

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday
December 4th, 2023
Budget Meeting**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Edward Kisselback, Council President
Joseph Knowles, Council Secretary
Stacey Champion, Council Member
Michelle Benitez, Council Member

SUPPORTING STAFF PRESENT:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary
John Chaykowski, Finance Manager
William Cmorey, Director of Administration
William McVey, Director of Public Safety
Tim Shultz, Director of Public Works
Kyle Pennypacker, Director of Parks & Rec
Ken Farrall, Director of Building & Planning
Jim Bogan, Director of Operations, Bensalem Township Country Club
Lauren Gallagher, Township Solicitor

PLEASE NOTE:

The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of their microphone.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Council President Kisselback opened the meeting with a moment of silence and/or prayer which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET:

Council President Kisselback introduced **the Director of Public Safety, Director McVey**, who presented the Police and Fire.

POLICE AND FIRE:

Director McVey thanked the Mayor, Council and the Administration for the support they give to the Police and Fire Departments. Director McVey also thanked the men and women of the Police, Fire and EMS Departments who do a tremendous job for our Township day and night. Director McVey indicated they are only as good as they are because of the commitment the Mayor and his Administration and the Council have given them and have shown towards them and the support they give every day. On a particular note, the Administration and Council support the people of those Departments the most by keeping them funded, and by the support of all the technologies and the training that is critical to keep the residents safe.

Director McVey indicated he would be happy to answer any questions the Council had regarding the proposed 2024 Police and Fire Budget.

Council Secretary Knowles wanted to clarify one additional hire, and if Director McVey felt that his Police Force was at full staff and would be able to continue to do the outstanding job that is done for our Community?

Director McVey responded “Absolutely!” This one additional officer is specifically needed for the Vice Unit which will enable the department to keep their Patrol Unit fully staffed for the first time in years.

Councilwoman Champion indicated that the largest increase she saw was the Pension, seems to be largest increase and asked the Finance Manager, Mr. Chaykowski, to please clarify that increase.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the way the Pensions are calculated are that it is always based on the Year-End Market Evaluation. The Year-End Market Evaluation for 2022 affected the 2024 evaluation for the Townships Municipal Contribution into the Pension Plan. The Pension Plans are split up between two separate plans, the Uniform which is the Police Officers and then the Non-Uniforms which is all the other Township Personnel.

Unfortunately, the end of 2022 the Market was in a down-turn. The Evaluations tend to not turn out as well. There is State Funding that is provided for the Pension Plans. This year the Township received 1.6 million which is always received, if not more in the following years. It is all based on credits on the participants within the Pension Plan.

Councilwoman Champion asked Director McVey if the Operating Expenses were on target as compared to the prior year and if there were any new vehicles included in the budget.

Director McVey indicated he has 7 vehicles slated for 2024. There has been a 25% mark-up in vehicle purchases, and we were able to save this year and allocate some of that for vehicles at the 2023 rate. Director McVey indicated they pretty much level-funded everything in the Operating Budget and made some decrease where he could.

Councilwoman Champion thanked Director McVey and his Departments for all that they do.

Council President Kisselback indicated that there was an additional increase in salary based on contracts and based on the negotiations in the past.

Director McVey indicated due to the Collective Bargaining Agreements between the Union and the Administration and Arbitration, that is something contractually the Township is obligated to handle at this time.

Councilwoman Champion asked Director McVey if the School Bus Camera Program has seen any decrease.

Director McVey indicated that number is alarming, it is over 7,100 violations in just over a year's period. The department has seen a 27% decrease when comparing the first portion of the program, compared to the second portion. The program has curbed driver behavior and has been consistent.

Councilwoman Champion asked when will the Red-Light Camera be installed?

Director McVey indicated possibly by year-end, if not, by the first quarter of 2024.

Council President Kisselback indicated that the Township was hiring additional people for the Fire Department involving the SAFER Grant.

Director McVey indicated that was correct. They have not received word yet but as soon as they do they will formulate a plan as to how they would sustain that over the years after the funding. It would be their intention, once Council approved, to hire the additional four firefighters applied for under the SAFER Grant.

Councilwoman Benitez asked when the Township would hear if the SAFER Grant was approved.

Director McVey indicated the latter part of 2024 the Township should hear something about the SAFER Grant.

Council President Kisselback asked if the Township was budgeted for the additional firefighters.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the Township did not budget for the potential firefighters. When the Township finds out they have been awarded that Grant a plan will be presented to Council as part of the adoption if Council chooses to do so. The current staffing level is the same. There is a new position for a Fire Chief and an Administrative Assistant.

Council President Kisselback indicated \$647,617 projected in 2023. The 2024 Budget is budgeted at \$985,200.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that 2 things happened, when the firefighters hired their step increments to get them to top salary. Almost everyone will be reaching top level next year as well as the position for the new Fire Chief and his Administrative Assistant as well as a contractual increase that was negotiated.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the SAFER Grant is a full 4 years that includes salary and benefits as well.

Mr. Chaykowski introduced the Director of Public Works, Mr. Tim Schultz.

PUBLIC WORKS AND LIQUID FUELS:

Director Shultz thanked the Mayor and Council and proceeded with questions from Council.

Director Schultz indicated that Public Works is ready for winter. There is plenty of salt in stock and all of the trucks are ready to go.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated that he knew that Public Works had purchased new equipment last year and asked how it was working out.

Director Schultz indicated that two years ago they had purchased the Aerial Track Lift for tree work which has helped tremendously by cutting out the Tree Contractor that was previously hired to do such work.

Council President Kisselback's question was regarding salaries and indicated in the 2023 Budget and the 2024 Budget they are very similar. But the projected budget for 2023 is somewhat less than what is going to be projected in 2024. Are there new employees?

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that the department has two open positions within the budget that Director Schultz has not felt the need to hire as of yet. They were previously allocated positions and they are still open which is why Council sees an under-budget performance for 2023. If Director Schultz were to hire and have a full complement you would be looking at what 2024 and 2023 reflected. Director Schultz also had some higher seniority employees retire so he does have more junior employees which they are again, step-process throughout the Union contract for salaries and they are at a lower pay scale then the seniors were.

The Mayor indicated that Public Works had a Director, and under that Director Mr. Schultz was hired as the Deputy Director. The Township has not hired a Deputy Director and Director Schultz has been running the Public Works Department so well and gave kudos to Director Schultz for running an efficient department.

Councilwoman Champion had two questions regarding snow removal and hydrant services.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated as part of Liquid Fuels, Snow Removal is an allowable expense. To make up for the hydrant increase, which it went from \$375,000 to \$600,000 that is just based on Aqua's increases on the hydrants the Township owns and maintains. To reduce the impact to the General Fund the Township allocated more Snow Removal in the State Highway Aid. This went from \$600,000 to \$900,000 for 2024. The salt itself will pay for the plowing as well as the sub-contractors used to plow the cul-de-sacs and townhouse areas of the Township.

Director Schultz indicated the hydrant services had a 40% increase.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that Aqua doesn't charge the Township for water, they charge a per hydrant fee. Some of the fees are monthly and others are quarterly, it depends on the age of the hydrant. The hydrants that the Township owned prior to selling the Water and Sewer

Department, they are on a quarterly basis, newer hydrants are on a monthly basis. Aqua charges a per hydrant fee and the hydrants are maintained by Aqua.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the Road Machinery Fund is an allocation from the Township Real Estate taxes. This fund is for the purchasing of vehicles and equipment for the Public Works Department. There is about six pieces of equipment that the Public Works Department will be purchasing next year.

Council President Kisselback indicated there is an increase of \$200,000 dollars in the Major Equipment.

Director Schultz indicated they are doing more of the blacktop then the department has done in the past. The department will be purchasing a new roller due to the existing roller being undersized to do the proper job, along with a trailer to support the roller. The existing bucket-truck is in dire need of replacement, it is a 1998 GMC and we are experiencing problems with the safety bucket. Also, the chassis, engine and transmission are showing a lot of wear and would like to replace the old bucket-truck with a new bucket-truck and will use the current bucket-truck as a back-up.

Also, the Facilities Manager's Maintenance truck will be getting a back-hoe attachment for the rear of the vehicle. The department will be purchasing a mid-size Loader that will help with the tree company, because the Township is having trouble accessing a lot of the Township spots that are tight in space. Also, the loader will be used in the wintertime for plowing and loading salt. The department is requesting another trailer for the Basin Crew, the existing trailer is underweighted for what they are now doing.

Director Schultz indicated that every Public Works truck is a plow truck. Brian Quay does an excellent job with the equipment.

Mr. William Cmorey, Director of Administration, commended Director Schultz and his crews which have done a tremendous job. The Director has a special Tree Crew which has saved the Township a ton of money as opposed to using a private contractor.

Mr. Chaykowski introduced the Director of Parks and Recreation, Mr. Kyle Pennypacker.

PARKS AND RECREATION:

The Mayor indicated that the Township is unable to fund the Parks and Recreation budget. In regards to the Mayor's Budget Message, he is reluctantly proposing to increase taxes a mill and a half. Director Pennypacker will explain the urgency for this increase in his presentation to Council.

The Mayor indicated the Township will keep up the \$300 rebate to the homeowners.

Council President Kisselback indicated that the Township has 1,400 acres of Open Space which is 5 times the amount required for the size of Bensalem Township. The proposed increase the Mayor is speaking of consist of \$33 per household which will allow the Township to continue to perform its duties relative to the various parks and recreational areas.

Director Pennypacker thanked the Mayor and Council and indicated that there were a lot of Capital Improvements that need to be done in the Township parks. Most of the increase will be going to replacing playground equipment that is considered “end of life” by the DCNR and upkeeping the new property, First Responders Field. There are a lot of public utilities that are going to be needed: the lighting for the various fields, along with the water and irrigation.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated there are 13 playgrounds beyond their life. A playground set that cost \$37,000 when they were original put in years ago, is now \$175,000 to replace. This is the kind of cost that the Township is looking at, besides the acquisition of New Park and Open Space. These upgrades will be fine state-of-the-art, well-groomed and well taken care of Soccer Fields.

Director Pennypacker indicated the Pickle Ball Courts will be on existing courts located at Bridgewater where a net will be installed and lines where there used to be an existing Tennis Court. There will still be a Tennis Court and a Basketball Court. Mill Creek Farms will be converted, there is a fully fenced-in Tennis Court that was converted into three individual Pickle Ball Courts.

Council Secretary Knowles believes this is one of the reasons why Bensalem was voted as One of the Best Places to Raise a Family because of being able to take your children to the parks and getting them involved in activities by giving the children positives things to do.

Director Pennypacker indicated he would like to keep to the five-and ten-year plan going, and replacing two every year, this way the Township can put a dent on the oldest ones first and getting everything up to standard. It will also help with maintenance costs because right now 30 properties have to be checked every week with three maintenance guys. Having newer equipment is going to lessen the amount of time they will have to spend at each property and replace existing parts.

Councilwoman Benitez indicated that there was a substantial increase in salaries for summer and winter Rec, and if the Director will be able to fulfill that?

Director Pennypacker indicated that there have been some issues with hiring and were based off the children that register. This year everybody that registered was accepted and are seeing a slight uptick but nothing like in previous years. If there is an increase in registration, there will be a need for hiring the appropriate Counselors to keep the children safe and anything monitored by the State and Federal government as well.

Councilwoman Benitez asked for clarification regarding the Major Equipment just pertaining to the playground funding.

Director Pennypacker indicated that it was pertaining to the playground funding.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated when you are talking about replacing lighting, not only for this year but next year as well, there are poles that need to be replaced because they are wood. With the increase to the budget the Director will be able to replace the wooden light poles.

Director Pennypacker indicated the wooden light poles are going to be a priority for replacing. The lighting system used in all of the parks are a composite between aluminum and steel with concrete bases which will last for decades.

Council President Kisselback asked Mr. Chaykowski to clarify the Real Estate Tax Refund.

Mr. Chaykowski explained that if a resident or a business petitions County and they are granted a Real Estate tax reduction, an assessment reduction, they could be entitled to a refund of the Real Estate reduction for however many years they are petitioning. Sometimes it could be a year or two before the case is heard or decided on, or whatever the situation may be.

When the Township pays the Real Estate taxes, the taxes are divided up between about 5 different funds within the Township. The General Fund, the Street Light, the Volunteer Fire Service and the Rescue Squad, Parks and Rec and the Road Machinery, all of those funds get a portion of the Real Estate taxes.

Councilwoman Benitez inquired about lighting for Ramblers Field.

Director Pennypacker indicated they could look into lighting for Ramblers Field and Softball which is lacking. The directional lighting is very convenient and only lights the field, it will not be offensive to any of the surrounding residential homes. But for Ramblers it is going to be very expensive due to them not having electricity available for the installation of lighting. The wooden poles will be easier to replace for a lower amount of money since the power is already there. To accommodate Ramblers, they could utilize the other facilities to play a night game. Mr. Pennypacker will work with any of the youth organizations to accommodate their needs.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that there are Grant opportunities at times for field lighting which is how they were able to obtain lighting for the field at Community Park. The Township is always petitioning legislature as well as applying for different Grants to do these types of projects. Community Park did not have electricity either and therefore it was a larger cost for the installation. The Township is always exploring every avenue, when they can, to do more through Grant opportunity.

Councilwoman Champion indicated she is excited to see the Township doing replacements of the equipment at the various playgrounds, and asked how many were planned for the upcoming year.

Director Pennypacker indicated they were looking to do 2 of the larger playgrounds to replace equipment.

Councilwoman Champion indicated about having a sports field, First Responders Field, located in Trevoise. Excited that there will be Soccer and Field Hockey to be played there.

Director Pennypacker indicated that the Township is looking to do a unified field on the lower, so it will be Field Hockey, Lacrosse and Soccer, if needed.

Councilwoman Champion asked Director Pennypacker if he was looking at making any improvements with registrations for any of the programs that could be done online? Are the lights at the various parks on timers?

Director Pennypacker indicated he has been looking at some options for software. The lights are sourced by an app; which Director Pennypacker has the capacity to set at a certain time, and to handle any problems through the app right from his cell phone. He can actually look at data to see how often lights are on and can maintain the lighting right from his cell phone.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated, besides the lights at Richlieu for the girls Softball, I understand that the Ice Hockey Rink has been updated, along with the Basketball Court. Is there a difference in the flooring for both rinks?

Director Pennypacker indicated the hockey rink is a much harder surface, it is made for the wheels for skating, you don't have any give. Whereas in the Basketball Court actually has a little give. If you bounce a basketball on the Basketball Court it is actually quieter because it does not have that same resonance because it actually has give; and was told by some of the younger adults that play on the court when you fall it doesn't feel like the concrete or asphalt that some courts consist of. It is actually spongier and has some give.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that what was so great about these courts is that the water drains right through it and there is no ponding issues.

Director Pennypacker indicated the water actually lies beneath the surface while draining off the surface and dries much fast than an asphalt or concrete surface.

Director Pennypacker indicated Season Passes go on sale this Wednesday.

Mr. Chaykowski introduced the Director of Building and Planning, Mr. Ken Farrall.

BUILDING AND PLANNING:

Director Farrall thanked the Mayor and Council and proceeded with questions from Council.

Director Farrall indicated the Building and Planning Department is working with a full staff for the first time since he has been hired. Things are more efficient and getting out much quicker.

Councilwoman Champion asked what the wait time was for a normal kind of permit.

Director Farrall indicated, generally, when permits come into the Permit Center they are getting them out to the reviewers in less than a week, and then getting them back from the reviewers in less than 2 weeks. Potentially in 2 to 3 weeks permits are being issued. Quick permits, such as fence permits are going out almost immediately.

Councilwoman Benitez asked Director Farrall if he has looked into any technology options to make the process smoother.

Director Farrall indicated just before he was hired the Township invested in a Munilogic Program that the department is currently using. The Building and Planning Department is in a process of doing an upgrade to that system which will be more of a Windows base, which is going to be a little bit easier. It is a very difficult process, in some places when people submit permits they check all the boxes and they submit it electronically into the systems. The problem

with that is they don't always get the right information in the system correctly, which now takes a lot of time to go back into the system and fix it.

It is better off with the system the Township has where it goes electronically into the permit system, and the department pulls it out and physically puts it in the Munilogic Program. What that does is we enter it into the system correctly the first time and goes right to review.

Councilwoman Benitez indicated she didn't see anything that really stood out except for Legals Fees.

Director Farrall indicated that he has a legal meeting every month because they do have certain things; and even though they file in court they don't always use the attorney if they don't need to. But they do have some cases such as truck parking cases that now have been appealed 2 times in Doylestown and the attorneys are needed for those bigger cases.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated since the Director is hands on with those cases, is there an Office Manager who handles internal things that the department did not have in the past?

Director Farrall indicated Noemi Scott was elevated to Office Manager and handles the day-to-day operations within the department; which allows the Director for bigger things such as the Zoning Hearing Board and the Planning Commission which he has to administer, and gives the Director the opportunity to concentrate on those boards.

Mr. Chaykowski introduced the Director of Operations for the Bensalem Township Country Club, Mr. James Bogan.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNTRY CLUB/BANQUET FACILITIES:

Mr. Bogan presented the 2024 Budget for the Bensalem Township Country Club. A special thank you to Mr. Chaykowski and Kelly Newhouse with helping with the Budget.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated that Mr. Bogan was doing a great job. The atmosphere is great. The Golf Association is relatively inexpensive to join. There are a lot of tournaments and you will receive a gift at the end of year along with a banquet. A lot of local residents are involved from all different age groups. There is a lady's group and there are quite a few different programs for the kids. Johnny C works with the Veterans and has received the "Patriot Award" which is a National award for his work with Veterans.

Mr. Bogan indicated his work with the disabled veterans which has become quite a large group mainly because Johnny had the foresight, the ability and the drive to do what he does so well with the Veterans.

Councilwoman Champion asked Director Bogan where you could find the information for all of these programs that are being offered at the Country Club.

Mr. Bogan indicated you can go to the website or call the Pro Shop.

Mr. Bogan indicated that the Country Club is running way out front regarding revenue, the Country Club is doing very well.

Council President Kisselback asked Mr., Bogan to elaborate on the Country Club and the Banquet facilities.

Mr. Bogan indicated they were on a search and find for a Manager and believes they have found a very good one for the Banquet facility.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the Township has hired a new Banquet Manager, it was “Baptism by Fire” with a lot of December events. She was very busy over the weekend which is a very good sign in itself for the Country Club. She has a lot of good ideas as far as Social Media presence and advertising. Once she gets past the December season she will start implementing things.

The current Revenue projections are based on the current bookings. Her goal and the goal of the Township is to increase the bookings.

Council President Kisselback asked Mr. Chaykowski to elaborate on the Mansion and how it will be utilized.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that major renovations have been done to the outside of the Mansion and is a landmark the Township did not want to lose. The patio will be double its size to accommodate weddings as well as cocktail hour and other amenities. The Township is looking to renovate the inside of the Mansion in 2024. Both catering and daily restaurant activity utilizing the first and second floor.

The Mayor indicated that the Country Club is his second dream, his first dream was the Riverfront. After visiting other Country Clubs and how they utilized their facility it was evident to renovate the Mansion. Very excited that it will be a landmark, a destination to go to in Bensalem.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the inside of the Banquet facility will be renovated in 2024 to attract more business and make it a first-class facility.

Councilwoman Champion indicated to John’s point, the young lady who has taken-over is already out there on Social Media to help make the Banquet facility grow.

Mr. Bogan thanked the Mayor, Council and the people of the community for supporting the Bensalem Township Country Club.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT:

Mr. Chaykowski indicated in 2022 the Township was provided with Federal Funding through the American Rescue Plan Act to be able to do infrastructure repairs to the Township stormwater systems. The Township has allocated about \$8 million dollars’ worth of improvements that will be contracted for 2024 and to be completed no later than 2026. The Township has evaluated a number of areas that need repair. In some cases, there will be new infrastructure which is the bulk of the expense.

First Responders Field was awarded a \$1 million-dollar Local Share Act Grant that is being utilized to install a turf field. That project and the renovations of that area will cost approximately \$2.6 million dollars.

There are a lot of projects for 2024 that will better the Township.

Council President Kisselback asked Mr. Chaykowski to elaborate on the stormwater management project which is 12% of the Budget.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated there is an ongoing unfunded mandate from the Federal Government on reducing sediment and monitoring the Townships outfalls of the water system that are to be protected downstream. \$80,000 is budgeted in 2024 for the monitoring and testing to reduce sediment basically hitting the Delaware River. The unfortunate fact is the Township is at the lower part of Bucks County, so the upper end of Bucks needs to do their part as well. The Township is continually obligated and continually funding and monitoring in the coming years.

Councilwoman Champion indicated the Mayor had a group come out to the amphitheater to talk about what Mr. Chaykowski spoke of and what the residents of Bensalem can do as homeowners. Councilwoman Champion is going to work with the Conservation District to help her with putting a rain garden in on her property. Her home sits 41 feet below Bensalem Boulevard and all the water flows to her house.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that any resident that was unable to attend that seminar for the Bucks County Conservation District can call Karen at the Bucks County Conservation District, and they will help any resident in any way they possibly can.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the Conservation District has been awarded a Grant to work on the Country Club on the stream banks to put the correct plantings to slow the water that is hitting the streams that comes off the Golf Course.

Councilwoman Champion indicated she had taken a tour to see the progress of the work to help alleviate the water flow off of the Golf Course.

Council Secretary Knowles asked Mr. Chaykowski about the Storm Water Management Project involving the Golf Course, Hulmeville Road and Woodbine Avenue.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the Township met with contractors and they should be starting on the project sometime around the end of December or the beginning of January, with a completion by March. This way it will not impact the Golf Course by doing the project in the winter months. There will be bio basins installed at the club that will retain the water or slow the water as it is exiting.

Council Secretary Knowles asked what stage is the Township with the Cornwells Basin.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated the basin along with the sewers that were installed are working very well and that the Township has not heard from any of the residents located in that area.

Councilwoman Champion indicated that since the Township took down a lot of the trees, will there be anything going up along Hulmeville Road?

Mr. Chaykowski indicated that the Township cannot put a net up at the Golf Course due to the directional wind shears, which will actually shred the netting. Tree roots create an issue for the Golf Course but there are other avenues being discussed.

Council Secretary Knowles explained the repositioning of some of the tees and greens on the Golf Course.

Council President Kisselback asked Council if they would like to add anything before moving on to the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Councilwoman Benitez thanked every Director for their hard work and leadership and answering all of their question; everything the Directors are doing to make Bensalem the best town there is, and was grateful for that.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated that the Township has excellent Department Heads and staff that work alongside of them. Council has a lot of confidence in the people that the Mayor has put into place. There has been some transition in the past few years and those Directors have really stepped up to the plate in their performance.

Councilwoman Champion thanked all the Directors for their hard work. With the \$33.00 a year tax increase the Township will see some amazing improvements to the parks. As the Township continues to make improvements it attracts businesses, the more the Township looks like a first-class city it will attract the right businesses here, not just any business.

Council President Kisselback added that the Township Tree Lighting was on Saturday, December 9th at 5:00pm. The Police Department is also having their Toy Drive at the Texas Roadhouse on December 9th from 11:30am to 1:00pm. To all of the Townships Jewish friends and family a very Happy Hanukah.

The Real Estate taxes have not been raised in 30 years and it was an investment that Council looked at very seriously. If Council did not do it this year the deficit would increase more so the following year. This is the best alternative for Bensalem Township and the best solution as to where Bensalem will be in 2024.

Council Secretary Knowles indicated the 1.5 mileage is spread-out between the homeowner, businesses, apartments and commercial, and that is it shared among all people. The \$300 will still be given to the homeowner and the low-income seniors will still have the ability to apply for the additional grant.

Mr. Chaykowski indicated if you are on Social Security Disability and you are low income they can also qualify for the additional \$150.

The Mayor indicated his message is online for anyone who would like to read the entire message. It is worth reading because it tells a story. Parks and Rec is a separate entity from the General Fund. The Mayor indicated that along with his Administration and Council they are a TEAM. Teams work together to get things done. The Mayor thanked Council.

The Mayor thanked all the Directors who are diligent and working as a Team and getting things done. The Budget is not done in one day. The Mayor and his Directors meet in a Staff Meeting

every Wednesday morning to discuss the topic at hand. Every Thursday they meet with the Township Attorneys and the Township Engineer and work on the Budget. It takes an absolute TEAM effort and the Mayor is appreciative of a Council that works together to get the things done in Bensalem Township, it is an incredible community. The Police, Fire and EMS are second to none. Bensalem is the BEST!

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Council President Kisselback asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to comment on the 2024 proposed Budget. Seeing no one come forward the second Public Comment portion was closed.

Council Secretary Knowles motioned to approve the Budget as presented by the Mayor, with the additional funds available to the Parks and Recreation department for a mill and a half and continue the \$300 Rebate Grant Program to the homeowners. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

4. **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Budget Council Meeting of December 4th, 2023 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

www.bensalempa.gov

or

www.youtube.com

Respectfully Submitted,

**Debora F. McBreen
Recording Secretary**