect the community in the event of an emergency while also supporting other township emergency response agencies. As of Spring 2022, NJOEM has published multiple directives that must be followed to ensure Mansfield’s agency is compliant with State requirements. To remain compliant with these directives, the office has had to increase the workload as well as expenditures. NJOEM Directive 7 (2022), the Coordinator must efficiently use the agency budget for equipping the agency, staffing, facilitating mass public care, and more. These requirements will increase the amount needed by the department to remain compliant. The department is actively supplementing the increase cost requirement by entering into the EMAA grant program and receiving \$10,000 a year to support OEM.

While the position of safety coordinator has previously been unfunded in the Township, it is being requested that the safety coordinator be credited as a position salaried at \$10,000.00 a year to fairly compensate for the duties being performed by the safety coordinator. These duties include coordinating the right to know program, as well as completing reports requested by the JIF. This position includes measures constituting risk reduction and can fall under the supervision of the OEWM if desired by the Township.

2023 Regular Budget Request:

- *Coordinator S&W - \$10,000.00
- *Deputy Coordinator S&W - \$5,000.00
- *Safety Coordinator S&W- \$10,000.00
- *Supplies/General Budget - \$20,000.00
- *Training & Education - \$5,000.00

TOTAL: \$50,000.00

In Addition to the regular budget, the office is requesting a capital project to purchase a Dodge Durango for OEM use. The office currently does not own a vehicle that can be used for responding to incidents, attending training, or attending offsite meetings. The vehicle will also allow the OEM to have a mobile command post presence when necessary, equipped with radios, a printer and other command items to allow the office to protect the community in a large scale emergency or disaster. The vehicle will increase the response capability and is vital to the continued improvement of our agency. Additionally, the vehicle can be used to tow the OEM trailer with Polaris Ranger to incidents in the township. The office currently has no tow vehicles. The trailer must be towed by another agency in township to any incident taking away a vehicle from the other response agencies.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kristianne Goodenough, 28126 Gaunts 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 31st or the first meeting thereafter. It needs to be adopted by April 29th 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.

RESPECTFULLY PREPARED AND SUBMITTED BY:

Linda Semus, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk