

BOROUGH OF BERLIN
BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
APRIL 1, 2015
BERLIN COMMUNITY SCHOOL CAFETERIA
215 SOUTH FRANKLIN AVENUE
BERLIN NJ
7 PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR ARMANO.

FLAG SALUTE LED BY MAYOR ARMANO.

SUNSHINE NOTICE WAS READ BY MUNICIPAL CLERK.

ROLL CALL: Mayor John Armano, Council President Lynn Kupchik, Council members Bilella, Pearce, Knight, Miller and Badolato were all present. Present also was CFO Adriane McKendry.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: No one requested to speak to council.

Mayor Armano turned the meeting over to Finance Chairman Jim Bilella. Councilman Bilella explained that the process of getting to this point was put together by the Finance Committee, the CFO, the Administrator and the input of the employees department budget needs. He explained that he would go over some major points that affected this 2015 budget noting that the assessed value property has gone down amounting to a loss of six million dollars that impacts taxes that was equivalent to ½ cent. On a positive note he reported that the collection rate is the highest in ten years which is a plus for the budget.

He explains that this is the first general, water and sewer budget for our CFO and that several adjustments were made in allocations in salaries, pension and health care benefits and these allocations will continue to be adjusted over the next couple of years to get in line with budgeting the exact allocations.

In regards to the Fire Marshall's budget. Bilella explains that this department is being reviewed as it has always been able to cover its own expenses until most recently. He notes that both Berlin Borough and Waterford Township operate as a whole for the fire marshals inspections. The county most recently has stopped doing their fire investigations and it now falls on our inspectors. There is no charge for these inspections Bilella explains. They are no different that when a police department has to investigate a crime scene or accident. No revenue is received. The additional time needed to perform the inspections the county use to do adds to the shortfall of revenue. Chief Behnke, the borough's fire marshal is working on raising the inspection fees as they have not been raised in over 13 years and the borough's fees are not in line with what other town's fees are. He is also looking into charging Waterford administrative fees to offset costs. He stated that Waterford Township was in understanding with this reason and suggestion.

Ambulance budget. Chairman Bilella spoke about how there is an agreement with the borough and the township regarding the allocation of the ambulance budget that is shared by both towns. Last year the borough paid a little over \$17,000 to the ambulance squad, however in 2012 and 2013 a total of \$64,000 was paid to the ambulance squad but they should only have been paid \$38,000. He states that we will be seeking a credit for this overpayment and our payment for this year will be held up until this matter gets resolved.

This year's budget has been worked down to one cent over last year's budget for current fund. We are no longer subsidizing library and now will pay on municipal tax and no longer county library tax.

At this time in the meeting there were questions on several of the lines in the budget including legal, COAH, health benefits and board of health. Councilman Pearce questioned where in the revenue side does it reflect the community center revenue and the camp revenue. CFO explains that is miscellaneous revenue not anticipated and it basically just goes into miscellaneous revenue.

The capital budget list of items that are being requested this year was discussed. Chairman Bilella explains that a trash vehicle is being purchased out of an older ordinance and went over each item in the capital list. In the water budget there is a \$15,000 line for a CADD study that will be needed long before a capital budget ordinance can be adopted. The administrator and CFO will be able to encumber this cost out of an ordinance that is already adopted that allows spending for water equipment and or water infrastructure.

The budget will formally be introduced on April 16, 2015 if there aren't any more changes.

Second Privilege of floor: No one asked to speak to the council.

A motion was made to adjourn at approximately 8:05 pm by Kupchik seconded by Bilella. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted;



Charleen Santora
Borough Clerk, RMC