

**TOWNSHIP OF PARSIPPANY-TROY HILLS
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**

March 14, 2011

Public Invited with Public Participation

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Council President Fox at 3:30 p.m.

Roll Call:	Mr. Cesaro	-	Present
	Mr. dePierro	-	Present
	Mr. Ferrara	-	Present at 4:04 p.m.
	Mr. Stanton	-	Present
	Mr. Fox	-	Present

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mayor Barberio; J. Lim, Business Administrator; J. Silver, Township Clerk

FLAG SALUTE

PRESENT DURING PORTIONS OF THE MEETING:

Police Chief M. Peckerman; Deputy Police Chief A. DeZenzo; Capt. J. Carifi; Capt. E. Jasiocki; Capt. P. Philipps; B. Ievoli, Director of the Department of Human Services; R. Strechay, Director, Department of Municipal Utilities; P. Bober, Sewer Plant Acting Superintendent; F. Lorito, Sewer Plant Asst. Superintendent; K. Ryan, Water Superintendent; P. DeFalco, Golf Superintendent

The agenda of this meeting, to the extent known, is as follows:

Review and Discussion of the Mayor's 2011 Budget Recommendations

FORMAL ACTION MAY OR MAY NOT BE TAKEN.

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law by filing the notice in the Office of the Township Clerk and by posting the meeting notice on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building on March 9, 2011 where it has remained posted since that date. Copies of this notice were mailed by fax to The Daily Record, The Star Ledger and various other newspapers and local radio stations on March 9, 2011.

The Township Council commenced its review of the Mayor's 2011 budget recommendations.

Ms. Lim advised that she provided the Council with worksheets that show comparisons between this year's budget and prior years' budgets. She noted that this is information required by the Department of Community Affairs as part of its Best Practices Checklist for budget analysis. Copies were made available to members of the public. Additionally, this data will be posted on the Township's website.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (240)

Present for this portion of the budget review: Police Chief M. Peckerman; Deputy Police Chief A. DeZenzo; Capt. Carifi; Capt. E. Jasiacki; Capt. P. Philipps

Manpower concerns were addressed. Chief Peckerman indicated that, as of April 1, 2011, there will be 95 police officers. This number includes one officer who is out on Workers' Compensation and is not expected to return to work. The number of future retirements, per Chief Peckerman, is very fluid; a lot depends on future legislation as far as health care and pension reform. The worst case scenario is a loss of another 16 officers by the end of 2011, bringing the total number of officers to 79.

The Mayor confirmed that there is no funding in this budget to hire new officers. Ms. Lim noted that there will be two civilian replacements for uniformed police officers, one will replace the student resource officer and the other will serve as a "technician" for the evidence room. The Mayor, in response to an inquiry from the Council, advised that negotiations with the police are continuing; the outcome may benefit this budget.

Mr. dePierro noted that funding in the amount of \$88,000 for three new police vehicles is included in the budget. He suggested not purchasing the cars and transferring the funds to salary and wages in order to hire two new officers. Mr. Cesaro expressed his concern that the officers will incur more expense in the years to come. Mr. dePierro felt that, if necessary, the Captains' vehicles could be put out on the road. Chief Peckerman explained that most of the vehicles driven by the Captains have high mileage and that, additionally, there will be costs associated with repainting the vehicles and the purchasing of required equipment to enable these vehicles to be out on the road. Mr. dePierro then asked Chief Peckerman what is more important to him, two new police officers or the police cars. If it's a choice between the three new cars and two police officers, Chief Peckerman advised that he would opt for the officers. Mayor Barberio, agreeing with the concern expressed by Mr. Cesaro, pointed out that the hiring of two officers this year will dramatically affect next year's budget. Mr. dePierro commented that he is trying to soften the impact of losing police officers. The Mayor commented that, going forward, we are going to have to find a way to reorganize the Police Department in order to put more officers on the road; we will have to eliminate the nonessential services and sustain the vital ones.

Mr. dePierro made a motion to transfer \$88,000 from Vehicle Equipment (229) to the Police Department's Salary and Wage Budget in order to add two new police officers. Ms. Lim explained that if this is approved, approximately \$8,000 must be left in the operating budget to cover the cost of uniforms, psychological evaluations, etc. Chief Peckerman advised that his department could live for one year without purchasing new police vehicles, but not having a steady replacement schedule for police vehicles is a major concern. He further commented that he understands the Mayor's concern regarding the 2 percent cap, noting that next year these officers would not only get a 2½ percent raise, but contractually their pay steps increase every year. The question is how do we hire police officers, follow the contract and still stay within the 2 percent cap. Mr. dePierro responded that the contract has to change, sooner or later. Mr. dePierro amended his motion to transfer \$80,000 from Vehicle Equipment (229) to Salary and Wages. No second to the motion was offered.

Operating expenses in the Police Department's budget were reviewed. Specifically,

Vehicle Equipment (229) – Mr. Cesaro noted that Chief Peckerman had indicated that the Police Department could go another year without purchasing additional vehicles. He asked Chief Peckerman if he could forgo the \$88,000 this year or cut the amount allocated leaving enough to cover painting or required maintenance. Chief Peckerman replied “no,” questioning, if he cuts the \$88,000 out of the budget, how do you put those cars back into the budget next year with the 2 percent cap. He explained that there could be a trade off by transferring the funds from one area to another, but not an absolute cut. Mr. Cesaro made a motion to cut Vehicle Equipment (229) from \$88,000 to \$68,000, leaving \$20,000 in the budget for paint jobs and upkeep. No second to the motion was offered.

Building Maintenance (231) – Mr. Cesaro noted that the amount expended for Building Maintenance on average over the past few years was less than the amount currently appropriated. He made a motion to cut \$15,000. No second to the motion was offered.

Education (300) – Mr. Cesaro pointed out that the Mayor appropriated \$3,000 more than the amount requested. Ms. Lim explained that someone applied for college education reimbursement, which is contractual, after the Chief submitted his budget. Ms. Lim noted that the Explanatory Statement lists the names of the individuals who will be receiving education dollars.

Microfilming and Shredding (375) – Mr. Cesaro noted that for two years, nothing was expended. He questioned why \$8,000 is now necessary. Chief Peckerman explained that the Police Department is in the process of purging documents; money will be used for shredding and microfilming this year.

Safety Equipment (445) – Chief Peckerman reviewed the items included in this account, noting that every year the officers on the road save multiple lives with the defibrillators.

Traffic Section Supplies (492) – It appears to Mr. Cesaro that the amount appropriated in this year’s budget is approximately four times the amount expended last year. He questioned the reason for the increase. (The items included under this account and their projected costs are included in the Explanatory Statement.)

ANIMAL CONTROL (890) – Relative to Veterinarian Service (670), Mr. Cesaro pointed out that the Chief requested \$18,500, but the Mayor appropriated \$25,500. Ms. Lim explained that this line item was increased because of the shared services agreement with Hanover. The revenue portion is included under “Current Fund – Anticipated Revenues.” In connection with the PASS Donation Shortfall, Mr. Cesaro questioned why \$12,000 was appropriated this year when only \$1,658 was expended in 2010. Chief Peckerman explained that the amount of donations is an unknown factor and varies from year to year. The Animal Control Division must be prepared to run the operation if it does not receive donations. The Chief stated that we hope to receive the donations, but we cannot rely on it.

No capital improvements were requested this year by the Police Department.

PUBLIC HEARING – POLICE DEPARTMENT

Council President Fox opened the meeting to the public on the Police Department Budget only, noting a three-minute time limit per speaker.

Roy Messmer, 10 Drumlin Drive, asked the number of officers as of April 1, 2010. Ms. Lim stated that she thinks the number was 103. Mr. Messmer pointed out that the number has dropped by 10 percent. He felt that this drop in the number of officers is a serious concern. He commented that he doesn’t understand why the Governor does not allow this portion of the budget to go above the 2 percent cap. Additionally, Mr. Messmer questioned the longevity payment made to Sgt. (Gregory) Clark who retired. Ms. Lim explained that he retired mid-year, the payment was what he earned prior to retirement. Mr. Messmer felt that this should be reviewed, noting that Sgt. Clark’s retirement date is indicated as February 1, 2011. Additionally, Mr. Messmer indicated that he has been told that the cost to hire a new officer is \$55,000 in direct salary and that the benefits are \$29,000. It appears that the numbers discussed this evening are different. Chief Peckerman explained that the salary is what the market will bear. If there are a lot of laid off officers in the State, the Township has more control over what it offers.

Mr. Cesaro pointed out that he believes the Governor made an allowance that provides that a municipality can request an exemption from the cap if a hardship exists, such as an increase in crime.

Council President Fox noted that Council Member Ferrara arrived at this point in the meeting.

Mr. Stanton confirmed that the Mayor had indicated that he is not putting a freeze on hiring police officers.

Pat Petaccia, 182 Hawkins Avenue, commented that she liked Mr. dePierro's idea of waiting to purchase the police vehicles. She questioned if anyone has asked the police officers to freeze their salaries for a year which would allow the hiring of additional officers. Mayor Barberio explained that he cannot discuss this issue as the Township is currently in negotiations.

Seeing no one else come forward to speak, Council President Fox closed the public hearing relative to the Police Department Budget.

HUMAN SERVICES

Present for this portion of the budget review: B. Ievoli, Director of the Department of Human Services

OFFICE OF HEALTH (430) – In connection with Fleet Maintenance, Mr. Cesaro pointed out that \$45 was expended in 2010, but \$3,000 is appropriated for this line item in 2011. Ms. Ievoli confirmed that the entire amount appropriated last year was spent. Regarding the Shared Services Agreement, Mayor Barberio advised that the Township will save approximately \$60,000 a year. Ms. Ievoli advised that the number of clinics has been reduced based on the number of patients seen last year.

OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES (450) – Operating expenses were reviewed. Mr. Cesaro questioned why \$21,400 was appropriated for Cultural Affairs Bus Trips and Activities (462) when only \$15,000 was requested. Ms. Ievoli explained that she initially cut out all of the senior trips, but Mayor Barberio requested that half of the trips be reinstated. The funding will provide one trip for each senior organization. Mayor Barberio advised that, hopefully, in the future, funding from the Community Development Block Grant can be used to offset the cost of these trips.

CHILD DAY CARE CENTER (451) – Ms. Lim advised that funding for the Center was cut back. Mayor Barberio advised that he was told that the Center is running in the "black." Last year he indicated that if the Center is going to continue to count on this funding, the Center might as well close. He agreed to keep a certain portion in the budget provided that the Board demonstrates that it can make the Center work. Hopefully, per Mayor Barberio, the Center will become self sufficient over a course of time. Ms. Lim confirmed that the Center is aware of the \$48,000 appropriation. Mayor Barberio further noted that the Day Care Center has been more proactive in raising funds.

AMBULANCE SERVICES (452) – In response to Mr. dePierro's inquiry, Ms. Ievoli indicated that the paid EMTs provide coverage 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Ms. Ievoli indicated that the EMTs have provided coverage on Saturdays since 2002. Mr. dePierro advised that when he first agreed to paid EMTs, the paid squad was to supplement the volunteers during the workweek, Monday through Friday. Ms. Ievoli explained that Saturday is one of the busiest days. Mr. dePierro questioned if the Mayor is saying that the volunteers cannot handle Saturdays. Mayor Barberio stated that this is not what is being said. He reiterated that the EMTs have been

providing coverage on Saturdays since 2002 and he is not willing to change this. It was noted that the Township would save approximately \$400 per day if Saturdays were eliminated, but that the revenue, in the amount of \$750 for each billable call, more than covers the cost. Ms. Ievoli advised the Council that the paid squad handled 10 calls last Saturday, which is a significant number. At the Council's request, she reviewed the procedure for dispatching the ambulance squads, both paid and volunteer. Mr. dePierro stated that it is his belief that the volunteers could handle the weekends. Mayor Barberio stated that he is not willing to eliminate Saturdays as this is a public safety issue for him, but that the Council could do so via the budget. Mr. dePierro commented that if he makes a motion to cut \$20,800 out of the budget, there is no guarantee that Saturday coverage will be eliminated as there is no specific line item for Saturday coverage. Mayor Barberio assured the Council Members that if they vote to delete funds from the budget, he would eliminate Saturday coverage. Mr. dePierro made a motion to eliminate Saturday coverage by the paid squad.

Dean Snook, Chief, Par-Troy EMT advised that he is shocked at the possibility of eliminating Saturdays, as this was not a question he thought would be raised today. He addressed Saturday service and the dispatch protocol. What has been learned in the past year is that, if a volunteer squad is on the road, the paid staff is to stand down immediately and let the closer ambulance handle the emergency. It is true that there are some Saturdays when there are not a lot of emergencies. Last Saturday, however, the paid squad handled 11 dispatches and took eight or nine people to the hospital. He felt that taking Saturday coverage out of the budget would be a mistake. Keeping one ambulance on duty on Saturday with volunteer supplementation should remain in place.

Don Bragg, President, Rockaway Neck First Aid Squad, indicated that the volunteer squads have about 20 to 30 EMTs each. On a Saturday, there could be 60 EMTs available versus two paid EMTs in a single truck. He commented that at any given time people will "come out of the woodwork" to staff ambulances and their hearts are in it. He disagrees with the feeling that the Township is not safe or that the volunteers are not capable of handling coverage. He confirmed that volunteers could fully cover the Township on a weekend. He commented that the paid crew works very hard to provide Saturday coverage and pointed out that, on that particular Saturday, the paid crew was really racing around and there should have been room for volunteer rigs to respond as well.

Jennifer Thurkauf, First Senior Lieutenant for Parsippany Volunteer Ambulance, agreed with the comments made by Reverend Bragg, noting some days it seems like the volunteer squads are being cancelled so that the paid squad can take the calls. She felt that the volunteers could provide coverage on Saturdays. She also reminded everyone that the Township has mutual aid, if needed, with Boonton, Montville and Denville. Mr. Fox asked why hasn't the Saturday coverage been an issue for the last eight or nine years. Ms. Thurkauf explained that the volunteers did not think they had an option.

Mayor Barberio explained to the Council that if it is going to cut the Salary and Wage portion of the budget and, thereby, eliminating Saturdays, the anticipated revenue needs

to be cut as well, which in fact will increase the budget. Ms. Ievoli stated that the amount of anticipated revenue would have to be cut by approximately \$3,500 for each Saturday for a total of \$182,000.

Mr. dePierro stated that his motion to eliminate Saturday coverage by the paid squad still stands. Mr. Stanton asked if this could be tabled until additional information regarding weekend calls is provided. Mr. Cesaro agreed that he too would like to see the numbers. Mr. dePierro expressed his concern that eventually we will ignore the volunteers since we can recover all of this money with the paid squad. He does not support this trend. Mayor Barberio indicated that this is the trend that the State is headed with a 2 percent cap, but he is not taking this direction.

In hopes of making a compromise, Mr. dePierro withdrew his motion providing that, procedurally, the volunteers, as well as the paid squad, are responding to calls on Saturdays. He stated that he hates to see the volunteer squads ignored or snubbed unnecessarily. He questioned if this is possible. **Chief Snook** indicated that this is a good idea and, if this is put into place, procedures need to be developed with the Police Communications Center and amongst the agencies that, if there is an emergency crew ready to respond, the Police Desk must be so advised. The Police Desk could then dispatch the volunteer crew as the closest available ambulance. Mayor Barberio felt that this could be worked out. He reiterated that he doesn't care who responds as long as someone responds quickly. Mr. Fox warned that if this is not worked out with the volunteers, there will be real problems with this budget next year.

Christopher Brown, Captain, Rockaway Neck First Aid Squad, indicated that the volunteers are more than willing to work with Chief Snook on developing a rotating schedule and doing what is best for the Township and its residents.

The Council asked the volunteers to let them know how everything works out.

In connection with other expenses for the **Ambulance Services (452)**, Mr. Cesaro commented that the three-year average expended for **Ambulance Billing TPA** was about \$35,000, but he noted that there is a \$25,000 spike in the 2011 appropriation. He asked for the reason. Ms. Ievoli advised that this is for the second ambulance, which was put in operation on December 1st. She indicated that the average monthly revenue is between \$57,000 and \$58,000, 8 percent of which would be \$60,000 yearly, which is payable to the Third Party Administrator.

There are no capital improvements budgeted for this department. It was noted that there are capital improvements included in the municipal budget for the first aid organizations.

PUBLIC HEARING – HUMAN SERVICES

Council President Fox opened the meeting to the public on the Department of Human Services Budget only, noting a three-minute time limit per speaker.

Pat Petaccia, 182 Hawkins Avenue, commented that paying EMTs and not using them or alternating them with volunteers defeats the purpose. She also felt that senior citizens can't afford the charge. It was explained to Ms. Petaccia that individuals are only charged if they have insurance. Ms. Petaccia stated that she understands that the Township is getting its fee from insurance companies, but the more we bill insurance companies, the greater the increase in premiums. She felt the Township should make a decent effort to keep premiums down. The paid squad, in her opinion, is just making money for the Township. She stated that she doesn't care about Mondays through Fridays, but felt that Saturdays should be covered by the volunteers.

Roy Messmer, 10 Drumlin Drive, asked if the Administration has considered busing seniors to Township concerts and sports events. Ms. Ievoli indicated that the Township bus picks up residents at Brookside for concerts. In response to Mr. Messmer's inquiry as to whether the volunteers, the Administration and the paid EMTs have met to work out concerns, Mayor Barberio advised that a discussion was held. Ms. Ievoli explained the dispatch procedure in response to concerns expressed by Mr. Messmer. Mayor Barberio advised that he is considering putting GPS systems into all of the ambulances. The Administration is looking into costs.

Seeing no one else come forward to speak, Council President Fox closed the public hearing relative to the Human Services Budget.

Mr. Cesaro, in terms of the senior bus trips, emphasized the importance of seeking corporate sponsorship. Mayor Barberio indicated that a lot of corporations sponsor concerts and other activities, but noted that these corporations are going through difficult economic times as well.

SEWER UTILITY (700)

Present for this portion of the budget review: R. Strechay, Director, Department of Municipal Utilities; P. Bober, Sewer Plant Acting Superintendent; F. Lorito, Sewer Plant Asst. Superintendent

In connection with the Salary and Wage portion of the Sewer Utility Budget, Ms. Lim confirmed that an employee who retired from the Sewer Plant will be replaced.

Mr. Strechay advised that the Sewer Utility needs to increase Gasoline (323) by \$15,000 from \$33,813 to \$48,813. Additional surplus will be used to balance this appropriation.

The Council reviewed the remainder of the Sewer Utility Budget, including Capital Improvements, Debt Service and Deferred/Statutory Expenditures.

Mr. Cesaro stated that he has reservations about using sewer surplus to help balance the municipal budget. Surplus may be required in connection with the upgrading of the plant, especially to deal with unforeseen problems that may occur. He would like to find

another way to balance the Budget. Mayor Barberio advised that it was his decision to use \$700,000 from the sewer surplus, noting that there would still be about \$4.7 million in surplus to address any type of catastrophe that may happen. His decision was based on several factors – (1) the money is available and he is giving it back to the rate payers and (2) these are extraordinary times, noting that former mayors used surpluses without the cap that he has to deal with. Mayor Barberio explained that, if the \$700,000 is not transferred, the significant number of employees that would have to be laid off would be catastrophic, especially in the Police Department.

Mr. dePierro commented that the Mayor assured him that there is still sufficient surplus for emergencies. He doesn't like taking money out of utilities. If there is a huge surplus, then rates should be lowered. However, he agreed that these are extraordinary times; this is a onetime thing and there is sufficient surplus for contingencies. Mayor Barberio advised that this will not affect our AA Bond Rating; this was another motivating factor. The Mayor reiterated that the money is going back to our residents.

PUBLIC HEARING – SEWER UTILITY BUDGET

Council President Fox opened the meeting to the public relative to the Sewer Utility Budget, noting a three-minute time limit per speaker.

Roy Messmer, 10 Drumlin Drive, asked the Mayor to consider giving ratepayers a credit and increasing tax bills, which are tax deductible.

Mayor Barberio advised that there will definitely be a rate decrease once the Sewer Treatment Plant is finished.

Mr. Cesaro expressed his view that the lowering of rates, especially in these economic times, would be a good gesture.

Pat Petaccia, 182 Hawkins Avenue, commented that she knows we are in tough times, but this seems to be an excuse that everyone is using. She expressed her view that taking the surplus is wrong. She felt that residents don't see an effort being made on their behalf.

Mayor Barberio responded that taxpayers are going to see a 2.3 percent tax levy, which is one of the lowest in the last eight years. The way we got money in the past was through State funding; now the Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid has been drastically cut and this cut has to be made up somewhere.

Ms. Petaccia stressed that we must have a committed Council and a committed Mayor to look into every nook and cranny to see where we can get this money from – cut things that are really not needed.

Seeing no one else come forward to speak, Council President Fox closed the public hearing relative to the Sewer Utility Budget.

Mr. dePierro stated that he would like to follow the progress of the Treatment Plant project. Ms. Lim advised that a power point presentation that includes block diagrams is available for review on the Township's website.

WATER UTILITY (600)

Present for this portion of the budget review: R. Strechay, Director, Department of Municipal Utilities; K. Ryan, Water Superintendent

Ms. Lim advised that the Administration is increasing Gasoline (323) from \$67,000 to \$90,000.

Capital Improvements, Debt Service and Deferred Charges/Statutory Expenditures were noted. In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mr. Ryan explained that the money budgeted for "Tank Painting" under Capital Improvements will be used for outside tank maintenance and painting only, noting he has been receiving a lot of complaints about the unsightliness of tanks in residential neighborhoods.

PUBLIC HEARING – WATER UTILITY BUDGET

Council President Fox opened the meeting to the public relative to the Water Utility Budget only, noting a three-minute time limit per speaker.

Roy Messmer, 10 Drumlin Drive, asked Mr. Ryan if, during his ten years as Water Superintendent, has the Water Utility ever had a \$1 million surplus as it has now. Ms. Lim indicated, not in recent years, noting that last year the Water Utility surplus was dangerously low. Mr. Strechay advised that last year's surplus was \$169,000. Mr. Messmer indicated that last year we had an increase in water rates of 38 percent; now we are sitting with a \$1 million surplus. Mr. Messmer asked Mr. Ryan what his plans are for repairs and maintenance this year. Mr. Ryan responded that maintenance and repairs are ongoing, totaling approximately \$7 million, which includes both labor and materials. Mr. Messmer pointed out that the \$1 million surplus is a result of the rate increase, but his understanding is that utilities are supposed to "break even." Ms. Lim explained that you don't want to operate a utility or the Township without surplus. Mr. Strechay agreed. Mr. Messmer commented that he would anticipate that next year the Water Utility should have another million dollar surplus unless Mr. Ryan has extraordinary items to deal with in the future. Ms. Lim explained that the million dollars was the 2010 year end surplus, but \$750,000 of the surplus is being used to balance the 2011 Water Utility Budget so that operating expenses equal revenues. Rents alone are not enough to support the operation. She noted that the surplus now is \$350,000.

Bob Crawford, 35 Hidden Glen Drive, stated that last year the rates were increased by 38 percent to cover costs. This year, even with the 38 percent increase, it appears that the Utility is running at a deficit and, because of that deficit, the Utility needs to take

\$750,000 of its surplus to make sure it is whole in 2011. The current rates are not covering the cost of running the Utility.

Mr. Strechay explained that additional surplus will be generated over the year. Ms. Lim indicated that, in terms of rents anticipated, Mr. Strechay was conservative with the number, which is appropriate in order to avoid a budget deficit at the end of the year.

Mr. Cesaro commented that it seems that the 38 percent rate increase was just a “band-aid.” Ms. Lim indicated that when the 38 percent increase was proposed, it was thought that the percentage would be enough to carry the Utility a number of years without an additional rate increase.

Mr. Crawford asked if his memory was correct, that the rate had to be increased, not because of the amount of water used, but to cover the cost of the operation itself. Mr. Crawford pointed out that \$750,000 is being applied to a problem that doesn’t appear to be clearly understood. It seems as though the 38 percent increase should have been sufficient unless the 38 percent increase was not enough to do what had to be done. Because we seem to be using water less, maybe we need “less organization” to provide less water and, therefore, less taxes.

Ms. Lim explained that the Utility’s costs are all basically fixed. Mr. Crawford concluded that the “model” isn’t driven necessarily by consumption, but by the cost of running the Utility. This suggests, per Mr. Crawford, that there might be a more efficient way, and therefore cheaper way, to run the Utility, rather than by raising rates one year and, the next year, by using surplus to maintain a “model” that doesn’t seem to be sustainable down the road.

Seeing no one come forward to speak, Council President Fox closed the public hearing relative to the Water Utility Budget.

GOLF UTILITY (800)

Present for this portion of the budget review: R. Strechay, Director, Department of Municipal Utilities; P. DeFalco, Golf Superintendent

Mr. Strechay requested that Gasoline (323) be increased from \$45,000 to \$60,000. Mr. DeFalco took this opportunity to advise that the Knoll just received 130 new golf carts on a four year lease that are 35 percent more fuel efficient than the carts just turned in. This will be a good savings for the Utility.

Capital Improvements, Debt Service, and Deferred Charges/Statutory Expenditures were noted.

PUBLIC HEARING – GOLF UTILITY BUDGET

Council President Fox opened the meeting to the public relative to the Golf Utility Budget, noting a three-minute time limit per speaker.

Seeing no one come forward to speak, Council President Fox closed the public hearing relative to the Golf Utility Budget.

GENERAL PUBLIC HEARING

Council President Fox opened the meeting to the public to speak on any matter, noting a five-minute time limit per speaker.

Mr. Messmer, 10 Drumlin Drive, noted that the Board of Education is giving out two percent raises this year to non-union employees. He asked that the Council keep this in mind. He then asked what is the “direct labor expense” excluding union employees. Ms. Lim responded that, if she remembers correctly, the number is \$5 million. Mr. Messmer expressed his concern regarding police staffing and the number of officers per shift. He questioned how the Police Department is functioning with only 95 officers. Mayor Barberio agreed with Mr. Messmer, noting it will get to a point where the Township will have to hire new officers. He asked the Mayor to consider his suggestion made earlier in the evening to credit residents on utility bills and increase tax bills, which are tax deductible. He also suggested making the \$700,000 (the Sewer Utility surplus being used to offset the Municipal Budget) a loan.

Mayor Barberio advised that he is looking into ways to reduce the Township’s bottom line while continuing to maintain services. He commented that there is nothing wrong with a 2 percent cap, but pointed out that the Governor can’t take funding away and promise a “tool kit” that is years away. He would hope that, in the future, Abbot Districts are tackled and COMPTRA (Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid) is more evenly distributed.

Pat Petaccia, 182 Hawkins Avenue, questioned why the appropriation for Prescriptions (785) in the Golf Utility Budget increased by \$30,000. Ms. Lim advised that prescription rates will change May 1st; the amount budgeted is a projection based on the Township’s loss ratio. Ms. Lim noted that the rates will go up; the Township is seeking proposals. She further advised that this benefit will need to be negotiated. With regard to the Police Department, Ms. Petaccia stated that she does not think it is unreasonable to ask the police to forgo their raises for a year and for the Township to use that money to hire new officers. Council President Fox indicated that he knows the Mayor is pursuing negotiations.

Seeing no one else come forward to speak, Council President Fox closed the public hearing.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Mr. Cesaro

SECONDED BY: Mr. Stanton

Roll Call:	Mr. Cesaro	-	Yes
	Mr. dePierro	-	Yes
	Mr. Ferrara	-	Yes
	Mr. Stanton	-	Yes
	Ms. Fox	-	Yes

MEETING ADJOURNED: 5:47 p.m.

Minutes Approved : 4-12-11