



**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
March 26, 2019
Regular Session Minutes 7:30 PM**

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Diegnan	Present
Ms. Duarte	Present
Mr. Monaghan	Present
Ms. Neibart	Present
Mayor Gisser	Present

Also present:

Matthew Petracca, Township Attorney
Debbie Bonanno, Township Administrator
Maria Coppinger, Township Clerk

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:

Adequate Notice of this meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice was given to the Observer Tribune and Daily Record on January 8, 2019. Notice was posted on the bulletin board in the township offices and notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

PROCLAMATION

National Donate Life Month – April 2019 – NJ Sharing Network – Mayor Gisser read the proclamation.

PRESENTATION

Introduce 2019 Municipal Budget – Karen Fornaro, Chief Financial Officer – Budget Presentation attached hereto.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS

Mayor Gisser announced that the sale of the Pitney Property (5+ acres) has been completed. Mayor Gisser announced that no action was taken after the conclusion of the March 11th executive session. Mayor Gisser, Ms. Duarte and Ms. Neibart announced several upcoming events in Mendham Township

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Monaghan moved. Ms. Neibart seconded.

All members present voted to open the meeting to the public.

Patricia Zimmerman – 3 West Main Street – The Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) requested that ordinance no. 2018-02 be amended to include that *all* applications for demolition received by the Township be sent to the HPC. The current ordinance reads that the *Planning Board and Board of Adjustment* shall make available to the Committee an informational copy of every application *submitted to either board* for development and/or demolition, or any other application which is deemed by either board to have historic interest or importance.

Vanessa Brown – Ms. Brown asked that the Township Committee consider the amendment to include all applications for demolition because it was her understanding that the previous Township Attorney included it in the ordinance.

Bob Wock – 12 Cooper Road – He expressed his appreciation for being invited to attend the finance committee meetings. He is aware that the Township Committee does not oversee the school budget or the board but asked the Township Committee to communicate the importance of the school budget since there were not many residents in attendance at the school board budget meeting.

Ryan Guthrie – 28 Cold Hill Road – He expressed that the budget looks great - job well done. He asked if there was a way to see the expenses (wages, operating expense and capital expense) per departments.

Diane Orban Brown – Ironia Road – Ms. Brown noted that that public hearing (open house) for the school budget is Thursday, April 4th at 9:30 am and 6:30pm in the Staff Resource Room. She explained that previous school budget hearings had one or two people in attendance. She reminded that public that it is very important to attend these (budget) meetings.

Michael Merritt – Mountainside Road – Mr. Merritt noted that there was recently an evaluation that rated the schools systems in Mendham fourth and twentieth in a very competitive state. He expressed that the township committee has an expense line that is completely within their control to cut which is the Township Committee's salaries. He noted that it would not reduce the budget increase to zero but would take a significant cut of the proposed increase.

Ms. Neibart moved. Ms. Duarte seconded.

All members present voted to close the meeting to the public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2019
Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Monaghan seconded.
Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.
- Executive Session Minutes of February 26, 2019
Mr. Monaghan moved. Ms. Duarte seconded.
Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.
- Regular Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2019
Ms. Duarte moved. Ms. Neibart seconded.
Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.
- Executive Session Minutes of March 11, 2019
Ms. Neibart moved. Ms. Duarte seconded.
Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

RESOLUTIONS

2019 – 060 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Introduction of the 2019 Municipal Budget and Establish Hearing Date

Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Diegnan seconded.

Mayor Gisser expressed that all though the township is coming to the conclusion of the 2019 budget process, they have every intention to continue working on the 2020 budget and future tax years. He explained that they have identified a number of items to look at for next year which included garbage collection, Morris Area Senior Transportation Program and development opportunities.

The proposed budget is a fair representation of our high level objectives. Keeping our tax levy at the appropriate level to provide the services that we need to provide to the community, it is consistent with our long term debt management plan, consistent with our long term capital plan and consistent with our desire to establish reserve level of various kinds.

Mr. Diegnan thanked the finance sub-committee and expressed that they did an excellent job in looking at all the line items and trying to get to the best budget possible. As much as he would like to see a zero percent tax increase every year, he believes a 1.1% is acceptable because he is unwilling to reduce the amount of reserves. He noted that 20% of everything that we bring in goes to debt services and he is really not in favor of slowing down debt repayment because in the long run paying down debt is going to help the town. He recommended that finance committee really consider the garbage collection and reducing services because he fears that we are going to reduce services and the tax rate will remain the same which becomes a reverse tax. He also suggested combing the planning board and the zoning board of adjustment into to a single land use board. Overall, he thinks it is a good budget and will support it.

Ms. Duarte thanked everyone who worked on the budget and suggested, for next year, a public meeting with the full committee present to get into some of the details of the budget prior to the introduction. She is comfortable with the \$45 tax increase per averaged home in the community. Ms. Duarte is comfortable with the budget because she is glad to see investments being made in the community. She agrees if there are areas we can save and cut back for 2020 that we should look into them. She does not feel comfortable going into the fund balance and extending the debt services. Ms. Duarte suggested cutting the salary paid to the Township Committee to save taxpayer money.

Ms. Neibart thanked everyone involved with the budget and expressed that she is not comfortable with its current status. She explained that it is just not a \$45 tax increase on an averaged home but it is about the tax increase on the county level and school level. She does not believe it is fiscally responsible to be increasing taxes. She will vote to abstain so that it can move forward to the public hearing however if it was to adopt the budget she would have voted no.

Mr. Monaghan thanked everyone involved with the budget and expressed that it is a pretty good budget. He would love to get a zero percent tax increase but the fact is that there are not that many sources of revenue that can make up \$90,000. He is concern that if the township keeps cutting services then eventually there would be nothing left to cut. He is intrigued by the idea of the land use board and it should be studied to see if there is a cost savings and efficiency opportunity. He noted that there might be ways of tweaking the budget but a 1.2% tax increase is not as bad as it could have been.

The Township Committee continued with discussions on ways to increase revenue and suggestions on budget cuts were made.

Public hearing on the 2019 Municipal Budget is scheduled for April 23, 2019.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve resolution 2019 – 060 with the exception of Ms. Neibart who abstained.

2019 – 061 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Certification of Compliance with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s “Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Ms. Duarte moved. Ms. Neibart seconded.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2019 – 062 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Self-Examination of Budget

Ms. Neibart moved. Ms. Duarte seconded.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2019 – 063 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Green Acres State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Enabling Resolution

Ms. Duarte moved. Ms. Neibart seconded.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2019 – 064 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township Of Mendham Authorizing the Award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract for Township Computer System Support to Quickteks

Mr. Diegnan moved. Ms. Neibart seconded.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2019 – 065 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Cancellation of Outstanding Checks

Ms. Neibart moved. Mr. Duarte seconded.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2019 – 066 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing the Payment of Bills

Ms. Neibart moved. Ms. Monaghan seconded.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION

03-2019 An Ordinance Authorizing the Amendment to Amended Deed of Conservation Easement for Steep Slopes for the Property Identified as Block 148, Lot 4 and Block 149, Lots 6 and 7, in the Township of Mendham in Connection with the Approvals Granted by the Mendham Township Board of Adjustment

(Public hearing scheduled for April 8, 2019)

Ms. Neibart moved. Mr. Monaghan seconded.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Gisser asked the Township Committee to review the Ralston Cider Mill lease that was part of their communication packet because he hopes to engage in discussions at the next Township Committee meeting during executive session.

Ms. Duarte noted that she will put out an anonymous survey monkey to the student representatives and to the chairs of each board to gather feedback for the next appointments of student representatives.

Ms. Neibart mentioned that there is some hope for shared services with recreation and Mendham Borough and also there is possible movement with the court shared services.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Diegnan moved. Mr. Monaghan seconded.

All members present voted to open the meeting to the public.

Ryan Guthrie – 28 Cold Hill Road – Mr. Guthrie had some concern regarding the suggestion to increase housing as a form of increasing revenue in the community. He expressed that this could be an issue since the demand for housing, at least in New Jersey, is decreasing because of state and local income tax deductions going away so the demand is actually shifting. He expressed that this idea gives us some revenues in the short term but in the long term it does not really fix the problem and then you end up changing the character of the town forever.

Peter Dumovic – 3 Shelton Road – He applauded the Township Committee for an open robust discussion in terms of the budget that was introduced tonight and the background behind the process. He believes that one thing was missing from the process, the entire committee's thinking in terms of the guiding principles going into the following year's budget. He also applauded the Township Committee on the Pitney Property grant process and thanked Ms. Brown for her efforts. He is happy to see that the closing for the Pitney Property took place and asked that the public be updated on the new owners' plan when the information becomes available. He welcomed the public to attend the school budget meeting.

Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Diegnan seconded.

All members present voted to close the meeting to the public.

ADJOURN

Motioned by Mr. Diegnan and seconded by Ms. Duarte.

All members voted to adjourn at 9:39PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Coppinger, Township Clerk

Distributed: 04/04/2019

Approved: 04/08/2019

Attachments

2019 Budget Presentation