

March 19, 2024

A workshop meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens held on March 19, 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 Meeting 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 CFO.

Joe said he made all the changes that we have talked about throughout our discussions on the budget. With the changes we are at a 2.98% increase to the budget which equates to about \$57.00 more in taxes for the year.

Councilman Glass said this is just our part of the taxes? Yes, the municipal side. We still need to see what the County and the schools are doing. The Clerk said she heard the County taxes are staying the same.

Joe said that with doing a reassessment you are looking good with a rate increase under 3%. A lot of towns are over that.

Joe said he used \$25,000 out of the reserve for schools. The reason I did that was because we are using it as a one time expense. You are not going to do it again. You are not going to do a reassessment every year. The reason you have reserves are to utilize them when you have those items that are truly one time expenditures. If it is something that is re occurring, you don't want to drain your reserves. This is a one time expense and it's okay to use some of it. It shortens the time frame from 20 years to 19 years.

Joe said that within that time frame other items should have changed. You will have revenue coming in from the cannabis businesses you have approved.

The Clerk asked the CFO if he has any idea when we will introduce? Can we get it done for the first meeting in April? The goal I have is for the first meeting in April. If Council agrees on this tonight then I will get it over to Man at the auditors. If she comes back with anything I will let you know. All the bank reconciliations are done. We can now move forward.

The only other piece of this is Capital. The American Rescue Plan monies need to be taken care of by the end of the year. The Clerk said she has the Engineer working on that. Councilman Glass asked when that expires? We have to have it encumbered by the end of this year.

Councilwoman Montes said the ramp outside, the sidewalk that is all going to be fixed? Yes. Leon was here today. the firehouse doors will be fixed? Yes. The ramp can be done through the ordinance we did when we had the fire at town hall. We can do the phone system with that also. Councilman Glass said we can save the railing outside. The man that did it looked at it and it can be saved.

One of the goals I have is to build a comprehensive plan Joe said. This way moving forward we can see what we are doing. I want every road in here on a list so if we need to we have the information to see what needs to be done. I will go over that with Deb and the Engineer. We need a plan in place for Capital.

Councilwoman Montes asked when the sidewalk on Monroe Avenue is getting done? It has been done for over 6 months the Clerk said. That was done with Community Development money. What side is it on. As you come into VG the Clerk said it is on the right side.

Councilwoman Montes said all Joe has to do is give it to the Auditors and we should be okay? Providing the Council approves it tonight the Clerk said. Council agreed that Joe can send the budget to the Auditors.

Councilman Suarez asked about the software. Joe said he has the chart of accounts together. I am talking to the company. Jason did the foundation for what we need. While I was out sick, Deb and Letty did checks. Some of the check numbers weren't posted in quick books. We have to get those taken care of. We have a good set of numbers. Now that Jason is done, everything can get wrapped up. Do you have the software in this years budget? that was in last years CIP. I am trying to get the cost lowered.

The Clerk asked Joe if he is doing Edmunds or MSI? MSI which is still part of Edmunds. MSI use to have their own company. Their president retired and they sold out. They have something called FAS. Financial Accounting Software. What that is, it is very user friendly.

Councilwoman Montes said that she needs Joe to work on getting our taxes down for next year. Every year they go up. Whatever I can do I will Joe said.

Councilman Glass asked with the grant money that we are getting for the sewer can we use that for equipment? No. We need major ovrk done to the front end loader.

The Mayor asked if everyone was satisfied with the budget? Yes. No more questions? No. No more meetings? No.

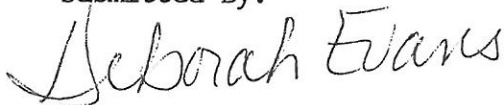
Motion to open the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

No public present.

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

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

Submitted By:



Deborah Evans  
Borough Clerk