

# SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

## March 31, 2012 – 9:00 a.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 9:13 a.m. Present: Mayor Fisher, Committeemen Rich and Molnar. Also in attendance were CFO Tom Carro, Rob Tomenchok and Porter Little

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 February 28, 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:**

Mr. Carro provided several new handouts for review. The 2012 wages, including a proposed 2% increase and requested salary adjustments, was reviewed. A summary of the specific requests was provided. A couple corrections and additions were made.

Budget sheets were then presented and reviewed by line item. Some modifications to the numbers were made due to late requests as follows:

General Administration – increased to \$33,700  
Finance OE – increased to \$6200  
Legal – may have to be increased over the \$40,000 entry  
Ag Advisory – increased to \$500  
Zoning Board and Zoning Officer lines have been separated  
General Liability Insurance – whether fire company bills were included will be checked  
Emergency Management – increased to \$700  
West Amwell Fire Co – possibly increase to \$33,000  
Animal Control – the \$25,000 salary of the ACO was added and OE was increased to \$2000  
Recreation – raised to \$4000, will be using OS trust money

Items outside the cap were then overviewed. Of particular note was that the \$15,000 allocated to the capital improvement fund will join the \$135,000 currently accumulated to provide for 5% down payments should they be needed. The original entries indicated a \$68,274 increase over 2011 or 2.16% increase over 2011 but will need to be re-calculated for the additions.

The revenue sheet was presented showing \$85,000 in surplus anticipated. Realized revenues from 2011 were noted as were anticipated amounts for 2012. Grants are an unknown and are dealt with by Chapter 159 amendments. The use of \$485,000 from the Open Space trust fund is anticipated for 2012. For the latter, an amortization schedule was provided projecting a depletion date with current draw downs, although the 6 cent tax would still exist. These calculations would change if callable bonds are refinanced in 2013 and nothing else is purchased. It was mentioned that 99% of the Township's debt is Open Space but with refinancing, up to \$300,000 would be cleared for use.

A preliminary 2012 tax impact on a \$400,000 house calculation was also presented. The 14% drop in assessed value was noted as was the projected 4 cent increase in rate.

Mr. Carro stated that budget introduction is anticipated for the April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting with adoption in May. All department requests were included; the revenues are reasonable; and, the rate is basically flat. This led to an extended exchange about cuts; keeping the budget at no more than last year due to the 14% reduction in property value although this would hold true for only about half of the properties; the desire to control spending at the township level; the suggestion that 2011 numbers be the starting point; the desire for raises tempered against the taxpayer; that the employees here are undervalued; that ticket volume has dropped over the past three years, and especially now that the State Police are writing less; and, being at the right level in Court personnel. If the budget were to remain at the 2011 level, it was questioned where cuts would be made to reach that number given the increased costs for 2012. A combination of reduced OE and increased revenue was suggested. The Finance committee will review the options at their next meeting.

Attention was then briefly given to capital projects. Highlighted were:

DPW dump truck – out  
One or two new police vehicles

A gas boy for the DPW  
Technology updates – WiFi for the meeting room; a projector; power point; new  
microphones/amplification system, computers and network  
Turn out gear for the Fire Company  
A/C for the patrol room & municipal building heat system (most likely OE not cap)  
Roll offs/dumpsters  
Marriage license computer system

A possible clean up day was deferred for discussion by the Recycling committee. The use of  
Clean Communities money was suggested but unless there are controls set, it will not be  
enough given past events.

Mr. Tomenchok suggested that the STOP signs be retro-laminated to save money. Mr. Molnar  
will speak with John King of Raritan Township to see if their shop does this.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

A special meeting to approve a Raffle license for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class has been requested.  
However, no paperwork has been turned in to date for processing.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 11:35 p.m. on  
motion by Molnar, seconded by Rich.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lora L. Olsen, RMC  
Township Clerk