

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday
December 02, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joseph Knowles, President
Ed Kisselback, Vice President
Joseph Pilieri, Secretary
Jesse Sloane, Member
Ed Tokmajian, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
John Chaykowski, Finance Manager
Fred Harran, Director of Public Safety
Dennis Hunt, Director of Public Works
Chuck McMullin, Director of Parks & Rec
Ken Farrall, Director of Building & Planning
Jim Bogan, Director of Operations, Bensalem Township Country Club

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 the microphones.**

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Council President Knowles opened the meeting with a moment of silence which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. **Council President Knowles** invited the **Mayor** to make Opening Remarks.

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo welcomed everyone and asked if his 2020 Budget Message could be put into the record without reading it due to the length of the message which consists of 7 pages. The **Mayor** turned over the meeting to **Council President Knowles** who at that time introduced the **Finance Manager, John Chaykowski**. **Mr. Chaykowski** was pleased to report

after the 2018 Audit Report was finalized the Township was able to return an additional \$5.3 million dollars to the General Fund budget. The Fund Balance was able to fund such programs as the Home Owner's Assistance Grant. Since the Grant was started in 2007, the Township has been able to return over \$42 million dollars to the residents.

2. **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED 2020 BUDGET:**

John Chaykowski introduced the **Director of Public Safety**, and **Director Harran** approached the podium.

PUBLIC SAFETY/FIRE DEPARTMENT

Director Harran gave a power point presentation utilizing charts and graphs to depict how the funds for the police department budget are allocated and the statistics regarding various crimes and how the police department has achieved those results.

Council President Knowles inquired about the increase in "Salaries" and understood that increase to be in regards to the two new officers and that would add to the "Minor Equipment" being up and asked if there was a grant for the body cameras. **Director Harran** indicated they had a grant for the first year but body cameras is something that is going to be mandated and since the laws have changed and the cameras can be kept on when entering a premises which will help in any liability case. **Council Vice President Kisselback** asked for clarification regarding "Salaries and Overtime". **Director Harran** explained the first "Overtime" line item had to do with the officer's appearance in court which is one of the biggest expenses for the police department. **Council Vice President Kisselback** asked for clarification regarding the "Special Response Team" line item. **Director Harran** indicated after a while the officers in those Special Response Teams look to get out so the new officers coming in will need equipment which is always being upgraded. **Council Vice President Kisselback** asked for clarification regarding the "Minor Equipment" line item. A discussion regarding intersection cameras ensued. **Council Vice President Kisselback** asked why the decrease in the "Salaries and Benefits" line item for the Fire department. **Director Harran** explained there was a position in that budget that was never filled so it was removed from the budget because it was never used. Continuing on with the Fire Department Budget **Council Vice President Kisselback** asked why the large increase for the "Vehicle Purchase" line item. **Director Harran** explained he works very close with the Public Works department and the Head Mechanic Brian Quay who indicated the Special Service Vehicle 222 is "on its last legs", there are leaks that is ruining equipment and Director Harran asked for a new vehicle to be added to the budget. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked **Director Harran** why he looked at square footage instead of population during his power point presentation. A conversation ensued regarding daytime population, having a casino and bordering Philadelphia. A conversation with **Director Harran** and **Mr. Chaykowski** ensued regarding overtime, labor attorney, criminal investigation and how it's determined. **Council Member Sloane** indicated the total "Salary and Benefits" looks like it is an increase of about 2.2 million dollars, how much of that is contractual and how much of that is overtime, and is it based on what you expect on those lines. **Director Harran** indicated overtime is contractual and the increase is contractual. Council Member Sloane inquired about the new line item "Computer Upgrades". John

Chaykowski explained how he wanted to make it easier to track Fixed Assets that the Township is purchasing that are computer related. **Council Member Sloane** asked about the line item “Docking Stations” and if it was intentional for the line to be duplicated. **Director Harran** responded it was intentional because one line is repairing old equipment and the other line is new equipment. A conversation ensued regarding the Townships phone system and the funding required.

PUBLIC WORKS

Director Dennis Hunt presented the budget for the Public Works Department. **Council Member Sloane** commented on the Major Equipment line item and indicated it looked as though the Township was replacing old equipment and asked if he knew what the expected lifespan of the equipment would be. **Director Hunt** explained most of the equipment being replaced was 12 to 20 years old and the Township is getting as much “bang for its buck” than ever. **Council President Knowles** commented on the new Assistant Director that was hired, and asked if there were any new employees expected to be hired for this year or next year. **Director Hunt** indicated they are slated for one hire to replace an opening in his department. **Council Vice President Kisselback** inquired about the Major Equipment line item. The **Finance Manager, John Chaykowski** indicated Public Works will be purchasing a new Interstate Tractor and 2 new X-Marc Mowers. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked how many employees were in his department. **Director Hunt** indicated a total of 24 employees.

STREET LIGHT

Director Dennis Hunt presented the budget for the Street Light department. **Council Member Sloane** inquired about the Real Estate Taxes line item. The **Finance Manager, John Chaykowski** explained through the budget process, with the Real Estate Taxes the Township has the ability to reallocate millage. Years ago the Street Light fund received additional millage from the Debt Service fund and what the Township did was through the aging of the street lights additional funds were added. Since the LED upgrade program and being monitored through technology it saves a lot of wear and tear on the lights. What the Township is looking to do is move a ½ of a mill to the Road Machinery Fund. The Township is looking to purchase a Jet Truck to help with the storm water system throughout the Township which the Public Works department will utilize. Council Member Sloane inquired about the Public Service Utility for the streets lights budget has lowered and asked if it was because of the change to LED. **John Chaykowski** responded it is and a discussion involving the installer and PECO ensued.

STATE HIGHWAY AID FUND

Director Dennis Hunt presented the budget for the State Highway Aid Fund. **Council President Knowles** asked where the money in that fund came from. **John Chaykowski** explained the money is provided by the State of Pennsylvania through the Gas Tax and audited by the State every year and continued to explain the other avenues of funding.

John Chaykowski indicated the Facility Manager is overseen by the Director of Public Works. The Capital Improvement fund line item Administration Wing and Improvements, includes the re-carpeting of Council Chambers, the hallway on the Administration side and the Building and Planning department and since it is a large project it could come out of the Capital Improvement fund. **Council Member Sloane** indicated the Public Service line item seemed to be higher than usual. **John Chaykowski explained** the Aqua increases are in the line and went into detail regarding the solar panels and their function.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Director Chuck McMullin presented the budget for the Parks and Rec department. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked how many employees were in his department. **Director McMullin** responded, full-time, 5 and 5 part-time employees. **Council Member Tokmajian** questioned the Recreation Supply. **Director McMullin** indicated supplies could vary from soccer nets, basketball rims, and basketball backboards along with supplies for the football fields. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked **Director McMullin** to provide a little more detail for the Programs line item. **Director McMullin** explained the money is used for the Summer Concert Series to hire the talent and for running the shows. **Council Member Sloane** asked why the increase in the Park Maintenance line item. **Director McMullin** indicated the cost for materials and products that are used for such as the baseball dirt and any other materials needed. **Council Member Sloane** inquired about the Growden Mansion line item. **Finance Manager, John Chaykowski**, explained in detail the expenses for Growden Mansion and the plans for 2020. **Mr. Chaykowski** asked Council to refer to the Capital Improvements section of the budget and explained there is a line within this fund called Field Lighting and asked **Director McMullin** to comment on this line item. **Director McMullin** stated the sports lighting in both the Valley Association Recreational Ballfield and the Ramblers Ballfield is quite old and the plan is to start with these two fields first and replace the lighting on both fields with metal poles and LED lighting. **Mr. Chaykowski** asked Council to refer to the Recreational Improvement Impact Fee line item and explained how it is funded through developers who are responsible for paying a Recreation fee as well which is discussed by the Administration and Recreation Department on how those funds that are collected are to be disbursed.

BUILDING AND PLANNING

Director Ken Farrall, presented the budget for the Building and Planning Department. **Council Member Sloane** inquired about the Overtime line item. **John Chaykowski**, indicated a new computer software system was installed in that department and there was a lag of getting permits entered into the system which came along with a few kinks which led into producing additional overtime. **Council Vice President Kisselback** inquired about the Professional Services line item and asked **Director Farrall** to elaborate on what are those services the Township receives. **Director Farrall** indicated the following services: Code Inspection Services, Carroll Engineering for the GIS and the Electric Inspector for the permitting. **Council Vice President Kisselback** inquired about the Major Equipment line item and **Director Farrall** indicated it is to replace one of the Code Inspectors car. **Council Member Tokmajian** inquired about the Legal Services line item. **Director Farrall** indicated this is a moving target

because the department could get hit with 5 complaints that could deplete those funds very quickly. **Council Member Sloane** asked if the Computer Tech line item will go down in future years after the transfer is complete for the new computer system. **Director Ken Farrall** indicated yes, the last transfer will be from the old database alchemy into the new system Munis Logic.

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNTRY CLUB

Director of Operations for the Country Club, Jim Bogan, presented the budget for the Country Club. **John Chaykowski** spoke about the Inter-fund Transfer line item and paving of the cart paths along with the lease for the golf carts and a loan and how the repayment would be set-up, were all discussed in length. **Director Bogan** announced the Country Club has been voted the “Best” in Golf throughout Bucks County since 2014 which is a pretty good run. **Council Member Sloane** inquired about green fees and range fees. **Director Bogan** indicated golf is weather driven and commented how they have had a good year. **Council Vice President Kisselback** asked about the Professional Services line item and what that entails. **John Chaykowski** indicated the Banquet Manager for the Catering Facility is not an employee of the Township they are hired from an outside agency, **Matt Galvin** is the President of Morning Star and Hospitality and also the fee for “Tony” who is also not an employee of the Township.

FINANCE

John Chaykowski, Finance Manager, was open to Council for any other questions regarding the proposed Budget for 2020. **John Chaykowski** talked about the I-95 slip ramp and a spine road, traffic signals and the DEP Stormwater Management mapping. **Bill Cmorey, Director of Administration** spoke about the different projects slated for 2020. **Council Member Sloane** asked if Council could receive a list of those projects so that in the event a resident calls with a complaint they could let them know there is a project in the works for the year.

There was a very lengthy discussion amongst **Council** and the **Finance Manager**, regarding the 2020 Budget regarding paving, future projects, Sinking Fund and so forth ensued.

With the 2020 Proposed Budget review concluded, **Council President Knowles** invited Public Comment on the Budget and the following people came forward:

Alan Windsor, welcomed the two new Directors, Ken Farrall and Dennis Hunt, to the Township and asked about the two Central Park Trails which Director Cmorey indicated for one of the trails there was too much intrusion to the Wetlands and explained the project was not financially feasible. **Mr. Windsor** asked about the Greenway project, **Director Cmorey** indicated the section of Greenway that is going to be done is in front of Waterside from the Yacht Club up through Cambria Avenue, Waterside is expanding State Road adding a third lane in front of their property and up a little further. Greenway is not a part of the State Road project. Mr. Windsor commented he was for the 2020 Budget.

Seeing that no one else came forward, the Public Comment portion was closed and **Council President Knowles** called for a vote. **Council Vice President Kisselback** put a motion on the floor to accept the Budget as presented, **Council Secretary Pilieri** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

The **Mayor** thanked his staff for a job well done and thanked Council for giving the Administration the opportunity to continue to give the services that our residents deserve and looks forward to a great year and wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Happy Kwanza .

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to conduct, **Council President Knowles** motioned to adjourn, **Council Secretary Pilieri** seconded.

The Bensalem Township Budget Council Meeting of December 2, 2019 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

www.bensalempa.gov or www.youtube.com

Respectfully submitted,

Debora F. McBreen
Recording Secretary/Council Clerk