

**Meeting Minutes
Hightstown Borough Council
Budget Meeting
March 15, 2014
9:00am**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kirson at 9:04am 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 sent to the *Trenton Times* and the *Windsor-Hights Herald*, and is posted in the Borough Clerk's office."

The flag salute followed Roll Call.

	PRESENT	ABSENT
<i>Councilmember Bluth</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Doran</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Hansen</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Misiura</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Quattrone</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Thibault</i>	✓	
<i>Mayor Kirson</i>	✓	

Also in attendance: Henry Underhill, Borough Administrator; and George Lang, CFO

Resolution 2014-76 Naming an Acting Deputy Clerk

Councilmember Hansen moved resolution 2014-76; Councilmember Quattrone seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Council members Bluth, Doran, Hansen, Misiura, Quattrone, and Thibault voted yes.

Resolution adopted 6-0.

Resolution 2014-76

*BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN
COUNTY OF MERCER
STATE OF NEW JERSEY*

NAMING AN ACTING DEPUTY CLERK FOR PUBLIC SESSION

WHEREAS, The Borough Clerk is not available for the March 15, 2014 budget workshop meeting of the Borough Council; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of Borough Council to deputize Henry Underhill, Borough Administrator, to perform the duties of the Borough Clerk for this meeting; and

WHEREAS, Henry Underhill shall perform all the duties of the Borough Clerk for said meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that Henry Underhill is hereby named as Acting Deputy Clerk for the budget workshop meeting of the Borough Council on March 15, 2014 and shall perform the duties of the Borough Clerk for said meeting.

Councilmember Misiura moved the agenda for approval, Councilmember Quattrone seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Council members Bluth, Doran, Hansen, Misiura, Quattrone, and Thibault voted yes.

Agenda 6-0.

Council President Bluth requested that Councilmember Thibault recuse himself from discussion on the budget because his settlement with the Borough is included; she feels there is a conflict of interest.

Councilmember Thibault declined, noting that the Borough Attorney, as well as his personal attorney and they found no conflict.

There was further discussion and Councilmember Doran reminded Council that the Borough Attorney has advised them on these matters in the past noting that the decision on whether to participate is up to the individual Councilmember.

Mayor Kirson asked for the meeting to continue as Councilmember Thibault has decided to participate in the budget discussion.

Mayor Kirson opened the public comment period and the following individuals spoke:

Walter Sikorski, 326 N. Main Street – commented regarding cost savings being implemented into the union negotiations that are to take place this year; the life insurance policy provided for employees who are covered under the pension system is a duplication of costs; Crossing Guards should come under the school board, not the Police Department; they would then not get paid during the summer months reducing the burden on the Borough; expressed concern regarding the length of Council meetings and how effective Council is at the end of a meeting and the cost associated with extra meetings; noted the large number of legal cases brought against the Borough, especially the number of cases in the Police Department, and the legal costs associated with them; noted that Senior Citizens have lost their Homestead Rebates and are on fixed incomes, tax increases are not acceptable.

There being no further comments, Mayor Kirson closed the public comment period.

Council then reviewed the budget figures as presented by the Administrator and CFO. There was discussion regarding the deferred charges from the emergency appropriation and reserve for uncollected balances.

Councilmember Doran requested that all documents be noted with the date and author so changes can be tracked.

There was discussion regarding revenue, rateables, anticipated tax collection, surplus and debt. George Lang then reviewed proposed salaries, departmental budgets and the recent history of tax collections. He then explained the increase in the budget from 2013.

There was further discussion regarding the revaluation and the school budget; and the effect on the Borough tax rate. It was noted that \$39,000 equals one penny in tax. Mr. Lang noted that he does not have the exact figures for the school budget at this time, but will forward them when received. He then reviewed the library and County taxes. Mr. Lang explained the tax levy cap bank, noting that an ordinance will be required to exceed the tax levy cap; and explained what is inside the cap versus what is outside the cap. Discussion continued regarding debt, surplus, reserves, revenue, state aid and grants.

Mr. Underhill advised Council that a three to five year plan for capital purchases will be made this year so the Borough can be prepared for required purchases in the future and plan to put the appropriate funds in future budgets. There was discussion regarding capital purchases, bonding and possible shared services. It was requested that the various departments present their capital plans at a general meeting in April.

There was discussion regarding salaries, computer upgrades, elimination of the Information Technology salary, municipal court rental costs, escalating health insurance costs, workers compensation costs and experience, OEM stipend and training. It was requested that the OEM stipend be discussed at a future Council meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding vehicles and equipment needs and the ages of the various equipment. Council requested a list of vehicles and equipment with the ages of each included.

Mr. Lang explained the budget line for accumulated sick and vacation time, noting that if a Police Officer is out, we must pay overtime for the Officer who covers the duty.

There was discussion regarding the water/sewer budget and the decrease in collections and increase in costs. Mr. Lang explained the allocations and appropriations. It was noted that there were funds appropriated for a time program to appropriate the time spent by employees for the Borough and water/sewer; the Police already has a program. Discussion continued regarding the need for funding pothole repairs this year, having the volunteer departments pay for their own electric and etc.

Mayor Kirson confirmed that the departments will come forward at the first meeting in April with their capital request information.

There was discussion regarding having the budget ready for introduction at the second meeting in April and adopted at the second meeting in May. Mr. Lang and Mr. Underhill noted that if Council has any further questions, they can be contacted.

Councilmember Thibault moved to adjourn at 10:56 am, Councilmember Misiura seconded. All ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Henry Underhill
Acting Deputy Clerk