

Borough of Palmyra
2022 Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes
8:30 am, Saturday, March 26th, 2022

Mayor Tait called the budget workshop meeting to order at 8:35 am.

Mayor Tait requested a roll call:

At the call of the roll:

Present: Mr. Brandon Allmond, Dr. Laura Cloud, Mrs. Michelle McCann, Mrs. Bernadette Russell, President Timothy Howard, Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait

Absent: Mrs. Farrah Jenkins

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Tait then read the following open public meetings statement into the record:

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Mayor Tait read to following statement into the record:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Public Notice of this meeting been given by the Municipal Clerk in the following manner:

- Posting written notice on the official bulletin board at the Palmyra Borough Hall on January 5th, 2022.
- Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times, and the Courier Post Newspaper on January 10th, 2022.
- Notice to All Council Members.

BUDGET WORKSESSION

Mr. Gural went on to budget appropriations explaining all the various columns labeled and how they affect the 2022 budget. Mr. Gural suggested that because the Fire Department had another commitment, we could start with those line items so they will be able to go. Council agreed. He then began with the Fire Department explaining the various categories noting if it was the same or if a notable change had been made:

Aid to Volunteer Fire Company

Mr. Gural explained that he budgeted \$20,000.00. Mr. Gural noted that they request this year is a three-year contract with a \$2,500.00 increase each year. Mr. Gural stated the lease agreement to store and take care of our equipment, began at \$15,000.00 it was increased to \$17,500.00 last year. Mr. Allmond indicated he did not

understand the \$2,500.00 increase each year. Mr. Zimmerman stated the amount given is used to cover the utilities of the building each year and they are still upside with that number. There was discussion regarding the lease agreement, annual increases, the fire company spending. It was decided to fund the \$20,000.00 this year with a one-year lease. Mr. Allmond advised the fire company to begin to look at creative means for additional funding.

Aid to Volunteer Ambulance Company

Mr. Gural noted we give the same donation to the Ambulance Association \$3,500.00 annually per the agreement signed in 2019.

Fire Department

Mr. Gural indicated this budget is up due to the potential of hiring two full-time firefighters. Mr. Gural indicated this is starting a new department requiring management, supervision, policies, and procedures etc. There was additional discussion regarding the impact on next year's budget. The 29,000.00 budgeted this year is to get it started, noting there could be additional funds required depending upon when the people are hired.

Emergency Management

Mr. Gural indicated there is a meaningful change in OEM's line item (reserve for emergencies) as it was decreased \$20,000.00 because we do not anticipate spending as much on covid-19 expenses as we have in the past. Mr. Gural noted that \$5,000.00 was left in that item.

Length of Service Award Program –(LOSAP)

Mr. Gural noted that the exact amount, \$12,305.00 approved at the last council meeting is what is budgeted for the year.

Mr. Gural noted the single largest expense are the employees and expenses related to employees, such as health benefits, pension contributions to PERS, PFRS, DCRAP, social security. Mr. Gural noted the 2% increase built into all the salary line items.

General Administration

Mr. Gural noted the Community Center scheduling coordinator's salary is now included in general administration which accounts for the 16.81% increase change in General Administration- Salaries & Wages

Mayor & Council Miscellaneous

Mr. Gural indicated the notable change in this section is the additional expense of \$3,000.00 for the welcome packets. Mr. Allmond expressed concern about the additional expense for the welcome packets. There was additional discussion regarding the welcome packets, and it was suggested that the information included in the packet be placed on the website and a "Welcome to Palmyra" page/section be created. After discussion it was decided to reduce the public relations line by the \$3,000.00.

Borough Clerk

Mr. Gural noted the vacant Deputy Clerk position and the need for it, noting that the funds to hire had been removed from the budget. Mr. Gural noted the increase in the budget for Accuscan record retention software needed for all record retention of the Borough of Palmyra.

Elections

Mr. Gural explained the 60% momentous change in the cost for elections, noting the cost is determined by the county and we must pay it.

Financial Administration

Mr. Gural noted a slight increase in Financial Admin- Salaries & Wages, as the finance clerk is now full time in that department and the previous person was part-time.

Audit Services

Mr. Gural indicated no significant changes in this section.

Collection of Taxes

Mr. Gural noted a significant overall increase in this section, mostly due to salaries and training.

Assessment of Taxes

Mr. Gural indicated assessment of taxes is always a moving target as we are at the mercy of the county.

Legal Services & Costs

Mr. Gural indicated legal services was down \$22,000.00.

Engineering Services

Mr. Gural indicated no significant changes in this section.

Grants & Planning

Mr. Gural indicated this line item was up significantly. Mr. Gural stated we applied for a number of grants and received them, but they come at a cost. Line item up 46.15%. There was additional discussion and line item remained the same.

Land Use

Mr. Gural indicated no significant changes in this section.

Construction Code Official

Mr. Gural indicated there are a number of changes coming in this section. Mr. Gural indicated all the positions are required for that department. Mr. Gural stated we are currently looking for an electrical subcode and are hoping to have that position recommendation from Mrs. Kilmer soon.

Code Enforcement

Mr. Gural indicate the new code enforcement officer will be starting April 1st, 2022, and there are no significant changes to this item.

Insurance

Mr. Gural indicated he was going to change and reduce the Group Health Insurance line by \$20,000.00 to 845,000.00. Council agreed.

Unemployment Insurances

Mr. Gural indicated no significant changes in this section.

Police Department

Mr. Gural stated this category is up 5.50% mostly driven by contractual salaries of officers hired since 2011. Mr. Gural noted the Chief requested a digital evidence technician and police clerk however the budget does not include those positions. Mr. Gural noted the three-parking enforcement field patrol officers to again be hired. There was discussion regarding the number of officers' need. Council agreed to the hiring of three. Mr. Gural also noted that the budget includes a seventeen member police department, eighteen being requested by the Chief. There was additional discussion regarding the effects on next years budget by what is in this year's budget.

Mr. Gural noted the \$10,000.00 reduction in other expenses of the police department.

School Crossing Guards

Mr. Gural noted the reduction in the crossing guard's salaries, stating that we are shorthand but still actively seeking crossing guards.

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 salaries are down 5% mostly because a number of the older employees have moved on or retired and although we replaced them the new employees' salaries are lower. Mr. Gural noted the \$10,000.00 increase in the cost of salt.

Solid Waste Collection

Mr. Gural indicated this is stable for now however next year we are looking at a potential major increase. New contracts must be negotiated.

Public Buildings and Grounds

Mr. Gural indicated the budget reflects bringing back one employee to help with the scheduling etc. at Legion Field and the hiring of the seasonal employee to help with the opening/closing and cleaning of the restrooms at the fields.

Shade Tree

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes.

Vehicle Maintenance

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes.

Condominium Services Law

Mr. Gural indicated MAACCS is up significantly. Mr. Gural noted the complexes and the shared services agreement with Maple Shade up 34% which is contractual.

Board of Health

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes except that the Board of Health Coordinator has been appointed.

Animal Control

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes, it is contractual.

Parks & Recreation

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes.

Education Functions

Mr. Gural indicated this is a donation to the Riverton Library in the amount of \$500.00, which is outside CAP.

Community Youth Recreation

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes.

Contribution to Tri-Boro Senior Citizen

Mr. Gural indicated there are no change and no request has been made.

Accumulated Sick Leave Compensation

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

Utility Expenses & Bulk Purchases

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes.

Gasoline

There was discussion regarding the rising costs and the increase placed in the budget. Mr. Gural noted that currently there is really nothing we can do regarding the costs.

Landfill and Solid Waste Disposal

Mr. Gural stated Land Fill Fees are up significantly. We have budgeted \$30,000.00 more than last years appropriation and this is in addition to the trash collection fees.

Statutory Expenditures

Mr. Gural indicated the statutory expenditure for PERS is stable however there is a significant increase in the PFRS due to contractual obligations. Mr. Gural noted there are no pension payments built in this year's budget for the firefighters under consideration however next year this will increase as that will be required.

Municipal Court

Mr. Gural indicated there are no significant changes

Public Defender

Mr. Gural indicated this is a new line item, as the public is no longer paying for their services, and we must provide and pay for their services.

Capital Improvements

Mr. Gural stated he was reducing the capital improvements by \$25,000.00.

Reserve for uncollected taxes

Mr. Gural indicated the reserve for uncollected taxes is \$643,913.01, which when added to the budget makes our budget total \$9,157,701.01. Mr. Gural again noted the use of \$1,350,000.00 from surplus to offset the tax levy. Mr. Gural stated the average home is assessed at \$148,517.00 and with that assessment the average homeowner would pay \$62.63 or 3.22%. or 3.77 cents on the tax rate.

Sewer Utility Budget Appropriations

Mr. Gural stated sewer is up significantly, but the increases are mostly driven by the contracts which we solicit and award, noting debris removal is up \$100,000.00. Mr. Gural also noted the major cost with the rental of the generator while we are waiting for parts. Mr. Gural noted the potential of going to usage billing instead of flat fee for the second half of this year.

Mr. Gural then explained the 2022 Surplus Worksheet.

Mr. Gural then went on to explain to 5-year Capital Improvement Plan and new requests for capital improvements or projects. There was discussion regarding debt service and future payments.

There was discussion regarding the vehicles on hand, their condition and new vehicle purchases during 2022.

Ms. Condo explained the Federal government awarded municipalities additional funding and new rules as to how that funding could be used. Ms. Condo suggested the funding be used to offset the cost of our road improvement projects. Mr. Gural agreed noting that to include it in the budget could have a devastating effect on the budget as this is a time funding that will not be available in the future.

Mr. Gural also noted the costs for the records retention building which we are planning to construct where the on Public Road pump station was. Mr. Gural indicated the building construction we have pushed off until next year however felt the design portion could be completed this year. There was discussion regarding the building, the cost of currently renting a storage space and all the records seen in various areas in the Borough. Mr. Gural noted the replacement of the turf field had also been moved to next year.

After a lengthy discussion it was decided to approve the 5-year capital improvement plan as presented, noting additional discussion would be had later regarding specific purchases.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open for Public Comment. Mrs. Russell 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 the average home price was. Mr. Nehila indicated it is \$148,517.00. Ms. Veitenheimer asked why the Borough still had a Board of Health and the expenses that go with it. Mr. Gural stated we are required to have a Board of Health and there is communication between the County and the Borough regarding different issues, which someone needs to accept the incoming information and disseminate it to those required to know.

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

All members present voted in favor of the motion.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to approve the following resolutions,

Resolution 2022-102 Resolution Certifying Compliance of the Governing Body with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Resolution 2022-103 Resolution Authorizing the Introducing of the 2022 Budget of the Borough of Palmyra.
(Public hearing to be held May 2nd, 2022)

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolutions 2022-102 and Resolution 2022-103. President Howard seconded the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

AYES: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell, President Howard

NAYES: None

Resolutions 2022-102 and 2022-103 were approved

President Howard expressed his gratitude to Mr. Gural, Mr. Nehilla, and the staff for getting everything in place and keeping council updated along the way.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tait requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Russell made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

President Howard second the motion.

All members present voted in favor of the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 12:04 PM

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk

Approved: May 16th, 2022