

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday  
December 07, 2020**

**Zoom Platform**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ed Kisselback, President  
Joseph Pilieri, Vice President  
Joseph Knowles, 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  
Matt Galvin, Director of the Banquet Facility - Country Club

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and all of the orders and declarations from the Federal, State, and County governments, the Bensalem Township Council held its' regular monthly meeting as a virtual public meeting utilizing the Zoom Meetings platform.**

**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.**

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

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

**Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo** welcomed everyone and asked if his 2021 Budget Message could be put into the record without reading it due to the length of the message which consists of 10 pages. The **Mayor** commented on the COVID crisis and how it has had an impact on everyone's lives. The **Mayor** indicated this was his 27<sup>th</sup> straight Budget without a property tax increase. The **Mayor** discussed how essential the Bensalem community is and to make sure they get all the services they deserve.

The **Mayor** addressed Council in regards to the consequences of the EMS referendum being turned down, and how the EMS will be in serious trouble in the next few years and to put this matter to thought.

The **Mayor** discussed how some of the Township departments were impacted by COVID.

The **Mayor** mentioned how blessed the Township was in regards to the Casino not cutting their funds.

The **Mayor** stated essentially, we are in good shape because of the way the Administration is run and the Township has not slacked on any situation.

The **Mayor** turned over the meeting to **Council President Kisselback** who at that time introduced the **Finance Manager, John Chaykowski**. **Mr. Chaykowski** was pleased to report, as the Township has done for the past 27 years, after the 2019 Audit Report was finalized the Mayor and Administration were able to return an additional \$4.4 million dollars to the General Fund balance. It is important to recognize these funds are returned year after year. This Fund Balance is able to continue to provide the level of service the Mayor feels the residents of this community deserve. Since the Home Owner's Assistance Grant started in 2007, the Township has been able to return over \$42 million dollars to the residents. With the adoption of the 2021 Budget that number will increase to over \$46 million dollars.

This year's Budget process was met with challenges in relation to the projection of revenues that the Township receive. The COVID virus has changed the workforce model for many businesses and as such the need to adjust the view on the collections of the Township business privilege taxes. Experts in this field say there could be as much as a 15% decline on average throughout the state of Pennsylvania in business volume due to these changes in the workforce. This is something that will be continually monitored and as always adjust the philosophy as the years progress.

With this in mind, the Administration closely evaluated the expenses for the 2021 Budget and the increase this year for the wages and operation expenses are only increasing by 2.5%. An

impressive feature when you have contractually obligated expenses that are unable to be changed.

## **2. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED 2021 BUDGET:**

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

### **PUBLIC SAFETY/FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**Director Harran** indicated 2020 was an unusual year, to say the least. Between COVID 19, Civil unrest and Police reform issues and attacks on Police. The Bensalem Police force being so close to the city of Philadelphia having to deal with the many issues and the overflow of problems from the city of Philadelphia, the Township continues to hold the line on public safety and protection in the Bensalem community. In this past year, even with all the issues that were faced nationally, the Bensalem Police Force continued to maintain their state of accreditation. Bensalem Police department, for the first time, signed a historic cooperative agreement with the Bucks County NAACP. Bensalem Police Officers attended a Racial Intelligence training engagement to help better prepare the officers for issues within the community. Officers also received training on de-escalation. Bensalem is the first Police department to partner with the District Attorneys office involving the movie to bring better relations with the police and community groups called “Walking While Black, Love Is the Answer”. Bensalem was the lead agency in formalizing the Bucks County Police department “Use of Force” policy that looks at 15 particular points which have been trending nationally and Bensalem has taken the lead and now all 39 Police Departments in Bucks County have adopted this policy. Another first, two Social Services workers are assigned to the Bensalem Police department to help respond to mental health type incidences.

**Director Harran** explained as in 2020, the Police department will continue to expand in its technology for the year 2021. Some of the technology consists of Axon body cameras, all officers have body cameras, which have been upgraded and supervisors are now able to watch officers in “live” time and tap into their body cameras to see things as they are transpiring. The Axon Virtual Training was purchased by the Police department which includes a mental health perspective for officers to be better trained in dealing with people suffering from mental health issues. All tasers have been upgraded. A Citizens for Communities was purchased which allows citizens to download evidence and to turn them into the Police department for further investigation. The officers cell phone capacity has been increased allowing the police department to download every single cell phone model in existence for investigation. The police department has expanded their community cameras to help solve crime and to prevent crime in the community. The Police department has been certified by the Pennsylvania Chief of Police Association to be in line with President Trump’s Executive Order regarding certification of policies concerning the use of force standards. This certification was mandated in order for the Police department to apply for funding.

**Council Member Sloane** thanked **Director Harran** for his presentation and thanked the Police department for all their hard work they do in the community. The account ending 42140 for “Computer Upgrades”, noticed on the detailed budget that a lot of the equipment listed is the same as listed in last years budget. **Council Member Sloane** asked **Director Harran** if the Township was purchasing the equipment again or if they were maintenance fees. **Director Harran** stated the computers are constantly being upgraded and indicated new computers are not bought every year, it is only for a certain number of computers and it is done in increments. This year there are 15 computers and this will repeat itself every 4 to 5 years until they get to the total number of computers upgraded. Many things are upgraded from year to year. For example, bulletproof vests, they expire every 5 years and that is why you see the same list of equipment. **Council Member Sloane** asked **Director Harran** about the Voyager Analytic Equipment which is a tool the Police utilize regarding social media and other types of electronic and virtual platforms and applications out there on the information highway which are used for investigations and is a recurring license expense. **Council Member Sloane** asked if the extra line item listed for ammunition with a specific code for COVID, to track some of the additional expenses are departments incurred related to the pandemic response. **Director Harran** said yes, but did not see it in ammunition. **Mr. Chaykowski** explained the Finance department creates acronyms for different projects and uses existing line item numbers. If there is an opportunity for funding, such as COVID, PEMA and FEMA, the Finance department will create the project acronym, in this case, CIV-20 is for civil unrest. A portion of the ammunition budget was reallocated toward that project code. **Council Member Sloane** asked if the “Other Services” line item has a \$20,000 increase from last year’s budget due to COVID testing. **Director Harran** indicated it is for many testing services. In April of 2021, the Police will be doing a new test for officers since their list expires, and need to be prepared as replacements are needed. The police will be doing testing by contract and are obligated under the collective bargaining agreement for the Police department to have a current contract for current eligibility list for supervisor positions whether it be for Detectives, Corporals and Sergeants which all expire this year as well. The COVID line was increased by \$20,000 because the Police have been doing an exorbitant amount of testing. **Council Member Sloane** mentioned the “Computer Tech Support and Equipment”, and the new sub-titled line items: “Digital Storage for Intersection Cameras” and “Axon Aware Plus System” and asked Director Harran for a brief description. **Director Harran** indicated the Police department must maintain the storage of the video it captures and the video images are a pretty thick file which takes a lot of room to store those images. Axon is a company that not only makes tasers but also the body cameras the police wear and all the community application, the downloading of digital evidence from the community, the ability of tapping into the body worn cameras the officer is wearing is all done by Axon and the reasoning for the line item “Axon Aware Plus System”. **Council Member Sloane** indicated the “Communication” line item shows a “Verizon Building Phone Service” item which seems to have increased by 3 times as much as last year. **Director Harran** indicated the increase is due to the change over of a lot of different phones and they had under budgeted that line item. Those are hard numbers and the cost does increase for the cell phones and landlines. **Council Member Sloane** asked about the “Emergency Management” line item that is listed as “Operational Needs for Emergency Management”, COVID, PPE, and if this is something that should be tracked separately. **Director Harran** indicated the Police department keeps a spreadsheet on every dollar spent regarding COVID and has to be put into the budget in different places. PPE and cleaning services, these are unknown numbers and changes weekly

due to how many outbreaks that may occur within the department. **Council Member Sloane** indicated the “Community Policing” line item has increased and asked **Director Harran** to share some of those ideas. **Director Harran** indicated the Police are trying to do more things in the community and in 2021 are starting some new programs and did not want to “show his cards” at this time and would like to have a good unveiling of some of these projects as the year goes on once they can get everything worked out. A \$5,000 increase will bring a lot more projects and services to the citizens of Bensalem Township. **Council Member Sloane** indicated the line item “Minor Equipment” shows a sub-line of “Additional Intersection Cameras” and asked if there is a reason for this to be under the “Police” budget and not “Capital Improvements”. **Director Harran** stated in order for it to be considered a “Capital Improvement” it would have to be over a \$5,000 expenditure for the one camera and this does not fall under that requirement.

**Council Secretary Knowles** stated the training for our police officers, especially in today's environment, is very important and noticed 2019 the Police department spent \$122,815, but last year the budget was \$95,000 and the department came in under budget. **Council Secretary Knowles** asked Director Harran if \$95,000 budgeted for 2021 was enough for the training of our officers. Director Harran stated it is cost prohibited to send 100 officers out to a location for training, so the Police department is really big on train the trainer. The Police department will send 4 officers on a premiere training facility, it may encompass overnight stay accommodations, depending on where the training is, and then the 4 officers will come back to the department and train 100 plus officers. In 2020 a lot of the training/travel was cancelled., capitalized on the trainers in-house and also bring some trainers up from Florida and an outside source paid for that training, the total cost to Bensalem Township was \$950. The budget request for 2021 of \$95,000 will suffice. **Council Secretary Knowles** asked Director Harran if he had the ability to transfer funds from one line to another. **Director Harran** indicated the request would go to the Director of Administration and the Finance Manager. **Council Secretary Knowles** asked about the line item “Special Response Team”. **Director Harran** explained this is for equipment. The County has 3 S.W.A.T. Teams, Northern, Central and Southern and Bensalem is part of the Southern Team. **Council Secretary Knowles** mentioned the Mayor's Budget letter and the referencing of the K-9 Unit and asked Director Harran to elaborate on the additional building for the K-9 Unit. **Director Harran** indicated it is a very large building located near the Public Works department and houses 6 dogs. **Director Harran** indicated Council allocated the funds in 2019 for the construction of this facility.

**Council Member Tokmajian** indicated the vehicles line went over the budget, slightly, and asked what the protocol was for exceeding the budget. **Director Harran** indicated he does not have the authority to move funds around, this process is performed by the Finance Department and Administration. **The Mayor** explained the money is moved within that department and not taken from another departments line item. If that were the case, it would have to come before Council. **Council Member Tokmajian** indicated two other line items that exceeded the budget, slightly, “Crime Watch” and the “Police Officers Scheduling System”. **Director Harran** indicated it was “PAS”, which is the current payroll program the Police had and explained in detail how the system worked. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked if the Township was using two different payroll systems. **Mr. Chaykowski** explained “PAS” is just a scheduling system and tracks the employees time which is then downloaded into the payroll

software. The current payroll company is ADP, and the Township will be switching payroll companies by year end. **Council Member Tokmajian** noticed the “OT” line item and asked if the projection of \$400,000 was correct. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated the projection is under and it will probably end up to be \$600,00 or \$700,000. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked Mr. Chaykowski if he did a COVID analysis with the Grant money the Township received. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated the Township did not receive any Grant money. What the Township is eligible to do is to file for reimbursement for any of the Township’s over and above expenditures. The Township was able to submit for any overtime due to COVID, the over and above expenditures would be for the hand sanitizing, wipes, chemicals and any PPE.

**President Kisselback** inquired about the “Salaries -Reimbursable Overtime”. **Director Harran** explained the Police department was getting into different crime techniques and investigations engaging with the public. The reimbursable is paid by Narcotics money and things of that nature but could not elaborate on camera. **President Kisselback** asked about the “Labor Attorney” line item. **Director Harran** indicated this year there were two outstanding issues from previous years that went to arbitration this year and the lawyers are still working on briefs and things of that nature.

**Council Member Sloane** inquired about the “IT Maintenance” line item, and stated there seems to be a significant increase over the course of the year and asked for an explanation. **Mr. Chaykowski** explained the IT Manager will evaluate whether it pays to do a 1, 3, 5-year license renewal. This year the Township is on a cycle where the longer contracted licenses are due. Fire has their own individual software that they utilize. The increase is due to the variations of license renewals. **Council Member Sloane** indicated under “Major Equipment”, there is a significant increase and asked for an explanation. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated when the Police building was expanded, the Fire department received all the old office equipment, at this point, the equipment is starting to breakdown, so the Fire department will receive new office equipment as well as being re-carpeted.

**Council Member Tokmajian** inquired about the “Minor Equipment” line item. **Director Harran** indicated the Fire department purchased a new truck and equipment is being added to their apparatus.

**Council Secretary Knowles** inquired about the “Firemen’s Incentive and Retention” line item. **Director Harran** indicated most of the budgeted money is a third quarter expense. **Council Secretary Knowles** asked if the Retention Program was helping to retain Volunteer Firemen. **Director Harran** indicated it was and they are appreciative to whatever Council can offer. **Council Secretary Knowles** asked **Mr. Chaykowski** what the “Foreign Fire” allocation line entailed. **Mr. Chaykowski** said it comes from the State of Pennsylvania and is Relief money the Volunteer Fire Companies receive from the State and has to be separately managed inside the Volunteer Fire Company because it is audited by the State.

**Council Member Tokmajian** inquired about the Fire Training Facility and asked if there were any expenses related to the facility and where is it put in regards to the Budget. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated under “Fire” the line item “Other” – “Emergency Management Training Center” is where money is allocated for that facility.

**Council Member Sloane** indicated he noticed a significant increase in the “PAL” line item for 2021 and asked if there were any new programs. **Director Harran** indicated “PAL”, for the past few years, has been a 12-month program. The programs change from year to year but the Police continue with the signature programs of basketball, flag football, bowling and activity days, trips to the Phillies and hockey camp. The officers are constantly coming up with new ideas. PAL is free, there is no charge to join the league.

**Council Member Tokmajian** inquired about the line item “Building a Better Bensalem” and indicated a significant increase for 2021 and asked for an explanation. **Director Harran** stated B3T is becoming more and more active with more members who have new ideas which cost money to bring new programs to the Township. **Mr. Chaykowski** explained the funds are all donations and it is not Township funded.

**Council Member Tokmajian** inquired about the “Community Policing” line. Director Harran indicated as the officers came up with new ideas he would have to submit a request for an increase each time. Instead, the decision was to budget the fund balance and in 2022 you should see it level off, unless the Township receives major donations. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked for an explanation regarding the “Gaming Control Board”. **Director Harran** indicated the Township received a Grant, which is given to the local police department, from the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, for illegal gaming investigations.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

**Director Dennis Hunt** presented the budget for the Public Works Department.

**Council Member Sloane** inquired about the line item “Labor Attorney” and asked why it was not included in last year’s budget. **Director Hunt** explained it was for contract negotiations. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated the Township is starting contract negotiations with Public Works. Normally the funds are not allocated directly to the budget, but for the Public Works department the Township wanted to start for reporting purposes.

**Council Member Sloane** indicated the line item for “Travel/Training/Conferences” has increased and asked for an explanation. **Director Hunt** explained it was for the training and certification on the heavy equipment operations, the Director is trying to get every guy certified under the same program which will take a few years to accomplish this task. The certification is for the Front End Loader and Skid Steerer.

**Council Member Sloane** inquired about line item “Major Equipment” and asked if the Township purchased the Inter-Stater in 2020. **Director Hunt** indicated that was correct and decided to use some of the funds which were slated for the Jet Truck. **Director Hunt** indicated after an intensive evaluation, regarding the Jet Truck, the Township decided to nix that purchase and use the funds set aside for the Jet Truck towards the Inter-Stater. **Council Member Sloane** indicated he was off a certain amount regarding the detailed budget and asked **Mr. Chaykowski** for clarification. Mr. Chaykowski indicated the funds **Council Member Sloane** was inquiring about were for each lawnmower.

**Council Secretary Knowles** asked if the Township was filled to capacity regarding the salt supply. **Director Hunt** indicated the salt supply was sufficient.

### **STREET LIGHT**

**Director Dennis Hunt** presented the budget for the Street Light department.

**Council Member Sloane** inquired about the “Street Light Conversion” line item and asked what the Township was expecting in 2021. The street lights on Hansell Drive, to date, have not been installed. Those funds were used to install the street lights on Horizon Boulevard, which seem to have been taking a beating. Hansel Drive is slated for 2021.

**Council President Kisselback** inquired about the “Road Machinery Fund”, “Major Equipment Purchases” and indicated the line item has increased considerably and asked **Director Hunt** for clarification. **Director Hunt** indicated the Township was purchasing a new “Street Sweeper”. The current “Street Sweeper” is 8 or 9 years old and there has been a significant increase in the annual maintenance.

**Council Member Sloane** asked what the anticipated annual maintenance cost for the new “Street Sweeper”. **Director Hunt** indicated the cost starts out in the \$3,000 to \$5,000 range, then will increase incrementally as the years progress.

**Council Member Tokmajian** asked, based off of the budget, did the Township not make all of its purchases last year. **Director Hunt** indicated the only piece of equipment not purchased was the “Jet Truck”.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

**Director Chuck McMullen** presented the budget for the Parks and Rec department.

**Council Member Sloane** indicated he noticed the salaries for 2021 are lower and asked the Director to explain the decrease. **Director McMullen** stated the department eliminated a position. **Council Member Sloane** indicated there was no “Fall Festival” in 2020 and asked what the funds were expended on. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated the Township was going to hire a management company who would assist on the Concert Season and the Fall Festival for 2020, and the company did put some work into the Fall Festival and the Township had to pay a small percentage of the contract and were gracious enough not to demand the entire amount. Also there were talent bookings intended for 2020 and re-booked for 2021 and the talent was gracious to extend their booking to 2021.

**Council Member Sloane** inquired about the “Public Utility Service” line item and its increase and asked for clarification. **Director McMullen** explained, with the purchase of the Trifecta property, the Township will incur extra expenses for utilities and such.



**Council Member Sloane** inquired about the “Community Events” line item and asked about the incurred expenses for 2020. **Mr. Chaykowski** explained the Township paid for the 2020 “Memorial Day Parade”, which did not occur, and that expense will be carried over to 2021 and returned to the Parks and Rec fund balance at the end of 2021 since it was already paid for in 2020. **Council Member Sloane** asked if an amendment needed to be made and Mr. Chaykowski indicated there was no need for an amendment, everything will go back into the fund balance at the end of 2021.

**Council Member Sloane** inquired about the “programs” line item and noted a significant increase in 2021 and asked for clarification. Director McMullen indicated the increase is due to the new management company, Sherman Theater, to manage the Amphitheater in 2021.

**Council Secretary Knowles** inquired about the “Summer Programs” line item and asked if this was limited due to the pandemic. **Director McMullen** indicated that was correct.

**Council Secretary Knowles** inquired about the outdoor hockey rink, located at Richlieu and Galloway Roads, and asked what the surface was made of and what was the condition of the surface. Director McMullen stated the surface will need to be redone and is waiting on estimates. **Council Secretary Knowles** asked if this cost was included in the budget. **Director McMullen** stated the funds were included in the budget.

**Council Member Tokmajian** indicated, with the elimination of one position, asked if the Director felt he had enough manpower and resources in maintaining Trifecta. **Director McMullen** responded yes, and stated the maintaining of Trifecta will be of the utmost highest Township standards.

**Council President Kisselback** inquired about the Real Estate Taxes Revenue and indicated it was the identical number as the Fire Company and asked if it was money allocated by the Township. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated each fund has its own millage rate and it just so happens the Fire Company and Parks and Rec have the same millage rate. **Council President Kisselback** clarified other line items to be because of the pandemic and was verified to be correct by Director McMullen and he announced the “Drive-thru Tree Lighting” date of December 12<sup>th</sup> commencing at 5:00 P.M.

## **BUILDING AND PLANNING**

**Director Ken Farrall** presented the budget for the Building and Planning Department.

**Council Member Tokmajian** indicated he noticed an increase for “Professional Services” and “Engineering Services” and asked for clarification. **Director Farrall** stated the services have to do with the Townships Master Plan which the department is going through and doing an update, in which those increases represent those additional costs for 2021 only and will not be carried forward.

**Council President Kisselback** asked for a definition of the Master Plan. **Director Farrall** indicated every 20 years the Master Plan is updated as to where the Township wants to go as to

where development can occur. It is a document which is used in Grant Applications and as a directional roadmap as to where the Township is going to go. **Council President Kisselback** asked if this would be considered a Comprehensive Plan. **Director Farrall** indicated it was, just a different terminology. **Director Farrall** indicated Council will be able to see the Plan in a draft form, and to make comments, after the first of the year.

**Council Member Tokmajian** inquired about the “Building Permit” line item. **Director Farrall** indicated, as far as revenue, the “Building Permit” line was up and the number used for the budget amount are historic numbers used in the past and the Building and Planning department has become more efficient as to what they do.

**Council Member Tokmajian** inquired about the “Alchemy” line item and asked the Director to describe the line item. **Director Farrall** indicated “Alchemy” is the data base used in the Building and Planning department. The conversion of the “Alchemy” data base will be to “MuniLogic” and the “Alchemy” line will eventually be eliminated and the department’s ultimate goal is to be running with one system, “MuniLogic”. **Council Member Tokmajian** asked if we will see this again in the 2022 Budget. **Director Farrall** indicated the conversion should be completed in 2021.

**Council Member Sloane** asked if the conversion to “MuniLogic” started. **Director Farrall** indicated the conversion has not started. **Council Member Sloane** asked why the budget line projection for “Computer Tech Support & Equipment” was at the full amount. **Mr. Chaykowski** explained he did the projection numbers for that line item and the Township is in continuation talks with “MuniLogic” to get it switched over. COVID caused the delay for the conversion and with people working remotely from home, there was a possibility it might happen this year. The Township will not reach that number and the funds will be returned to the “General Fund”.

**Council Member Sloane** stated with the rise in building permits he did not see the increase in the revenue sheet. **Director Farrall** indicated as of December 7<sup>th</sup>, the “building permits” were at 105%, “electrical permits” were at 204%, “plumbing permits” were at 145% and with the lack of revenue on the other end, the Building and Planning department is trying to be more efficient. **Council Member Sloane** indicated the “Miscellaneous Revenue” line item was down and asked for an explanation and asked as to what sort of revenue streams would fall under that category. **Mr. Chaykowski** explained part of the revenue was the sale of maps and publications, with everything in the visual age people are not buying maps and not buying reference material because it is all on line. Included in that line item are the court costs for any code violations.

**Council Secretary Knowles** asked the Director if he felt good with the numbers of his staff and the out-sourcing and will they be able to handle the volume of work for the upcoming year. **Director Farrall** answered with a definitive “yes” and the out-sourcing is working very well.

## **BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNTRY CLUB**

**Director of Operations for the Country Club, Jim Bogan**, presented the budget for the Country Club.

**Council Secretary Knowles** congratulated **Director Bogan** on the job the Golf Course had done during the COVID crisis. When the Golf Course reopened, they handle a tremendous volume of business which was able to compensate for the hit taken on the Banquet side.

**Council Member Sloane** asked for clarification regarding the transferring in on the Revenue side. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated it was coming from the “Capital Improvements” and stated in 2020 the Township intended on repaving all the cart-paths, then COVID happened, all construction stopped, pretty much everything stopped. There was no repaving of cart-paths in 2020.

**Council Secretary Knowles** indicated he spoke to **Mr. Chaykowski** regarding the Banquet Hall’s loss of revenue due to COVID and the Township documenting the loss and the possibility of being reimbursed by a Grant or some kind of Government assistance. **Mr. Chaykowski** stated a majority of events that were booked this year, have rebooked for next year.

**Matt Galvin**, Director of the Banquet Facility-Country Club, indicated it was a difficult year and the revenue was 50% off of budget. As Mr. Chaykowski said, the Banquet facility was successful in moving all but one or two events from 2020 into 2021. Also, none of the clients lost deposits. The Banquet facility erected a tent in August which saved 22 events which would have otherwise cancelled.

**Council President Kisselback** inquired about the “Building Repairs” line item. Mr. Chaykowski indicated it was the general maintenance of the buildings. The breakout is COVID with regards to the addition of the PPE for the “Owls Nest” as well as the “Pro Shop”.

## **FINANCE**

**John Chaykowski, Finance Manager**, was open to Council for any other questions regarding the proposed Budget for 2020.

**Council Member Tokmajian** indicated the “Real Estate Taxes” was budgeted to be the same and asked if he felt there were going to be no issues. **Mr. Chaykowski** stated the “Real Estate Taxes” stayed the same and is very confident. “Business Privilege” is more of a concern with people staying home to work.

**Council Member Tokmajian** indicated the 5-year Budget projection seemed inconsistent and asked for clarification for “Capital Improvement”. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated a Storm Water Management project that will be moving forward for this year, and indicated every year he will be “dumping” money into that particular program. As far as road repaving projects, they are usually scheduled every other year and it is whatever the Township deems necessary in the appropriate year for any particular project.

**Council Member Sloane** indicated Mr. Chaykowski mentioned the “Road Repaving” project to be every other year and asked if the Township was restarting a Township wide program. **Mr. Chaykowski** indicated yes, the Township is starting a Township wide program. In 2019 the Township finalized the second version of “Road Repaving” and in essence the Township is starting the third process. The Township roads take a daily beating between trash collection, commercial traffic and the number of vehicles that are on the roadways. The Township performs an evaluation each year and the Public Works department has been able to start addressing potholes with a better patch job with the addition of the “skid-steer”. The **Mayor** indicated some of the roadwork that will need immediate attention are emergency cases, especially when the road starts to deteriorate. The Township will receive a report from the engineers regarding the situation of the roads and the determination is made at that time.

The **Mayor** addressed **Council Member Tokmajian** and the five-year budget plan and indicated none of the figures are written in stone, it will obviously change as each year goes along.

**Council Secretary Knowles** indicated he was impressed with some of the numbers as he read through the budget. With the mention of the Casino, the Earned Income Tax, it really made a solid foundation for the Township to survive this hit of COVID and still give the \$300 checks to the Homeowners. Also, even after the purchase of the Trifecta Club and keeping the 18 acres of open space and getting the lighting for the fields for the girls’ softball at Bensalem Community Park located at Richlieu and Galloway Roads. **Council Secretary Knowles** said there is a lot for the Township to be proud of and thanked the Mayor for his work.

**Council Vice President Pilieri** complimented the Mayor and the Administration, and all of the department heads for the hard work they put in by keeping their staff together and keeping the Township running. It wasn’t an easy year to get it done, but everybody did get it done.

**Council President Kisselback** called for a motion to accept the budget as presented. **Council Secretary Knowles** made a motion to accept the 2021 Budget as presented by the Mayor, **Council Vice President Pilieri** seconded and **Council President Kisselback** called for a roll-call vote which was unanimous, 5-0.

The **Mayor** thanked everyone and said it is a team effort working together, appreciated Council going through the budget and thanked all of the Directors for their report regarding their department. This is a daily operation, we have to keep our “eye on the ball”. It has been a very difficult and challenging year. We have complied with all of the safety rules and the operation of the Township continues to move on through this crisis. The Mayor believes in teams, as teams win and we are doing it for the people of Bensalem.

**Council President Kisselback** indicated, for the record, there were no Public Comments.

**Council Member Tokmajian** thanked the First Responders for all they do and the Township employees. Wished everyone Happy Holidays and wished all was well with Council Vice President Pilieri and his family.

**Council Member Sloane** thanked everyone for their time, and thanked the Mayor and Directors for all their hard work during this challenging time. Looking forward to another year working with everybody and wished everyone a Happy Holiday and extended his best wishes to Council Vice President Pilieri and his family.

**Council Vice President Pilieri** thanked everyone for their well wishes during this trying time.

**Council President Kisselback** indicated he was grateful for all the department heads and thanked them for what they do on a daily basis. Thanked the Mayor for leading us in terms of taking the Township from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and moving on. Thanked the Administration and Solicitor for all their work.

**Solicitor Pizzo** congratulated everyone on navigating a particularly trying and difficult year. Everyone at every level of Township Government has really stepped up and the community should know they have been well served and should be very proud.

**Council President Kisselback** ended the meeting by saying the Council we have works very well together, we have different concepts sometimes of moving in different directions, but we all come together in terms of the betterment of Bensalem. Thanked the gentlemen on Council for the year 2020 and for all they have done for the citizens of Bensalem.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Budget Council Meeting of December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

[www.bensalempa.gov](http://www.bensalempa.gov)

or

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debora F. McBreen**  
**Recording Secretary/Council Clerk**