TOWNSHIP OF DENVILLE
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP

FEBRUARY 9, 2016

The Meeting was called to order by President Golinski at 7:00 p.m. The Salute to the Flag was recited, followed by the reading of the Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act Statement by Deputy Municipal Clerk Kathy Costello. Deputy Costello advised that this is a non-smoking facility and asked that all cell phones be silenced at this time.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Gabel, Witte, Kuser, Lyden, Fitzpatrick, Murphy, President Golinski
Absent: None

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Thomas Andes, Mayor; Steven Ward, Administrator; Michael Guarino, CFO and Christopher Wagner, Chief of Police.

OPEN PUBLIC PORTION: No one wished to be heard.
CLOSE PUBLIC PORTION.

Before proceeding to Chief Wagner’s presentation of the 2016 capital budget for the Police Department, Mayor Andes sadly advised that Attorney Fred Semrau’s father passed away yesterday. He noted that the arrangements are: 2 - 4 and 7 - 9 pm on Thursday at the Bizub Parker Funeral Home in Little Falls and a Mass on Friday at 10:30 am at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Wayne.

The Mayor noted that, following Chief Wagner’s presentation, Mr. Ward and Mr. Guarino will present the 2016 operating budget.

Chief Wagner began his presentation by providing the Council and Administration with two (2) handouts; an artist’s rendering of the renovation of the police dispatch desk and an engineer’s schematic of the same area.

The Chief said that he will follow the order of the capital budget request form that the Council members have before them.

1. Renovation of the Dispatch Desk. The Chief gave a brief history of the age and previous renovation of the dispatch desk and noted that the desk is constantly staffed by a dispatcher and is in use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Chief Wagner described some of the beneficial features of the new desk and noted that the cost will be $175,000. He advised that the cost includes gutting the desk down to the sheetrock, removal of furniture, ceiling, light fixtures, carpet, installation of a rubber floor and radio consoles.

2. Firearms Program Enhancements. The Chief explained that new flashlights to be mounted on the rifles in the patrol cars are needed. He added that he is also requesting new flashlights to be mounted on the rails of the officers’ pistols and new holsters to accommodate the addition of the flashlights to the pistols. Chief Wagner gave a detailed explanation of the benefits of the flashlights for the pistols.

The Chief added that the cost for these enhancements is $15,000.00.

3. Twelve (12) Radar Units. Chief Wagner noted that the radar units currently in use in the patrol cars are 12 – 15 years old. He said that these radar units cannot be integrated with the computers in the new patrol cars, so the radar cannot be properly calibrated in order to be used to write radar summonses. The Chief advised that the cost to replace the twelve (12) units will be $25,000.00.
4. Four Wheel Drive Vehicle – Detective Bureau. The Chief gave a brief history of the Police Department’s car purchasing schedule in previous years. He noted that, in recent years, the Department has purchased administrative use cars, which last for ten or eleven years. Chief Wagner commented that the most recent purchase was a Dodge Durango for the Detective Bureau and gave the oldest detective car to Wesley Sharples to use in his day to day duties. He said that the new Detective Bureau vehicle will cost $40,000.00, which includes the installation of the lights and radios in the car. Administrator Ward noted that patrol cars cannot be purchased through the capital budget because the life expectancy is less than five (5) years, so two (2) patrol cars are being requested through the operating budget. He added that the life expectancy of a Detective Bureau SUV is longer, so it can be put through the capital budget.

There was a brief discussion concerning the brand and model of car that best suits the Police Department.

5. Capital Outlay Signs. The Chief noted, for the benefit of the new Council members, that John O’Dell was brought over from DPW a few years ago and designated as Traffic Safety Officer. He said that John makes and installs signs and works on traffic safety plans. Chief Wagner advised that the Police Department got John O’Dell but none of the funds or equipment for sign making came with him from DPW. He noted that this capital request will be used to purchase all of the sign making materials and equipment that is needed to keep our signage in top notch condition and meet all of the State requirements for signs. The Chief stated that the cost for the materials and equipment is $19,000.00.

Councilman Gabel asked, hypothetically, if we looked at moving our dispatch to Morris County, what impact that would have on the $175,000 renovation to the dispatch desk.

Chief Wagner replied that, if the Council made that decision to move to the County, none of the renovation would be needed. President Golinski asked about the Sally Port, since it is controlled from the desk. The Chief said that is true but there would be no one in the building to control it. He said that a garage door opener would probably have to be used.

President Golinski asked if the Chief is going to address the operating budget or is he leaving now. Administrator Ward replied that the Chief is here for the capital budget and then is free to leave but, if the Council has any questions for him while he’s here they can ask them.

President Golinski asked if there is any change in manpower. The Chief replied that it is staying the same.

In response to a question from Councilman Kuser, Chief Wagner gave a lengthy explanation of the proposed legislation that would allow for retired police officers to work in the schools as a Class 3 Special Police Officer. He explained in detail what the duties and limitations of these officers would be and emphasized that they could not take the place of a regular, sworn police officer. The Chief added that they would not replace the School Resource Officer that Denville now has in place in the high school. He said that these Class 3 Special Officers would be designated for school security only within the school, within 100 feet of the property and only when students and/or staff are present. The Chief commented that the Class 3 Special Officers would be under the control of the Police Chief.

Councilman Fitzpatrick asked the Chief to speak on the general state of the Police Department. The Chief spoke about the quality of his men and how easy their willingness to work makes it for him to lead them. He said that there are compliments from the public about his staff on a daily basis, so he feels that the state of the Department is very good. Chief Wagner commented on body-worn cameras and his desire to have the Department reconnect with the public. He also explained “ALICE”, the school emergency training program.
President Golinski thanked Chief Wagner for his presentation and turned the floor over to Administrator Ward.

Administrator Ward began by saying that he, the Mayor and CFO Guarino are pleased to present to the Council the 2016 Municipal Budget. He noted that the budget this year contains a slight reduction in taxes for the average homeowner in Denville.

Mr. Ward commented that there were two very notable events that occurred in 2015 that were major factors when the budget was being drafted.

1. A County-mandated, town-wide revaluation. Mr. Ward noted that the assessed value of the entire town is recorded at the County. He said that between 2002 and 2015, the total valuation of the Township increased from $2.2 billion to $3.0 billion, a 37% appreciation of property values during that time period. Mr. Ward further explained the details of the results of the revaluation.

2. St. Clare’s Hospital was privatized on October 1, 2015. Mr. Ward noted that on October 1, 2015, the hospital went onto the Township’s tax rolls and will be receiving a bill later this year for the added assessment for the final two months of last year. He advised that the hospital was valued at $83 million by the revaluation company.

The Administrator stated that he also wanted to mention that in late 2016 or early 2017, the Township will be receiving the first of the five (5) PILOT installments from Estling Village. He said that, since we are unsure as to exactly when the first payment will be received, either November-December of 2016 or January-February of 2017, it was decided that it would not be included in this budget but it will be included in future years. Mr. Ward noted that the installments increase over the five (5) years.

Administrator Ward moved on to the Summary page and explained the tax impact with regard to the hospital and revaluation. He said that the tax impact on the average homeowner will be minus $.25 per year but, due to the revaluation, commercial properties will see an increase in their taxes of $207.20 per year (excluding the hospital). The Administrator advised that more is being paid down on notes and bonds than is being added.

President Golinski noted that two Council members have left the Chambers and he suggested that we pause for a couple of minutes until they return. He said that, in the meantime, the other Council members may ask any simple questions they may have. The two Council members returned four minutes later and Mr. Ward continued.

Administrator Ward discussed appropriations and noted that the operating budget is well under the 2% cap. With respect to revenues, Mr. Ward explained the process whereby the Auditor has the authority to place money from the year-end fund balance into the reserve for tax appeals to ensure that the Township is adequately protected from tax appeals. The Administrator also touched on the snow removal trust, advising that at the end of last March the fund was down to $7,800. He said that this has prompted a recommendation from the Auditor, as well as Administration, to transfer $100,000 from the appropriations reserve budget into the snow removal trust.

Administrator Ward addressed each item in the capital budget, indicating how each item would be financed; either by bonding or capital outlay, or a combination of both. Mr. Ward also touched on the Open Space Trust, the Water Utility and the Sewer Utility budgets.

The Council asked for clarification on some of the items in the budget. Administrator Ward replied to several of the questions and said that he would provide answers to others via e-mail.

President Golinski asked what the next step is toward finalizing this budget. Administrator Ward replied that Administration is looking to introduce the budget at one of the March meetings and have the public hearing and adoption set for one of the April meetings. He said that an early adoption of the budget has certain benefits.
CFO Guarino explained that every third year the State requires that they review the municipal budget to make sure it meets all of the criteria. He said that this is the year that Denville is scheduled to be reviewed by the State. Mr. Guarino noted that at whatever meeting we decide to hold the public hearing, if State approval has not been received, the adoption may have to be voted on at a subsequent meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOVED BY MEMBER WITTE, SECONDED BY MEMBER GABEL
AYES: UNANIMOUS

The Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathleen A. Costello
Deputy Municipal Clerk