

February 16, 2016

A workshop meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens held on February 16, 2016.

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: Councilwoman Cheatham, Councilman Glass, Councilwoman Hedgepath, Councilman Jacobus, Councilman Lorenzo, Councilwoman Garcia Montes.

ABSENT: None

Tonights meeting is a discussion on the 2016 municipal budget. Amy Maronpot, our Chief Financial Officer is here tonight. At the time the meeting is being turned over to Amy.

Amy said the last time we went over the budget line by line. I don't know if you had a chance to review or if you have any questions. Once everyone is in agreement with the budget then I will send it to Bill Schroeder and he will get it ready for introduction. Our increase this year is less than last year. Bill will give you a more accurate number for the budget and the increase. We did increase this year but not as much as last year.

Councilwoman Montes said that we can't go over a 2% increase in the budget because of what the Governor said. Yes, that is correct. We can only go 2% and that is what we have done in this budget Amy said. You can go up more than 2% on certain things. Those things are pension, health costs. We stayed within the 2% that we are allowed. Is there anything we can do to make the taxes not go up Councilwoman Montes asked? It is hard not to do that Amy said. If you don't raise the budget you will eventually fall behind and you will never be able to make that money up. Due to inflation you have to go up and if you don't you will fall behind and never be able to make that up. You will always be behind after that. Three years in a row we had an increase. Several years back we didn't have an increase. Bill Schroeder would say to do the increase every year. If you don't make these small increases there will come a time when you have to raise it much greater and you won't be able to. Then you won't have a surplus anymore.

Councilman Glass said that one year we didn't raise it and then it was like out increase went double. We are very good with our money here.

Mayor Holeman pointed out that the 2% cap is not just for Victory Gardens but for all towns in New Jersey. Yes, absolutely. The 2% is the most we can raise. Amy said there are some things that are exempt from the 2% . Basically, the operating expenses are what we only raise 2% . It is 2% total of the taxes we raised for taxation last year. That is the formula that is used.

Amy said that are two different types of CAPS. There is the tax cap levy which we are talking about and then there is the Operating Expense Levy which we can go up more than 2% for operating expenses but we want to stay in the 2% range. There is nothing saying that we will get the same amount of state aid this year as we have in the past. We could get less. That is correct.

Councilman Jacobus said that he has an article from the paper. The Star Ledger shows that Victory Gardens is one of three that has the lowest taxes in New Jersey. It states that school and local towns may know what the state aid figures are by the end of this week. It is saying that in 5 years the State Aid will be increased. The Clerk said just because the paper says it doesn't make it true. The Governor was suppose to restore the pension money they keep using and hasn't done anything about it yet.

The Mayor asked Council if they have any other questions on the budget. There were no other questions from the Council.

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

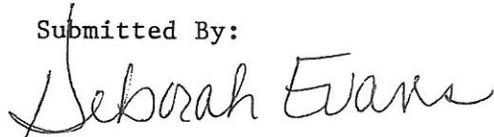
Joan Cegelka - I don't have all the figures for the budget. I have your year end report. There was money left but we had expenses to cover from last year where we got bills in late. We paid bills through January. There may be more that is due but we haven't gotten bills yet. Most get paid in January for December. We have some things that we are keeping in the budget like the codification, trees, computers, classes for both Debbies, new chairs for the office and the website upkeep. How many more trees do you have to do? We don't know. We have some from last year that didn't get done and there will be more this year. There is \$20,000 in for trees. Should I put in for a year end report? I really don't have a current one. I have a sheet as to what was taken out of the appropriation reserve. Okay.

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

Amy said that when you have the first meeting in March, Bill Schroeder will be here and do the introduction of the budget.

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

Submitted By:



Deborah Evans
Borough Clerk