

Meeting Minutes
Hightstown Borough Council
Budget Meeting
April 28, 2010 6:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Robert Patten at 6:00 pm and he 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 accept the agenda, Councilmember Sikorski seconded, all approved.

Public Comment

Mayor Patten opened the floor for public comment. There being no comments from the public, the Mayor closed the Public comment period.

Mr. Massa introduced Judge Newman who proceeded to give his recommendation for the court. Discussion regarding the court ensued. Judge Newman and Court Administrator MacLean were then excused from the meeting.

Mr. Massa advised that the current budget proposal is at a 14.1 cent increase and is within the cap. There was discussion regarding the budget caps.

Mr. Lang gave a review of the budget schedule and possible budget adjustments that would reduce the budget by \$214,000.00; these included Furloughs and/or lay-offs, an increase in sewer/water rates and changing to the State Health Benefits Plan. Council was advised that some of these reductions will have to be negotiated with the bargaining units. Chief Eufemia then read a list of concessions that the Police were willing to negotiate in an effort to reduce the budget; however, only if Council was to cease negotiations with East Windsor regarding the Police/Court Study recommendations.

Mr. Massa advised that contract negotiations will continue with the unions and that Mrs. Sopronyi has developed a furlough schedule for Borough Hall Staff.

The Borough Insurance Agent, Mr. Rick Alessandrini of Allen Associates gave a review of what changes would take effect should the Borough switch to State Health Benefits and how these changes would affect the employees. Mr. Massa advised that a review of these benefits will be given to the employees at a staff meeting to be held on June 1st. There was continued discussion on this matter and Mr. Lang gave a review of the health benefit costs in the Borough, which are heavily dependent upon claim trends.

Mr. Massa then reviewed the options for the budget reductions that were presented and requested direction from Council. Mr. Lang advised Council that the goal is to hold the public hearing on the budget at the May 17, 2010 Council meeting and it was decided that the budget hearing would be put on the agenda. Discussion continued regarding health benefits and furloughs.

Council made suggestions that there be a thorough review of the Planning Board budget and the cost of professionals including redevelopment expenses. Discussion then continued regarding tax lien sales and tax appeals, raising fees to increase revenue, and water/sewer fee collections. The matter of Senior Citizens having the ability to pay their taxes was also raised. The budget reduction considerations were again reviewed and the use of Professionals was discussed.

Council President Quattrone motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 pm and Councilmember Sikorski seconded; the Motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra L. Sopronyi

Borough Clerk