

The first of two 2024 Budget Workshop Meetings of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District No.2 was held on the above date at the Lenola Fire House. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Wesolowski. Five commissioners were present along with Administrator Knobbs. Also in attendance were Chief Grant and Chief's Assistant Wesolowski.

President Wesolowski opened the meeting by reading the following statement in accordance with the "Open Public Meetings Act":

This meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District No. 2 of The Township of Moorestown is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975. Pursuant to the "Act", on November 9th, 2023 the required notice was transmitted to the *Burlington County Times*.

Additionally, the required notice was posted on the bulletin board, reserved for such notices, in the lobby of the Town Hall, 111 West Second Street, Moorestown, NJ 08057, on the bulletin board of the Moorestown Municipal Library, 111 West Second Street, Moorestown, NJ 08057 and on the bulletin board of the Lenola Fire House, 229 North Lenola Road, Moorestown, NJ 08057 and filed with the Clerk of the Township of Moorestown on this date.

Lastly, written notice was posted on the official website, MoorestownFireDistrict2.com on November 9th, 2023 and mailed to each person who has requested copies of the schedule of meetings.

An affidavit certifying that the aforesaid delivery and posting of notices was prepared and signed by the Administrator.

Wesolowski called for a salute to the flag and a moment of silence for our departed members.

Prior to beginning the budget discussion, President Wesolowski informed the commissioners that the concrete driveway is being repaired after the parking lot project. He stated that Administrator Knobbs met with a concrete company rep today and they offered to remove the bricks between the driveway and the lawn and replace the same with concrete at a total cost of \$1,400.00. The bricks have sunk over the years and would need to be pulled up and reset to make them level with the new concrete. Motion by Commissioner Mann, seconded by Commissioner Gifford to spend \$1,400. Motion was approved by the five commissioners present

Proposed 2025 Budget:

Wesolowski asked Administrator Knobbs to lead the general budget discussion. The following items were discussed:

- Current and projected Governmental Fund Balances
- Multi-year Capital Plan
- Budget Timeline

Knobbs then stepped through the Proposed 2024 Budget. Synopsis of the changes by category as compared to the prior year were provided. Discussion ensued with intermittent public comment.

Notable discussion items were as follows:

- Knobbs reviewed the Post Retirement Reserve, and based on current costs, as well as projected costs into the future, he recommended continuing the amount contributed annually to the reserve. He recommends a \$30,000.00 contribution.
- 2025 Salaries: Administrator Knobbs stated the salary actions discussed during the September 11th Executive Session were incorporated into the 2025 Budget.
- Administration: Overall Budget increased due to increased Salary and associated taxes and benefits, a \$500 increase in Election Expenses, a \$4,800 decrease in the Insurance cost, a \$6,000 increase in Professional Services (\$1,000 Auditor & \$5,000 Grant Writer), a \$1,500 decrease in Travel Expenses, and a \$2,000 decrease in Office Supplies.
- Cost of Operations & Maintenance-Salaries & Benefits shows a 29.5% increase total. These were the salaries decided in the Executive session last week along with the addition of the duty crew program and the associated taxes for it.
- Cost of Operations & Maintenance-Care & Maintenance: Overall shows an increase of \$2,420 or 4.4%. This is due to increases of \$160 for firefighter gloves, \$200 for the Holmatro Tool service contract, the addition of Glick Truck Checks totaling \$1,260, \$450 for hose testing, \$150 for the NFPA Fire Flow Pump/Ladder, and \$200 for the NDT Testing of 3135.
- Cost of Operations & Maintenance-Repairs-Buildings & Grounds: Shows an decrease of \$67,950 due to the removal of \$70,000 for the Parking Lot project in 2024, a \$250 increase in Cleaning Supplies, and an increase of \$1,800 for maintenance contract for the lock system that was installed.
- Cost of Operations & Maintenance-Hall Repairs & Maintenance: Remains same as 2024.
- Cost of Operations & Maintenance-Utilities Remains same as 2024.
- Cost of Operations & Maintenance-Fire Equipment: Shows an overall increase of \$63,500 due to a \$4,900 decrease in equipment purchased last year, and a \$60,000 increase for the replacement of air pack bottles.
- Cost of Operations & Maintenance-Promotions (Hall): Shows an overall increase of \$300 due to costs associated the dishwasher.
- Oper App Offset with Rev-Bureau of Fire Prevention: All associated cost increases were due to salary and benefits. Cannot be finalized until pension and healthcare numbers are available from the state.
- Reserve for Future Capital Outlay and Post-Retirement Benefits: The 2025 Budget includes reserve contributions for these categories, \$50,000.00 and \$30,000.00, respectively.
- Contributions to First Aid Squad: Overall this category shows a increase of \$10,000 due to an increase of \$20,000 in Assistance with ambulance purchase and a decrease of \$10,000 in supplies. This is due to 319 taking over for 318. The fuel allowance will remain in the budget for assistance with fuel costs if needed.
- Revenues: The following revenue items were discussed: Investment Income, Bureau of Fire Prevention Income, Intra-district Billing Revenue and Rental Hall Income.

Knobbs ended the discussion by reiterating the fact that the state is behind in providing Pension rate information. The proposed budget at this time is using estimated rates. He is also awaiting Healthcare benefit rates. He will adjust the figures as they become available, and if the commissioners are happy with the current proposed budget, he will adjust the amount to be used

from reserves. Knobbs reviewed the CNC-3 ratables proposed for 2025, and the reasons the ratables have decreased. The Township made tax settlements with the mall and Kmart properties last year at the end of the year and as a result the actual amount charged to the taxpayers was .103% as opposed to the planned tax rate of .097%. Knobbs stated that he should be able to reduce the tax rate to .10%.

The proposed 2025 Budget as discussed reflects a total revenue of \$907,018, an amount to be raised by taxation of \$779,022 and a total appropriation of \$1,686,039.

President Wesolowski stated that he believed that the budget presented tonight, with the exception of the discussed pension numbers looked good, and he did not see a need to have a second Budget Workshop. He asked if this meeting could be cancelled. Administrator Knobbs stated that it could be cancelled, as it is listed as an “if needed” meeting, and he would have to post the cancellation notice on the website as well as post a notice at the library and town hall. Wesolowski asked if the commissioners were in agreement, Motion by Commissioner Mann, seconded by Commissioner Humes to cancel the October 23, 2024 Budget Workshop was approved 5-0.

Meeting opened to the public:

None

There being no further questions or comments from the public, this portion of the meeting was closed.

There being no further business to come before the Board, by Proper Action, meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen W. Knobbs
Board Administration