



**MAYOR & COUNCIL  
THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE,  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING APRIL 7, 2022**

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The special budget meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was held on Thursday, April 7, 2022 virtually via the Go To Meeting Conferencing System and began at 6:01p.m.

Mayor Skinner called the meeting to order. Borough Clerk Nancy A. Bretzger read the Sunshine Notice "Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Adequate notice of this meeting was published in the Courier News and Bernardsville News on March 24, 2022 and posted at the Municipal Complex and the Borough Library. Action may be taken."

Mayor Skinner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call indicated the following present:

Present: Mayor Skinner, Councilman Caminiti, Council President Corigliano, Councilwoman Dietrich, Councilman Lemma, Councilwoman Murphy, Councilman Sweeney

Absent: None

Also present were: Dale Melville, John Bruder, Borough Attorney, and Nancy A. Bretzger, Borough Clerk/Administrator

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – 5 MINUTES PER PERSON – NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

No one came forward.

**DISCUSSION**

Mayor Skinner turned the meeting over to the Finance Chairman. Council President Corigliano welcomed everyone to the meeting in his role as Finance Chair. Council President Corigliano shared his screen for all to see the 2022 Budget workbook to continue the review of the budget. The review began with the Fire Safety Official portion of the budget, which is where the prior budget meeting left off. No questions or comments raised for Fire Safety Official. There were no questions or comments for Fire Hydrant Service or Longevity & Service Awards. Streets & Roads were skipped as that portion of the budget was covered during the last budget meeting. The Shade Tree Commission requested a slight increase, for which there were no questions or comments. No questions on the budget line items for Garbage/Trash Removal and Recycling. Buildings & Grounds and Vehicle Maintenance were skipped as those were covered in detail during the last budget meeting.

Council President Corigliano noted that the Board of Health budget is a contracted amount with the Bernards Township Health Department and there were no questions or comments. No questions or comments regarding the Environmental Commission budget or the Animal Control budget, also a contracted service. For the Senior Citizen Bus, no dollars were budgeted as nobody utilized it last year and minimally the year before. In prior years, the Borough subcontracted the service to Bedminster Township. Councilman Sweeney noted that due to COVID-19, senior citizens were very unlikely to utilize a bus service. Borough Administrator Nancy Bretzger stated that Bedminster Township has stopped their service and has since contracted with Somerset County. Ms. Bretzger confirmed that the County's fee is a monthly fee and not based on the number of riders on the bus.





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Council President Corigliano noted that he was skipping the Recreation section of the budget as it would be covered later in the meeting since the budget numbers come from salaries. The Library budget has been fully zero'd out as of last year as Library costs are fully now covered by the County. For Accumulated Leave, \$50k was budgeted in 2021; Council President Corigliano recommends budgeting \$35k for 2022. This account represents a trust fund to pay out accumulated leave dollars when an employee leaves the Borough. CFO Dale Melville confirmed that after the actual expenses incurred last year in 2021, an approximate \$47k balance was transferred to the trust fund account. Council members concurred with the \$35k proposed budget for 2022.

Council President Corigliano moved into the line budget line items for Electricity, Street Lighting, and Telephone Expenses. Councilwoman Dietrich asked if Liberty Park is covered under Street Lighting and Council President Corigliano replied that Liberty Park is covered under the Electricity account. He added that the well pump at Liberty Park is new and will use significantly more electricity. Regarding the budgets for Water, Natural Gas, and Gasoline & Diesel, the 2022 proposed budget for gasoline is greater than 2021's budget. Councilman Sweeney recommended increasing the gasoline even more and proposed a \$45k budget for Gasoline & Diesel. Borough Administrator Bretzger explained that the Recycling Tax budgeted is a \$3 recycling tax per ton for dumping fees that is paid to the State.

Council President Corigliano noted that the PERS budget is set and explained that it is a trailing number; CFO Dale Melville confirmed that the bill has already been received and paid. Social security is an increase over 2021 as it is a direct correlation to increased Salaries. PFRS Police Retirement is also a trailing number and Dale confirmed the actual bill has been received. No questions or comments regarding the proposed budgeted amounts for Unemployment Insurance and Defined Contribution Retirement Program. For the Police Body Armor Replacement Fund, Borough Administrator Bretzger noted that she received the figure that has been budgeted. Mayor Skinner asked about both State and Federal grants. Councilman Sweeney stated that the mandate for Body Armor was from the State and that the State received a grant to help fund the Body Armor.

Council President Corigliano noted that as part of the Clean Communities Program Grant, the Borough will be providing reusable shopping bags to Borough residents. Councilwoman Dietrich asked if the AARP Grant that was recently applied for should be included in the budget and Council President Corigliano confirmed that it wouldn't be added to the budget now as the Grant dollars have not been awarded. For the Shared Services Municipal Court, Councilman Sweeney stated that 18% of the share of the Municipal Court costs are our Borough's as it's based on the number of summonses issued. He also noted that due to the expanded work load, the Shared Court has hired additional as-needed part-time Violations Clerks. Councilman Lemma stated that a more equitable funding approach will be looked at in the future for the Shared Services Court. Mayor Skinner asked if the revenue from the court fines goes to the court or to the town who issued the summonses; It was confirmed that each town has it's own bank account for the Shared Court and that our Borough's summonses go into our bank account. Mayor Skinner further explained that the location of where a summons is issued--on a County, State or Borough road, in addition to if the summons was for a local ordinance or a State statute determines where the bulk of the dollars reside, whether that be the State or the local Municipality.





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Council President Corigliano stated that the next portions of the 2022 Budget are set numbers for Debt Service, both the Bond Principal payment and the interest on the Bonds. Additionally, the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes is a statutory budget requirement. The Sewer Utility budget was reviewed during the last budget meeting. Council President Corigliano noted that the Borough has one additional debt service payment, which is for the Komline Property and amounts to \$144k for 2022, but it is paid from the trust fund. Councilwoman Murphy asked how many years are remaining on the Komline Property debt service payment and Council President Corigliano checked and confirmed that it goes until the year 2029.

Moving into the 2022 Capital Budget, Council President Corigliano stated that the bulk of the Capital budget was reviewed during the last budget meeting. He mentioned that he spoke with the Borough's auditor who confirmed that the American Recovery Act funds can be used to pay for the Fire Rescue Truck. Therefore, he recommended that the DPW Front End Loader be fully budgeted this year. Council President Corigliano confirmed that the Local Finance Notice (LFN) specifically states Fire Truck/Fire Apparatus as part of the American Recover Act. Councilman Caminiti raised a question about the Holland Ave sidewalks and Council President Corigliano stated that there has been no request for same. Councilman Caminiti stated that there are unsafe conditions and Councilwoman Murphy and Councilman Lemma concurred. Councilman Caminiti said that the last estimate received for the Holland Ave sidewalks was \$243k and that they've been working toward getting the cost down and would like to keep the momentum going. Councilwoman Dietrich raised the question as to finding out whether or not any of the American Rescue Act dollars could be used toward the Holland Ave sidewalks. Councilmembers agreed to include \$40k in the 2022 Budget for the Holland Ave sidewalks. Council President Corigliano explained the need to have enough dollars in the Capital Improvement Fund to cover all of the approved Capital Budget items.

The Sewer Capital Budget was reviewed with Dan Megill during the last budget meeting. Council President Corigliano stated that he received an additional budget request for eight (8) metered sewer lines that need to be replaced as the meters are not functioning properly; \$50k was added to the proposed budget for the eight metered sewer lines. Council President Corigliano noted that the Borough typically expenses two-thirds of the DWP Capital items that are also utilized for Sewer to the Municipal Budget and one-third to the Sewer Budget and that the Dump Truck, Dump Body, and Pickup Truck with Plow all qualify for that split. All Council Members concurred with the two-thirds, one-third split for the Budget.

The Council has been putting money aside for the Trails work . Dollars have been accumulating and now total \$140k for trails. The request of \$9400 for Engineering documents for proposed bridges over the river was discussed. Councilwoman Murphy noted that the \$9,400 budget request covers DEP and permits and Borough Administrator Bretzger stated that the DEP approval for the second bridge has been received as well. Council President Corigliano and Councilwoman Murphy stated that the footbridges are very expensive.

Council President Corigliano started the discussion regarding Salaries for the 2022 budget and stated that he included a 2% increase for all applicable Municipal staff as a placeholder in the spreadsheet; he noted that it does not cover those under the PBA Contract but that he plugged in a 2% increase for them as well. He also included a one-time increase for the Police Secretary and a one-time increase for the Nighttime Janitor. Mayor Skinner pointed out that the rate for the hourly Carpenter exceeds the rate for the hourly Class II Police Officer. Councilman Sweeney said that he looked at the increased in Social Security rates over the last three (3) years and that it resulted in a 2.93% increase and therefore, he recommends increasing the salary increase from 2% to 3%. Councilwoman Dietrich spoke and suggested meeting in the





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middle with a 2.5% salary increase. Councilwoman Murphy concurred that a 2% increase is too low in the current environment. Councilman Lemma proposed a 2.5% increase for non-union staff across the board and to revisit the topic later in the year. CFO Dale Melville noted that the Social Security dollar amounts budgeted would need to be adjusted accordingly in accordance with a salary increase budgeted. Mayor Skinner commented that the budget would likely not be revisited halfway through the year or later this year. Various ideas and options were discussed amongst Council Members, in addition to concern over whether or not a certain salary increase would set a perceived precedent for future years. Mayor Skinner stated that salary increases do not need to be consistent from year to year as it is something that the Council reviews and determine each year. Borough Attorney John Bruder stated that if there are any labor law questions or concerns, he would suggest that Council defer to their Labor Attorney as labor laws are not general counsel matters. After back and forth discussions, Councilwoman Dietrich stated her opinion is to grant a 3% salary increase and Councilwoman Murphy noted that it will help with employee loyalty and morale. Council President Corigliano noted that he will enter the 3% increase into the budget. Councilman Lemma suggested that the increase be 2% with a 1% bonus instead, but the Council concurred on 3%. Councilman Lemma then recommended a 1% salary increase for all newly hired employees and those not currently due for a salary increase this year; Councilman Sweeney, Councilwoman Dietrich, and Councilwoman Murphy concurred. Council President Corigliano stated that at some point, perhaps next year, the pay for the Borough Council Members should be reviewed and increased as this has not changed in about 30 years and is necessary to continue to attract talent.

Discussion then focused on the currently hourly rate for the part-time Special Police Officer II and consensus was achieved that a 10% one-time increase in the hourly rate would be granted to the current Special II Officer, increase the hourly rate to \$26.40. All Council Members concurred. Council President Corigliano stated that he will plus a 3% increase into the Budget for the Grade Level 1 Officers, although this is merely a placeholder contingent upon the outcome of the ongoing arbitration.

CFO Dale Melville asked about the Board of Health salary budget and Council President Corigliano clarified his reallocation of the Administrator's salary.

A brief recess from the Budget Meeting began at 7:39pm so that Council President Corigliano could adjust the Budget file for the agreed upon additional 1% salary increase.

The Budget Meeting resumed at 7:48pm and Borough Administrator Bretzger took roll call after the recess. The Mayor, all Council Members, CFO Dale Melville, Borough Attorney John Bruder, and Borough Administrator Nancy Bretzger were all in attendance.

**Recap** – Council President Corigliano summarized that he input a one-time 3% salary increase for all salary increase-eligible employees, a one-time 1% salary increase for those not eligible for an annual salary increase as a one-time raise in recognition of the current state of the economy, a 10% increase in the hourly rate for the Special II Police Officer to \$26.40/hour, an increase to \$20/hour for the nighttime Janitor, and a \$1700 one-time salary adjustment for the Police Secretary. He also stated that a 3% salary increase for the Police Officers was included for budget purposes only, to be determined as a result of the arbitration outcome.

**Budget Overview** – Council President presented the Budget Overview at a very high level by displaying and highlighting the Revenue & Tax Calculation Page of the Budget for both the Municipal Budget and the





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Sewer Budget and explained that Total Revenues less the Budgeted Appropriations results in the Tax Levy or the amount necessary to levy in taxes, which amounts to an additional \$175k for 2022. Councilman Sweeney asked if that included the rateables and Council President Corigliano confirmed that it does. The average assessed residential property in the Borough increased from approximately \$751k in 2021 to \$784k in 2022. Council President Corigliano discussed that next steps are that he will send the Budget to CFO Dale Melville and the Borough's Auditor to produce the user-friendly budget, which will then be on file and available in the Municipal Building. Council President Corigliano asked if all Council Members are in concurrence with the 2022 Budget and all Members confirmed yes. Council President Corigliano noted that the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of the Budget will be during the April 12, 2022 Regular Mayor & Council Meeting; the Budget will be published in the Bernardsville News on April 21, 2022, and then Adopted at the Regular Mayor & Council Meeting on May 10, 2022 and that the Borough's Auditor will be present at the Meeting on May 10, 2022.

Mayor Skinner transitioned the Special Budget Meeting into Executive Session at 8:09pm and the Executive Session portion of the Meeting was closed to the Public. There being no other matters to be addressed by the Governing Body at this time, a motion was made by Councilman Lemma, seconded by Councilman Sweeney, that the Executive Session meeting be adjourned at 8:32pm. This motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLUTION 83-22** Appointing Professional Service Consultant Arthur R. Thibault Jr., Esq. as Labor Attorney for the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was read. Motion was made by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Councilwoman Dietrich. Said motion was passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – 3 MINUTES PER PERSON – AGENDA ITEMS**

Mayor Skinner asked if any member of the public wishes to speak about agenda items.

No one came forward.

**Final Comments** – Council President Corigliano stated that despite minor differences in option, everyone did a great job and through a democratic process arrived at an agreement. Once again, he recognized and thanked Borough Clerk/Administrator Nancy Bretzger and CFO Dale Melville for their efforts in putting the budget together and keeping things running smoothly. Mayor Skinner posed the idea of a collection box for old American flags outside of DPW for which the proper disposal of same would occur once or twice a year. All Council Members concurred and Mayor Skinner noted that he will inform Dan Megill and Brad Fagan to construct an outside box for the collection of old American flags.

There being no other matters to be addressed by the Governing Body at this time, a motion was made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Lemma, that this meeting be adjourned at 8:34p.m. This motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy A. Bretzger, Borough Clerk