

TOWNSHIP OF MOORESTOWN
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP
June 2, 2020

(This meeting was held telephonically due to COVID-19)

The Budget Workshop of the Moorestown Township Council was called to order by Mayor Gillespie at 5:00 p.m. Attendance was as follows:

Nicole Gillespie, Mayor	Thomas J. Merchel, Township Manager/CFO
Brian Donnelly, Deputy Mayor	Patricia L. Hunt, Township Clerk
Michael Locatell, Councilmember (Arrived 5:10 p.m.)	
Victoria Napolitano, Councilmember	
Lisa Petriello, Councilmember	

Staff in Attendance: Anthony Zappasodi, Director of Community Development

Mayor Gillespie advised that notice of the meeting was given in accordance with law. She advised who was present and how public comment would be taken.

Mayor Gillespie introduced Anthony Zappasodi.

Mayor Gillespie opened the floor for Council questions.

DISCUSSION ON 2020 BUDGET:

Community Development

Various line items were reviewed. Mr. Zappasodi and/or Mr. Merchel justified the budget for each and Mr. Zappasodi made various concessions.

Much discussion was held on funds for the Master Plan. Mr. Zappasodi advised that he will provide a list of priorities and associated costs to Council.

Ms. Petriello asked for the Zoning Board Annual Report. Mr. Zappasodi said he recently received it and will forward it to Council.

Discussion was held on new Code Enforcement Officers. Mr. Zappasodi and Mr. Merchel advised on the matters being addressed and the progress made. Both of the officers were highly commended.

The Construction Office budget was discussed. Mr. Merchel cut vehicles out of the budget this year as an offset. The Construction Code Official is the Floodplain Management Manager. He has received his certification. Mr. Zappasodi stated that Mr. LaRocca said he has additional work that we need to do when we issue permits for properties located in the FEMA floodplain. He has to create a protocol that was not in place before. Mr. Zappasodi advised of the extra cost associated with implementing the protocol.

The Construction Office's decrease in revenues were discussed. Mr. Merchel advised that same is due to COVID. Mr. Merchel and Mr. Zappasodi were certain there will be an uptick shortly.

Ms. Petriello stated that they hired an Affordable Housing Administrator and she wanted to know the status. Mr. Zappasodi stated that they developed manuals for market to affordable housing and accessory apartments. He has had three conferences with them. They have hit the ground running and they have been in contact with Clarke Caton Hintz. They have been great to work with and we have received two invoices so far. Ms. Petriello wanted to know if they did any marketing yet for the accessory apartments. Mr. Zappasodi stated yes and it is in draft form. It is among the professionals for review.

Mr. Locatell asked if there were any takers on the accessory apartments. Mr. Zappasodi stated that they have one person interested so far. Mr. Locatell suggested doing amnesty for people who have over garage space or mother-in-law suites. Mr. Zappasodi said it was a great idea and would do a list.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mayor Gillespie opened the meeting to the public.

Melvin Sheppard, 406 Glen Avenue, thanked Council for this forum. Mr. Sheppard wanted to know where he could find the Budget. Mr. Merchel stated that it was on the website and informed Mr. Sheppard where it was located on the website. Mr. Sheppard asked about a long term plan for the low income housing. Mr. Zappasodi asked Mr. Sheppard to send him an email and he would share the information with him. Mr. Merchel said that a lot of the information is on the website and he advised Mr. Sheppard where to find it.

No further comment from the Public.

CLOSING COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:

Mr. Merchel answered questions of Council from the last budget workshop concerning the Police Department's budget.

Deferring the school tax was addressed. Mr. Merchel said we are no stranger to deferred school taxes. He explained that deferring school taxes is a budget tool that is frowned upon but permissible. He advised it is a journal entry and he gave an explanation. The Auditors stress not to do it. It is against Mr. Merchel's recommendation. He advised how it was detrimental to the town in the past. He stated that he has a surplus policy. He has a policy of not entering into deferred school taxes. That is part of the AAA bond rating. Mr. Merchel stressed it is permissible but strongly recommends against it. It could impact our bond rating.

Mr. Donnelly stated that resident, Chris Buoni, said at the last meeting, it is incumbent upon Council to come up with that is that right. Mr. Merchel stated that he can only recommend. It is an action of Council by Resolution. Mr. Donnelly said it hasn't been used in a decade. Mr. Merchel stated that is correct.

Mr. Locatell thanked the public for tuning in.

Mr. Napolitano stated that she appreciated Mr. Merchel providing the budget book to the public. She appreciates the transparency and for allowing the public to participate.

Ms. Petriello stated that posting the proposed budget online started last year and she appreciates it. Mr. Merchel stated that it was done in the past also. It depends on the Manager.

Mr. Locatell stated that he feels that it is not necessary for Mr. Merchel to update the website with the intermittent changes that are made because he has other things to do. Mayor Gillespie stated that she feels that it is important to have it out there.

There was a discussion held on the next workshop. All agreed on 5:00 pm on Monday and that it would be listed first on the Agenda and then they would go into the regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: At 6:16 p.m., there being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn.

MOTIONED BY: Ms. Petriello
SECONDED BY: Mr. Locatell
VOTE: All in favor

PATRICIA L. HUNT, RMC
Township Clerk

Prepared By: Vicki M. Gough, RMC
Deputy Township Clerk