

FEBRUARY 20, 2010

On the above date the Township Committee of the Township of Mantua held a Special Budget Workshop Meeting in the Municipal Building, 401 Main Street, Mantua, New Jersey 08051.

Mayor Timothy W. Chell called the meeting to order. The time was 7:30 a.m. Mayor Chell asked that everyone rise for the flag salute.

Mayor Chell read aloud the Statement of the Presiding Officer: "This Rescheduled Special Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act, *N.J.S.A. 10:4-8 (d)*, Notice of this meeting was transmitted to the Gloucester County Times and the Courier-Post newspapers at least 48-hours in advance. In addition, copies of the notice were posted on the bulletin board in the Mantua Township Municipal Building and filed in the office of the Township Clerk."

Mayor Chell called on Township Clerk Shawn Menzies to perform a roll call of present officials. Present were Mayor Chell, Deputy Mayor Pete Scirrotto, Committeewoman Lorraine Beckett, Committeeman Robert Zimmerman, Mike Datz, Township Administrator, Mr. Menzies, and Gayle Tschopp, Chief Financial Officer. Also present were Police Chief Rodney Sawyer, Glen Demers, Assistant Supervisor of Public Works, James Gallagher, Construction Official, and Sandy Elliott, Tax Assessor.

Committeeman Zimmerman made a motion to open the meeting to the public, seconded by Committeewoman Beckett. All were in favor.

As no one wished to speak, Committeeman Zimmerman made a motion to close the public session, seconded by Committeewoman Beckett. All were in favor.

A budget worksheet was distributed to officials. Mayor Chell called this year's budgetary process an extremely difficult one, as revenue is down significantly and before cuts are made today the increase would be 14 and a half cents. First the Mayor called for the increase in deferred school taxes, which would decrease the overall budget by at least three and a half cents and then requested the increase in the fund for uncollected taxes.

For the Construction Office Department, Mr. Gallagher said his office does not see any change from 2009 except for salaries. He added 2009 was a rough year with revenue down because of a decrease in inspections, but the good news is the office has nearly \$70,000 worth of permits to be issued in the coming months. Inspections are occurring for small projects and not large-scale projects like housing developments or commercial projects.

Mayor Chell asked about the hours for sub code officials, to which Mr. Gallagher said he can try and re-work schedules but it might be a good idea to look at increasing fees. While reviewing the construction department's portion of the budget, Mayor Chell asked

if line items for electricity, printing, clothing and gas be cut or zeroed out as they were either not used in 2009 or the funds were taken from another part of the budget. Mayor Chell also asked for the operating expenses to be cut in half from \$4,000 to \$2,000 for the construction office.

Mayor Chell next asked a review of the proposed Gloucester County Tax Assessment programs. Mrs. Elliott explained some towns have signed on for the first phase and Mantua would be in the second phase which would not start until about 2011 or 2012 for the revaluation.

Mrs. Elliott said in the past she has had a part-time assistant and with Susan Baldwin now in the Construction Office she would like the Committee to look to get her some part-time help. Mayor Chell said it is the wrong time now to hire anyone. Mr. Datz suggested appointing Pam LeVine, the current Deputy Clerk, to assist in the office a few hours a week and also to have Mrs. Baldwin continue assisting when the construction office is slow.

For Streets and Roads, Mr. Datz said most budget line items will remain the same from last year. Mayor Chell asked about overtime due to the past two large-scale snow storms. Mr. Datz said the federal government will be offering counties in New Jersey financial assistance for the storms and Mantua will apply for funding.

Mayor Chell asked if the line item for buying back sick time by public works employees should be cut or zeroed out. Mr. Datz said while it is in their contract to do so, most do not do it but out of caution it would be good to have it in place. Mayor Chell asked to take it down from \$2,000 to \$1,000 and for gas and chemicals to be taken down from \$4,000 to \$1,500 under sanitation. Mayor Chell called for the equipment line item for the office to be completely cut in 2010.

Mayor Chell asked about the recycling line item and what is the \$13,000 going towards? Mr. Datz explained at one time the Township of Mantua was being paid about \$30 per ton of recycling but the market has fallen and now the Township of Mantua must pay to bring it in. Mayor Chell and the Committee asked for the miscellaneous operating expenses cut to \$6,000 from \$8,000.

For the police department, Police Chief Sawyer said they hope to hold the line and they are seeking the purchase of two cars in 2010. The Committee said it will likely be a one vehicle purchase in 2010. Chief Sawyer said they are in the process of continuing the revamping of the Mobile Data Terminals and would like to replace three in 2010. Chief Sawyer explained about a new computer being offered that reads license plates and then reports are brought up for violations, no licenses, or even warrants. The cost is \$19,000 each. The Committee said it would look into it in the future.

Committeeman Zimmerman said something needs to be done with cutting overtime, as the department almost used all of the \$145,000 in 2009. Chief Sawyer said he understands, but officers were in K-9 Training, injured and now one is deployed to Iraq

until the end of the year. Chief Sawyer added the department mandates a three officer shift and with people out officers need to be moved around to cover shifts. Chief Sawyer said a change in the schedule could possibly make the situation easier, but it would require a meeting with the police union, to which the Committee agreed if it can bring down overtime then the two sides should meet.

Mayor Chell next reviewed the General Administration portion of the budget. Mayor Chell and the Township Committee requested lowering several line items including summer help, lease and rentals, and finance office equipment between \$3,000 and \$5,000 each.

The Committee said it was unhappy with the 18 percent increase in the group insurance rates. Mr. Datz said he will look into it and discuss what other options the Township of Mantua with Hardenbergh Insurance Group. Also, the Committee reported that workman compensation is up 8 percent from \$284,000 to \$333,000 in 2010. Mr. Datz said claims were up in 2009 in the police and public works department and that the JIF is looking into individual town assessments for workman compensation instead of a JIF-wide assessment.

Mayor Chell said General Liability is also up 8 percent and needs to be reviewed.

Mr. Datz said a way to cut overtime would be to make the bus driver a full-time employee and then any overtime would be applied as comp time.

Mayor Chell asked about the landfill line item as the County announced lower rates per ton brought in at Wheelabrator. Mr. Datz said while that is the case sometimes they are diverted to the South Harrison Landfill, which is more per ton.

Mayor Chell said the PERS line item is fixed, but why is the PFRS up \$75,000 from 2009? Mrs. Tschopp reported she will call the pension division and find out the reasons and report back.

Mayor Chell and the Committee asked for further ideas on where to make cuts and are furloughs a possibility? Mr. Datz said furloughs could be considered from March to December using two hours a pay period which would be minimal against all employees, but it have more savings if all employees do such as all unions would have to agree on it or direct layoffs is another possibility to be considered.

The Township Committee asked for everyone to come up with more ideas to make cuts.

Committeeman Zimmerman made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Committeewoman Beckett. All were in favor. The time was 10:15 a.m.