

TOWNSHIP OF MOORESTOWN
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP
May 20, 2019

The Budget Workshop of the Moorestown Township Council was called to order by Mayor Petriello at Town Hall, Council Chamber, 111 West Second Street, Moorestown at 5:36 p.m. Attendance was as follows:

Lisa Petriello, Mayor	Thomas H. Neff, Manager
Brian Donnelly, Councilmember	Thomas J. Merchel, Deputy Township Manager/CFO
Nicole Gillespie, Deputy Mayor	Vicki M. Gough, Deputy Township Clerk
Michael Locatell, Councilmember (absent.)	
Victoria Napolitano, Councilmember	

Staff in Attendance: Theresa Miller, Recreation Director

Mayor Petriello read the Open Public Meetings Act statement, as written on the agenda, aloud.

DISCUSSION ON 2019 BUDGET:

Mayor Petriello introduced Ms. Miller and stated that Ms. Miller is here for the third time. Mayor Petriello asked if Council had any questions for Ms. Miller.

Ms. Gillespie had questioned why the purchase of equipment budget line item varies from year to year. Ms. Miller explained that it is a tricky number to project. She then explained what the funding is used for.

Ms. Napolitano had questions on the part-time employees especially for the summer programs. Ms. Miller said that they began taking registrations for the programs in January so they know how much staffing will be needed. Most of the programs are already maxed out. The staffing cost is offset by the fees that are taken in. Ms. Napolitano said so the salaries are completely covered by the fees. Ms. Miller stated yes.

Ms. Gillespie wanted clarification on the donation from the Mission Run and how it would be appropriated. Ms. Miller stated that she received a phone call today and Mission Run would be donating \$40,000 to the Recreation Program. Mr. Merchel said that \$25,000 would go to salaries and the rest would be put in the Recreation Trust to be used for other expense items. Discussion continued on where this donation is placed in the budget.

Mayor Petriello asked Council where they stand with the Budget going from a 5% increase down to where it currently stands at a 2.28% increase. Ms. Gillespie said we have come a long way. She stated that Council never discussed the list of appropriated decreases that was not recommended by staff that was handed out by Mr. Merchel. She suggested that maybe it would be worth discussing. Mayor Petriello said she doesn't see anything more being cut from the Budget. She added that it is not a frivolous Budget. Ms. Gillespie said she agrees with Mayor Petriello. She doesn't see anything more that they should hack. Ms. Napolitano said she doesn't see a need to add new hires. They should be added slowly not all at once. She agrees with the Stormwater

Coordinator but does not feel that hiring a supervisor for the Department of Public Works is a priority. In the Department of Community Development, we should start with one part-time employee instead of two. Ms. Gillespie said that the hiring of the part-timers are up to Mr. Neff and Mr. Merchel. The cost will be the same. Ms. Napolitano said that the idea of the previous Council cutting back the Department of Public Works employees is not true. Staff was added over the last 7 years. Last year a maintenance person for the motor vehicles was added. This year we will be adding the Stormwater Coordinator. We need to add back slowly. Ms. Gillespie added that the Department of Public Works has gone from 30 to 23 employees. Ms. Napolitano said we did not cut employees. Positions were cut. Mr. Merchel said no one was eliminated. When we outsourced the sanitation department, those workers were absorbed by other vacancies within the department. Ms. Gillespie stated that Mr. Nims has made a good case of why these employees are needed. She doesn't feel it is an extravagant request. Mayor Petriello agrees. Mr. Donnelly stated that Mr. Nims stated that he has had to drive a plow truck during a snow storm. He said he does not want to have Mr. Nims drive a truck during a storm, he should be managing. Discussion continued on the costs associated with hiring employees. Mr. Neff added that it is part of a succession plan to hire a supervisor for Public Works. Mayor Petriello stated that she believes that is smart management to have a succession plan in place. Mr. Nims has a lot in his head that needs to be passed along. Ms. Gillespie said she doesn't see any major way to cut this. If Council doesn't add this cost now, it will cost more in the future. It will be much worse for the town in the future.

Mayor Petriello asked Council for their thoughts on using \$2.6 million of surplus. This will leave \$5.5 or 6 million in surplus. Ms. Gillespie said that they need to protect their bond rating. She also worries about using this money if they can't replace it. Mr. Donnelly said how much do we have to cut to break even. Mr. Merchel stated \$400,000. Mr. Donnelly stated that it is a 1 cent increase. To cut \$400,000, we would have to go line by line and it could take us 5 years. Ms. Napolitano said that we should be using the surplus because it is higher than it has ever been. Discussion continued on using the surplus.

Mayor Petriello makes a motion to introduce the Budget as written with the changes talked about in the memo. She would like to move forward with the introduction of the budget with the 2.48 tax rate which is a 1 cent increase. Ms. Gillespie seconded the motion. All were in favor with exception of Ms. Napolitano who voted No. Mr. Neff stated that will try to schedule a special meeting for the Budget Introduction.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mayor Petriello opened the meeting to the public.

Edwin Begg, 209 Parry Drive, stated that this side is raising the taxes by 100%. Mr. Merchel stated that it was a tax decrease last year. Mr. Begg went on to explain his statement. Mr. Begg said that he doesn't understand how the 5 Council people can support private sports clubs. The parents can afford \$50 and he doesn't understand why they don't jump on it. He stated that they are all dead beats. Mayor Petriello said that then all the upkeep of fields, uniforms etc. would fall on the Recreation Department. They are currently being run by volunteers. The kids pay a fee which pays for their uniforms and they contribute to the upkeep of the fields. She can't imagine what it would cost the Township if we had to do it. Mr. Begg said why do you need baseball and softball. Mayor Petriello said because some children like to play it. Mr. Begg said they played sports without parent activity when he was a kid. He stated that there are only private sports clubs because of the fathers. Ms. Gillespie said she doesn't have children but in communities where they community invests in their children the community is better. It teaches children

competitiveness. It is a good investment. It makes us a better, stronger community all around. Mr. Begg said he doesn't believe that taxpayers should have to pay for sports activities. He knows those fathers could afford \$50 per kid. Ms. Gillespie added that it offers opportunities for children to better themselves. Mayor Petriello stated that she respectfully disagrees with Mr. Begg and she appreciates his opinion.

Monique Begg, 209 Parry Drive, stated that playing sports can be quite expensive. Some of the teams cost \$300 to play. She has paid for some children who can't afford to play. They only let the kids who can afford it play. She said the town did not help her pay when her kids swam at Sunnybrook. She said private is private and public is public. The library is public because it is open to everyone. She believes that there should not be a fee charged to families who cannot afford it. She is all for making renovations to the Children's Pond but over time it will be costly. She spoke about when she was a child and her experiences when she went to Beaver Lake. Ms. Begg suggested that the residents could help with the upkeep of the lake but not fertilizing their lawns and let nature take care of it.

Kate Wilson, 2 Split Rock Place, had questions on the salaries for the new hires. Mr. Merchel said that for the Stormwater Coordinator, the salary would be \$60,000, the Department of Public Works Supervisor would be \$90,000 and the code enforcement staff would be \$45,000. Ms. Wilson asked for Ms. Napolitano to clarify her reasoning for the way she is voting on the budget. Ms. Napolitano explained that she believes that they should use the surplus. Ms. Wilson stated that they should vote in the best interest of the town because that is the right way.

ADJOURNMENT: At 6:27 p.m., there being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn.

MOTIONED BY: Ms. Gillespie
SECONDED BY: Ms. Napolitano
VOTE: All in favor

VICKI M. GOUGH
Deputy Township Clerk