

Mayor and Council Special Budget Meeting – March 6, 2021

The Special Budget Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of North Caldwell was held on Saturday, March 6, 2021. The meeting began at 9:02am at Borough Hall and via tele/video-conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mayor Alessi called the meeting to order announcing that notice was provided in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

Mayor Alessi asked Councilman Kessler to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call indicated the following:

Present: Mayor Joseph H. Alessi, Council President Francis Astorino, Councilman Matthew Atlas, Councilman Anthony Floria-Callori, Councilman Robert Kessler, Councilman Arthur Rees and Councilman Kenneth Tilton.

Also present were: Kevin O’Sullivan, Borough Administrator; Mark Semeraro, Borough Attorney; Rich Mondelli, CFO; Mark Deuer, Police Chief; and Tami Michelotti, Municipal Clerk. Department Heads joined the meeting as needed.

Mr. Semeraro explained that public comment regarding the budget would be best reserved for the public hearing after the Municipal Budget is introduced.

Executive Session

Resolution R-57-2021 A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor and Council of the Borough of North Caldwell to Hold a Closed Session Meeting for Certain Specified Purposes: Personnel – Employee Compensation. Motion was made by Councilman Atlas, seconded by Council President Astorino. Said motion was carried unanimously with six votes.

The meeting was re-opened to Public at 10:11am. Mr. Semeraro departed the meeting at this time.

Citizens to be Heard

No one from the public came forward.

Items for Discussion

The 2021 Operating Budget and Capital Budget requests were presented by each department head.

Municipal Court

Municipal Court Administrator, Ashley McMillion, noted that the judiciary will continue to run court virtually with exceptions only for potential imprisonment sentences. Due to the remote meeting schedule, a replacement for the Deputy Court Administrator position was deemed unnecessary at this time. The Council discussed fees for credit card payment processing for fines.

Recreation Department

Pool Utility Operating Budget – Potential revenue from the pool concession stand was discussed. Mr. Mondelli reviewed the annual debt service of \$33,000 and the \$64,000 deficit from 2020. Recreation Director Bill Maranz noted that the annual minimum wage increase necessitates increases in member and guest registration fees. The Council considered reducing hours of operation at the pool to reduce salaries and wages.

Recreation Operating Budget – Mr. Maranz reviewed the allocation of sponsorship revenue to the sports that were sponsored. He noted the need for “L” screens. Mr. Maranz suggested decreasing allocations for certain budget items, i.e. parades and celebrations, the Spring Spectacular event and the Seniors Club.

Recreation Capital Budget – Mr. Maranz reviewed the requested Capital Budget needs including fencing between Magnusson Field and the Four Seasons complex, lacrosse goals for Mountain Field, tennis court drainage improvements and resurfacing, pickle ball court installation, upgraded bleachers at Liberty Park and batting cage repairs. The Council discussed the development of a long-range plan for the Borough complex and fields.

Pool Utility Capital Budget – Mr. Maranz presented the repairs needed for the pool pump house, perimeter fencing, pool interior resurfacing and concrete decking. Estimates for the repairs would be

scheduled as soon as snow melted and allowed for visual inspections. The renovation of bathrooms would be deferred for 2021. Snack bar renovations would be made in 2021.

Volunteer Fire Department

NCFD Operating Budget - Fire Chief Tim Peterson reviewed the department's operating budget requests including uniform clothing allowances for new members and an upgraded exhaust system for the fire house.

NCFD Capital Budget - Chief Peterson reviewed the capital budget requests including a command vehicle, replacement of turnout gear and an aerial ladder truck.

Police Department

NCPD Operating Budget – Chief Deuer noted that much of the proposed 4.75% increase in the department's operating budget is for recurring technology update and maintenance expenses. Councilman Floria-Callori suggested shifted technology operating costs from the PD budget to its own category. Chief Deuer noted the need for ammunition but agreed to a decrease in radio upgrade expenses.

NCPD Capital Budget – Chief Deuer reviewed the mandate for body cameras for each officer and the associated server required for retention of the footage. He noted the need to replace some firearms.

Technology Department

Technology Operating Budget – Sgt. Credico, Information Technology Director, reviewed expenses to meet compliance requirements including email data retention, annual software leases and software updates.

Technology Capital Budget – Sgt. Credico presented capital budget requests including server storage and upgrades for the Police Department, website redesign, cameras for the Fire Station and Borough buildings, and modems for the NCPD vehicles. Captain Strodthoff suggested that revenue from the pending auction of vehicles and radio equipment may fund capital expenditures.

Department of Public Works

Department of Public Works Operating Budgets – Assistant Director of Department of Public Works, Bill Stickles, reviewed the required repairs for generators and pumping stations, building maintenance and sewer/catch basin maintenance. He noted the need for street signage, landscaping for the Lindsley Heights pumping station, tree removal and pruning and Animal Control Officer training.

Water Operating Budget - Mr. Stickles presented requests including additional overtime for hydrant flushing and water main repairs. He recommended allocating funds to replace water meters.

Department of Public Works Capital Budget – Mr. Stickles reviewed the need for Summit Drive sewer pumping station replacement, fencing replacement and two DPW trucks and one dump truck that need to be replaced.

Water Utility Capital Budget - Mr. Stickles reviewed the Water Utility Capital Budget requests including Fire hydrant connection upgrades and fencing around the water tank on Skyline drive.

The Council discussed the need for speed humps for Beachmont Terrace and allocated funding for installation. Snow removal equipment for Walker's Pond was considered. Mr. O'Sullivan reviewed the mandatory Asset Management Plan that must replace old infrastructure as part of a 100 year plan. Water meter replacement cost distribution was discussed.

Miscellaneous Budget Summary

Mr. Mondelli provided a summary of discussions for each budget fund and utility category. The Council agreed to raise water rates by 4% to cover increases in water purchases. Donations to The Bridge were recommended for removal from the budget. The Council approved the issuance of cell phone stipends to four non-union employees.

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Potential revenue sources were discussed including Animal Control fees, a stormwater utility tax and the sale of a retail plenary liquor license.

There being no other matters to be addressed by the Governing Body at this time, a motion was made by Councilman Atlas, seconded by the Council, that this meeting be adjourned at 3:22pm. This motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tami Michelotti".

Tami Michelotti
Borough Clerk