

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE  
TOWNSHIP  
OF WANTAGE, HELD AT THE WANTAGE TOWNSHIP BUILDING, 888 STATE ROUTE 23,  
WANTAGE, NJ, HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON  
JANUARY 30, 2020**

Mayor Morris called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requested that the Clerk call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Jon Morris, Deputy Mayor William Gaechter and Committeeman Ron Bassani. Also, present: Administrator/Clerk Michael Restel and Chief Financial Officer Michelle LaStarza.

Mayor Morris stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. It has been properly noticed and certified by the Clerk."

**BUDGET 2020**

Mr. Restel stated this meeting is being held for the Mayor and Committee to review the 2020 Budget. Mr. Restel explained there were a few items still missing from the Budget that will be completed over the next couple weeks.

Mr. Bassani asked what the reasoning was pertaining to the drop in Administrative Salary line and discussion ensued.

Mr. Restel spoke about the Code Enforcement Budget line increase and it was increased due to having a Code Enforcement Officer 29 Hours a week.

Mr. Bassani wanted more information pertaining to the EMMA Grant, Mrs. LaStarza explained the process on how the grant works and what was needed. Mayor Morris asked what other expenses can be used and discussion ensued.

Mr. Restel stated that under the Streets and Roads Budget there is a request for another DPW laborer at \$16.00 an hour. Mr. Bassani asked why the number was a significant increase from years past, Mr. Gaechter stated this possibly could be the true up from the DPW Union Contract and discussion ensued.

Mr. Bassani spoke about the Parks and Playgrounds increase and why it was increased. Mr. Restel stated the increase is adding another part time employee to help maintain the parks. Mayor Morris explained he would like to see an internal employee trained on the proper way to maintain the sports field, but also would like to get quotes for either a Shared Service with High Point or an outside contractor.

Mr. Bassani asked about the decrease in Court's Budget, Mr. Restel stated there was a mix up in last years Budget number where \$5,000 was supposed to be in a different line than it was, discussion ensued.

Mr. Restel moved to Page 2 of the Budget Operating Expenses and explained that the majority of the lines stayed flat.

Mr. Restel spoke about the Finance Expense increasing due to Mrs. LaStarza retiring in 4 years and the need to send someone to classes for the certification. Mayor Morris spoke about the employee picked and if the Mrs. LaStarza had any issues in mentoring the employee throughout the process.

Mr. Restel spoke about the Computer Expenses and the increase is due to upgrading all the computers from Windows 7 to Windows 10.

Mr. Restel spoke about the Health Insurance line increased, at the end of the year we do receive a check on our dividend with our Joint Insurance Fund.

Mayor Morris spoke about the increase in Maintenance for Fire Truck Pumps and how the pumps need to be inspected and services every 2 years.

Mr. Bassani asked about the monies allotted for our Fire Companies and discussion ensued.

Mr. Restel stated that the DPW Road budget increase from \$300,000 to \$400,00 is due to the complaints of road conditions.

Mr. Bassani asked what the increase for Capital Budgets line, Mrs. LaStarza explained that the increase is for Bonding requirements and the 5% mandatory down payment needed.

Mr. Restel moved to the Capital Project Page of the Budget and spoke about the Animal Control Vehicle and the mandatory requirements by law that are needed. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Restel spoke about 911 equipment needed for the transition to the County. Mr. Restel stated the equipment needed are a Climate Controlled Cabinet to store the Repeaters, installing the Antennas that were previously used on another site and an onsite generator.

Mr. Bassani asked about Southfield and South Shore Drainage, Mr. Restel explained the South Shore drainage is a 15-foot storm basin that is sinking and has become a road Hazard this project can be bided out in 2020. Mr. Restel explained the Southfield Drive issue dates back to 2013 and the storms since then have eroded the area behind the house to where it needs to be repaired, Mr. Restel explained that there is a NJDEP Permit needed for the project and according to the Township Engineer takes Approximately 1 year for approvals.

Mr. Bassani stated that the Payment on Bonds went way down and that was due to the interest going way down, Mrs. LaStarza confirmed.

Mrs. LaStarza explained that looking into 2 possible ways for financing either permanent financing or keeping it the way Wantage Township currently has, discussion ensued.

Mr. Gaechter asked Mrs. LaStarza if she knew what the Reserved Fund would be, Mrs. LaStarza explained our Tax rate came in close to the same as last year and is not sure what our Surplus might be.

Mr. Restel stated if the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes stayed the same the Budget would increase \$35,000. Mr. Gaechter stated if we removed the \$50,000 set aside for Construction there would be no increase in the budget.

Mr. Restel moved to Page 4 Capital Items; Mr. Restel spoke about DPW replacing 2 Mason Dumps over the next 2 years. Mr. Restel explained that on the Morris Count COOP the dealer would accept trade ins to help lower the costs. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Restel spoke about the various DPW items and discussion ensued.

Mayor Morris opened the meeting to the public.

There being no other public this portion of the meeting was closed.

Mayor Morris requested a Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Bassani and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Gaechter, Morris Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:57p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael L Restel

Administrator/Acting Clerk