

SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

March 7, 2012 – 6:00 p.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 6:07 p.m. Present: Mayor Fisher, Committeemen Rich and Molnar. Also in attendance were Harry Heller, Steve Bartzak, Randy Hoagland, Rob Tomenchok, Shirley Skillman and Pat Pittore

In compliance with the Public Meetings Act, Mayor Fisher announced that this Special Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act with notices faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Trenton Times on March 1, 2012. A copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

The meeting was recorded via digital recording system.

BUDGET WORKSHOP:

The purpose of the meeting was to meet with various department heads to gain insight into their budgetary needs and anticipated projects.

Harry Heller (OEM) reviewed accomplishments for the year noting that over 200 volunteer hours were expended. Work continues on filing reimbursement requests with FEMA for damages from Hurricane Irene and the October snow. To date, these equal \$37,289 and the Township should realize a return of 75%. It was initially thought that the generator repairs could be claimed; however, a reimbursement of \$36/hr for the 14 hours that it did run can be claimed. Mr. Heller requested that the CFO watch for the deposit and let him know when it arrives.

As for requests, being paid would be nice although not expected. Mr. Heller noted that he gave up a week's County vacation time to work for the Township. OEM would like to obtain 5 three season jackets specifically marked WAOEM. These would run approximately \$100 each. In addition, batteries for the portable radios are required. \$200 should cover this item. The topic of generators for the municipal building and DPW was discussed. The possibility of a donated generator to run the gas pump was mentioned but whether it could also run the base station/repeater was questioned. As for the municipal building, Mr. Heller noted that Township phones shut down when power is lost. A POTS line with jacks would be better or an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) obtained to run the current system. A 10KW unit for each facility was thought to be sufficient but prices are currently high. It was suggested that two transfer switches be obtained and one generator per year as a capital expense. Consideration should also be given to acquiring Auto External Deliberators (AED) for each building. These run \$700+ each. Request totals: Jackets - \$500; Batteries - \$200; AED - \$2100; Generators/transfer switches – TBD.

The status of the OEM roster was questioned. Mr. Heller is still looking for a damage assessment officer. Someone in either real estate or construction would work best. A couple of names were offered and John Hoff will be contacted for his possible interest. Mr. Heller explained that within two days after a storm they are required to perform a windshield assessment to arrive at preliminary damage numbers, usually a percentage of the property's assessment.

Steve Bartzak (PD) reviewed his budget requests and reasons for increases in line items, e.g., school programs, supervisory education for officers to prepare for his eventual replacement, and uniform money for part-time officers. The previous discussion on the latter was relayed and the decision changed to a flat \$350.00 per year for uniform replacement. The lieutenant would also like to keep an additional \$3000 in the uniform line in case there is a new officer. The cleaning/maintenance line includes all officers and himself for the \$18,700 request. A \$1000 increase over last year's allotment for basic operations is needed. The \$700 marked for DARE could be kicked back to \$500 as the clothing bins will bring in money. Lt. Bartzak relayed that he keeps an eye out for grant money as well. Discussion ensued over the number and status of the current patrol units; lease vs purchase options; that one vehicle is basically shot now with a second joining it by the end of the year; and, increased gas costs with SUVs. Currently the officers are rotating the SUVs and using the cars at night. If the decision is to lease, the lieutenant suggested that the lease period be 3 years instead of 5. A budget of \$35,000 for vehicle replacement is requested. Obtaining one replacement vehicle per year is the goal.

The status of the air conditioning system at the police station was raised. Lt. Bartzak was requested to activate the system to test its functionality. During some recent work at the station, the lieutenant was advised that some of the vents were rusted shut, which may have caused some of the problems experienced in the past.

Randy Hoagland (DPW) has requested a new dump truck but this may be deferred until 2013. If there is no replacement for this truck, the existing one will need considerable repairs to keep

it going. Mr. Hoagland relayed that he is still waiting for the truck ordered last year and hopes that it arrives soon. In addition to the previously submitted operating budget, \$5000 for tree work was requested as there are several in Township ROWs that need to come down. Quotes would have to be obtained. Also, to comply with the federally mandated reflective signs, new STOP signs need to be purchased for an approximate cost of \$5000. Mr. Hoagland relayed that he attempted to obtain quotes for tub grinding the pile of storm damaged tree debris as 75% of the cost, if completed by the end of the month, is reimbursable through FEMA. Unfortunately, no one has returned his call.

The recent request by DPW workers for an extension of time to use vacation days was discussed. Mr. Hoagland suggested that instead of the July 31st and October 31st dates that were advanced, that the time just be extended through the end of the year, at which time unused days would be lost. The consensus of the Committee was to approve the suggestion. This will be a change for the policy manual.

A question was raised about whether it would be possible to move money designated for salt to help with the budget requests. The CFO will be consulted.

The bleachers have been removed from Hewitt Park. The roof on the concession building needs to be replaced and a brief exchange ensued over the baseball league's grip on the facility. The Clerk noted that the latter and related insurance concerns need to be discussed at some point. The pipes from the Toll project were cashed in for \$393.60. Additional request totals: \$13,000

Rob Tomenchok (Planning Board) reviewed his submitted budget requests noting a drop of \$2400 from last year. The expense of printing the Master Plan may be reduced by doing this electronically and PDF it for placement on the website. The only a few hard copies would need to be produced. Professional staff costs have been worked hard. The cost involved with mailing packets each month was a topic of much debate at the last Planning Board meeting and pick up arrangements are under discussion. Money will be needed to Planner review of the tax maps and working with the County on any GIS mapping is being considered. The latter may not happen with the projected County layoffs. Mr. Tomenchok offered that if cuts are needed, his bottom line is \$8,000-\$10,000.

Pat Pittore (LNHARS) relayed that he is the immediate past president of the organization. The current president is Jason Strauss with Shirley Skillman holding the position of Treasurer and Harry Heller the Vice President. Approximately 15% of their calls (225 last year) were for West Amwell. They anticipate a similar number for 2012. The Squad runs crews 24/7 with paid personnel during the day and volunteers in the evening, although the latter category needs new recruits. Their budget is \$600,000 for 2012 and no replacement ambulance is slated. West Amwell's donation in 2011 was \$7,500 but at one time this was \$12,000. Mr. Pittore asked that consideration be given to raise the 2012 donation to \$8000 if possible but stated that all donations are appreciated as the Squad relies on contributions. The billing that was implemented last year will cover approximately 1/3 of their projected budget but Mr. Pittore hastened to add that not all calls are billable and gave examples. Questioned about deliberators for the various municipal buildings, Mr. Pittore offered that this would be a good idea. The new ones are easy to operate and the time saved gives the victim a greater chance of survival. Squad personnel would be glad to instruct the staff. He also took time to recognize the Township's police officers who come out and assist the Squad. The extra person and their professionalism helps them out tremendously. Asked what the Squad receives from other municipalities, Mr. Pittore noted that Lambertville pays their Workman's Comp, which runs \$10,000-\$12,000 per year; New Hope gives \$12,000-\$14,000; and, Solebury \$18,500. Request total: \$8000.00

POSSIBLE RESOLUTION AWARDING TUB GRINDING QUOTES: Held

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

No public in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:20 p.m. on motion by Molnar, seconded by Rich.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk