

The scheduled budget meeting of the East Amwell Township Committee was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Present for this meeting were: Mayor Peter Kneski, Deputy Mayor Linda Lenox, Committee Members Patricia Cregar, Tim Martin, and Larry Tatsch, Township Administrator Timothy Matheny, and CFO Jane Luhrs. Also present: Carolyn Fritsch, Deputy Clerk.

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this meeting was duly advertised. Notice of the meeting was posted on the Township bulletin board and sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat, the Trenton Times and the Star Ledger on January 27, 2010.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

DISCUSSION ON 2010 BUDGET

Ms. Cregar thanked Deputy Clerk Fritsch for filling in at the meeting.

Ms. Cregar asked the Committee to address the Engineer’s bill received by Helen Rynearson with regard to Dunkard Church Road. Mayor Kneski said since it was not on the agenda, it could be addressed at the February 11, 2010 meeting of the Township Committee.

Mayor Kneski turned the meeting over to CFO Luhrs.

Ms. Luhrs stated she had handed out two new budget sheets this evening.

At the last budget meeting Ms. Luhrs had presented four “what if” scenarios showing there would have to be quite a bit of budget cutting to stay under the 4% levy cap.

Ms. Luhrs said, since the last budget meeting, things were changing quickly at the State.

These two new sheets contain other “what if” scenarios.

Column 5: “What if” the Township did not receive the \$78,207 in CMPTRA, and “What if” the State eliminated the 4% levy cap.

“If those two scenarios hit our budget what would happen is we would probably have no tax increase and you’d only have to cut about \$58,000. 00 out of the budget, and you could cut it from anywhere, not the operations.”

Ms. Luhrs said 90 some percent of our debt is open space debt. Part of the open space trust is for debt reduction. When the levy cap was put in place, we were penalized for bringing outside funds in to offset the debt that is rightfully open space debt. Instead of putting \$350,000.00 in our budget (as a revenue), last year we were only able to put in \$50,000.00, (because you are penalized for bringing in the outside revenue.) If there is no levy cap, those monies, or a portion there of, may be put into the budget, balancing the budget with no tax increase.

Ms. Luhrs stated the League of Municipalities sent out a resolution asking municipalities to come together to request the Legislature release the levy cap.

Mr. Kneski stated he sent a letter to Governor Christie’s office urging his transition team to take a hard look at the levy cap. A resolution will be considered, at the Feb. 11, 2010 Township Committee meeting, supporting the removal of the levy cap.

The reason the levy cap was put in place was to have municipalities cut their operations costs.

For the last two years municipalities have used up their surplus because the levy cap has put a strangle hold on use of funds.

Ms. Luhrs said the East Amwell Township budget has not gone up much in the last five years.

It was decided to go over the budget line by line.

Mayor Kneski started reviewing the budget. The following suggested cuts were discussed:

Page 1: General Administration

Open Space Secretary –	minus \$ 200.00
Other expenses –	minus \$ 500.00
Office supplies –	minus \$1500.00
Copier –	minus \$1000.00
Misc. Projects -	minus \$2000.00
	(final bill for “The Ridge”-not yet received)
Computer Tech support -	minus \$ 500.00

Page 2: Mayor & Council

Dues, meetings, etc. -	minus \$ 100.00
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Page 3: Municipal Clerk

Advertising -	minus \$1000.00
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Page 4: Financial Administration – Auditor	minus \$ 500.00 Ms. Cregar will ask the Auditor if he would please keep his rates the same as 2009.
Page 5: Audit Services Single Audit	minus \$2700.00
Page 6: Revenue Administration Tax Bills	minus \$ 700.00
Page 7: Tax Assessment Administration Tax Map Maintenance	minus \$ 500.00
Page 8: Legal Services Legal General -	minus \$10,000.00
Page 9: Engineering Services Other Expenses	minus \$2000.00
Page 10: Historic Sites Committee Salaries Other Expense	minus \$ 100 minus \$ 564
Page 11: Agricultural Advisory Commission	None
Page 12: Planning Board Attorney Engineering	minus \$1000.00 minus \$1000.00
Page 13: Zoning Board of Adjustment Legal Lawsuits Legal General	minus \$2000.00 minus \$ 500.00
Page 14: Affordable Housing Agency	Nothing at this time. Tim will follow up with Jim Robbins regarding his e-mail.
Page 15: Uniform Construction Code	The Construction Secretary hours will be reduced from 15 to 10.
Page 16: Liability Insurance	(Research to be done by staff with regard to rates)
Page 17: Worker’s Compensation Ins.	Nothing at this time.
Page 18: Employees Group Ins.	Offer an in lieu of payment of 20% of the savings of the lowest premium possible for “opting out” of employee group insurance benefits. To be established in Policy Manual for 2011. (rounded dollar amount)
Page 19: Office of Emergency Management Other Expenses	minus \$ 250.00
Page 20: Aid to Volunteer Ambulance Co.	Need to provide a financial statement. Once received and reviewed, they should come in and provide an explanation regarding the needs. (Appear at next budget meeting.)
Page 21: Uniform Fire Code	Nothing at this time. Tied to CMPTRA
Page 22: Municipal Prosecutor	None

Page 23: Streets and Road Maintenance	Defer
Page 24: Solid Waste Collection	None
Page 25: Buildings and Grounds Remediation	minus \$1,000.00
Page 26: Vehicle Maintenance	Nothing.
Page 27: Police	“Traffic enforcement/Contract services” to be added as explanation)
Page 28: Public Health Services Legal General	minus \$500.00 (can be revisited)
Page 29: Environmental Commission Other expenses Newsletter Stream/Salt monitoring	minus \$150.00 to remain as budgeted T. Martin will discuss intention of Commission regarding this line item amount.
Page 30: No page	
Page 31: Administration of Public Assistance	None
Page 32: Contrib. to Social Service Agencies	None
Page 33: Stormwater Permit-Public Health	None
Page 34: Recreation Services & Programs	None
Page 35: Prior Years Bills	None
Page 36: Electricity	None
Page 37: Street Lighting	None
Page 38: Telephone	None
Page 39: Fuel Oil	None
Page 40: Gasoline	None
Page 41: Recycling Enhancement Act	None
Page 42: Public Employees Retirement Sys.	None
Page 43: Social Security	None
Page 44: Unemployment Comp. Ins.	None
Page 45: Defined Contrib. Retirement Program	None
Page 46: Contrib. to Deferred Comp. Plan	None
Page 47: HC Open Space, Rec., Farm, Historic Pres. Trust Fund	None
Page 48, 49 & 50 - No Page	
Page 51: Clean Communities Grant	None
Page 52: No page	
Page 53: NJ Trans. Trust Fund Authority Act	None

Page 54: Matching Funds for Grants	None
Page 55: Municipal Court	None
Page 56: Public Defender	None
Page 57: Capital Improvement	Hold and revisit
Page 58: Purchase of Ambulance Equipment	Defer until receipt of financial statement
Page 59: Bond Principal	None
Page 60: Note Principal	None (This number may change. A decision should be made by April if a principal payment will be made)
Page 61: Bond Interest	None
Page 62: Note Interest	None
Page 63: Green Trust Loan	None
Page 64: No Page	
Page 65: Tax Appeal Judgments	Hold. (New line to build up a reserve for tax appeals.)
Page 66: Salary Adjustments	To be reviewed.
Page 67: Special Emergency Auth. – 5 Years	Last payment made already.
Page 68: No Page	
Page 69: Res. For Uncollected funds	This number will change. It is a calculation dependant on what delinquent were.

Total Reduction: \$30,264.00

Next meeting: Capital Projects to be discussed, and meeting date to be decided by e-mail.

RESOLUTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

Deferred.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS

Mr. Martin motioned to open the public comment portion of the meeting, seconded by Ms. Lenox, and carried unanimously.

Unidentified person in the audience: “Good work.”

Mr. Martin motioned to close the public comment portion of the meeting, seconded by Ms. Lenox, and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Martin motioned, seconded by Ms. Lenox to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Fritsch, Deputy Clerk