

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION
FEBRUARY 16, 2023

The Township Committee met on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 295 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road, Chesterfield, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koetas-Dale at 7:00 p.m.

The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was read and compliance noted.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Present: Belinda Blazic, Jeremy Liedtka, Matthew Litt, Shreekant Dhopte and Denise Koetas-Dale

Also present: Thomas A. Sahol, Township Administrator; Caryn M. Hoyer, Township Clerk; Troy Ulshafer, Public Works Manager, and Wendy A. Wulstein, CFO

AGENDA MATTER(S) REQUIRING RECUSAL(S) - NONE

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Wulstein advised it is standard each year. All were good with it as prepared.

Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the computer equipment. She spoke with Wendy and this amount is due to compliance with the JIF. Ms. Wulstein stated she spoke with Mr. Sahol and they are comfortable with removing the \$1,500. Ms. Wulstein stated she supplied the committee with the notes from the BAC meeting last evening. Maintenance and service contract line item will be reduced \$800 which is a recommendation of the BAC. Ms. Wulstein stated the website hosting will be reduced from \$5,700 to 4,400. Mr. Litt stated it sounds like a lot. Mr. Sahol explained it is for website support, the annual .gov and .com registrations, emails, use of software for website. City Connections service is very good and available 24/7. Also includes uploading and storage of the videos on the site. Mr. Dhopte thought that was reasonable. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the postage for the tax office. Ms. Hoyer explained the increase in postage and that includes the estimated tax bills which allows us to stay with the August 1st payment date. Ms. Koetas-Dale stated in the past we have extended the due date. Mr. Wulstein stated the revaluation will have no effect on this year's budget but probably 2024. The funding could be spread over 5 years. Mr. Sahol explained when we are getting ready for the revaluation, Glenn McMahon will come and speak to the committee. Ms. Wulstein stated the BAC general legal line item should go to from \$90,000 to \$70,000 and quarterly monitoring. Litigation line item will be discussed at another time. Mr. Litt is concerned that it is being based off of the old RFPs. Mr. Liedtka stated that the average of those previously submitted is \$70,000. Mr. Litt has no problem with it preliminarily. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the Pipeline

expenses. Ms. Wulstein stated there is presently nothing in that line item. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the line item for TDR. Mr. Sahol explained that will be ongoing. Engineering should go to \$60,000. Mr. Dhopte asked why the spike in 2020. Ms. Wulstein did not get an opportunity to review that. Ms. Koetas-Dale stated at the last pipeline taskforce meeting they decided not to do any testing this year so that item can be removed. Ms. Koetas-Dale stated the \$8,200 would be for any review in anticipation of possible applications. Mr. Dhopte suggested reducing since some of those items would be under escrow. Mr. Liedtka suggested increasing the Planning Board legal based on the last few years. All agreed to increase to \$15,000. Construction part time salary and wage was discussed. Ms. Wulstein that is an unknown and must budget for the potential of development. Mr. Sahol explained the projects and fit outs along Saddle Way. coming down the line which will be an increase over last year. Computer computers – Ms. Wulstein stated there is new legislation that will require new programming. She stated we are not sure if it is going to happen this year. She stated that may also be an item that can be capitalized. She will have more information at the next meeting. Ms. Wulstein stated that this year will be a true reflection of what it will cost to run the construction department. They need to show a more realistic cost of those costs. The numbers will be a shift of some numbers already in the budget will not be accounted for in the construction budget. Ms. Wulstein stated there is nothing we can do with the insurance costs. The state will be making some adjustments of what can be in and out of CAP. Mr. Dhopte stated that is a 1 cent increase just on insurance. Health insurance is up 24% industry wide. Ms. Wulstein stated she now has the number and the line item can now be changed to \$380,000. Ms. Wulstein explained the health buy back and is comfortable reducing that to \$7,500.00. Ms. Wulstein stated there is no need to add to unemployment at this time as there is \$80,000 in the reserve. There was discussion regarding the Police Salary & Wage and agreed to leave as requested to allow for the 13th officer. Mr. Dhopte stated that a portion of this line item will be out of CAP. Mr. Litt asked if we hire another officer that should go down. Ms. Wulstein stated we hired two new officers in December of last year. The committee requested that be reduced to \$20,000. Mr. Dhopte asked about the CAP. Ms. Wulstein stated she did a quick calculation before the meeting and right now we are \$1,000,000 over CAP. It is hard to determine without having any final numbers. There is one police vehicle in the budget. Ms. Wulstein stated there is an increase in salary as there was some consideration on a step system for DPW. Ms. Wulstein stated that in the past we have paid \$48 per ton and now it is upwards of \$115 per ton. If we empty the salt barn it will cost approximately \$70,000 to refill. We currently have enough salt for two (2) storms. Ms. Wulstein stated the budget advisory committee recommended reducing the salt amount from \$30,000 to \$15,000. We have a snow reserve of \$65,000. Ms. Wulstein stated we are looking to replace the aerators with bubblers for efficiency. The budget accounts for installing in 2 bubblers in 2023. Ms. Wulstein explained the basin maintenance performed by Black Lagoon comes from the basin trust fund and not out of the DPW budget. Mr. Dhopte questioned the existing fountains and the electricity they use. Mr. Ulshafer explained the bubblers run on electricity as

well and will replace the fountains with bubblers when the fountains fail. Currently the fountains are in working condition. Mr. Ulshafer explained the stormwater regulations. We must become compliant and there is a time frame. We are unsure of the costs at this time. We will be required to sweep all of the roads. That will need to be outsourced. The County does it and it will be \$1800 -\$2,000 per day. It will take 10 days to do Chesterfield and must be done 3 times per year. That alone is a cost of \$60,000. Ms. Wulstein stated she will be attending a stormwater seminar tomorrow and will have more information at the next budget workshop. Tree removal was discussed. Mr. Ulshafer stated there still is a lot of trees that need to be removed throughout the town. Ms. Koetas-Dale is concerned this has increased over the last few years. Mr. Ulshafer stated the DPW will remove some of the trees but larger trees must be done by professional. This item is going to remain for maintenance on trees. Mr. Litt asked what is included in repair. Ms. Wulstein read the charges to that line item last year. It is a variety of repairs to all buildings. Mr. Litt asked about correcting sidewalks. Ms. Wulstein stated there is some money available. Ms. Koetas-Dale stated that if it is front of a homeowner, it is their responsibility. There was discussion about sending a letter out to residents where sidewalks are an issue. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the miscellaneous under Buildings & Grounds. Ms. Wulstein read some of the expenses from last year. Ms. Wulstein explained that animal control has a trust account and the majority of the costs and animal control are paid from that account. There are some items in the budget such as salary. Ms. Wulstein explained we no longer supply the dog waste bags at that was a huge cost and reduce to \$1,000. Mr. Litt asked if there have been any issues but not supplying them. Mr. Ulshafer believes the majority of the owners are doing the right thing. There has been no change since removing the bags. The dog stations have been removed but the trash cans were left. Ms. Wulstein stated that everyone had previously agreed to add \$1,500 for the Jr Greyhounds. Mr. Liedtka stated to be fair, he would like to also see \$1,500 for the Mud Dogs and \$6,000 (since they do 4 sports) in the budget. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the agreement with the CTAA. Mr. Liedtka stated we use to give them \$10,000 but they were doing a lot of fundraising and were sitting on money. We previously gave money to the Jr Greyhounds as well. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked about the costs of the recreation fields. Mr. Ulshafer stated there is a lot of time and costs. Mr. Sahol stated that the surrounding municipalities contribute to Jr. Greyhounds as well. Ms. Wulstein stated miscellaneous parks includes cricket pitch, irrigation and astro turf for that area. In addition, she would like to add a capital ordinance in the near future to cover replacing equipment and can remove an additional \$3,000 from the miscellaneous line item. The capital ordinance would cover equipment for hopefully a few year. Ms. Wulstein stated street lighting can be reduced to \$115,000 under PSE&G. Mr. Litt asked about the celebration of events. Ms. Wulstein explain the \$1,000 is generic and was used for the opening of the building, rec building, etc. The \$10,000 is for the Harvest Festival. There is a lot of fundraising for the event which reimbursed that line item. Mr. Litt would like to go back to celebrating Memorial Day. Ms. Wulstein that would fall under the \$1,000 line item. Ms. Koetas-Dale suggested lowering the telephone line item to

\$8,000. Ms. Wulstein stated that grant amount will change from \$5,000 to \$1,098.32 and the match will remain at \$5,000. After some discussion, it was decided to leave the court line item at \$120,000. Ms. Wulstein will be able to provide a more reasonable number for the reserve for uncollected taxes next week. Mr. Litt asked about the communication to the residents about the sidewalks and wants to make sure we have the funds to do that. Mr. Sahol stated there are ways we could make sure it is done.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to open the meeting to the public. All were in favor. Hearing none, Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic. All were in favor.

Mr. Dhopte asked if the meeting on February 23rd will have recommendations for surplus use. Ms. Wulstein stated she will have ranges for the committee to review and the impact on the average assessed home. She will always recommend the maximum as that is the way to help the CAP problem.

Mr. Dhopte was concerned about the potential increase from the fire referendum. Ms. Wulstein that is not under the control of the township. He understands we are 11 percent of tax bill but is concerned with the overall impact to the resident.

Mr. Liedtka made a motion seconded by Mr. Dhopte to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 PM. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Caryn M. Hoyer, RMC
Township Clerk