

**Borough of Palmyra**  
**2019 Budget Meeting Minutes**  
**Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 8:30 AM**

Mayor Arnold called the meeting to order at 8:30 am

At the call of the roll:

Present: Mr. Brandon Allmond, Mrs. Michelle McCann, Mrs. Gina Tait, President Timothy Howard, Mayor Michelle Arnold

Absent: Mrs. Bernadette Russell, Ms. Mindie Weiner

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Arnold then read the following open public meetings statement into the record.

Public Notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meeting Act has been given by the Municipal Clerk in the following manner:

- Posting written notice on the official bulletin board at the Palmyra Borough Hall on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.
- Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times, and the Courier Post Newspaper on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.
- Notice to All Council Members

•• It should be noted the Councilwoman Weiner arrived at 8:36 AM

**BUDGET WORKSESSION**

Mr. Gural explained the various documents council would be working with during the meeting. Mr. Gural noted the primary document council would be working with, the budget appropriation worksheet; he explained the various columns and how they applied to the current, past and proposed budgets. Mr. Gural also noted the salary requests which were highlighted on your original copy of budget appropriation worksheet, were removed for this meeting as those affected were not rice noticed. Ms. Weiner indicated all the current salaries are included plus the 2% across the board increase. Ms. Weiner asked if salary increase requests could be discussed at a later time. Mr. Gural indicated it could be done when the salary ordinance is complete.

**General Administration**

Mr. Gural indicated the costs for this over all section has been reduced by \$7,950.00 for a savings of 7.84%. Mr. Gural noted that next year the code books will need to again be codified which could cost about \$10,000.00, the fee you see this year is the annual maintenance cost.

### **Mayor & Council Miscellaneous**

There was some discussion regarding mayor and council salaries and the differing amounts due to some taking increases and other not. Mr. Gural asked that it be addressed prior to the salary ordinance being adopted so those salaries are more constant and not so confusion regarding who is getting paid what. Mrs. Tait inquired about Borough Council eliminating their cell phones. Mayor Arnold indicated no. Mayor Arnold indicated she would not give up her phone and warned council about the use of personal cell phones to conduct Borough business. Discussion ensued regarding those phones and how much they are used. Ms. Weiner indicated she felt the governing body did not need cells phones and neither did the Mayor. She indicated she only gets calls from solicitors and felt it was a waste of money. President Howard indicated the Mayor could keep her phone but did not feel as though council needed phones.

Mrs. Tait made a motion to get rid of the Borough Council Cell Phones still allowing the Mayor to keep her phone. President Howard second the motion.

#### **At the call of the vote.**

**AYES:** Mr. Allmond, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Tait, Ms. Weiner, President Howard

**NAYS:** none

**ABSENT:** Bernadette Russell

### **Borough Clerk**

Mr. Gural noted a slight increased to this overall section due to the increase in legal notice publications.

### **Elections**

Mr. Gural indicated no significant change in this section and we pay what the County bills.

### **Financial Administration**

Mr. Gural noted a slight decrease of \$500.00 in this section.

### **Collection of Taxes**

Mr. Gural noted a slight decrease in this section.

### **Assessment of Taxes**

Mr. Gural noted there is a significant increase, up \$3,500.00, due mostly to the requirements of the Borough for compliance with county requests.

### **Legal Services & Costs**

Mr. Gural indicated a new line item was added this year for tax appeals as a significant number of them were filed and some we filed challenges to.

### **Engineering Services**

Mr. Gural indicated the engineering fees are up and that is primarily driven by the need for property maintenance/ structural investigations.

### **Grants & Planning**

Mr. Gural indicated this section is up slightly due to redevelopment support.

### **Land Use**

Mr. Gural indicated no significant changes in this section.

### **Construction Code Official**

Mr. Gural indicated no significant changes in this section.

### **Code Enforcement**

Mr. Gural indicated no significant changes in this section.

### **Insurance**

Mr. Gural indicated no major changes in this section, but noted a reduction in Group Insurances: Health NJSHBP in the amount of \$25,815.00.

### **Police Department**

Mr. Gural noted the police department salaries are mostly driven by contract. Mr. Gural noted the Safe and Secure grant we will be receiving in the amount of \$39,485.00, was also included as an offset to the police department salaries & wages. Discussion was had regarding the police overtime, detective stipend, and the new digital evidence tech position. Ms. Weiner inquired about the digital evidence tech position and if we really need it or can it wait. Chief stated no, this was mentioned last year and is really needed as the work load has increased significantly. The Police overtime budget line item was also reduced by \$10,000.00 making it \$74,868.00. Mr. Gural stated in the other expenses two items need to be discussed. Mr. Gural stated last year we began leasing sedans instead of buying SUVs via the capital budget which is why there is an increase in vehicles. Mr. Gural noted we have to budget for sedans because they cannot be included in the capital budget as they do not have a five year life expectancy. Discussion regarding the police accreditation program was had noting that the JIF Insurance Agency strongly encourages and make a reimbursement to the Borough for those efforts. Mr. Gural indicated it is a 13 or 14 month process. Mayor asked if it would be helpful with employee retention. Chief Pearlman indicated he didn't think so as everyone was having a problem with retention due to the 2% cap. Weiner does this have to happen every year. Chief Pearlman indicated the \$39,900.00 would not have to be paid every year, only the initial year but the program does have to be keep updated and there would be fees however not as costly as the initial cost. There was some additional discussion regarding the program and the requirements to complete the accreditation. Mr. Gural noted a slight increase in the school crossings guards' salary, related to New Jersey sick leave law. Mrs. Tait asked why there is a significant increase in the police communications and phones. Chief Pearlman indicated he had to increase the Comcast internet service due to requirements from the prosecutor's office and our current upload speeds. Chief Pearlman also noted the police department detectives currently have flip phones and they need to have smart phones due to the field work being done. Chief Pearlman indicated to access the security cameras in the school we have to access them thru a tablet, Chief Pearlman indicated there will be only two on street at a time.

### **Emergency Management**

Mayor Arnold and Mrs. Tait requested \$750.00 be placed in the salary line for the OEM executive director. Mr. Gural indicated once the proper notifications have been made additional discussion will be had regarding whether it will be paid.

### **Aid to Fire Company**

Mr. Gural explained the lease agreement with the fire company how it was handled last year and how it is moving forward. Mr. Gural noted the line item would remain at \$15,000.00 as was previous given by donation

### **Aid to Volunteer Ambulance Company**

Mr. Gural noted we give the same donation to the Ambulance Association every year, as they do not charge our residents fees they only charge insurance companies. Amount budgeted is \$2,500.00 annually.

### **Fire Department**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes

**Uniform Fire Safety**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes

**Borough Prosecutor**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes

**Streets & Roads – Public Works**

Mr. Gural indicated some things were realigned in this category this year, however there are no significant changes. Mr. Gural noted however operating expenses are down two thousand dollars and two cell phones were cancelled. Mr. Gural also noted \$3,500.00 was allocated for railroad landscaping.

**Solid Waste Collection**

Mr. Gural indicated this is contractual.

**Public Buildings and Grounds**

Mr. Gural indicated some money must be allocated to go to the recreation trust account/fund to pay the salaries of the staff in the community center. Mr. Gural indicated there is an overall slight reduction.

**Shade Tree**

Mr. Gural indicated the line item for shade tree miscellaneous sidewalk repair was reduced by \$4, 300.00. The Borough only spend \$5,700.00 last year and that is about what we have been spending every year.

**Vehicle Maintenance**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes

**Condominium Services Law**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes

**Board of Health**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes

**Animal Control**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes, contractual

**Parks & Recreation**

Mr. Gural indicated this is pretty straight forward however we do have a PCCPB donation request which is up significantly over last year. Mr. Gural explained the Palmyra Community Center Program Board request, noting in 2017 their request was \$15,000.00 in 2018 it was cut in half to \$7,500.00, this year the request has been increased \$4,500.00 over last year to 12,000.00. Mayor Arnold indicated the request is for an additional \$4,500.00 and according to the financial reports they submitted they operated in the red last year by a \$-5,641.00. Mayor Arnold stated the PCCPB brought in \$16,863.00 in revenue and the Borough brought in \$19,000.00 in revenue from the Community Center rentals. Mrs. Tait inquired that \$19,000.00 in revenue is derived only from rental charges. Mr. Gural indicated yes. Mayor Arnold indicated she did not want to increase the donation, indicated it would have been nice if someone from the community center program board can before us and explained how successful or not the programs were which they ran. Mayor Arnold indicated she would like more information regarding how the programs are and were run. Mayor Arnold asked why we would give them more money when they are running in the red. Ms. Weiner stated she was not on the board however use to be the program director. Ms. Weiner indicated part of the funding requested from the Borough is to compensate for the classes being offered and to make them affordable to people. Mayor Arnold indicated she would like more information regarding which classes were successful and which were not and why. Mayor

Arnold noted the program director is being paid \$8,667.00 which is more than the Borough contributed last year and that item alone could be cut significantly or all together. There was some additional discussion. Mrs. Tait indicated do you want to give just the \$7,500.00. Mayor Arnold indicated she did not want to cut them out completely however it is hard to justify when they are running in the red almost \$6,000.00 and are paying a coordinator over \$8,500.00. Mrs. Tait stated we can budget the \$7,500.00 for now and have them come and speak with us regarding the program and decide what to give at that point. Mayor Arnold indicated that was a good idea. President Howard stated he cannot see giving them more money when they are running in the red, some changes need to be made.

#### **Education Functions**

Mr. Gural indicated this is a donation to the library, which is outside CAP.

#### **Community Youth Recreation**

Mr. Gural indicated here are some other donation requests for summer recreation program, post prom, high school senior's graduation awards and Catholic Charities. There was some additional discussion regarding various programs and it was agreed to change the \$10,000.00 donation to \$6,000.00 for the Summer Rep program. There was some additional discussion regarding how helpful the school nurse is allowed to be due to other laws. Ms. McCann indicated she would be more than happy to help where ever she can in communicating with the school.

Ms. Weiner indicated she wanted to return to the PCCPB Director position; she is aware that it looks like a lot of money to pay a director of the program on paper however as someone who has done that job it is very difficult, time consuming, stressful job. Mr. Allmond asked why there was such a significant drop in the request from the first year. Ms. Weiner explained when the program began the Borough gave the Board a \$15,000.00 donation to start and the Board was to create programs for the resident of the community and work towards becoming self-sufficient. Ms. Weiner indicated the first year learning and they were responsible and had money left over so reduced the request the following year, last year was not so good so they are asking for more. Mr. Allmond indicated that's a huge difference and did not want to give them everything they requested, he felt they need to come within their constraints and find a good balance. There was some additional discussion regarding the program and previous donations.

#### **Contribution to Tri-Boro Senior Citizen**

Mr. Gural indicated he received the same dollar amount request of \$6,000.00 dollars, from the outgoing Senior Co- Presidents as the incoming new Senior Club President. Mr. Gural indicated we need the operating agreement and financial from the senior group. Mr. Gural indicated he budgeted the request but the remaining paperwork needed to be completed before the request could be completed. Mrs. Tait indicated the seniors need to provide the additional information before the request can be fulfilled. Mr. Gural indicated all paperwork must be submitted and all will be submitted to the governing body for approval before any funds are disbursed.

#### **Accumulated Sick Leave Compensation**

Mr. Gural indicated the line is used to pay people when they retire.

#### **Celebration of Public Events**

Mr. Gural indicated the Halloween Parade is requesting \$4,000.00 an \$1,000.00 increase over the 2018 request, also we have a request from the fire department for Palmyra Day for \$2,010.00 for the tent, portable toilets and band etc. Mr. Gural indicated the Public events line item is up because money was added for the mural. Mr. Gural also noted we previously approved for outdoor displays, which was used for snowflakes. Mr.

Gural indicated there is \$13,000.00 in the capital budget available for the banners, etc. Ms. Weiner indicated she felt the line item should stay at \$10,000.00 instead on \$11,500.00, Mr. Gural explained how he derived at the number indicated he cut it \$1,000.000 and then added the \$2,500.00 deriving at the \$11,500.00. Mr. Allmond indicated he felt \$10,000.00 would be good. Council agreed and the \$11,500.00 was changed to \$10,000.00.

#### **Utility Expenses & Bulk Purchases**

Mr. Gural stated they next series of line item is the utilities and there are what they are. He however noted the phone system where there is a significant reduction due to the new phones which were installed last year.

#### **Landfill and Solid Waste Disposal Costs**

Mr. Gural indicated were up slightly due to another increase we anticipate.

#### **Statutory Expenditures**

Mr. Gural indicated the next few are statutory and there is a slight reduction in the PFRS however DCRP is up slightly due to additional part-times which were added.

#### **Municipal Court**

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes however it is down a little with Tracy McGill returning her cell phone.

#### **Capital Improvements**

Mr. Gural stated he was suggesting adding an additional \$50,000.00 to the existing \$315,000.00 current capital budget this year.

#### **Municipal Debt Service**

Mr. Gural indicated the \$375,000.00 is principal payments for bond anticipation notes. Mr. Gural explained how pro-active we are in regards to handing debt and the payment of debt. Mr. Gural noted the deferred charges for the upcoming codification project of \$1,900.00 which is done every year over a five year period to provide funding for that project.

#### **Reserve for uncollected taxes**

Mr. Gural noted the \$610,152.41 dollars that must be appropriated for uncollected taxes. Mr. Gural stated these funds must be appropriated for the School taxes and County taxes, as they must be paid whether we collect them or not.

Mr. Gural stated the grand total of appropriations is \$8,752,377.41. Mr. Nehila indicated when we started working with the budget this morning the tax rate increase was 2.1cents, with the cuts and changes made we are currently at 1.625 cents. Mr. Nehila indicated that the yearly cost to the taxpayer would be; when we began \$30.79 now, it is down to \$23.74 increase on the year. Mr. Nehila indicted the percentages are, began at 1.7% and currently at 1.31%. Mr. Gural indicated he felt the percentage should be 1.5% remembering the tax levy cap is 2% that taxes can be raised every year.

Mr. Gural indicated the can be done by keeping the reductions made but reducing the amount of surplus we would use.

Mr. Gural explained when we started today we anticipated the use of total \$1,375,000.00 in surplus. Mr. Gural indicated 950,000.00 for offset of tax levy plus \$375,000.00 to pay against debt and \$50,000.00 for capital improvement appropriations. Mr. Nehila indicated if we use \$10,200.00 less of surplus it would bring us to a 1.49% tax increase or \$27.00 increase on the yearly assessment, which would be \$6.75 on the quarter, or \$2.25

per month. There was some additional discussion regarding use of surplus, our debt service, upcoming projects and their cost and the financial health of the municipality. Ms. Weiner asked when we start putting money into surplus to fund the various projects we decided to do. Mr. Gural indicated we are putting in \$50,000.00 this year. There was some additional discussion regarding capital improvements and the capital budget with Mr. Gural explaining the various components of planned purchases of the capital budget and plan.

### **Sewer Utility Budget Appropriations**

Mr. Gural indicated the salaries are reduced a bit as the superintendent was not replaced and a portion of some salaries are no longer being charged to this account. Mr. Benson also returned his cell phone. Mr. Gural indicated the sewer budget is \$1.8 million and there is a slight reduction 3% or \$60,000.00 the lowest sewer budget since 2015.

### **ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING**

**Ordinance 2019-02** An Ordinance to Exceed Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and To Establish A CAP Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14).

Mayor Arnold asked for a motion to approve Ordinance 2019-02. Mrs. Tait made a motion to approve Ordinance 2019-02. President Howard seconded the motion.

**At the call of the roll, the vote was:**

**AYES: Mr. Allmond, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Tait, Ms. Weiner, President Howard**

**NAYES: None**

**Absent: Mrs. Russell**

**Ordinance 2019-02 was approved on first reading, public hearing to be held April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution 2019-107** Resolution Certifying Compliance of the Governing Body with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Mayor Arnold asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2019-107. President Howard made a motion to approve Resolutions 2019-107. Mrs. Tait seconded the motion.

**At the call of the roll, the vote was:**

**AYES: Mr. Allmond, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Tait, Ms. Weiner, President Howard**

**NAYES: None**

**Resolutions 2019-107 was approved**

**Resolution 2019-108** Resolution Authorizing the Introducing of the 2019 Budget of the Borough of Palmyra.

Mr. Nehila indicated the 2019 Budget as introduced would be an increase in the tax rate of just under two cents or 1.846 cents which is a yearly increase to the average homeowner of \$27.00 or 1.49% over tax levy of last year. (\$6.75 per quarter or \$2.25 per month)

Mayor Arnold asked for a motion to approve Resolutions 2019-108. Mrs. Tait made a motion to approve Resolutions 2019-108. President Howard seconded the motion.

**At the call of the roll, the vote was:**

**AYES: Mr. Allmond, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Tait, Ms. Weiner, President Howard**

**NAYES: None**

**Resolutions 2019-108 was approved on first reading; second reading and public hearing will be held on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Arnold then asked for a motion to open for Public Comment. Mrs. Tait made a motion to open the public portion for comments. President Howard second the motion

All members present voted in favor of the motion

**Mrs. Veitenheimer – Rowland Avenue** – Mrs. Veitenheimer asked what is was the average home value used to calculate the tax rate. Mr. Nehila indicated it is \$147,580.00. There was some additional discussion regarding values and how much would be paid by whom.

No one else from the public wishing to be heard, President Howard made a motion to close the public portion, Mrs. Tait second the motion.

**All members present voted in favor of the motion.**

President Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Tait second the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM**

Respectfully Submitted

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk