

# **Borough of Tenafly**

## **MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

### **BUDGET MEETING MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Zinna and Councilmembers Lauren Dayton, Jeffrey Grossman Venugopal Menon, Julie O'Connor, and Daniel Park

**ABSENT:** Adam Michaels

**ALSO PRESENT:** Borough Administrator Jimmy Homsi,  
Chief Financial Officer Susan Corrado  
Borough Clerk Omar Stovall  
Human Resources Manager Alisha Dawkins

At 6:03 p.m. Mayor Zinna read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, chapter 231, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates for the year are listed in the Annual Agenda; copies are sent to the Record, Suburbanite, and Northern Valley Press and posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Municipal Center. The notice of this special budget meeting by Resolution #22-90 has been sent to the Record, Suburbanite, and Northern Valley Press, has been posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Municipal Center and Borough Website."

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No one came forward.

#### **BUILDING**

Construction Official, Robert Byrnes noted attorney fees had increased due to zoning. He added besides that there was no increase in budget. C. Dayton inquired about the Building Department operations. Mr. Byrnes explained that his department is working well now that he has two full-time employees. He added that his department is catching up from the previous year. Mr. Byrnes expressed that his department is experience a 35% increase in construction permit applications which translated to an increase of 42% in fees. C. Grossman asked if permits were attributed to Hurricane Ida. Mr. Byrnes responded no but effected the quantity. C. Menon asked if staffing is suitable for the Department needs. Mr. Byrnes expressed his staff was sufficient for the department's daily operations. C. Dayton asked if code enforcement could address items in a timely manner and how code enforcement is handled doing off hours. Mr. Byrnes explained that code enforcement issues during off hours are handled by the Police Department. M. Zinna added that if the enforcement matter is an emergency it would be referred to the Police Department. M. Zinna continued that when he receives enforcement matters that he forwards it to the Borough Administrator Jimmy Homsi and to Mr. Byrnes. Mr. Byrnes added that he doesn't believe an additional code enforcement official is need.

C. Dayton inquired about the Building Department's software request. Mr. Byrnes explained that municipal Building Departments are required to upgrade their software through the county for about \$40,000. C. Dayton asked if the software includes large paper document scanning. Mr. Byrnes expressed no. C. Menon asked how much is scanned for the large document paper scanning due to being budgeted for \$21,000. Mr. Byrnes explained that the scanning of the documents vary due to what needs to be scanned. M. Zinna asked why document scanning a capital expenditure. Mrs. Corrado explained that bond council allows it. C. Menon inquired about the possibly of Building Department purchasing an Electric Vehicle. Mr. Byrnes expressed that he has no objection to purchasing an Electric Vehicle. C. Menon mentioned the possibility of receiving a car from another department. Mr. Byrnes expressed that Police Department vehicles would be the most logical but they would have many miles. C. Dayton stated that she wish to explore that every car requested by each department should be a short term lease. Mrs. Corrado expressed that the Borough could lease vehicle due its AAA rating but doesn't believe it could be a capital item but would look into. C. O' Connor expressed that the potential of waiting on purchasing of a vehicle due to supply chain issues. M. Zinna expressed that the Governing Body seem generally interested in the leasing of an Electric Vehicle. The Governing Body asked Mr. Homsi for a state listing for vehicles.

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

Borough Administrator Jimmy Homsi expressed that there was a sharp decrease in website cost due to startup fees. C. Dayton expressed that the website should be removed from the

Clerk's Office to Administration Office. She continued that that many pages are not finished and she had requested that the website should be under the leadership of the Borough Administrator. C. Dayton requested that the website designer who previously worked on the website comes back and design the website at a cost of \$7,500. C. Dayton asked to add \$7,500 to the administration operating account. C. Dayton continued by requesting to have a High School age intern work on the website. C. Menon expressed that that the website designer who previously worked on the website had done some of the work and the results were very minimal. C. Menon added that there should be a large discussion for an IT department. C. Dayton advocated that the website designer was beyond competent. C. Grossman suggested that Mr. Homsi to make recommendations on how to move forward with the website. Mr. Homsi suggested that a stipend be given to a current employee. C. Menon asked if there is an internal employee competent enough to maintain the website. Borough Clerk Omar Stovall expressed that an employee would have to be identified and would have to be trained by viewing saved training videos. Human Resources Manager Alisha Dawkins made a suggestion of persons who may be interested in website maintenance. C. Dayton voiced the need for an app to compliment the website. Mrs. Corrado expressed that she received a quote for the app a few years ago. M. Zinna asked the Mr. Homsi to provide recommendations regarding the app at a later date.

Mr. Homsi expressed that was a decrease in the communication line within the Senior Service Coordinator. C. Dayton recommended to get help for the Senior Service Coordinator with a designated assistant. Borough Administrator Jimmy Homsi expressed that the Senior Service Coordinator has not expressed and issues. C. Dayton offered Mr. Homsi to come to the next Senior Services meeting to see what is expressed during the meeting. M. Zinna asked to Mr. Homsi and Human Resources Manager Alisha Dawkins to meet with the Senior Services Coordinator. C. Dayton voiced there is a need for assistance and a succession plan. C. Grossman expressed that if there is a need it should have been communicated.

C. Dayton inquired about the increase in salary to employees is in the Administration Department. Mr. Homsi voiced that due to the employees taking additional courses and to keep salaries competitive with retention in mind an increase to those employee was due. C. Dayton why a \$3,000 increase while the employees receive a stipend for their positions. Mrs. Corrado expressed that if a person receives a certification that they become more valuable to the Borough. C. Menon expressed that the \$3,000 may not be justified he added that the employee received training from the previous year. C. Dayton suggested to raise the stipend rather than the salary. The Governing Body agreed to a raise of \$3,000 of the two Administration Department employees.

Mrs. Corrado raised a question about the clerical task of TVAC. M. Zinna expressed that is a legal question in which the Borough Attorney Wendy Rubinstein should be made aware of for clarification. Mrs. Corrado voiced that it has to be determined where the TVAC duties are going. C. Menon asked if the salaries are comparable to other municipalities and to purchase a salary survey from the League of Municipalities.

C. Dayton made an inquiry of the legal bills and wanted to make sure that legal bills are not being under estimating. C. Grossman expressed that there was an idea of using the labor attorney less. C. Grossman reiterate that there should be restraint on the usage of the labor attorney. He added that inquiries should go through the Borough Administrator. M. Zinna asked what does municipalities the size of Tenaflly typically spend. C. Menon added that with the labor attorney fees that an in-house attorney could be hired. M. Zinna expressed that he doesn't believe \$200,000 in legal fee is extraordinary compared to a \$31 million budget. M. Zinna added that he expects the labor bills to be lowered. Human Resources Manager Alisha Dawkins explained to the Governing Body reason why labor attorney services had increase due to multiple arbitrations. She continued that she has not contacted the Labor Attorney regarding human resources matters. C. Park asked if the Senior Bus Drivers have their CDL-B. Mr. Homsi responded that one driver has the CDL-B and is awaiting a on a county grant to purchase a van that would not require a driver to have a CDL to drive.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE**

Human Resources Manager Alisha Dawkins gave an overview of her department from filling key positions, from sending newsletters, and ratifying the OPEIU contract through 2023. She added she is working on the DPW Supervisors contract and she expressed streamlining paid-time off through an automated system. Mrs. Dawkins requested the need for the new computer in her capital budget. Mrs. Dawkins asked for an increase in her rewards budget to be increase by \$2,000. Mrs. Corrado expressed that there are monies from JIF to be allocated to employee rewards. Ms. Dawkins expressed that those fund come in at the end the year. Mrs. Corrado asked Mrs. Dawkins to tell her the amount to be charged to the JIF account. C. Dayton expressed does not want to raise the budget to contribute to employee

functions. Mrs. Dawkins expressed that these type of functions have an impact on employee morale. C. Dayton expressed that she would like to keep the budget as is. C. Menon believed that the increase is reasonable. C. Dayton expressed to increase the education and training line item.

Mrs. Dawkins expressed that the Borough is paying \$1,700 a month for COVID testing. She expressed that the Federal Government is providing free COVID testing. Mrs. Dawkins added that the Borough have not had a COVID outbreak since December 31, 2022. Mrs. Dawkins recommended not having the Borough covering COVID testing. Mrs. Dawkins presented Option A. - employees bring in their own individual test or Option B to remove the COVID testing be provided by the Borough. The Governing Body proceeded with Option A.

### **PUBLIC WORKS**

Department of Public Works Director Mike Cassidy expressed that his department have 5 driver laborer position vacant. Mr. Cassidy requested that the Governing Body consider budgeting the position of Supervisor of Public Works to serve as a deputy. Mrs. Corrado expressed that the position would be exempt and not subject to overtime. C. Dayton asked what the role would entail. Mr. Cassidy expressed daily operations. C. Dayton asked the different between Department of Public Works Director position and the foreman. Mr. Cassidy replied by explaining that the foreman are working daily throughout the Borough. C. Menon asked how many foreman are there. Mr. Cassidy replied 6. C. Menon asked what would the ideal salary be for the requested position. Mr. Cassidy stated \$120,000. O' Connor asked if it was possible to fill the position and to not receive fringe benefits. M. Zinna expressed you cannot do because of being a government entity. Mr. Cassidy added that the figure is based on longevity. C. Grossman expressed that the reason the Borough purchased the arm truck was to free up Department of Public Works employee and the goal was to have overtime elimination. Mrs. Corrado expressed that the individual who was in the General Foreman position, which was eliminated, could have been described as a workaholic. Mrs. Corrado continued that the Capital plan had double which requires more work, from documentation, and projects. She continued that Mr. Cassidy needs to run the Department of Public Works at a high level without having to operate vehicles for snow and other department related operations. C. Dayton expressed that if the Supervisor of Public Works position is being considered into that she would like to see it posted internally and externally. C. Dayton she added that she would like provide the resources but believes the salary is very high and asked to have Mr. Cassidy remove two capital items to help offset the budget. M. Zinna expressed that you cannot offset by removing items from the capital budget. C. Grossman suggested to table this discussion of the Supervisor of Public Works position.

C. Dayton asked Mr. Cassidy if he is comfortable with budgeting \$90,000 for overtime and budgeting \$35,000 for the temporary/seasonal positions. Mr. Cassidy expressed that it does not matter because if needs the funds that they could be transferred.

C. Dayton asked if the Richard Street pumping station would be done. Mr. Homsy expressed that the Borough is waiting on authorization to go out to bid by the engineers.

Mrs. Corrado expressed that donations made to the rose garden had decreased to maintain it. She explained that \$31,000 is needed to maintain the rose garden.

C. Menon inquired about the other contractual line item. Mr. Cassidy explained that Servepro, PPE, cleaning supplies are purchased from that budget. M. Zinna asked what happens if the COVID money are not uses. Mrs. Corrado expressed it goes into the storm trust and then eventually into the surplus. With regards to a capital expense, Mr. Cassidy discussed the life span of his trucks. M. Zinna asked out of what trucks which is the most important. Mr. Cassidy replied the Packer truck. C. Park inquired about the life span of the arm truck. Mr. Cassidy expressed it has plenty of life. M. Zinna asked Mr. Cassidy to continue the Department of Public Works budget on another day to be determined.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

As there was no further business to come before the Council, on a motion by C. O'Connor, second by C. Park, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 09:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Omar Stovall,  
MPA, RMC, CMR  
Borough Clerk