

**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – February 4, 2019**

The meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on February 4, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Township Hall, 2600 Bayshore Road, Villas, New Jersey.

The Clerk announced that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act and that adequate notice of the meeting had been provided according to law.

The following members of Council were present for roll call taken by the Clerk:

- Councilmember Thomas Conrad
- Councilmember David Perry
- Councilmember Roland Roy, Jr.
- Deputy Mayor Frank Sippel
- Mayor Erik Simonsen

Also present: James Ridgway, Township Manager, David Stefankiewicz, Township Solicitor and Karen Fournier, Deputy Township Clerk

**Work Session**

2019 Budget Message/ Introduction - Manager Jim Ridgway, CFO Lauren Read, Auditor Leon Costello  
 Manager Ridgway delivered the proposed 2019 Municipal Budget to Council, indicating a .009 tax increase and highlighting key aspects of the proposed budget. He thanked CFO Lauren Read for her diligent work and announced the public hearing is scheduled for March 18, 2019 at 7 p.m. The budget summary will be published in the Cape May Star and Wave and copies will be available on the Township website as well as in the clerk's office at Township Hall. The Budget Message is attached and made a part of this public record.

Leon Costello, Auditor, explained the budget process and informed that this Budget meets all legal requirements and is well within the caps.

Res. #2019-75 2019 Budget Introduction (hearing and adoption scheduled for March 18, 2019)

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD			X			
PERRY			X			
ROY		X	X			
SIPPEL	X		X			
SIMONSEN			X			

Auditor Leon Costello informed that the Budget may not be adopted until the Governor's Address on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Lauren Read, CFO, stated that copies of the Budget will be available in the clerk's office and on the Township website.

**Consent Agenda**

Approval of Minutes - January 23, 2019

Approval of Closed Session Minutes - January 23, 2019

Res. #2019-76 Payment of Vouchers \$ 1,070,966.28

Res. #2019-77 A Resolution Requesting Release of Performance Guarantee for Villas WAWA Diesel Fuel Modification; Block 216, Lot 5,6,35 & Various to 39, Escrow #Z17-05-03

Res. #2019-78 A Resolution Requesting Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders Reduce the Speed Limit on Townbank Road

Res. #2019-79 Authorization for the Payout of Accumulated Compensatory Time (C.Scheid \$6,115.08)

Res. #2019-80 Authorizing the Payout of Terminal Leave (T.Whittington \$25,734.17)

Res. #2019-81 Issuance of 2019 Limousine and Operator Licenses (High Roller Limousine, Inc)

Res. #2019-82 Approval of 2019 Rotary Towing Licenses

Res. #2019-83 Resolution Authorizing the Exemption of Residency Requirement for Temporary Tax Collection Clerk

Res. #2019-84 Resolution Adopting AXA Equitable's Specimen 457 Plan Document

Res. #2019-85 Appointment to the Recreation Advisory Board (R.DiCarlo)  
 Res. #2019-86 Appointment to the Recreation Advisory Board (G.Garagozzo)

Councilmember Conrad commented on the retirement of T. Whittington.

On the Consent:

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD	X		X			
PERRY		X	X			
ROY			X			
SIPPEL			X			
SIMONSEN			X			

**Regular Agenda**

Res. #2019-87 Payment of Voucher – D.Perry Contractual Reimbursement

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD	X		X			
PERRY					X	
ROY		X	X			
SIPPEL			X			
SIMONSEN			X			

**Manager's Report**

Manager Ridgway gave Council an update on the Opportunity Zone, a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce, and the area on Fulling Mill Road.

**Council Comments**

Councilmember Conrad gave an update on the Delaware Bayshore Council and reminded of the Substance Abuse Panel on February 13<sup>th</sup> at Township Hall.

Councilmember Perry spoke about the request to the County for speed limit reductions on Townbank Road, and additional County Road improvements. He also gave an update on the Roseann Avenue project.

Councilmember Roy applauded the Erma and Villas Fire Departments for their response to an ice rescue at Ponderlodge. He stressed the need for volunteer fire fighters and encouraged support from the community.

Deputy Mayor Sippel reminded about the NJ Run for the Fallen fundraiser.


Mayor Simonsen reminded of the next Council meeting date, Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>.

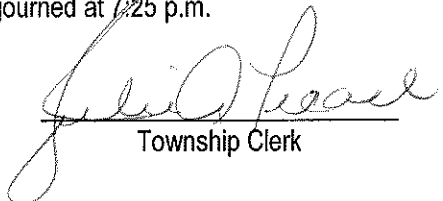
**Call to the Public**

Rudy Von Colln, 522 Sheridan Avenue, addressed Council about a public safety issue on Breakwater and Seashore Roads.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to address, motion to adjourn moved by Deputy Mayor Sippel, seconded by Councilmember Roy. Motion to adjourn was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mayor

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Township Clerk

Approved: 

Good Evening Mayor and Council:

I am required by law to deliver a working document of our Proposed 2019 Budget to Council by Feb. 10 and the Council must approve the Budget by April 30, 2019.

I have met with our CFO Lauren Read and department heads over the past 4 months putting this together, as well as consultations with Township Auditor Leon Costello of Ford Scott Associates for the purpose of compliance with the State of N.J. Spending Cap Laws and other Budget regulations. The Budget being presented tonight is compliant with the Tax Levy Cap Laws and the Original Spending Caps Law. The tax levy is \$21,252,363 compared to last years \$20,863,366, an increase of \$388,997. We are below the Legal Spending Cap by \$1,781,592 and below the 2% Levy Cap by \$355,701.

The Township completed 2018 with a surplus of \$6,760,550, a reduction from last year of \$385,810.00. We are applying \$2.5 million of the surplus to this year's Budget, leaving a balance of \$4.26 million.

Due to several factors there is a 9/10ths of 1 cent or .009 tax increase being presented to Council. For a home with an assessed value of \$230,000 this would reflect a \$20.00 increase or \$5.00 a quarter.

Projections anticipate fully restoring the fund balance used in this budget. We feel confident using this amount of surplus and our Bond rating continues to be very solid at this time.

The tax collection rate for 2018 was 98.68% which was excellent, and BOCA again exceeded Budget projections.

Staffing increases in the Police Dept. contributed to our minor tax increase, as we increased our Police Dept. to a total of 50 officers, and we also added an SRO in partnership with LCMR at the Richard Teitelman Junior High School. This administration is strongly committed to public safety by providing more officers on our streets and in our schools. This is one way we can proactively address any and all safety concerns that arise.

Another increase in spending is due to Solid Waste Disposal. That Budget line has remained level for many years but this year was increased by \$50,000 to address the growing amount of fees generated by our community from waste disposal.

The total assessed value of Real Property upon which the tax rate is based is \$3,641,658.746 compared to \$3,634,439,452 in 2019, an increase of \$7,219,294. Every \$364,166 of the amount to be raised by taxation for the 2019 budget equals one cent on the tax rate. This Budget uses 97.15% rate to compute the reserve for uncollected taxes in 2019.

This budget also adds a new worker in our Recreation Dept. so we are able to provide the same great services to our taxpayers. We are very optimistic about our Shared Service relationship with the County regarding County Dispatch and our Public Safety building. The Dispatch is growing with other municipalities coming on board while our cost will be decreasing moving forward. Our utilities in the new facility are also decreasing.

The Public Hearing is scheduled for March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall. A budget summary will be published in the Cape May Star and Wave. Copies will be available on the Township website as well as in the Clerk's office at Town Hall.

Thank you for your continued support.