

Borough of Ben Avon Heights

Wednesday October 25, 2017 – Special Budget Meeting Minutes

The meeting of The Finance Committee was held at Shannopin Country Club at 7:00 P.M.

Present:

Council Members: Berardi, Cuteri, Eadie, Davis (arrived at 7:21), Isherwood, Radcliffe

Mayor: Dismukes

Secretary/Treasurer: Raves

Residents: Jason Brown, 8 Lynton Lane; Lee Hebert, 3 Penhurst Road; Steven Stiller, 21 New Brighton Road.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Cuteri:

The committee reviewed the 5-year budget income and expenses sheets prepared by Mrs. Raves using the same tax rate of 7.95 mills.

Starting with the income sheet, Mr. Cuteri asked what the \$10,000 line on the income sheet was, Mrs. Raves indicated that was the anticipated amount left over from the 2017 budget that will be left in the General Fund and transferred to the 2018 budget. Usually, that money is transferred to the reserve fund; however, due to anticipated projects, it will remain in the General Fund.

Several questions were posed by Mr. Brown regarding crossing guard fees and the fire relief. It was explained that the school district pays half the crossing guard fees and that the State gives the Borough money to aid the volunteer fire company with their retirement fund which is then transferred to our Volunteer Fire Company.

Mr. Brown questioned what the Sewage Fund was and why it keeps growing. Mr. Cuteri explained the due to the Wet Weather Consent Decree, and the future impacts of cost for future consent decree requirements the County advised the Borough that we would be in a better position to receive consideration if we are showing reserved funds for Phase II. There was discussion regarding the history of Council's direction not to use this account to pay for maintenance work on the Sewers. Mayor Dismukes stated that having money in the general budget is important so we do not deplete the Sewer Account, stating that regional sewage collection and treatment will be outside of our Borough and that it is in our interest to collect as much money as possible. Budget Committee agreed to leave \$10,000 in the budget for this line item.

Mr. Brown then asked what the Sinking Fund was for. Mrs. Raves explained that our AIM Loan requires this fund and is used to transfer loan money onto our books and then pay out to contractors when work is completed.

The anticipated 2018 income is at \$549,604.

Mr. Cuteri moved to review the Expense sheets of the budget. Questions came up regarding the ACORD Park payment and it was explained that is BAHB's share of park operation costs.

Fire Service payment was review. Avalon Fire Company asked BAHB to sign a 10-year contract, without increase, which enabled them to purchase new equipment. The remainder of that line item is for rental of fire hydrants and the Fire Relief Fund described in the Revenue section of the meeting.

Mr. Davis entered the meeting and asked if we were raising taxes. The answer was not at this time.

Expenses were reviewed by line item.

Discussion took place regarding the upcoming 2018 Columbia Gas Project including the increasing of fees for the solicitor and the engineers even though C.G. stated that they will pay all fees, it is likely we will have additional costs. The committee agreed.

Planning Commission line item was discussed as was the Planning Account. Mr. Cuteri explained why we need these monies for the Multi Municipal Comprehensive Plan and the legal fees for updating the Zoning Ordinance in the next year. Mr. Cuteri and Mayor Dismukes reviewed the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan and how it is necessary to the Borough in support of our zoning.

Trash Collection was reviewed for the residents in attendance. It was noted that BAHB is one of the only communities who pay for garbage collection as opposed to residents paying individually.

Deficiency Correction will be renamed Wet Weather in the future.

Misc. Health and Sanitation will be renamed Sewer Cleaning.

The Committee requested that the line item for Health and Sanitation, Consulting Engineers be changed to \$2,500 from \$5,000. During this time, Mr. Cuteri reviewed Phase I of the Consent Decree stating that its purpose was to reduce ground water from infiltrating the sanitary sewer system. The Borough measured our outflow years ago before the Phase I work was started and now we are currently monitoring the outflow so we can compare the difference between the old sewer system condition and the current sewer system condition after all renovations and corrections. This testing takes approximately 6 months and is underway.

It was discussed that Chief Micklos, Chief of Ohio Township Police Department, requested that Council consider budgeting for enhanced surveillance cameras at our major intersections. Mayor Dismukes noted that the Chief does not make requests and he strongly suggested we consider this work. Discussion took place regarding the intersections considered for this project as Perrysville/ New Brighton intersection and the second at Oxford / New Brighton. Mrs. Raves had inserted the estimated cost for one intersection into the budget at \$18,000.00. This cost does not include adding new poles for the cameras. (If the needed the price will increase.) The Committee decided to add \$36,000 to the budget for Council's consideration to add cameras to both intersections as well as budget for internet service and power to the cameras. Mr. Cuteri indicated this would enhance security at both the bus stops so we should consider doing both intersections.

Recreation line item was discussed. Having the tennis court cleaned plus the painting pickle ball lines, annual maintenance and other work are part of the \$10,500-line item for Improvements.

The Committee asked to reduce the Park Clean up line item to \$500 based on prior year expenses.

Streets: The upcoming Columbia Gas project was discussed in detail noting that curb work will not be included in their project. In 2018 roadwork will not include new curbs; however, this does not mean that the Borough is not planning to continue the installation of concrete curbs in our future work. \$11,000 was inserted for base repair on Briar Cliff as estimated by our engineers. The Committee asked Mrs. Raves to ask the engineers to verify all roads affected by the Columbia Gas project to determine if any additional base repair is needed. Mayor Dismukes recommended we add \$100,000 from the Reserve Fund to resurface Cambridge Road which is in very bad condition. Since the equipment will be in the Borough it will make this work more affordable. Mrs. Raves will ask the engineers to review Cambridge Road and give recommendations regarding costing to repave. The committee recommended we budget \$155,000 on the Street Repaving line. The committee asked Mrs. Raves to review how the money from Columbia Gas would be handled with the auditor to verify that we can propose the budget as discussed. (Placing the funds estimated for CG's work with a contingency.

The additional work on Cambridge as well as the Columbia Gas work will provide much needed repairs and buy the borough time to reduce debt before we need to do additional major road reconstruction in the borough.

Mr. Brown asked for the debt service information. Mrs. Raves showed him the amortization schedules for the loans.

Street Repairs line will be reduced to \$7,500

Under Streets, signs will not have their own line and will be added to the Street Maintenance Line item so the line will total \$7000. The committee asked to eliminate the \$2,000 for legal for loans since we have included that in the general government section.

Expenditures are now budgeted at \$668,804. Difference of \$143,717 will be withdrawn from the Reserve Account to balance this budget.

Finance Committee will recommend a 7.95% millage rate (the same as 2017) to Council at the November meeting with the intention to withdraw \$143,717.00 from the Reserve Account.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

The next monthly meeting is Tuesday November 14th at 7:00 at Avalon Volunteer Fire Station.

Submitted by Denise Raves, Secretary