

ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP COUNCIL – FEBRUARY 16, 2021

SPECIAL (BUDGET) MEETING MINUTES

The Special (Budget) Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Rockaway was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. This meeting was held remotely/electronically using the platform Webex Meetings and commenced at 6:05PM

Council President led those present in the flag salute.

Council President called for a moment of silence to remember the service and sacrifices of the armed service members who protect our Nation and the first responders who protect our neighborhoods.

Roll Call was taken for attendance.

Present: Council Members Kelley, Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett and Jackson.

Present from Administration: Mayor Michael Puzio, Attorney Perrone, Ms. Patricia Seger, Mr. David Dyer, Ms. Lisa Palmieri, Mr. Al Knoth, Mr. Gene Garabrant and Mr. Jeffrey Heintzelman.

Council President stated "This meeting was advertised in the Daily Record and the Star Ledger, the official newspapers for the Township of Rockaway on February 5, 2021. Notice was posted on the official bulletin boards of Rockaway Township."

Discussion of the Proposed 2021 Budget:

Council Member Kritz thanked Ms. Patricia Seger, Mr. Bryan Coward and Ms. Lisa Palmieri for their assistance and announced that there are funds available to purchase external defibrillators for seventeen recreation locations.

Council Member Salberg questioned whether the Administration was aware of the five current lawsuits filed against the Township by Council Member Kelley when budgeting for legal fees for 2021.

Motion was made by Council Member Salberg, seconded by Council Member Quinn to reopen section 1 of the budget to discuss legal fees.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 9 (Kelley, Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 0

Motion carries.

There was discussion concerning whether there was an anticipated cost of these lawsuits.

There was discussion concerning how legal fees are funded in various budget line items and that the Township should try to avoid needing to add an Emergency Appropriation to the budget later in the year. Ms. Palmieri explained that Emergency Appropriations result in a budget increase the following year.

Attorney Perrone recommended that the nature of the lawsuits and potential liabilities should be discussed in Closed Session.

Motion was made by Council Member Salberg, seconded by Council Member Quinn to close section 1 of the budget.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 7 (Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 1 (Kelley)

Abstentions: 1 (Brookes)

Motion carries.

There were inquiries regarding the Assistant Superintendent position in the Water Department budget, why the position was now being budgeted for after being vacant for several years.

Motion was made by Council Member Kelley to reduce the line item for Provision for Salary Adjustments in the Water Department from \$32,000 to \$5,000. There was no second.

There was discussion concerning funds budgeted for computer equipment and overtime for the Water Department.

Council Member Kelley lost connection to Webex.

Ms. Palmieri explained that the Water Department funds itself, it has no impact on the Township's taxes.

Motion was made by Vice-President Sackett, seconded by Council Member Quinn to approve section 21 of the budget.

Council Member Kelley returned.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 8 (Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 1 (Kelley)

Motion carries.

Motion was made by Council Member Kelley to reopen section 21. There was no second.

Motion was made by Vice-President Sackett, seconded by Council Member Quinn to approve section 22 of the budget.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 9 (Kelley, Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 0

Motion carries.

There was discussion concerning the request to replace the UTV for Fire Company 3, and whether there was a need to purchase a pump for the UTV.

Open to the Public:

Lisa Salberg, 10 Bergen Hill Road – Mrs. Salberg spoke about the lawsuits filed by Council Member Kelley and their financial impact on the taxpayers, questioned when the Township's insurance steps in to cover the costs of litigation and asked if a policy can be put in place to allow the Clerk to mute any Council Members who constantly disrupt meetings.

Patrick Egan, 59 Lenox Road – Mr. Egan stated that he was looking forward to hearing the answer's to Lisa's questions and expressed that it does not upset him when the Township spends money to improve the Township for the benefit of the residents, but it does bother him that thousands of dollars have been spent on lawsuits.

Motion was made by Council Member Quinn, seconded by Council Member Salberg to close Open to the Public.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 8 (Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 0

Abstentions: 1 (Kelley)

Motion carries.

Council Member Kelley requested to speak as a member of the Public.

Based on the opinion previously provided by Attorney Iacofano, it was explained to Council Member Kelley that he could not act as both a member of the public and a Council Member at Council Meetings.

There was discussion concerning the maintenance of the generators located at the Township's Fire Companies.

There were inquiries regarding the proposed location of the playground equipment budgeted for in the Township's proposed Capital Budget.

There was discussion concerning the proposed Municipal Building Bathroom Upgrades, the need to make them ADA compliant and whether grants had been applied for to pay for the upgrades.

Motion was made by Council Member Quinn, seconded by Council Member Kelley to reduce the Police Department Capital Budget to \$0.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 9 (Kelley, Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 0

Motion carries.

There was discussion concerning the proposed Senior Center Kitchen Upgrades.

Motion was made by Vice-President Sackett, seconded by Council Member Brookes to reduce the line item for Municipal Building Bathroom Upgrades from \$180,000 to \$90,000.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 9 (Kelley, Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 0

Motion carries.

Motion was made by Vice President Sackett, seconded by Council Member Quinn to add \$125,000 into the Capital Budget for Peterson Field Improvements.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 6 (Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 3 (Kelley, Salberg, Brookes)

Motion carries.

Motion was made by Council Member Brookes, seconded by Council Member Kelley to remove \$60,000 for Purchase of Playground Equipment and apply it towards work to be done at Park Lake.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 7 (Kelley, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 1 (Friedlander)

Abstentions: 1 (Quinn)

Moton carries.

Motion was made by Council Member Quinn, seconded by Vice-President Sackett to approve the Capital Budget.

Roll Call Was Taken.

Yah Votes: 9 (Kelley, Quinn, Friedlander, Kritz, Salberg, Brookes, Noon, Sackett, Jackson)

Nah Votes: 0

Motion carries.

Motion was made by Council Member Quinn, seconded by Council Member Friedlander, to adjourn this meeting at 8:05PM. All members unanimously agreed.

The next Regular Meeting of the Council of the Township of Rockaway is scheduled for February 23, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christina Clipperton
Municipal Clerk