

Meeting Minutes
Hightstown Borough Council
Budget Meeting
July 6, 2010 6:30 pm

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Robert Patten at 6:30 pm and read the Open Public Meetings Act statement which stated, "Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice was advertised in the *Trenton Times* and the *Windsor-Hights Herald*, and is posted in the Borough Clerk's office."

The Flag Salute was followed by Roll call.

ROLL CALL

	PRESENT	ABSENT
<i>Councilmember Bond</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember McGinty</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Musing</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Quattrone</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Sikorski</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Theokas</i>	✓	
<i>Mayor Patten</i>	✓	

Also in attendance: Debra Sopronyi, Borough Clerk; Herbert Massa, Borough Administrator; and George Lang, Chief Finance Officer.

Council President Quattrone motioned to amend the agenda to add discussion regarding the scheduling of meetings and a public comment period after the resolutions, Councilmember Sikorski seconded, all approved.

Public Comment

Mayor Patten opened the floor for public comment. The following individuals spoke during the public comment period: Eugene Sarafin, 628 S. Main Street; Rob Thibault, 504 S. Main Street; J. P. Gibbons, 504 S. Main Street; and Kathy Patten, 135 South Street.

Budget Discussion

Discussion followed, with Mr. Massa and the Mayor joining in as to topics previously reviewed by Council.

Mr. Massa gave a review of the taxes on the currently presented budget.

Resolution 2010-163 Adoption of the 2010 Budget

The Mayor opened the public hearing on the Budget Amendment. Mr. Rob Thibault of 504 S. Main Street spoke during this public hearing.

There being no further comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Resolution 2010-153 Adopting the 2010 Budget

Councilmember Theokas moved resolution 2010-163, Councilmember McGinty seconded.

Councilmember McGinty commented on why she concluded that she had to vote in favor of the proposed budget.

Councilmember Musing stated that he was concerned and skeptical at last week's meeting so he has reviewed the budget line by line and finds that cuts would damage our ability to serve the residents. He suggested that Hightstown move toward consolidation and he will vote for this budget.

Council President Quattrone commented that he will not vote for this budget and that he said everything he needed to at the last meeting.

Councilmember Sikorski commented that he has spoken with Mr. Massa and has determined that further cuts would compromise services to the residents. He also asked that information regarding the elimination of the Homestead Rebate be placed on the Hightstown website. He continued that the suggestions made by the Mayor are not feasible at this time and that estimated tax bills simply create confusion. He informed the public that the Minute Maid Sub-committee is working with East Windsor and the Mill Property is in litigation, therefore it is inappropriate to comment on these matters now; consolidation is something that must be voted on by the residents of both towns, the Police matter is not consolidation.

Roll Call Vote: Councilmembers Bond, McGinty, Musing, Sikorski and Theokas voted yes; Councilmember Quattrone voted no.

The Budget was adopted 5-1.

Discussion: Scheduling of Meetings

Councilmember McGinty raised the issue of the time that meeting are held and asked that the Councilmembers be polled before the time for meetings is set and that there should always be two public comment periods and a Council comment period on every agenda.

Mr. Lang was excused from the meeting at this time.

Councilmember McGinty stated that at the last two meetings the first public comment period was delayed and she feels that the meeting should not go any longer than 45 minutes prior to a public comment period being held as the presence of the public is essential.

Council Comments

Councilmember Musing requested that all committees, the members and purpose be listed on the website, it is important information that the public should know.

Mr. Massa requested that Council supply a roster of all committees and their membership to the Borough Clerk so Mr. Musing's suggestion can be followed up.

Councilmember Sikorski re-iterated that the sub-committee is working with East Windsor on the Minute Maid Property.

Council President Quattrone thanked the public for their budget comments last week and advised that the work on Mercer Street has been delayed pending a State meeting. He thanked the media for reminding the residents that it would be to their benefit to update their lines while this project is in process.

Councilmember Bond stated that the Council had worked for months on this budget and there was a consensus to adopt it, but then no votes last week and it was very upsetting. He commented that he does not understand Council President Quattrone's vote.

Council President Quattrone commented that he wanted to finalize police contract negotiations, change to state health benefits and get rid of longevity in this budget.

Councilmember McGinty reminded the public about the Ordinance Review Group meetings and commended the Parks and Recreation Commission for the Farmers Market and Triathlon. She agreed that the Borough organized committees should be on the website. Councilmember Theokas commended Councilmembers Sikorski and Musing for their comments last week and tonight, they took courage and thoughtful actions. He went on to say that he does not want the ship to sink, but he is not blinded to the rising tides.

Mayor Patten commented that other municipalities have shown an interest in providing police services and the status of these negotiations should be discussed in an executive session to make a group determination of where to go with it.

Councilmember Sikorski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm, Councilmember McGinty seconded; the Motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra L. Sopronyi

Borough Clerk