

A Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold was held on Thursday, May 13, 2010 at 7:00 PM in the Municipal Building.

Mayor Wilson stated that Notice of the time, date and location of the meeting had been provided pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975 (Open Public Meetings Act).

Mayor Wilson opened the meeting with the Salute to the Flag, followed by a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT	MAYOR MICHAEL WILSON
ABSENT	COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DI BENEDETTO
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN KEVIN KANE
ABSENT	COUNCILMAN JOHN NEWMAN
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN GEORGE SCHNURR
PRESENT	COUNCILWOMAN SHARON SHUTZER
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN JAYE SIMS

Mayor Wilson read Item No. 4 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution of the Borough of Freehold, County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey, Approving Self-Examination of Budget.”

Mayor Wilson read the resolution.

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Schnurr:

RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, APPROVING SELF-EXAMINATION OF BUDGET.

Councilman DiBenedetto arrived at 7:01 PM.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstained none; Councilman Newman absent. Mayor Wilson declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Wilson read Item No. 5 on the Agenda as follows:

“Public Hearing: 2010 Annual Budget of the Borough of Freehold.”

Mayor Wilson opened the meeting to the public.

Robert Taylor, Kiawah Avenue, referred to the chart showing the budgets of the police and fire department. He stated the police department budget is over \$5,000,000.00. He stated in reference to the police department pension program the Borough owes \$577,000.00 this year. He stated the fire department does not get a pension in this town.

Ted Miller, 13 Henry Street, questioned Sheet 3b, \$77,000.00 for the Drunk Driving and Enforcement Fund Safety and Securities Program. He noticed on the budget there was a matching portion and questioned what our match was.

Richard Gartz, Borough Auditor, responded the \$77,000.00 is the matching portion for the Safe and Secure Program.

Mr. Miller asked what is the Safe and Secure Program?

Mr. Bellina stated the Safe and Secure Program funds the entire public safety operation.

Mr. Miller asked how much is the net increase in property taxes?

Mayor Wilson stated the average home assessment in town is \$259,000.00 and this budget includes a 3% increase, which averages out to \$90.00 year.

Reggie Sims, 120 Broadway, asked how much the budget for the library is.

Mr. Bellina stated the budget for the library is \$392,000.00.

Mr. Sims stated that he is not against the decision that was made about the fire dispatchers. He stated he was against the way it was handled. He stated the Freehold Library has a budget of \$392,000.00 and the fire department, which is for public safety, is less. He asked if this was fair?

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Sims:

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE PUBLIC PORTION.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; Councilman Newman absent. Mayor Wilson declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Wilson read the following statement:

“I think by now it has become quite clear to all that the financial outlook for our State can be defined as bleak, at best. As with most towns throughout the State, Freehold Borough has realized the reduction in State aid of \$321,000.00 for the year 2010. This means over the last three fiscal periods we have seen our financial aid diminish by 35%. However, instead of bemoaning the depths of these cuts, we’ve simply decided to take charge and make a lean operation even leaner. In fact, we have been anticipating the need to make tough decisions over the past few years leading up to this time of fiscal reckoning. We have changed refuse collection contractors that has lowered the cost while not sacrificing the level of service. We have refused to replace employees who have opted to retire. We have changed the employee health insurance providers in an effort to contain the astronomical rise of premiums. We are hopeful the Governor delivers on his promise to spearhead legislation that will help Municipalities deal with the ever-fixed cost that always seem to bear a lot of weight on our shoulders. As reported earlier, we have commenced the process of transitioning our fire and police dispatch operations to Monmouth County. This cost effective move has been successfully accomplished with ten other

jurisdictions. Perhaps this is not the most popular decision, however, it is a unanimous decision made by the governing body that was born out of necessity during the stark economic reality of our times. I had indicated earlier that even tougher decisions will await us in the coming months. I have an inkling that there will be more questions awaiting us, and all towns for that matter, concerning our economic future. Will there be even more reductions in State aid? Will we be able to maintain all the services that we currently provide and will we be able to provide them as effectively as we do now? Will we be sharing more services with other towns? Will we be able to maintain our current employment force? What will our government look like in one year, two years or even five years from now? I suppose it is always easy to ask the questions, but the difficulty is finding the answers to them.”

Mayor Wilson read Item No. 6 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Adopting the 2010 Annual Budget of the Borough of Freehold.”

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Sims:

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2010 ANNUAL BUDGET OF THE BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; Councilman Newman absent. Mayor Wilson declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Wilson called upon the council for their comments.

Councilman Kane stated as Chairman of the Finance Committee he wanted to thank Joseph Bellina, Ricky Gartz, Nancy Forman and Kathy Caruso on their help in the preparation of the budget. He encouraged the residents to go on the Freehold Borough website and view the budget charts so they can see where the money is spent.

Councilman Schnurr stated the council has been cultivating a culture of frugality with our employees and department heads for some time. This new budget is less than last year’s budget and it reflects this culture of frugality in these tough economic times. He stated the Finance Committee consists of Councilman Kane, Councilman Newman, myself and our professionals and we have all worked very hard on crafting this budget. The committee met as a group nine times this year.

Councilman Schnurr stated that Freehold Borough is part of the Central Jersey Council of Governments, which is the largest municipal shared-services ‘think-tank’ in the history of the State of New Jersey. He also encouraged all residents to view the Borough website to view the budget charts. He stated next year there will be citizens on the Finance Committee. These citizens will provide analysis, input and suggestions to the council regarding municipal finance and budget issues.

Councilman Schnurr stated the analysis of Freehold Borough’s finances is a work in progress and it continues beyond this budget cycle. Every department in the Borough is being scrutinized. We will leave no stone unturned in the pursuit of cost savings that can be incurred by outsourcing of work, the combining of job functions and the sharing of services with other municipalities and the County. In the meantime the council feels that this is a budget that provides for the services you expect, while keeping the tax rate stable.

Councilman DiBenedetto thanked the Finance Committee and our professionals.

Councilman Sims also thanked the Finance Committee and our professionals.

Councilwoman Shutzer also thanked the Finance Committee and our professionals on this budget. She stated that Councilman Newman asked her to explain his absence this evening was due to a conflict in work that he could not resolve.

Mayor Wilson thanked the Finance Committee, along with Joseph Bellina, Ricky Gartz, Nancy Forman and Kathy Caruso for their hard work on the budget that seems to get more difficult every year.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

TRACI L. DIBENEDETTO, RMC
BOROUGH CLERK

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