

Montville Township Committee
Special Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2020

Montville Township Committee Special Meeting
Saturday, February 8, 2020 9:00 a.m.
Montville Township Municipal Building, 195 Changebridge Road, Montville, NJ 07045

Statement of Open Public Meetings Act Compliance read by Township Clerk Leena Abaza

Roll Call Township Committee:

Present: Committeeman Matthew S. Kayne
 Committeewoman June Witty
 Committeeman Richard D. Conklin
 Deputy Mayor Rich Cook
 Chairman Frank W. Cooney

Also Present: Victor M. Canning, Township Administrator
 June E. Hercek, Assistant Administrator
 Leena Abaza, Township Clerk

New Business:

1. Discussion 2020 Budget

Administrator Victor Canning reviewed the 10 Year Township Capital Improvement Program spreadsheet that had been previously distributed to Township Committee members. He stated that expedited items (roads, sewer, and drainage projects) and Sewer and Water Utilities were reviewed at the November 9, 2019, Special Meeting. Today's meeting is to review the remaining items proposed for 2020. He referred Township Committee members to a memo from him dated February 8, 2020, for a summary of the requests.

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- Administration
 - \$20,000 for ongoing hardware and software/IT infrastructure improvements
- Township Clerk – no requests
- Construction
 - \$35,000 for a new vehicle
- Finance – no requests
- Tax Assessor – no requests
- Engineering
 - \$1,200,000 (as discussed in the November 9, 2019, Special Meeting)
 - \$250,000 to complete road improvement projects already committed to

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- Land Use – no requests
- Police – total of \$205,000
 - \$5,000 for radar unit
 - \$15,000 for radio replacement
 - \$5,000 for office chairs
 - \$100,000 for vehicles
 - \$12,000 for mobile vehicle cameras
 - \$18,000 for firearm replacement
 - \$50,000 for fixed ALPR cameras
- Emergency Management – no request
- Fleet – no request

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- Roads Department
 - \$20,000 for new street signs to be added to \$50,000 from 2019 for new total of \$70,000

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- Facilities
 - \$50,000 for security camera for doorway entrances
- Health
 - \$6,000 fencing and storage area/Animal Shelter
 - \$35,000 for minivan
- Dial-a-Ride – no request
- Animal Control – no request
- RDAC – no request

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- Recreation (some will fall under the Open Space Trust Fund)
 - \$16,000 for picnic tables and chairs for the new pavilion and other locations (Open Space)
 - \$1,000 for grills for the pavilion
 - \$8,000 for fencing at Camp Dawson
 - \$2,000 for portable sound system
 - \$25,000 for resurfacing basketball court (Open Space)
 - \$20,000 to replace basketball standards (Open Space)
- Library – no requests
- Municipal Court – no requests
- Social Services
 - \$10,000 upgrade doors to Senior House for ADA compliance and security

Deputy Mayor Cook asked how grant money related to road improvements to Taylortown Road.

Administrator Victor Canning responded that the amount in the budget would be offset by the NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT) grant.

Chairman Cooney asked about the health department vehicle. He recollected that a vehicle was requested in the 2019 budget.

Assistant Administrator June Hercek responded that the Health Department requested a vehicle for 2019 but that request was removed during the finalization of the 2019 budget.

Committeeman Conklin asked about the vehicle being requested by the Construction Department. He asked whether the condition of the current vehicles justified replacement.

Administrator Victor Canning responded that the Construction Department requested a vehicle for 2019 but that request was removed during the finalization of the 2019 budget. Because of the shared services agreement with Boonton Township, there is a surplus of funds that can cover the cost of the vehicle. There are three vehicles with four inspectors and recommendations for additional inspectors will be upcoming due to the shared services agreement with Boonton Township and pending development projects within Montville.

Committeeman Conklin expressed concern about projects and costs for which Open Space funds were being used.

Administrator Victor Canning acknowledged that the use of Open Space funds is discussed every year during budget planning. The 2014 Referendum passed by voters allows the use of Open Space funds for maintenance as well as the acquisition of Open Space. He stated that the Township Committee is tasked with selecting what projects are a priority during the budget process. He asked Township Committee members to consider whether it is better to borrow money through the capital budget or to use money already on account within a permitted use for that account. He also stated that while the \$661,000 being requested is higher than the 2019 amount, it is lower than the 2017 amount, which was \$700,000. He stated that the Township's past practice of limiting expenditures to the guidelines established by the Long

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Term Financial Planning Committee of around \$250,000 could not always be adhered to if the need was critical. He advised that the current and future outlook of the Open Space Trust Fund is different from when the Long Term Financial Committee developed the guidelines. He stated that from a risk management standpoint, the sidewalks at the Youth Center should be a priority.

Administrator Victor Canning said that the projects listed in the budget are those arising from Township Committee input. He suggested that the request for \$300,000 to replace the amphitheater could be reduced to \$100,000 and be carried over to next year's budget with an additional appropriation for the balance. He referred Township Committee members to the Open Space Analysis and Projections spreadsheet for a yearly comparison of the Open Space Trust fund.

Committeewoman Witty asked whether the item relating to security cameras includes the Youth Center.

Administrator Canning responded that Administration wants to combine security camera needs for the Youth Center, Senior House, Edmunds Barn, playgrounds, Community Park and Municipal Court and place for public bidding.

Committeewoman Witty asked whether there were limitations on the amount that can be used within a period from Open Space. Would it keep the Open Space budget as is inhibit the ability to acquire property if a suitable piece becomes available?

Administrator Victor Canning responded that there are no limits for spending within the acceptable uses of the fund. The prior LTFPC guideline is \$250,000 but that is not set in stone. The Township can borrow to acquire Open Space and payback from the trust fund in future years.

Committeewoman Witty asked how reliable the projected balance figures on the Open Space Analysis and Projections spreadsheet were.

Administrator Canning responded they were from CFO Katie Yanke based upon the County equalization tables, which were just received. Adjustment to those tables resulted in a tax revenue increase of \$3,000.

Deputy Mayor Cook asked whether a large amount could be bonded to acquire Open Space if necessary.

Administrator Victor Canning responded that it could be bonded but that the County also has ample money for Open Space.

Committeewoman Witty asked about Surprise Lake/Camp Aheka.

Administrator Victor Canning stated that it would be on the next Township Committee agenda.

The Township Committee generally consented to the adjustments proposed to the 2020 Capital Budget and 2020 Open Space Budget.

Committeeman Kayne asked how many total street signs there were. He asked how far the \$70,000 would extend towards replacement.

Administrator Victor Canning responded the total is around 800. Approximately 130 have already been replaced. Approximately 100 more can be replaced with the 2020 appropriation. He will get an exact count. He stated that there would be some restitution from the theft of signs.

Committeeman Kayne asked about the lifespan of technology equipment. He recommended that the Township have a technology replacement plan to replace technology that either breaks or become obsolete.

Administrator Victor Canning will obtain the lifespan from Aton Computing.

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Deputy Mayor Cook asked about employee training on cyber safety.

Assistant Administrator June Hercek responded that employees are trained annually through the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF).

Committeeman Kayne urged that the Township continue to maximize grant opportunities.

Administrator Victor Canning reviewed the Adopted Capital Budget spreadsheet. He pointed out that the monies allocated towards road improvements have greatly increased due to sound fiscal management. When grant money and Open Space expenditures are excluded, the Township is presently within the parameters of not borrowing more money than it pays down.

Deputy Mayor Cook asked for the list of roads being paved.

Administrator Victor Canning will have Engineer send the list to Township Committee members. There is money left over from last year that will allow additional roads to be paved. He will notify Township Committee members on which roads.

Committeeman Kayne asked to include on the list the roads torn up by New Jersey Natural Gas (NJNG).

Administrator Victor Canning reported that Pine Brook Road was paved in the fall. Despite notices sent to homeowners to get all road opening requests completed before paving, there are still requests to open the pavement to convert to gas. Parsippany just approved a 5-year moratorium and is getting negative push back.

Deputy Mayor Cook said he had the same question from a resident about Turkey Hill Road. Deputy Mayor Cook asked for an update with The Land Conservancy.

Assistant Administrator June Hercek said Administration has been in conversations with them. It takes about one year for the assessment process.

Committeewoman Witty asked about whether the sewer is in the budget paperwork.

Administrator Victor Canning affirmed the sewer numbers are in the budget. It was reviewed in the November 9, 2019 budget work session.

Committeeman Kayne asked about the numbers for the Old Lane Sewer project.

Administrator Victor Canning stated those numbers are not on the Sewer/Water Utilities budget. He expressed caution on what could be shared because of executive session discussions. He has asked for expert input on loans/pricing from the Township special consultants. He expressed concern that New Jersey plans to move funds from the Sewer Trust to the Water Trust to address lead contamination in the public water supply of the state's major cities. The result would be that residents would need to pay 75% of the costs of connections from home to street and the State only 25%. He anticipates there will be an impact on the availability of Sewer Trust loans and grants. He suggested the option of bonding the money instead of applying to the Sewer Trust Fund. The Township can still go through the process of applying for Sewer Trust Fund money, but if it does not work out, there will be a backup plan. The consultants have advised that the Township likely can get a loan but are less certain of grant money.

Committeeman Conklin asked whether that money was included in the 2020 Capital Budget under review.

Administrator Victor Canning responded it was not but could be added if the Township Committee so directed.

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Committeeman Conklin asked to have the money incorporated subject to removal if grant money was received.

Deputy Mayor Cook asked whether one million was already allocated.

Administrator Victor Canning confirmed that one million was already allocated leaving a need for an additional approximately two million. The figures included are for roads. There could be more, pending the findings of an engineering inspection on the drainage situation. He will revise the budget to include the figures, which will be adjusted if a loan/grant is received.

Deputy Mayor Cook stated that the sewer project and paving could be bonded separately if the Township ends up doing it.

Committeeman Conklin asked for an update on the Lake Montowac Dam. He asked about the money.

Administrator Victor Canning responded that upon the last update, the lake needs to be drained for the repair because the crack is below the water level. He will ask Township Engineer for the update. He confirmed the money is in place.

Committeewoman Witty asked for clarification on the relationship of the Water/Sewer Capital requests prepared by Tom Andes and the 2020 Capital Budget spreadsheet.

Administrator Victor Canning responded that for utility bonding, a down payment is not required. The request represents the most urgent projects identified by former Sewer Director Tom Andes. Mr. Canning recommends that the Township Committee approve it as a technicality, but it is not likely to be authorized until a new director is hired.

Committeewoman Witty asked about the accumulation of those deficiencies identified by Mr. Andes.

Administrator Victor Canning responded that these items were not brought to his attention previously. Now they are known, they need to be addressed.

Deputy Mayor Cook asked whether the Water/Sewer Engineer was noticing those items.

Administrator Victor Canning stated that Administration would be recommending hiring former engineer William Ryden (Anderson & Denzler Associates) to preserve the Township's licensing. Resumes are being received for the position. Mr. Canning advised that both Mr. Andes in his exit interview and Mr. Ryden have independently stated that the water/sewer director's salary is inadequate for the credentials and skills required for the position. There will be a salary recommendation in the proposed operating budget to be split between the water and sewer utilities.

Administrator Victor Canning concluded by noting the very satisfactory 4th quarter revenues and expenditures. He hoped to achieve the same levy number as last year. He attributed the changes in revenue to the Boonton Township Shared Services Agreement and changes by the health insurance provider. He mentioned that the shared services agreement with Boonton Township and the pending large development projects in Montville would create additional demand upon the Construction Department justifying the need for an additional vehicle. He stated there would also be a request for an additional inspector.

Public Comments

Motion by Kayne second by Conklin to open public portion. All in favor. Motion approved.

The public was not in attendance. There were no comments.

Motion by Kayne second by Witty to close the public portion. All in favor. Motion approved.

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Adjournment – 10:02 a.m.

Motion by Conklin second by Witty to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved on: April 28, 2020
Township Committee

Leena M. Abaza, Township Clerk

Frank W. Cooney, Mayor