

February 20, 2024

A workshop meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens, held on February 20, 2024.

Mayor Holeman called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of Our Country.
Please remain standing for a moment of silence for our military.

This meeting has been advertised in one newspaper, The Daily record, in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

ATTENDANCE: Councilman Glass, Councilman Suarez, Councilwoman Hedgepath, Councilman Hale, Councilman Lorenzo, Councilwoman Garcia Montes.

ABSENT: None

Tonights meeting is for discussion on the 2024 budget. At this time the meeting was turned over to the Chief Financial Officer.

The Mayor stated that the budget meeting will run for one hour only.

Joe stated that he has a stomach virus and really isn't feeling well. I made the adjustments from what we talked about the last time. At that time you said the hourly persons were getting a 3% raise and that Debbe would get a 3% merit raise.

Councilwoman Montes said that we should get raises across the Board. It has been two years and no one has gotten a raise. Does the raise include the Professionals? Yes. If you want to keep your employees than you have to pay them.

Councilman Lorenzo said that if everyone gets a raise across the Board then a 2% raise for everyone is good. Council agreed to a 2% raise for everyone.

Joe said that in this paperwork you will see the money we put in for the reval. I started reserving funds for that. How much is the reval going to be? The approximate amount from our Assessor is about \$30,000.

Councilman Glass asked how soon the reval has to be done? I think it has to be done by 2025. So we have this year and next to get it done. We will be going over this at the Council meeting. I gave everyone a copy of the letter from the Assessor.

The Clerk said we have a problem with our phone system. We have been out for about a week. We have called Verizon in to see if they could find a problem with their lines. They said there was nothing wrong with the lines. Optimum was called and they said they do businesses but not municipal government.

Joe asked if we have an estimate yet? No, we have been trying to get estimates but haven't gotten any yet. Councilwoman Montes said we need to make sure phones are working.

Councilman Glass brought a phone down to see if just changing phones would work. It did not. The lines go into the garage and then comes into this building. Councilman Glass said we have a company called NEC that then divides the lines up. Verizon said the lines are good in the garage and inside town hall. But I couldn't get the phones to work. The Clerk said Verizon was coming back today but never showed up. Councilman Glass said if they show up to call him and let him know. Councilman Glass said he thinks it is Verizons problem.

The Mayor asked where we would take the money from for the phones? We will take it from Capital Joe said.

The Clerk said she asked Joe about the sidewalk in front of town hall and he said that the money can come out of the reconstruction of town hall. When can we do that Councilwoman Montes asked? I have to get in touch with Leon because he has to do up specs and go out to bid. Councilman Glass said he would call the company about the railing to see if it can be saved.

The Mayor said that the other projects would be doors for the firehouse and lights for the firehouse. The only other thing is trees.

Councilwoman Hedgepath said there are lights at the firehosue. We need to update the lights.

The Clerk said that Joe is sick and he shouldn't be here and we shouldn't be here either. We need to call this meeting.

The Mayor asked if Council has any other questions? There were none.

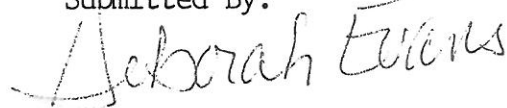
Motion to open the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved onverbal vote. None opposed.

Jim Janone - Based on what was discussed do you know what the increase will be on the budget? 2.92%. What does that equate to in dollars? I will have to get back to you on that. Can you let us know also what line items are increasing and if any are decreasing? Yes. You talked about 2% raises. Does that include professionals? Yes. You appointed the professionals at their old rates. Yes, until we had the budget meetings and decided if they would get raises or not. That was decided tonight when Councilwoman Montes said we should do a 2% increase across the Board. About the phones - how come we don't look at IT phones? Your IT person can set up the phones. VOIP. Optimum does the internet.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Submitted By:



Deborah Evans
Borough Clerk