

TOWNSHIP OF MOORESTOWN
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING

May 13, 2024

(This meeting was held in-person and virtually/telephonically)

The Budget Workshop Meeting of the Moorestown Township Council was called to order by Mayor Gillespie at 6:01 p.m. at Town Hall, Council Chamber, 111 West Second Street, Moorestown. Attendance was as follows:

Nicole Gillespie, Councilmember
Quinton Law, Deputy Mayor
Sue Mammarella, Councilmember
Christopher Keating, Councilmember
David Zipin, Councilmember (absent)

Kevin E. Aberant, Township Manager
Patricia L. Hunt, Township Clerk

CALL TO ORDER: At 6:01 p.m., Mayor Gillespie read the Open Public Meetings Act statement in full, as printed on the agenda.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT

"Notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act" by:

- a. Posting a copy of the amended meeting notice and agenda on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex.
- b. Filing a copy of the amended meeting notice and agenda in the office of the Township Clerk at the Municipal Complex.
- c. Forwarding a copy of the amended meeting notice and agenda to the Burlington County Times and Courier Post.
- d. Forwarding written notice to each person who has requested copies of the regular meeting schedule.

All of the above posting, filing and mailing have taken place on the 8th day of May 2024.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Gillespie took roll call. Mr. Zipin was absent.

2024 Municipal Budget: Mr. Aberant reviewed the overall budget.

Mayor Gillespie advised that this is Council's first discussion on the 2024 Municipal Budget. Mr. Aberant advised that he will post the proposed budget online after he receives feedback at this meeting. He advised that this budget does not include fancy graphs, it is bare bones without a CFO. Mr. Aberant reviewed the different categories contained in the budget, including the capital budget and the fact that all projects in the capital budget are subject to Council's approval and passing of a bond ordinance. This budget maintains the same municipal purpose tax rate as last year (no tax increase) per Council's direction.

To that end, the amount to be raised by taxation for municipal purposes is \$15,992,462 which is \$64,384 less than in the 2023 adopted Municipal Budget. The municipal purpose tax rate is 38.9 cents per \$100.00 of assessed valuation, which is the same rate as in 2023. The

total local purpose tax rate is increasing to 43.7 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation, which represents a .5 cent increase (one half of one cent) over the 2023 rate of 43.2 cents. This increase is driven by an increase in the mandatory library appropriation which is increasing by \$186,357 (\$1,782,462 in 2023 and \$1,968,819 in 2024). Mayor Gillespie asked if the library tax changes every year. Mr. Aberant advised that the State dictates what the municipality must provide, which is based on all assessed property in Township and the equalization ratio which keeps getting lower. He reviewed the analysis between last year and this year. He advised that Mr. Merchel (former CFO) had a surplus policy that he would provide to the rating agencies; Mr. Aberant felt this budget would be consistent with that policy, noting there is \$10 million+ in surplus. Mayor Gillespie noted that the surplus has increased more than normal over the past several years. Discussion was held on the surplus and ways that it is/has increased.

Mayor Gillespie asked Mr. Aberant to explain the reserve for municipal relief fund; he did so. Mr. Law noted that revenues from construction fees have been good. Mr. Aberant advised that a little less is anticipated this year, noting that the fees are paid when the applicant receives their permit. He advised of the large projects that took place where significant fees were collected. He anticipated the high collection rate will wain off. Mr. Law inquired about court fines and costs. Mr. Aberant advised that Director Riley has motivated the officers to issue tickets. The April report indicated the total revenue is up about \$48,000. Court has also picked up.

Mr. Aberant advised that there is about a two-percent increase in salaries. He advised on other costs, such as insurance, that the Township has no control over. He noted that there is also a significant increase in police training. He advised that there is a decrease in the investigative unit due to a younger staff and same being at the lower end of the pay scale. He advised that the Township has thirty-four sworn officers, four SLEOs. He noted that the Township has not had thirty-four officers in a while and the department is on its way to being fully staffed. He explained that the increase in salary for crossing guards has increased due to the increase in minimum wage. He noted that the Township is no longer just paying minimum wage as it was losing too many people. Mr. Aberant also advised that the Board of Education pays the salary and FICA tax for the school resource officer; the Township covers insurance, uniforms and training. He also confirmed that travel and conference is budgeted for educational purposes.

Mr. Aberant advised that the appropriations remain mostly flat, with the few exceptions that he reviewed. He advised that a few more increases involve road repairs, holiday lights and decorations for Camden Avenue and the purchase of AEDs for all recreational fields.

Mr. Aberant advised that utility revenues are up due to connection fees and larger projects. Water and sewer revenues have been better than in previous years (rate increase in 2023).

The anticipated open space tax is one cent. Mr. Aberant reviewed the details.

Mr. Aberant reviewed the General Capital and Utility Capital Improvements budget: Discussion was held regarding the basketball court at Fullerton Park. Mr. Aberant advised that the old court could not be replaced due to the conditions of the ground. He asked Council to consider automated water meters.

Mayor Gillespie asked Council if another workshop was needed. Council did not think so.

Next steps were discussed. Mr. Aberant advised that the budget could be introduced on May 20, 2024 with a public hearing and adopted on June 24, 2024

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (Items listed on and/or off the Agenda): There were none.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL: There were none.

ADJOURNMENT: At 6:58 p.m., there being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn.

MOTIONED BY: Mr. Keating
SECONDED BY: Mr. Law
ABSENT: Mr. Zipin
VOTE: All in favor

PATRICIA L. HUNT, RMC
Township Clerk