

**Meeting Minutes
Hightstown Borough Council
August 25, 2020
Budget Workshop
6:30 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Quattrone at 6:33 p.m. 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 on the Borough website.”

The flag salute followed Roll Call.

	PRESENT	ABSENT
<i>Councilmember Bluth</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Cicalese</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Jackson</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Misiura</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Musing</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Stults</i>		✓
<i>Mayor Quattrone</i>	✓	

Also in attendance: Margaret (Peggy) Riggio, Deputy Borough Clerk; Debra Sopronyi Borough Clerk/Administrator and George Lang, CFO.

The Flag Salute followed roll call.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Quattrone requested to add the Wycoffs Mill Road Warehouse to discussion.

Moved as amended by Council President Musing; Seconded by Councilmember Cicalese.

Roll call vote: Councilmembers Bluth, Cicalese, Jackson, Misiura and Musing voted yes.

Agenda approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Mark Madonia, 224 Sunset Avenue – Inquired about the size of the warehouse that we are speaking of.

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

DISCUSSION

Budget 2020

George Lang explained that this was a challenging budget year. Mr. Lang explained the surplus anticipated is less than normal this year. Court revenues are down. Delinquent taxes are less than anticipated because collection rate is high. All new union contracts are included in the proposed budget. A new police car is included in the operating budget this year as requested by Council. Each department was told that their budget was being rolled back to what it was in 2019. All department heads said they would make it work. He is looking into temporary financing through the County which will be beneficial to the Borough. He also stated that a portion of the Covid-19 expenses may be reimbursed through FEMA. Mr. Lang stated that the tax increase is about 4.4 cents. Mayor Quattrone stated that this is lower than the estimated tax bills that were sent to residents. Discussion ensued. There were questions construction fees, salaries and excess personnel. Mr. Lang explained that increasing construction fees would not cover the cost of the construction office. Mr. Lang explained that no department is running with excess people. There are not many ratables in town. Costs increase every year. There is not a lot to cut in this budget. We already take advantage of many shared services. It is unfortunate that there is never an increase in state aid. We have not received an increase in many years. Mr. Lang also reminded Council that we have no control over the County or School tax increase.

During the discussion Council questioned what should be done with the new Municipal Building. They instructed Borough Administrator, Debra Sopronyi, to complete an analysis of the impact of putting the municipal building on hold for a year. Ms. Sopronyi stated that we are under contract with the architect and they are moving forward with the drawings. Councilmember Misiura stated that the drawings can be completed so we can put the project out to bid so we have a cost and then the project can be put on hold.

Council would like to see 2 cents cut from the budget. Mayor Quattrone asked that all departments cut 5% from their controllable expenses and see where that leaves us. Mr. Lang explained that there is a difference between cutting the budget and cutting expenses. Cutting the budget cuts into surplus. Mayor Quattrone asked Council to please study the budget. They have made it very clear where they want to end, now there needs to be a way to get there. It was decided that there will be another budget meeting on August 31, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. The budget will be introduced at that time. Mr. Lang stated that after introduction, amendments may be made to the budget prior to adoption.

Mark Madonia and Sneah Sukhadia spoke regarding the First Aid Squad. They questioned what Council was planning on budgeting the squad for the remainder of the year. The Mayor responded that they would be received their requested amount.

Wycoffs Mill Road Warehouse

Mayor Quattrone informed Council that he met with the developer. The developer is building a warehouse on Wycoffs Mill Road in East Windsor. He needs permission to trim trees on Borough property to create a sight triangle. He is requesting a letter stating that we will allow the sight triangle. The developer would like to place signs directing Route 130 and Turnpike traffic to the left, away from Hightstown. Discussion ensued. It was stated that there is no guarantee that the motorists would follow the signs, but this should help decrease traffic. Mayor Quattrone stated that we are considering putting a storage facility on that property to store Public Works equipment. The developer is considering helping clear that land for us. Council questioned who is requesting the letter. Does the developer have approvals from East Windsor already? If not, where is he with his application. Borough Administrator, Debra Sopronyi will follow up with the developer.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Musing moved to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Cicalese. All ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret M. Riggio
Deputy Borough Clerk