

BOROUGH OF PITMAN
WORK SESSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 8, 2021

Call to Order

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement – Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, I hereby announce that adequate notice of the time and date of this meeting was published in the South Jersey Times on January 7, 2021, posted on the Borough Hall front door, and advertised on the Borough of Pitman website continuously since January 7, 2021.

Roll Call

Council President Blass: Present
Councilwoman James: Present
Councilwoman Rudley: Present
Mayor Razzo: Present
CFO Considine: Present

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Present
Councilman Mazzola: Present
Councilman Weng: Present
Borough Solicitor Krachun: Present
Clerk O'Donnell: Present

Discussion

Motion to Open Discussion: Weng
Time: 6:30 p.m.

Second: Mazzola

Proposed Police Department 2021 Budget

Councilman Weng noted that the salary portion of the 2021 Police Department budget is increased \$120,000.00 over the amount in the 2020 budget. This is due to contractual salary increases for all officers. Also, \$14,000.00 was added to the appropriation for the secretary to cover the cost of hiring an additional part-time secretary to assist the current full-time Police Administrative Secretary. Councilman Weng, responding to questions from Council President Blass and Councilman Mazzola, said that the need for assistance is there, and that at this time the intention is for a part-time secretary only. Chief McAteer agreed with Councilman Weng and said that the amount requested is based on a rate of \$20.00 per hour.

Councilman Weng also stated that some of the appropriations in 2020, were not fully expended due to the cancellation of events because of the COVID-19 restrictions in place. The cancellation of the events resulted in not needing to schedule extra manpower and supplies not being utilized.

Councilman Fitzpatrick asked for clarification that the appropriation for department salaries is \$1,600,000.00, with Mayor Razzo adding that the increase in the appropriation is a 10% increase over the 2020 salary appropriation. Chief McAteer said that the amount covers all officer salaries, including contractual percentage increases, and the mid-year step increases for officers.

Councilman Fitzpatrick asked if an additional car was going to be purchased this year. Councilman Weng said that a new car is in the budget and reminded Council that a car was not budgeted for in the 2020 budget. CFO Considine stated that both 4WD and AWD vehicles can be purchased using capital funding, otherwise, police cars are acquired with three year leases funded from inside the operating budget.

Five Year Plan for Police Department Spending Using Capital Funding

2021	Morpho-Track Fingerprinting System	\$25,000
	Patrol Vehicle	40,500
2022	KYMCO Gas Powered Terrain Vehicle	15,000
	Building Improvements	20,000
2023	Glock40 Handguns	10,000
	Patrol Vehicle	40,500
	Video Surveillance Recording System	30,000
2024	Fencing around Parking/Mun. Bldg.	50,000
	Patrol Vehicle	40,500
2025	Shotguns -Benelli M2	8,000
	Patrol Vehicle	40,500

Chief McAteer stated that the Morpho-Track Fingerprinting System needs to be updated every five years. Also, the mandatory purchase of a Breathalyzer is approaching, which could be as much as \$20,000.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant – Matching Funds

Councilman Weng and the Borough Administrator informed Council of the application being prepared by the Pitman Fire Company for the 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant from FEMA for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, including air packs, masks, and a tracker/receiver with charger. If awarded, the grant funds will be used to provide equipment for Pitman Fire Company No. 1, Highland Chemical Engine Company, and the Wenonah Fire Company. The amount being requested is \$861,711.00, with the Borough providing 5% matching funds totaling \$31,865.30. The Borough of Wenonah will pay their share of the required matching funds. CFO Considine said that the grant and matching funds will be part of budget discussions in the future.

Non-binding Referendum on Overnight Parking Ordinance

Councilman Weng stated that the ban on overnight parking on Borough streets has been in suspension since November 2019. He suggested that a non-binding public question should be placed on the General Election ballot in November to gauge residents’ opinion on amending the ordinance to permit parking overnight. He suggested that within the coming four to five months the language in the question could be formulated, and the various departments that will be directly impacted will be consulted for their opinion.

Councilman Mazzola suggested that the Pitman Fire Company Chiefs be consulted in addition to Borough department supervisors. Councilwoman Rudley sated that in the past the Board of Fire Engineers had a list of streets where overnight parking would create a problem. She suggested that the list could possibly be in the Work Session Minutes from 2019. Mayor Razze said that he would like to see the information disseminated to the residents in a newsletter.

Backyard Chicken Pilot Program

Councilman Fitzpatrick said that he was contacted by residents who were interested in starting a Backyard Chicken Pilot Program in the Borough. It was presented to him that participants would be required to attend a class on caring for the chickens, and that the program would be coordinated and overseen by a Borough appointed Advisory Board.

Councilman Fitzpatrick said that the idea was presented to the Combined Planning and Zoning Board who agreed to have Council review the idea. The Planning Board members asked to review the

Ordinance should Council decide to move forward and take formal action on the program. The Board members agreed to continue looking into the feasibility of the program.

Councilwoman James said that she has seen the plan put in place by Monroe Township and feels it is a good plan. She is in favor of pursuing a pilot program. Council President Blass said that he is not in favor of the plan for Pitman. He feels it is okay in towns with larger areas where the homes are more spread out. Councilwoman Rudley said that she has no opinion on the program one way of the other.

Mayor Razze stated that Planning and Zoning Board members are in favor of a distance requirement as compared to an area requirement for the keeping of chickens. Mayor Razze was told that if the Pilot Program doesn't work out, the owners maintain the chickens until their demise. He said that he has some concerns about that. Councilman Fitzpatrick agreed saying that if the Pilot Program doesn't work, it should end at that time, and that he was told that it is very easy to re-home hens.

Councilman Mazzola said that he would like to see the details of the plan and is particularly interested in the criteria for the disposition of the program. Councilman Fitzpatrick said that he will provide the proposed guidelines to Council.

Motion to close discussion: Weng
Time: 7:36 p.m.

Second: Mazzola

Public Portion

Motion to open to the public: Weng
Time: 7:36 p.m.

Second: Mazzola

Noah Burrows, 232 Lake Avenue – Mr. Burrows stated that he has been working on guidelines for a Backyard Chicken Pilot Program for the Borough. He has taken information from the guidelines of other municipalities that have successful programs in place. He noted that Monroe and Deptford Townships both have allowances that would permit owners of smaller properties to participate.

Kevin Austin, 562 Florence Avenue – Mr. Austin said that he is not in favor of allowing vehicles to park on the street overnight. He said that the recent snow removal effort is an indicator of how hard it is to plow roads when vehicles are parked along the curb. Mr. Austin is also not in favor of the Backyard Chicken Pilot Program. He agrees with Councilman Blass that the properties in Pitman are too small.

Kristen Savko, 728 Lambs Road – Ms. Savko said that she understands the concern about what would be done if the Backyard Chicken Pilot Program is not successful. She stated that hens are easy to re-home and advised that the Grove may not be the ideal location for chickens due to the proximity of the homes.

Mary Ellen Dragone, 445 West Avenue – Ms. Dragone said that she is against abolishing the overnight parking ban on Borough streets. She said that there has been issues with snow removal and trash collection due to parked vehicles. She said that it will make it difficult for Public Works if parking is permitted overnight on the street. Regarding the Backyard Chicken Pilot Program, Ms. Dragone offered to serve on the Advisory Board, and admitted to having concerns about cleanliness and the potential of attracting rodents to the area.

Jeff Knauss, 222 Embury Avenue – Mr. Knauss said that he has concerns about a non-binding referendum for public opinion on whether to allow parking on Borough streets during the overnight hours. He asked that if it goes forward, could the wording of the public question somehow notify voters that there are homes in Pitman that do not have driveways.

Barry Owen, 508 Pitman Avenue – Mr. Owen said that he would like to see more notice given to the voters that a referendum question will be on the ballot regarding the parking ordinance. He stated that many people have strong opinions on the topic and should be made aware of the discussion and the public question. Mr. Owen also expressed concern about the Borough selling two alcohol licenses at this time. He said that he would rather see one held back for potential property development in Pitman.

Motion to close public portion: Weng
Time: 7:49 p.m.

Second: Fitzpatrick

Adjournment

Motion: Weng
Time: 7:49 p.m.

Second: James

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith O'Donnell
Borough Clerk/Administrator