

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP REGULAR SESSION APRIL 28, 2022

The Township Committee met on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 295 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road, Chesterfield, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor Jeremy Liedtka at 6:30 p.m. followed by a flag salute and moment of silence.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Present: Belinda Blazic, Denise Koetas-Dale, Jeremy Liedtka and Michael Russo

Absent: Lido Panfili

Also present: Thomas A. Sahol, Township Administrator; Scott Miccio, Township Attorney; Robert Marrone, Township Auditor; Caryn M. Hoyer, Township Clerk; Rachel Fryc, Deputy Clerk and Troy Ulshafer, Public Works Foreman.

The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was read and compliance noted.

AGENDA MATTER(S) REQUIRING RECUSAL(S)

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Russo to approve the April 14th minutes. Voice vote – All Ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

None

ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2022-7

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD AMENDING CHAPTER 146 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHESTERFIELD TO ESTABLISH RULES AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO THE DOG PARK, TENNIS COURTS AND PICKLEBALL COURTS

Motion by Mr. Russo seconded by Ms. Blazic to open the meeting to public comment on Ordinance 2022-7. Hearing no comment, Mr. Russo made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to close public comment. Motion by Mr. Russo seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to adopt Ordinance 2022-7.

Roll Call - YEAS: Blazic, Koetas-Dale, Liedtka, Russo

2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING

Robert Marrone, Township Auditor gave a presentation on the 2022 budget prepared by CFO Wendy Wulstein who was unable to attend the meeting. He stated that of the total amount of yearly taxes paid per taxable property, Chesterfield Township only received 11.78% in 2021. He reviewed the breakdown of the taxes. He stated there are no new significant surplus revenue generators like in the past. One possibility is the proposed Crestwood development for 20 homes. He stated that the use of surplus continues to be carefully examined and a new multi-year projection analysis is underway. The examination includes build-out potential of the PVD zone and the corresponding reduction of added assessments that benefit the yearly surplus balance. He reviewed the development process of preparing the budget. He acknowledged the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) members Vibor Batra, James Codella and Shreekant Dhopte. Their main recommendations included: 1. Gradual hiring of Police Officers and prepare for future leadership 2. Adding DPW staff to reduce the need for outsourcing land maintenance and snow removal and prepare for future leadership 3. Lease versus purchase of capital equipment 4. Invest in AV equipment and encourage participation at Township meetings. He acknowledged the Governing Body takes all Budget Advisory suggestions into consideration when making budget decisions. Mr. Marrone explained the Appropriation and Levy CAPS. He stated that every year since 2005, the Township has requested a waiver of the Appropriation CAP Law. The waiver is for police salary & wages and ambulance service. The waiver was approved again this year in the amount of \$723,000.00 by the Local Finance Board at an April 13th virtual meeting. The Township plans to address the Appropriation CAP if and when a referendum is needed for the Levy Cap. This budget addresses the tax rate so that large spikes do not occur between years. Current forecasts show that the cap referendum may occur in 2024-2025. The Township Committee remains focused on surplus to spread all increases as far apart as possible. Mr. Marrone explained this budget uses \$160,500.00 more surplus than last year. The amount to be raised by taxation is \$3,303,413.00. He explained the different services and budget areas as well as shared services. Mr. Sahol listed the outside organizations and encouraged the public to volunteer and support them. He noted some of the projects that were completed this past year. They are as follows: Improvements to Fenton Lane Soccer Fields and Storm Water Infrastructure, Demolition of Old Municipal Building, Paving of Portions of Sykesville Road, Improvements to Baseball Field and Tot-Lot at Crosswicks Community Association, Modifications to Dog Park, and Restrooms at Fenton Lane Recreation Building. Future projects include: Improvements to Cricket Field (ongoing), Tennis Wall & Pickleball Court, Improvements to Fenton Lane Soccer Fields, Improvements to Storm Basins and Storm Water Infrastructure (ongoing), White Pine Road Paving, Completion of Sykesville Paving. Mr. Sahol stated that all future projects are considered in conjunction with grant opportunities.

The 2022 proposed tax rate is 39.3 cents which is an increase of 2.86 cents over 2021. The average assessed home of \$391,875 will pay \$1,540.07 of local purpose tax. That equates to a \$113.08 annual increase to the average assessed home.

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Russo to open the public hearing on the 2022 budget. All were in favor.

Paul Cincotta, 15 Gallop Way asked what is the percentage for the \$113.08 increase. Mr. Marrone replied approximately 8%. Mr. Cincotta asked about the need to go out to referendum and the process. Mr. Marrone explained that as we need to spend money in excess of the CAP we rely on surplus or other revenues to support it. As the surplus goes down there is less to use. There has not been an issue with the surplus for the last 17 years. If we do not have the surplus needed to cover the excess, the State will require us to fix it or reduce the budget. Options to do this are to ask the public to increase spending and raising of taxes by referendum or cut services.

Shreekant Dhopte, 18 Donlonton Circle was happy to be part of the Budget Advisory Committee. He thanked Mr. Marrone for presenting the budget. He requested to see the process of how our surplus depleted over the past 17 years and asked when we are headed for a referendum. Ms. Koetas-Dale asked Mr. Marrone if he can show the surplus going back 10 years when doing the forecast. Mr. Liedtka also asked Mr. Marrone to produce a document showing how surplus is generated. Mr. Marrone stated he will make that part of the financial analysis he is preparing.

Brett Anderson, 62 Brookdale Way asked if he heard correctly that there is \$700,000 out of CAP this year that is to be covered by surplus. Mr. Marrone replied yes. Mr. Anderson asked if the amount that we have to spend out of the CAP this year can be covered by anticipated revenues. Mr. Marrone replied no. Mr. Anderson asked if a large influx of construction would be a one-time increase in surplus. Mr. Marrone responded that those funds will go to regenerate the surplus used. Mr. Anderson asked what are the expenses outside of the CAP. Mr. Marrone responded they are the police salary & wages and ambulance services.

Agnus Marsala, 42 Cromwell Drive asked if the Natural Resource Inventory is separate from the Task Force ongoing monitoring. Ms. Koetas-Dale replied that the Natural Resource Inventory has nothing to do with the Pipeline Task Force. Ms. Marsala asked if the Task Force will still have their budget. Ms. Koetas-Dale replied yes. Ms. Marsala asked if the storm water infrastructures that are listed in the budget completed or not. Mr. Liedtka answered some are completed but they don't go away. They are always ongoing.

Hearing no further comments Mr. Russo made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to close public hearing. All were in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Ms. Blazic to approve Resolutions 2022-4-8. Roll Call - YEAS: Blazic, Koetas-Dale, Liedtka, Russo

RESOLUTION 2022-4-8

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE 2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Ms. Blazic made a motion seconded by Mr. Russo to approve Resolution 2022-4-9. Mr. Sahol explained this would make us covered in the event of a cyber issue. Voice vote - All were in favor.

RESOLUTION 2022-4-9

RESOLUTION ADOPTING TECHNOLOGY RISK MANAGEMENT STANDARDS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE NEW JERSEY MUNICIPAL EXCESS LIABILITY JOINT INSURANCE FUND'S CYBER RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN'S TIER THREE REQUIREMENTS

TREASURERS BILL LIST

Mr. Russo made a motion seconded by Ms. Koetas-Dale to approve the bill list. Voice vote – All Ayes

REPORTS & DISCUSSION

Old Business – Basin Bubblers

Troy Ulshafer reported that he forwarded a memo to the Township Committee for their review. The Township Committee agreed to move forward with the basin bubblers.

Ms. Koetas Dale thanked the staff, Green Team and community for helping to make the Green Fun Fair a success.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Koetas-Dale made a motion seconded by Mr. Russo to open the meeting to the public. All were in favor.

Lorrie Thier, 40 Foulkes Lane agreed that the Green Fair was a great event and well attended. She asked the Township Committee to take down the OYCC presentation that is on the Township Website since the Committee has agreed not to move forward with the warehouse. Ms. Koetas-Dale agreed that it is misleading. Mr. Liedtka asked for a vote to keep or remove the OYCC presentation from the website. Ms. Blazic, Mr. Liedtka and Mr. Russo wanted it to remain on the website.

Ms. Koetas-Dale wanted it removed. Ms. Thier asked where the proposed Crestwood development is located. Mr. Liedtka responded it is 23 homes off of Fenton Lane that have been approved for 15 years. Ms. Thier asked how an organization gets a proposal in front of the Township Committee. The Township solicitor said he will look into that.

Paul Cincotta, 15 Gallop Way asked if we are moving forward with the warehouse or not. Ms. Koetas-Dale replied we are not moving forward with the warehouse. The Committee voted not to pursue it over a year ago. Mr. Cincotta replied that if we don't go forward with the warehouse, our taxes will go up based on no surplus.

Brett Anderson, 62 Brookdale Way does not agree to leave the warehouse presentation up on the Township website. He said that the warehouse will not solve the surplus problem.

Maryann Springer, 441 Ellisdale Road asked why we added the new stop sign in Crosswicks creating a 4-way stop. She said it is a hazard and creating traffic. She is concerned it will create accidents especially in the bad weather on the hill. Mr. Liedtka said that he 100% agrees with her and suggested she contact the County Commissioners to voice her opinion since it is a County Road.

Hearing no further comment a motion to close public comment was made by Ms. Koetas-Dale and seconded by Ms. Blazic. All were in favor.

Mr. Russo clarified why he voted to keep the warehouse presentation on the Township website stating that even though the building of the warehouse was tabled a year ago it may come around again and says the presentation is an educational tool for the residents.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made Ms. Blazic and seconded by Mr. Russo. All were in favor. Meeting Adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Caryn M. Hoyer, RMC
Township Clerk