



**MAYOR & COUNCIL
THE BOROUGH OF PEAPACK & GLADSTONE,
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING MARCH 8, 2023**



The special budget meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Peapack & Gladstone was held on Wednesday, March 8, 2023 virtually via the Go To Meeting Conferencing System and began at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Corigliano 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 10, 2022 and posted at the Municipal Complex and the Borough Library. Action may be taken."

Mayor Corigliano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call indicated the following present:

Present: Councilwoman Dietrich, Councilman Lemma, Councilwoman Murphy, Councilman Quartello, Council President Sweeney, Councilwoman Weible, Mayor Corigliano

Also present were: Dale Melville, CFO, Police Chief Steve Ferrante, Brad Fagen, DPW Director

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

No one came forward.

Opening Comments

Mayor Corigliano being the Finance Chair led the meeting. He stated Councilman Quartello is with him and it is his hope that Councilman Quartello will follow the process and be able to take over in the years ahead. He thanked Nancy Bretzger, Dale Melville and all of our Department Heads. He stated that every department got him their budget report on time or early except for two.

Capital Budget

Mayor Corigliano wanted to start with the capital budget because that will give us a bearing on how much we allocate to the capital improvement fund when we get to the operating budgets.

DPW Capital Budget

Department of Public Works is requesting a riding lawnmower either with a gasoline model or an electric model. There is a big price difference.

Council discussed the price differences between the two and decided to go with the gasoline model which is \$13,000.

Improvements to the scout cabin

This included spraying, insulation on the ceiling and windows and doors, etc.

Councilman Lemma stated that this is an historic structure and he is not in agreement with spraying the ceiling for esthetic purposes.

After discussion it was agreed that they will pass on this one this year. Mayor stated until we are sure how we are going to use this building we should not do anything at this moment.



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Trim on the firehouse

Brad stated this would be part of that project you passed for the gentleman that was willing to donate the majority of the gutters last year.

Mayor would like Brad to get more quotes. He said he will give Brad a contractor's name.

The flat roofs on the Municipal Building

Mayor Corigliano stated it does not include the slate roof on the original structure. It would include the flat roofs on the hallways, the library, the police department, and the gym. Brand hired someone to come in and do an analysis. He came up with three numbers. One is for emergency repairs; one is for remedial repairs and one is a complete replacement.

Councilwoman Murphy stated in 2018 we did some repairs. They were emergency repairs and we spent close to \$20,000 to \$30,000.

There was discussion on the material of the roof. Mayor stated it is an E.P.D.M. roof. It is not a torch town and it is not an asphalt roof. E.P.D.M. is a compound of synthetic rubbers and it comes in sheets. If done right, the useful life is anywhere from 20 to 50 years. That is why they are a good investment. Ours is in a good position. He feels we could get another 10 years out of it. Brad confirmed the roof was put on in 2001. He is an advocate for the remedial repairs.

Brad said last year they did three emergency repairs on the roof.

They agreed to do emergency and remedial repairs but they will get another quote.

Mayor gave a rough total for this \$39,000.

Park House

Mayor Corigliano stated it will be roughly \$200,000 to put that building into habitable shape.

Discussion ensued. Everyone was in consensus with Councilwoman Murphy's suggestion of making it a pump house.

Mayor reviewed the 2024 and forward projected columns. He stated we will need to buy an alcohol test machine next year, a million dollars for a replacement fire truck and then a request for a \$100,000 of a total of \$300,000 to replace the radios in the fire company that the county wants us to comply with to.

Councilman Lemma thinks we should consider allocating 20% of that number this year and then if there is going to be a change, it not going to happen in the next 4 to 6 weeks. We will have time to fund the remainder of next year, depending on what that grant is.

It was decided if we do not need to budget for this, this year then we will wait.

Streets and roads

Proposed this year to resurface Ramapo, Willow, Section three, Dewy and Hillcrest. Everyone agreed.

Mayor pointed out there is a special number in for 2024 of \$160,000. This is was estimate to upgrade Apgar Avenue after the affordables get built.

Resurfacing the firehouse parking lot, \$35,000. We have deferred this a couple of years ago and it does need it.

Council agreed to resurface it.



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Mayor stated something to think about in the future is to abandon the basketball courts down there and make them parking spaces. That parking lot is always tight for space.

A recommendation from Brad to replace the body on one of the mason dumps which is rusting out. \$18,900 which is 70% of the cost. The remainder of the cost to be charged in sewer. Council agreed on this.

Mayor stated \$424,201 would be our total capital budget number for 2023 for the Borough.

Mayor pointed out that the Capital and Funds document that they are looking at, is not an approval to do this work. It is a plan. It is required statutorily and if and when we go to spend it on this approved column, it still requires an ordinance by the Borough Council or a resolution in some cases to spend any of these monies.

Accrued amount include:

Holiday Avenue Sidewalks is at \$200,000.

Added \$40,000 for Holland Avenue and added \$40,000 for Radios.

Consensus from council.

Sewer Capital Improvement Fund

To date there is \$650,000 in that fund but it is down and you see that we have budgeted some money to replenish it.

Brad is recommending to upgrade the control panels on Tremor Lane pump station and a portion of the dump body that we allocate to the utility.

Discussion ensued.

Councilman Sweeney stated if we do the work now hopefully saving the sewer user money in the future by avoiding a bigger repair. Council agreed.

Open Space and Recreation Trust Fund

We have set aside \$35,000 for our trails project, and this year it will be \$35,000. Council agreed.

The tennis courts were brought up. Mayor thinks it can be covered under operating.

Environmental Conservancy of New Jersey

Councilwoman Murphy spoke on the ERI. She said we received an \$13,000 estimate from the Conservancy of NJ to the ERI which is due this year in 2023 for an update. She said we need to put a line item in for that ERI. She had a conversation with Mark who has a contact at the Highlands. She also had Richard Dodds from New Jersey Conservation see if they could find some funds for this.

Mayor Corigliano will put \$13,000 in.

Mayor ended the capital and council agrees.

Mayor stated with Salaries and Wages this generated a conversation regarding the raise for employees based on an increase with health insurance costs which will affect our employees. After discussing this, they agreed on a 4% increase due to inflation and it also



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send a different message to the employees. For those who are not up for a raise they will receive 1%. It will be labeled inflationary 1% and applied to their salary.

They agreed to increase the Administrator's salary to \$128,000 that was discussed last year.

Increasing the Chief's salary to \$138,000.

The fire department asked for 10% increase for their stipends. It will apply to those who get the stipends, the officers, and the chiefs. They wanted to know if there is an increase in LOSAP. Nancy stated the LOSAP agreement includes increases each year.

Construction

Discussion was on Frank Laguarina and Joe Moschello. Nancy compared the hours. Frank is asking for an increase in salary and based on Nancy research the hours he is putting in does not warrant an increase.

Mayor stated that Frank approached him and stated he was looking for an increase to \$30,000. He claims that is what the part time code official is making. Manville just hired a part timer at \$40,000 and with the work at Natirar he feels the \$30,000 would be justified.

Discussion ensued. Conversation suggested changing his salary to an hourly rate. They will start with \$60 an hour and give him the option.

Frank asked Mark if Joe Moschello could go up to \$49 an hour because that is the going rate of everybody.

Mayor asked Mayor and Council what they think about a raise in salary. They have had the same salaries since 1980's. They think that raising it would not attract younger people to join the council. Not sure that makes sense. Maybe keeping it lower shows that they are not in it for the money. Consensus was to leave the salaries as they are.

Total payroll before fringe is \$1.95M.

Appropriations

Mayor did a recap. Column D is what was requested, Column E is the budget from last year adjusted, Column F and B, last year's actual and G and H was 2021.

Mayor stated general comments there is a line that says professional services. That means outside contracted services such as hiring consultants, like attorneys, land use experts, DPW could mean hiring a street sweeper or something for sewer.

General Administration

Affordable housing and \$40,000 in special projects for signs but they were done last year.

Clerk

Discussion on Newsletter. Having an email option as well. They believe a higher chance of people reading it if it is a physical copy. Tying into the Mayor's punch list, he was thinking three-times yearly to start.

Finance

Dale stated they are static. Shared services went up about 3%.



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Auditing

Dale stated per agreement with Suplee.

IT

He increased this by \$3,000 because we will be going to electronic plan review and that may require an upgrade of computer equipment in Code.

New website

Looking to move to SDL. We currently have the software for construction and OPRA. They under state contract and it would be an \$8,100 upgrade. We had a call with them and they went through things and the back end should be a lot easier.

Mayor stated before he joined the Council, they had formed a little committee and selected the current website provider. That was 11 years ago, at the time it was an excellent product. But over time they have not upgraded their product especially the back end and this has become problematic. He agrees that it is as difficult program when it comes to posting minutes, agenda, etc. He sees the merit in this increase in order to keep the website accurate and current. The Council agreed.

He noted in regards to the IT costs going up quite a bit, he said this is from the SDL software costs going up. We had to buy licenses in order to use it.

Collection of Taxes

Dale stated things are static. He has moved some things around to keep in line with the increase of postage. Nothing is out of the ordinary outside of the tax collection portion of this year to split as some of you already know so that is part of the increase.

Assessment

No discussion

Legal

They are ok with legal. There are other legal costs in there besides John Bruder.

Engineering

No discussion

Historic

The discussion of the quilt came up. It is looking pricey to preserve and display this. We are looking at approx. \$10,000 to do it right.

Council stated fundraising as an option.

Councilwoman Dietrich stated that when the quilt was first brought to the council, the mayor at the time thought it would be nice to display. But after future research we are finding it will be quite expensive. Fundraising \$10,000 is a lot. The committee is comprised of 7 members.

It was decided since they do not have a firm number, they will not budget for it. But it could be expensed to special projects if pricing is acceptable



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Land Use Board

No comments.

Zoning

Councilman Lemma stated that there used to be another person who did rental registrations and we might be asking too much from Sarah Jane.

Mayor has compensation for this in wages and salaries. There is a RCO inspector budgeted

Construction

Mayor took the 1,400 in software licenses and moved to IT.

Insurance, Workers Comp. and employee health benefits

Mayor stated that these numbers are split between municipal operations.

Police

Councilman Sweeney stated that he is a little about the \$40,000 overtime number. It is down \$20,000, we are down a man and then the officer who resigned.

Mayor said we have it in there because that part of the agreement to hire an officer.

Discussion ensued. It was agreed to do \$40,000

Chief stated that they are in interviewing process with a candidate. We have some quality candidates. Certainly training will take place and we want to move quickly to get him on board. The goal is to keep the OT down. He said they are doing a good job in keeping the OT limited. He feels \$40,000 should be ok.

OEM

The original request was for \$4,000 and they got a new lap top last year. Nancy was able to get one for a lower price.

The question of conference dues, conference seminar came up. It was mentioned that nothing was spent last year. They are a little behind in their classes so that the reason for the budgeted amount. There are some courses they need to take. They never over spend their budget.

Fire Department

There is a repeater shed in Bedminster that has mixed radio equipment and has been maintained by Bedminster and they have never charged us for repairs. He entered \$2500 for the repairs which is a one-time expense and \$1500 for one year of operations to the radio number year. Those radios are used by fire not police.

Councilman Lemma stated that they did a Traffic analysis and we utilized 40% of the traffic that flows through that repeater station. So, it is only fair to pay our share. This shed has been in existence before and we have never contributed before.



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First Aid Squad

It will be paid out in two payments like last year.

Fire Safety

No comments.

Mayor left in the \$1100 software request, but might not need to pay for the current product if moving to SDL.

Fire and LOSAP

No comments

Street and Roads

Brad stated the increase would be from aggregates such as salt, black top.

He said there may be 6 additional hydrants on Holland Road that is set to kick off in August with the new water line.

Mayor stated that he does not think we pay extra for the hydrants. The fee is included.

Councilman Quartello asked if the upgrade to the road signs get put under this line items?

Mayor stated we will try to get a grant for it and if that does not work, we can put it in capital.

Councilwoman Murphy mentioned that Brad said the salt dome at the DPW sight may need some repairs.

Brad said the objective was to empty the building in the spring and see what the repairs will be.

This would go under Building and Grounds.

Regarding street sweeping. The county does the street sweeping and it goes under Stormwater Regulation. We do budget for it, so the money is there.

Shade Tree

No comments

Buildings

Questions whether to add in a line for the tennis courts repair. Mayor stated there are plenty other lines items for the tennis court repair.

Deer Management

Councilman Sweeney stated when we had a deer management program it was about \$5000 a year and the went towards supplies for the volunteer hunters. He and Jill are going to talk to with a group out of Warren County with respects to this and it a volunteer group.



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Vehicles

No comments

Board of Health

It is all contractual.

Environmental and Animal Control

John Kappler is asking for an additional \$6800 for the footbridge. It is the application, bed spec and the cost analysis.

Council was hesitant in agreeing but they did.

Utilities

Electricity, street lighting, telephone, and water. No comments.

Gasoline, waste disposal, tonnage charges.

Councilman Lemma asked if we know the tonnage charges for 2023.

Mayor stated it is based on what the contract is.

Nancy said they have absorbed whatever the adjustment would be.

We are still under the new contract till 2024.

On the tonnage we are anywhere between 5,000 to 5,600 a month that we pay.

Recycling tax and public employee's retirement system

These numbers are given to us. Because our salaries have gone up, he plugged a higher number for SSN. The police fire retirement system is the number they provide to us. It went up substantially. Mayor puts in for the defined contribution unemployment insurance.

Grants

Only the ones that have been awarded to us appear here. Anything else we need to do by resolution for the coming year.

He said we are booking the \$271,000 from American Recovery, which has been allocated to the rescue truck.

Bear Court- no comments

Capital Improvement Fund

When Mayor looked the balance was \$90,000. If we take the \$500 and add \$90 and spend the \$425,000 that leaves a little cushion. That is part of the pay as we go.

On the principal bond interest, these numbers do not include bond monies paid out of the open space and recreation trust fund which was for Komline park and that was going to be \$142,000 for this year.



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\$970,000 estimated reserve for uncollected or a rut and we are looking at total budgeted expenses for 2023 of \$7,200,000 up from \$6,800,000. In all fairness we should back out the one-time American Recovery number of 270,000 which brings us down to \$100,000 increase in expenses over the prior year.

Councilman Sweeney asked that we have the fire truck in there for next year at a million dollars. Do we want to do any allocating now?

Mayor stated it is better to wait till we have a number. Whether we do it or not we still have the money in the Capital Improvement Fund.

Sewer Utility

Brad made a request of \$10,000 for remediation. Mayor added it to special projects rather than leaving it as capital which it is not.

On Historic he reduced the EDC from \$700,000 to \$650,000.

He added a line of \$40,000 to replenish the Sewer Capital Improvement Fund. This has dwindled in the last past couple of years.

Mayor said he balanced the numbers for sewer, but next year there will be a need increase the sewer rates.

So, we are budgeting this year \$1.53 million in sewer expenses.

Mayor did a recap. He showed out the taxes will work out this year.

He went through the revenues and fees.

With all this, we will subsidize our costs by \$2.7 million including a \$1.7M fund balance contribution.

We then subtract the appropriations number and we come up with how much we need to levy our residents in order to operate the government which is \$4.531 million.

Last year our tax rate came in at 1.84 budgeted. This year we are projecting a tax rate of 1.79 cents so it will go down but assessment are up.

The average total assessment for Peapack & Gladstone goes up from \$785 hundred million to \$823 hundred million.

From last year to this year, it is a difference of about \$120 tax increase on the municipal tax.

He is projecting an overall increase on the average residential property tax increase of about \$400 average.

Councilman Lemma stated this budget reflects what the council has been doing and particularly the finance committee and heading up the budget initiatives.

He then reviewed the sewer utility revenues and appropriations. The fund balance contribution is increased to \$380,000 from \$340,000 from last year. He would like to see it back to the \$340,000 number for next year. The only way for that to increase is to increase the sewer number.

He asked if the Council would like to discuss this at the March 14th meeting again, or shall we introduce it assuming Dale is ready to introduce it.

Council agreed to introduce on March 14th. Dale will check with the Auditors.



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PUBLIC COMMENTS – 3 MINUTES PER PERSON – AGENDA ITEMS

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

John Kappler, 24 Helen Avenue, made the council aware of all the acquired properties inundated with endangered species of flora and are being destroyed by invasive insects such as the Lantern Flies. Wanted to know if DPW could help with this.

Councilwoman Murphy stated we did budget for a new full-time laborer in DPW ideally that laborer could get some of the qualifications for these treatments.

No more comments, public comments closed.

Final Comments – Mayor Corigliano thanked staff members, Borough Clerk/Administration Nancy Bretzger and CFO Dale Melville for their efforts in putting the budget together, keeping things running smoothly, and keeping taxes down.

There being no other matters to be addressed by the Governing Body at this time, a motion was made by Council President Sweeney, seconded by Councilwoman Murphy, that this meeting be adjourned at 9:37p.m. This motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy A. Bretzger, Borough Clerk