

TOWNSHIP OF VERNON

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING BUDGET WORKSESSION

November 13, 2008

The Budget Work Session meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 4:14 p.m. on Thursday, November 13, 2008 in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Mayor Carew presiding.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The Township Clerk advised that adequate notice of this meeting as required by the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975 was provided to the newspapers on November 10, 2008 and a copy was posted at the Municipal Building.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Present were Council members Richard Carson, Gary Grey, Valerie Seufert, and Mayor Austin Carew. Glenn McLaughlin was absent. Also present were Township Manager Melinda Carlton and municipal department heads.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Mayor led the assemblage in the salute to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Austin Carew opened the meeting to the public. Seeing and hearing no one from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Carew closed the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

2009 BUDGET WORK SESSION

The Township Manger suggested the Township Council may want to form a Budget Review Sub-committee to move the budget review process along in a more timely fashion. It was agreed and a sub-committee consisting of Austin Carew, Valerie Seufert, Kerrie Scott, Fiscal Analyst, and the Manager was formed to continue an in depth review of the 2009 proposed budget

Melinda Carlton, Township Manager, distributed updates to the proposed 2009 Budget and asked the Council to incorporate the updates in their binders. The Township Manager reported revisions were made to the Capital Improvement Program [CIP] Budget and trust funds were detailed on the Operating Budget to better track revenue sources.

The Township Manager stated tonight's Budget Work Session will be devoted to discussing the Capital Budget only and asked the Council to review the CIP Budget, prioritizing projects of importance. Melinda Carlton reported capital projects have been prioritized by each department head. If needed, the department heads are present answer any questions the Council may have.

Tax Assessor. The Township Manager stated \$600,000 is available in surplus. With a property tax revaluation being completed this year, a budget reserve is necessary for costs associated with potential court actions due to property tax appeals.

Municipal Court. Proposed improvements to courtroom security were deferred to the 2010 budget upon input and agreement from the Court Administrator.

Department of Public Works. In reviewing the Public Works CIP Budget, the Township Council requested that shared services should be explored whenever possible and

asked what items could be deferred to the 2010 budget. The Council suggested a new mechanical street sweeper could be deferred or a shared service be explored. A sign post puller was approved as was the Phase I Resurfacing of Lake Walkkill Road and one hopper sander. The 4 x 4 Mason dump truck and one hopper sander will be deferred to the 2010 budget. A park utility vehicle to maintain the Maple Grange Park was approved. The Township Manager reported she had not yet reviewed the Township's current vehicle inventory with Dave Pullis, Public Works Director, and the Township's Fleet Manager, but will do so to project the Township's vehicle fleet needs in the coming years for planning purposes.

The Council unanimously agreed to move forward with the environmental audit of the Municipal Building, noting the health and well-being of municipal employees and public using the building is a priority. The Township Manager will advertise a "Request for Proposals" for the environmental audit. Ms. Carlton reported the Department of Public Works is responsible for cleaning the building and also performs much of the building maintenance

Department of Planning and Development. Two road intersection projects were discussed for inclusion in the CIP Budget due to their importance in public safety. The Township Engineer will be contacting the County to coordinate the intersection improvement projects and associated funding since county roads are impacted. The proposed Appalachian Trail Parking Lot improvement project was discussed. The alternative to constructing a parking lot across the street from the Appalachian Trail on Route 517 will be further investigated by the Township Engineer. The canoe launch capital project was postponed to the 2010 budget unless grant funding is obtained. The McDermott parking lot project was briefly discussed. The Manager stated she will provide more detail for this project to the Council. The Council approved the Town Center signage. Capital funding for the installation of Town Center utilities was taken out of the CIP budget.

Department of Recreation and Leisure. The Township Manager informed the governing body that a \$250,000 Department of Community Affairs grant for the construction of a community center, is due to expire at the end of 2009. The Township Council suggested constructing a community center facility in phases to help defray Township costs. Sponsorship opportunities will also be explored as was done with several other successful recreation projects. The Bike Path Phase III improvement project was deferred. Costs associated with land acquisition, however, would be appropriated from Open Space funding. The Township Council agreed that the Maple Grange improvements should be kept in the 2010 budget. Fencing requests were approved for Recreation. The bleachers project was discussed and the amount approved to purchase was reduced. Replacement of a section of the fence at Old Orchard Park was approved. The Pocket Park project was put off and the Playground Equipment project at Maple Grange Park was moved to 2010.

Department of Fire Prevention. \$29,500 for the purchase a 4x4 truck was questioned by the Township Council and was tabled pending more information.

Department of Personnel. Fireproof file cabinets and the purchase of a new payroll system were discussed and temporarily left in the 2009 CIP Budget.

Township Manager. The Manager's Office technology request for a Document Scanner and Imaging System was deferred to the 2010 CIP budget.

Township Council. Replacement of the Township Council chairs in Council Chambers was briefly discussed. Several of the chairs have been repaired and re-repaired over time; some are in poor or unsafe condition. In the interest of saving budget costs, the Council unanimously agreed to defer the replacement of Council Chamber chairs to the 2010 budget.

Police Department. The Council questioned why police cruisers were not listed in the capital budget. Ms. Carlton explained police vehicles, having a short useful life span, are allowed to be appropriated in the operating budget by State law. The Township

Council approved the radio repeaters, mobile radios and radar units for police vehicles. The 4x4 vehicles were required to be included in the CIP Budget and not the Operating Budget.

Council member Gary Grey left the Budget Work Session meeting at 6:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Carew stated the Executive Session listed on the agenda was taken off the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business to be conducted on the Budget Work Session Agenda, a motion for Adjournment was made by Councilmember Valerie Seufert, seconded by Councilmember Richard Carson, with all members voting in favor.

The Budget Work Session of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin R. Kline

Robin R. Kline, MAS, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Minutes approved: December 1, 2008