

MINUTES
HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
March 14, 2024

Start Time: 6:32 p.m.

The **Sunshine Statement** was read into the record by Mayor Robin Freitag
The **Flag Salute** was led by Mayor Robin Freitag

Roll Call: Mayor Robin Freitag, Tom Tedesco, David Miller, Kelsey Bayzick, Jeff Shimp
Also Present: John Hitchner, Admin; Jeannette Pace, Acting Clerk; Solicitor Ted Ritter; Neil Young, CFO; and Michael Garcia, Auditor

- **Presentation**
Art Marchand from the County Commissioners addressed the Committee. He introduced himself and advised that each Commissioner was assigned to two municipalities and that he was Hopewell's Ambassador. He will be our direct access to the County. Tedesco mentioned that he had a few issues to present to him for discussion with the County.
- **Proclamation**
Mayor Freitag read a Proclamation for Tony Rivera for his volunteer work on the Convenience Center project.
- **Approval of Minutes**
Approval of the Minutes from the February 15, 2024 Regular Meeting
Motion to Approve by Tedesco; Seconded by Bayzick. Voice Vote: All in favor.
- **Department and Committee Reports, Treasurer's Report and Approval of Bills**
Motion to Approve all of the above by Miller; Seconded by Shimp. Voice Vote: All in favor.
- **Budget**
Auditor, Mike Garcia, presented a couple of changes to the budget. He spoke of the tonnage grant as well as the addition of a firefighter's grant. All in all, the budget is below both caps and will only result in a slight .7/10 cent increase in taxes. Garcia presented a chart showing the next several years and what the tax increases could be. The Committee questioned the increase and surplus. All agreed that a slight increase now is better than a large increase in 3-4 years of 6 cents or more. Tedesco talked about paying for the upcoming new fire truck. CFO Young discussed the differences between making the

down payment from capital improvement funds or by grant. Miller questioned Young on the issue of interest with the current financial institutions. Bayzick asked Young for an explanation of the DOT grants. Bayzick suggested increasing taxes a full penny. Miller agreed with her comments; Tedesco disagreed.

Resolution #2024-43: Resolution Introducing the 2024 Budget

Discussion: Discussion to add to the health insurance line item by \$9,000 which cannot be used and cannot be transferred in November. Miller made a motion to approve; Seconded by Bayzick. Voice Vote: All in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Motion to Open to the Public by Bayzick; Seconded by Shimp. Voice Vote: All in favor.

Former Mayor Hankins addressed the Committee advising that when he was mayor, they hadn't had an increase in the sewer bill for 5 or 6 years, which resulted in a substantial increase when they needed it. He commented it was better to increase minimally regularly so it was easier on the residents. There was additional conversation regarding the County's equalization of rates.

Fire Chief Ken Mayhew commented on the new fire truck. The build time is approximately 4 years (2028) if ordered now. He indicated that they may be able to sell the old truck to offset some of the cost. He believes the new truck will cost in the area of \$1.2 Million. He also feels having an engine and rescue into one truck will fit our needs perfectly. Hitchner mentioned the available grant options and will meet with Mayhew to get the process started. Hankins reminded everyone that Hopewell is only responsible for 75% of the cost and Stow Creek is responsible for 25%.

Gary Van Meter addressed the Committee with his concerns that the Township previously billed Shiloh quarterly but also \$200 per year for use of our equipment. He believes it's been approximately 10 years since they've been billed. Hitchner will check into that and report back to the Committee.

Motion to Close to the Public by Miller; Seconded by Shimp. Voice Vote: All in favor.

ORDINANCES:

#2024-01: ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

Motion to Approve by Bayzick; Seconded by Miller. Roll Call Vote: All in favor.

RESOLUTIONS:

#2024-42: Resolution Cancelling Taxes for Dwayne Parker, Jr., a Veteran with a Wartime Service-Connected Disability, Block 63, Lot 39.02, 351 Roadstown Road, Hopewell Township

Motion to Approve by Miller; Seconded by Shimp. Voice Vote: All in favor.

#2024-44: Resolution Acknowledging Civil Rights Practices

Motion to Approve by Shimp; Seconded by Tedesco. Voice Vote: All in favor.

#2024-45: Resolution Extending Deadline for Filing Landlord Registrations

Motion to Approve by Bayzick; Seconded by Tedesco. Voice Vote: All in favor.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 2024 She-Bikes event: Hitchner advised this is a fundraiser in Upper Deerfield. They'd like to use Bostwick Lake as a turnaround spot. Tedesco advised it is a county road so they should probably check with the County Public Works department regarding signage. Bayzick voiced concerns regarding a Certificate of Insurance. Tedesco offered to donate a port-a-pot.
- Senior Center Camera Update: Hitchner advised the cameras at the senior center have been offline for some time. More research is needed as to the cost to reinstall the cameras.
- Recreation Grant: Freitag advised that the committee decided on a walking track on the Hopewell Crest School property. Mark Blauer is going to research to make sure there is no issue using school property. It would be utilized by the school during school hours and by the public on off-school hours, evenings and weekends. Hitchner advised the grant application process has been extended to mid-April and confirmed with Nardelli that this can be done with very little out-of-pocket costs. Miller questioned the cost of the project. Blauer had suggested requesting more than the \$100K to cover everything. It is believed soft costs will be approximately \$2,500.
- Convenience Center Update: Hitchner and Tedesco gave an update on the project. A punch list will be presented at the next meeting.
Temporary Dump Passes. A situation arose where a resident passed away and the widow and her children were trying to clean out the house. The children were not Hopewell residents so their vehicles were not registered here. There was also discussion regarding a Temporary Dump Pass. Mayor Freitag asked Hankins what they did when he was in office. Pace indicated that she has prepared a temporary pass which provides for a 1-week expiration date for individuals that request one which will give them 2 days within that 1-week period. Hitchner mentioned reviewing the ordinance to maybe make some changes in the future.
- 2024 Hopewell Day: Suggested dates were September 28th and October 5th with rain dates the following weekends. Greenwich wants to piggyback together so we can

advertise together. Pace advised the first planning meeting is April 4th and will update the Committee at the April 11th meeting.

- Building Maintenance Update: Hitchner gave an update on the status of the new phone system and the installation of the alarm/door chimes and the heating coil
- Substitute Director for Senior Center: The list of suggested candidates was discussed and we will reach out and see who is interested.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

The Committee received a thank you card from Jill Sungenis for the flowers for her mom's passing.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Resolution #2024-46 Authorizing Executive Session

A Motion to enter into Executive Session was made by Bayzick at 8:15 pm; Seconded by Tedesco. Voice Vote: All in favor.

A Motion to close the Executive Session and enter back into public session was made by Bayzick at 8:45 pm; Seconded by Miller. Voice Vote: All in favor.

MOTION TO ADJOURN made by Bayzick; Seconded by Shimp. Voice Vote: All in favor.

End Time: 8:45 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: March 28, 2024 @ 6:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jeannette Pace, Acting Clerk
cc: Township Administrator, Committee and Counsel