

WORK SESSION MINUTES
March 08, 2016

The Work Session of the Town Council of the Town of Phillipsburg was held on Tuesday, March 08, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 675 Corliss Avenue.

Councilman Fey read the required Open Public Meeting Act Statement.

ROLL CALL

Council Members: Fey, Lutz, Davis, Piazza

Council President: Tersigni

TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Mayor Ellis, Clerk Kleiner,
Attorney Moscagiuri

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joe Meyner, 392 South Main Street, I am sure that I will get a judgmental answer regarding the contract and the police, but, I would like you to for your own judgements and one piece of information. The Median income, average considers not voting on the increase in the SOA. This is before the facts.

Councilman Piazza stated that this was addressed

Councilman Davis stated that 1.85% increase was tabled.

Joe Meyner stated the Chief's

Council President Tersigni stated tabled to address another issue.

Mayor Ellis stated that yes we are addressing something

Joe Meyner stated I want to be clear

Mayor Ellis in Warren County hard to find comparable

Joe Meyner the Town of Phillipsburg average is not

Mayor Ellis stated Phillipsburg is the largest in the County

Council President Tersigni stated we have 38 Police

Mayor Ellis stated we would have to go beyond into other Counties

Joe Meyner one mid-range vs another mid-range

Councilman Fey stated its not apples to apples – Allamuchy Township – heavy populated Towns

Joe Meyner stated judgement by Mr. Wenner, is a personal judgement

Councilman Fey stated past Council has not been as fibrinous in the past 10 years

Council President Tersigni stated last contract 4% -6% raises end of contract

Joe Meyner stated only the upper echelon

Council President Tersigni stated that this one situation I will support that Ordinance

Councilman Piazza stated we can take suggestions under advisement

Mayor Ellis stated that some of this is contractual if we send back we can't predict the outcomes

Robert Merlo, CFO stated that so far the agreements been amicable

Mayor Ellis stated caught few things and we have done due diligence the Budget is less than a penny increase, We all share your concerns, I agree with Councilman Piazza and we can take it into consideration.

Joe Meyner I didn't realize you looked at it seriously

Mayor Ellis gets your digs in to them now.

Budget Meeting

Council President Tersigni stated that he had a discussion with Councilman Davis and Mayor Ellis to put the \$44,000 off for another time and five the crossing guards another \$1.50 raise – salaries I will support for the record. The Town debt is paid down five million dollars and six years we paid down fourteen million to nine million decreased interest percent and refinanced for lower rates. Raises to the crossing guards are fair and shows a compromise. The information put out for the budget and I support it.

Councilman Fey stated in 2009 \$14,142,263.00 now it is 9,940,631.00 we are going in the right direction we are doing more with less. We are tax payers too, these decisions are difficult but I believe it is in the best interest, to support the crossing guards. Not sure how it affects the budget but it is about \$8100.00. On another note paying \$300,000 for a pumper truck, maybe that can wait. I support the citizens and the fire company half of that added funds and going in the right direction and staying level. Congratulations to the Mayor and CFO Merlo, and Clerk Kleiner and Council on this. Maybe we can relocate funds for what is best for the people. Thank you Mr. Merlo and Mayor Ellis.

Council President Tersigni stated Congratulations also to the CFO and Mayor Ellis

Councilman Lutz questioned the regular pickup truck being used for?

Mayor Ellis stated community service workers, a grant that lasts several years, but once the grant runs out what happens to the truck

Councilman Lutz I think that the shift in the crosswalks needs to be fixed, I know were on a tight budget but maybe we can move some money around

Council President Tersigni stated safety is a concern

Bob Merlo, CFO, stated that we have existing funds, adding \$250,000 road improvements

Councilman Lutz maybe we can add more garbage cans – cleaning up down town.

Councilman Fey stated we went to three river stadium and every 40 yards was a can in Pittsburg

Mayor Ellis stated that people go to the cans

Council President Tersigni stated the request is well received

Councilman Fey stated can't we use some of the recycling grants monies

Bob Merlo stated that it is very restrictive, we have \$100,000 recycling grant

Mayor Ellis stated maybe the compactor cans

Council President Tersigni stated we can ask for cans to be put

Joe Meyner stated Delaware River Park

Councilman Piazza asked about another housing inspector two additional part times

Mayor Ellis stated Adam Kita has a full time job now

Bob Merlo stated we put in for one full time property maintenance inspector

Mayor Ellis stated makes sense if split money if interested in one part time

Councilman Fey stated no benefits

Mayor Ellis stated maybe he would work Saturday or Sunday and catch people on the weekends other than red stickers. Any code inspectors on the weekends? Bob – Vicki responded no

Councilman Piazza stated it is a good job for weekend or early morning

Councilman Fey stated we should get Kevin's thoughts

Council President Tersigni stated I agree with that

Councilman Piazza did we reserve sale of municipal assets to help keep the tax rate down.

Bob Merlo stated \$150,000

Councilman Fey stated foreclose and keeps funds to stabilize taxes

Mayor Ellis stated that currently Sandy Callery has collected 97% of the taxes last year was 95%

Bob Merlo stated chapter 159's brought the budget up.

Councilman Davis asked that Lori's salary be moved out of the Business Administrators line for Salary.

Mayor Ellis stated yes move Lori's salary all to the Clerk's Office

Councilman Davis stated can we get a list of Capital improvements

Mayor Ellis stated engineering is putting together a Capital Plan to know, and have a strategic plan, roads, utilities etc.

Councilman Davis stated in Administration there is \$25,000 line item what is that for

Bob Merlo stated that we are reworking and reduced that to \$15,000 quote on a new server, and with the pip trimmed back we need the money for the Water main line.

Mayor Ellis stated making way around the building one of our servers caught on fire. We are also looking to go electronic the paper time sheet needs to be submitted electronically

Bob Merlo stated current Payroll Company

Councilman Davis questioned if provide a local document server

Bob Merlo stated we don't have an IT person

Councilman Davis stated what about the Tractor for DPW is using now

Mayor Ellis stated that it is 20 years old and a slope mover, flail motor, a new one is a benefit flair back and side high grass on the banks

Councilman Davis the DPW has pickup trucks – maybe we should remove it and get a used van

Mayor Ellis stated can we borrow from Mike

Council President Tersigni stated unemployment

Councilman Davis said we just can't raise the salary so they can collect unemployment

Bob Merlo stated never thought about it, but my concern was if they raise the minimum do we keep raising their rate

Councilman Lutz state I agree

Council President Tersigni stated I think \$1.50 is appropriate

Councilman Davis questioned the Tax appeals

Bob Merlo stated we put money aside for tax appeals \$600,000, if it runs out we take from fund balance, Craig keeps an eye on his budget. We have \$500,000 set aside for appeals

Councilman Fey said so much!

Bob Merlo stated line item reserve for uncollected taxes, if not spent it is used to compensate for those who don't pay their taxes

Mayor Ellis stated do we have a list of unpaid taxes – we are having the tax sale June 22, or 27th

Councilman Piazza we still have to pay the County and School taxes

Mayor Ellis stated the County won and now in Superior Court, the County to pay and also the attorney fees.

Councilman Fey said we pay open space tax 5.7 million

Councilman Piazza stated do we have some county roads and county prosecutor; they gave some money to the Roseberry house grants the last six years from this fund

Mayor Ellis I don't believe we have gotten our fair share, not we have not

Councilman Piazza in Municipality any entity – can apply they have several grants every other year for non profit

Mayor Ellis we need a strategic plan they are huge with grants

Council President Tersigni I have been the Vice Chair and it is still up to the freeholders, but they make the decision, but the Roseberry house needs to apply for the grant this year

Mayor Ellis stated it is an issue and we want our fair share

Councilman Piazza stated that is a good point

Councilman Fey stated we need to follow up on that conversation with Mayor Ellis

Councilman Piazza stated it is an applicable grant 2016

ICE HOUSE DISCUSSION

Attorney Wenner spoke to Council President Tersigni and Mayor Ellis regarding postponement of the Ice house.

Council President Tersigni stated Mr. Hernandez has worked and take down the water tower; I believe he should make sure it is secure by fencing and manicure the property to clean it up.

Councilman Fey stated best secure and clean it up

Councilman Piazza stated I agree with both of you he has done a lot, I would like his number and email address

Mayor Ellis stated cyclone fence should be put so that the hazard until the building is completed.

Councilman Lutz state it is expensive and the tunnels, should be fenced off, and cleaned up there is a lot of land there

Councilman Fey stated the structure should be secured and the tunnels safe

Councilman Piazza is the building stabilized

Mayor Ellis stated if it is dangerous, the openings should be closed off we don't want to have a hazard with the openings.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Lutz made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Davis seconded the motion. 5- 0 vote.