

SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

April 13, 2009 – 7 p.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 7:05 p.m. Present: Mayor Corboy, Committeemen Masterson and Molnar, and CFO Luhrs

In compliance with the Public Meetings Act, Mayor Corboy announced that this Special Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act with notices faxed to the Lambertville Beacon, the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Trenton Times on April 8, 2009. 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 and a copy of the CD is on file in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2009 Open Space Trust Fund

Mayor Corboy opened the public hearing. Mr. Molnar questioned whether the open space tax could be suspended. An explanation of how the \$300,000+ raised covers debt service on previous purchases and that the account stays healthy through reimbursements was given by Mrs. Luhrs. The Toll purchase, in particular, was discussed as the open space money appropriated through the recently adopted ordinance will not come back until the property is sold.

2009 WEST AMWELL OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND

Purpose: as designated by N.J.S.A. 12-15.7, the tax may be used for acquisition of lands for recreation and conservation purposes, development of lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes, maintenance of lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes, acquisition of farmland for farmland preservation purposes, historic preservation of historic properties, structures, facilities, sites, areas or objects for historic preservation purposes, payment of debt service on indebtedness issued or incurred by a municipality for any of the purposes above. During the budget process each year, a public hearing is held on the allocation of funds raised by the open space tax.

The 2009 Open Space Trust Fund will be used for the following:

\$ 5,000 Maintenance of Lands for Recreation

\$ 179,500 Payment of Bond Principal

\$ 167,086 Interest on Bonds

\$ 90,000 Down Payments & Soft Costs for Acquisition of Farmland and Open Space

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS

Hearing no other comments, the public hearing was closed on unanimous vote.

Molnar motioned to approve and Masterson seconded. Roll Call: Molnar-aye, Masterson-aye, Corboy-aye

INTRODUCTION: 2009 West Amwell Township Budget

An inquiry as to the earliest time that the Fire Company's request could be reconsidered was made. No transfer is now possible until November and even that will depend on the situation with legal bills. Another consideration for the use of any extra funds might be to pay down the pension deferral. The Committee was reminded that if the Township receives Extraordinary Aid, those monies must go to reduce the tax levy. A discussion ensued about a recently received letter from Jeff Ent and how best to address the situation. One option would be to meet to relay recognition of services provided and acknowledge that this should be compensated. However, with the Fire Company having over \$100,000 in their accounts, the Committee's decision was based on what was available, not that the Township didn't want to provide funding. The fact that the Township budget funds Fire Company insurance, debt service on the new truck and LOSAP contributions was noted. Everyone is getting hurt with this budget and if more cuts are needed, the only other place would be in the Police Department. The April 13, 2009 Special Meeting

Township's surplus is further depleted every year and if there's no Extraordinary Aid, more will have to cut to get under the levy cap. A least \$50,000 will be needed. In the meantime, the Township will have to muddle through until the end of June and re-visit the budget once Extraordinary Aid numbers are released in July. Estimated tax bills will once again be employed as this worked well last year in keeping a positive cash flow for school payments and payroll. Another strategy, if Extraordinary Aid is not forthcoming, is to apply for a cap waiver.

A brief discussion ensued over attempts to combine 'donut' towns into surrounding municipalities which is not proving as easy to do as to say. The respective municipalities are not always a good fit as there are things such as debt, schools, differing government types, and the cost of referendums to change the latter.

The budget was introduced with the reading of the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #83, 2009
MUNICIPAL BUDGET NOTICE

Municipal Budget of the Township of West Amwell, County of Hunterdon for the Fiscal Year 2009

Be It Resolved, that the following statements of revenues and appropriations shall constitute the Municipal Budget for the year 2009;

Be It Further Resolved, that said Budget be published in the Lambertville Beacon in the issue of April 23, 2009

The Governing Body of the Township of West Amwell does hereby approve the following as the Budget for the year 2009:

A Hearing on the Budget and Tax Resolution will be held at the Municipal Building, on the 20th of May, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at which time and place objections to said Budget and Tax Resolution for the 2009 may be presented by taxpayers or other interested persons.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT FUND SECTION OF APPROVED BUDGET

General Appropriations For:

1. Appropriations within "CAPS"	
(a) Municipal Purposes	\$2,441,824.00
2. Appropriations excluded from "CAPS"	
(a) Municipal Purposes	792,001.62
Total General Appropriations excluded from "CAPS"	792,001.62
3. Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	156,422.00
4. Total General Appropriations	\$3,390,247.62
5. Less: Anticipated Revenues Other Than Current Property Tax	\$2,404,941.75
6. Difference: Amount to be Raised by Taxes for Support of Municipal Budget	
(a) Local Tax for Municipal Purposes Including Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	\$ 985,305.87

Masterson moved to introduce the Budget on first reading and Corboy seconded. Roll Call: Molnar-no; Masterson-aye, Corboy-aye. The public hearing will be held on May 20th.

Mr. Molnar was requested to state his objection to introducing the budget and responded that although it is not without gratitude over the amount of effort involved, his concern is directed at the reduction in wages and that the Police have not come to the table. The fact that Police overtime is now down after years of saying it couldn't be reduced also annoys him. A brief discussion about how the next contract needs to be

approached ensued and that furloughs of patrolmen could be employed if money runs short.

The Mayor's Message was reviewed. Mrs. Luhrs noted that the page also shows the introduced budget numbers, by line, compared to those in 2008 and the decreases involved.

APPROVAL OF EXTRAORDINARY AID APPLICATION

The application was reviewed and minor adjustments made. The consensus was that the narrative appeared to be inclusive of concerns and actions that have been taken.

Molnar motioned to approve for submission and Masterson seconded. Roll Call: Molnar-aye, Masterson-aye, Corboy-aye

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Mrs. Olsen presented a completed form that must be submitted for the video camera grant. This background information form must be submitted immediately. Approved.

Mr. Corboy announced that Lt. Bartzak is preparing a COPS grant application to pay for the salary and health benefits for up to three officers. If received, this could help maintain officers if furloughs are needed and would support the budget line item. Although there may be some that are against the municipality taking State or Federal money, its money that someone will get and therefore worth a shot to help out here.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:40 p.m. on motion by Molnar, seconded by Masterson.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk