

A Special Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Middletown was held in the Conference Room at Town Hall, One Kings Highway, Middletown, New Jersey, at 6:30 PM on February 23, 2009.

Township Clerk Heidi Abs called the meeting to order and read the following notice:

The Notice Requirements provided for the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given by transmission to the Asbury Park Press and The Courier and by posting at the Middletown Township Municipal Building and filing with the Township Clerk all on February 18, 2009.

Roll Call: Present- Fiore, Scharfenberger, Short, Mayor Brightbill
Byrnes entered upon close of public comments

Also present were Township Administrator Anthony Mercantante, Township Attorney Brian Nelson, Assistant Administrator Ed Dunn, and Township Clerk Heidi R. Abs.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Township Clerk announced a moment of silence to honor the troops serving world wide defending our freedoms and way of life.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

2009 Municipal Budget

The Township Administrator discussed the purpose of this meeting was to follow up on the special budget meeting held on January 14, 2009. The Mayor recommended the Public Comments be made after the CFO presentation and before the Committee discussion.

CFO Rich Wright recapped the events of the last Budget meeting and discussed the Departmental requests. The CFO spoke about using the 2008 budget as a base and then all the contractual increases and mandatory increases. The Township Administrator discussed the prior years one time revenue sources not available in 2009 as well as pension deferral in State Senate Bill S14. The Township Attorney discussed the Cap Levy and the State requirement of using the pension deferral if the Township would like to request a Cap waiver. The Township Administrator also discussed the 5 union contracts which are being negotiated.

The Mayor opened the meeting to public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Bob Saccardi of Leonardo requested Committeeman Short discuss the "one for one debt service". Committeeman Short discussed the debt reduction and pension deferral. Committeeman Short stated the \$1.5 million pension deferral would be used to pay down debt.

The CFO discussed the reduction of debt service over the next two years.

Thomas Wilkens of Middletown Avenue discussed suspending the mandated increase in the Library funding. The Township Attorney updated the Committee of a pending bill in the Legislature that would suspend the increase.

Phil Niclause of Turner Drive in Belford requested information on prevailing wage and the award of Township contracts. The Township attorney stated the prevailing wage is necessary on most contracts. Mr. Niclause stated he would like to request the Township implement a wage freeze for Township employees. Mr. Niclause also requested the Township stop administering the Community Development Block Grant program and objected to the open Space tax.

Don Watson of Collinson Drive New Monmouth inquired as to the Library's future budget plan if the funding is suspended. The Township Attorney stated the Library has its own board of trustees and does not submit their budget to the Township for approval. The Attorney also explained the history of Library funding.

Jim Granafefe of Red Coach Lane in Locust requested clarification of the Township \$6 million Liability cost. The CFO discussed the State requirement of projecting retirements in the Budget and the \$500,000 in severance liability in 2008. Mr. Grenafefe suggested the Township negotiate sick time and eliminate the banking of sick time. Mr. Grenafefe also suggested the Township use layoffs or hour reduction to close half of the budget gap.

Kathy Cody of Middletown supported the open space tax and would like to see the program preserved.

Upon no further members of the public wishing to be heard Mayor Brightbill moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Deputy Mayor Scharfenberger and carried by the following roll call vote:

Roll call vote: Aye- Fiore, Scharfenberger, Short, Mayor Brightbill

DISCUSSION

The Township Administrator discussed bargaining with the unions over the sick time as well as the amount of employees it would take by layoffs to reach half the budget gap. The Township Attorney discussed the layoff procedure under civil service. The Township Committee continued to discuss the shortening of the work week and the cost savings for closing the township buildings to save money on utilities. The Township Administrator discussed the effects on the service departments and productivity. The Administrator also discussed the overtime unpredictability. The Township Committee discussed the leaf pick up process and the need to review the hiring on outside contractors. The Township Committee also discussed the reduction of professional services contracts by 10%. The Township Administrator presented the Township Committee with a chance to meet with the Police, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and the Building Department directors in groups of two Committee members at a time and have a series of meetings to discuss detail portions of their departmental budgets. The Township Committee discussed the Arts Center and Arts Council paying for their cleaning services. The Township Committee discussed the Capital Improvements in the proposed budget and cost projections to pay down the Township debt. The Township Committee discussed reducing the Township vehicle fleet and closure of the Arts Center on certain days. The Township Committee discussed the reduction of services and events in Middletown and requested the Township Administrator to set up meeting dates as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT:

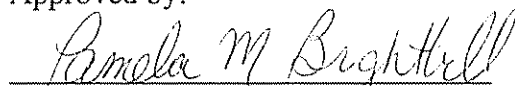
Upon motion, and seconded it was carried to adjourn by the following roll call vote at 8:25 pm:

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Byrnes, Fiore, Scharfenberger, Short, Mayor Brightbill



Heidi R. Abs, Township Clerk

Approved by:


Pamela M. Brightbill, Mayor