

SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
November 10, 2010 – 4:15 p.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 4:15 p.m.. Present: Mayor Molnar, Committeemen Masterson and Fisher, Committeeman-elect Rich, CFO Luhrs and Tom Carro (4:55 p.m.)

In compliance with the Public Meetings Act, Mayor Molnar 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 November 4, 2010, with revised notice faxed to same and posted on November 8, 2010. 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 held in the Clerk's office and was not recorded.

BUDGET WORKSHOP:

CFO Luhrs presented a preliminary budget packet making use of certain assumptions but noted that decisions are needed in certain areas. The spreadsheet for revenues provided three scenarios that kept 2010 numbers flat, reduced State aid by 15% and used different amounts of Open Space Trust money. The latter, when plugged into the State's levy cap calculation sheet, resulted in various CAP overages. The exercise was offered in an attempt to explain cause and effect of bring debt funds into the budget instead of being an exclusion to the calculation. The amount over CAP means additional cuts from the operating budget. The situation would be best helped by finding other sources of revenue as this would not cause an exclusion in the CAP calculation. It was explained because of this, that eliminating trash fees would be going in the wrong direction. Also noted was that the levy cap has no connection to the tax rate and that adding to the Capital Improvement Fund for capital projects means that increased taxes. Mr. Rich questioned the provisions of the 2010 funding of the garbage truck and inquired about SHREC as something that would be helpful in the capital improvement line. Mr. Fisher explained that there is no out of pocket costs as this project would be funded by the bidder. The group will be meeting again on Monday and relayed that there's apparently a lot of money available for this type of project. The Township would receive rebates worth \$2-3 million through State credits.

Continuing with the budget discussion, Mrs. Luhrs offered that operating assumptions will depend on policy decisions in the areas of tax collection, police, prosecutor, police vehicles, finance, court and garbage. These pages of the preliminary budget document were reviewed as follows:

Page 20 – Police Department: A 2% increase was applied to the salary & wage section as well as the addition of two new officers—one part-timer; one full-time but the numbers will change depending on the actual decisions made.

Page 30 – Vehicle Maintenance: The proposed changes involved a reduction in the amount owed on lease payments as one vehicle will be paid off and the addition of two new leased vehicles. The latter would run between \$6-7,000/year depending on type of vehicle plus outfitting expense.

Page 49 – Public Employees Retirement System: The number is provided by the State but is up 20% over last year. It's an exception to the cap but will raises taxes. Brief discussion ensued to explain a previous year's necessary deferral and pay back requirements.

Page 51 – Police & Fire Retirement System: This calculation is up 40% from last year. It too is dependent on salaries and number of people.

CLOSED SESSION:

RESOLUTION #150-2010

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances, and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Committee of West Amwell Township, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.

2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

PERSONNEL (Interviews)

3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.

4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

The Resolution was unanimously approved on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

The meeting returned to Open Session at 5:25 p.m. with the following result:

Fisher motioned to offer appointment to Tom Carro for the CFO position effective January 1, 2011 per his proposal and division of labor document. Masterson seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Carro accepted the offer of appointment.

A brief discussion about budgets and auditor costs ensued. It was noted that two proposals were received today for the position of Auditor. *Mr. Carro left the meeting.* Mrs. Luhrs will review and compare the proposals, noting that one was from a big firm that is making a presence in the area. The other is from the current auditor who is very conservative in his approach and has been good to the Township over the years.

BUDGET WORKSHOP, continued

Returning to the budget sheets needing policy decisions, the following pages were reviewed:
Page 6 – Revenue Administration: The salary lines have been adjusted downward but there's still some uncertainty concerning the department.

Page 8 – Legal Services: The OE line has been adjusted downward in light of the possible settlement.

Page 19 – Employee Group Insurance: With at least one retirement coming up, the line is slightly reduced. The number is based on the new rates which were 12% higher than last year; however, the number of full-time patrolmen decided upon will have an affect. A brief discussion ensued about shopping for options to the State plan; however, these may not necessarily be any cheaper. The medical and dental reimbursement number is per contract.

Page 26 – Prosecutor: A number of applications have been received for the advertised position and have been distributed for review. Savings will depend on the direction taken.

Page 27 – Streets and Road Maintenance: Last year's salary line was reduced due to charges to open space for work being done at the former Toll property. If there are no charges to that fund in the coming year, the salary and wage line would have to be increased. As for OE, once salt is awarded, the line will be set for the year. A brief discussion concerning the amount of money designated for road work ensued. With the current level it was agreed that not much can be accomplished. The suggestion was made to take a road tour with the engineer and road supervisor to prioritize projects.

Page 28 – Solid Waste Collection: Bids have been received for a used garbage truck. Mr. Molnar briefly relayed the stats on the vehicles under consideration and noted that the warranty is the same. Good numbers for truck operation (gas, oil, maintenance, tipping fees) were discussed and something in the range of \$52,000 was deemed plausible. Roll off and hauling, as a back-up plan should run no more than \$2000. A question of whether a new person would need to be hired for Saturday work or if this could be undertaken by one of the current road department employees in exchange for time off during the week was raised. The idea will be floated to the road crew. It was determined that the garbage fees will remain.

Page 22 – Aid to Fire Company: The line has stayed the same for two years. The item needs to be addressed.

Page 44 – Telephone: The budget number is high but there are three companies that service the Township—AT&T, Verizon and Century Link, in addition to the cell phones.

The expense of heating and cooling the firehouse is of concern. Mr. Fisher relayed that a walk-through of all buildings was accomplished on Tuesday with the energy audit program representative. The firehouse heaters and second floor area were looked at as well as the heater in the municipal building. The latter was deemed too small and the a/c units not the most efficient. However, there's only fifty thousand (\$50,000) available in grant money.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION CONCERNING BLOCK 12 LOT 14

At least two of the Committee members have inspected the house and its condition was noted. The suggested direction is to drain all water pipes, including the well, and wait until spring to continue testing the water. A discussion ensued over the loss of tax revenue and questions raised about the effect on the budget should the property be sold for less. Sale options are to be provided by the attorney at the next meeting. Another possibility for the house might be to meet affordable mandates through perhaps a donation to a non-profit like Habitat for Humanity. The Housing Official would need to be contacted but a lot depends on the direction of pending legislation.

Another Closed Session was needed.

RESOLUTION #151-2010

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the

exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances, and
WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Committee of West Amwell Township, County
of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter
specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS - Police
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public
when the matter has been resolved.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

The Resolution was unanimously approved on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

The meeting returned to Open Session at 7:50 p.m. with no results.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

There was no public in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:50 p.m. on
motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk