

**BOROUGH OF MIDLAND PARK
280 GODWIN AVENUE
MIDLAND PARK NJ 07432**

**January 14, 2021
Open Public Meeting Minutes
6:00 P.M. Budget Session**

On January 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., the Mayor and Council of Midland Park conducted an Electronic Public Meeting in lieu of its in-person of the Public Meeting previously advertised. Members of the public had access to the meeting by dialing this Toll-Free Dial in number (United States): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679) Access Code: 320-256-101

Agenda items for the meeting were listed on the Borough website. The foregoing Electronic Public Meeting is recommended due to the current situation involving the COVID-19 Virus and directives of State and County governments.

Mayor Shortway called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M., noting the date as January 14, 2021, and that there will be a 3-minute limit to each individual addressing the Governing Body during the Open Public portion of the meeting.

SUNSHINE LAW STATEMENT: This meeting is being held in accordance with the Sunshine Law, notice having been published according to law with a copy on file in the Borough Clerk's Office and a copy posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building.

Roll Call:	Mayor Shortway	Present
	Councilman Damiano	Present
	Councilman Kruis	Present
	Councilman Sansone	Present
	Councilwoman DeLuca	Present
	Councilwoman Peet	Present
	Council President Iannone	Present

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Regan, Borough Administrator Seemon, Borough Clerk Martin and CFO O'Hanlon

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

This will be the only Open to the Public portion of the meeting. No further discussions will take place once the Budget portion of the meeting begins.

No members of the public are present

BUDGET DISCUSSION :

1. Budget Updates- Discussion

Administrator Seemon updated the Governing Body relative to the current budget numbers. There is one more Budget Meeting scheduled for January 28th should we not finish up today. I plan on meeting with CFO O'Hanlon, DPW Super Tauber, and Borough Clerk Martin tomorrow to go over what is discussed this evening. There is wiggle room in the Capital Budget and a few good problems to discuss and a bad item, that being roughly 1 million in grant projects that need to be completed, the issue is we have to put up the money and our reserves are low. We are waiting for some reimbursements from the Erie Ave project and some Open Space. There is a time clock for a few projects this year which is why should keep our Capital a little high this will add to a smoother fiscal transition into 2022for when we start paying back the Bonds. We will

discuss future bonding and I will strongly suggest after this year bonding not be utilized, as the Borough will be in a great position with long term projects.

CFO O'Hanlon I know you are not happy with the tax impact and I do not know what to do, the tax levy was very close to being non-compliant, that has been rectified. As for the appropriation we are using some bank again but not too much, I understand lowering the appropriation is lowering the tax impact there fore that is where we need to look. Marc and I really can not see cutting anywhere but Capital. Recreation and Court is where we lost revenue, I am using the three-year average for this year's budget and it's not really helping. **Councilman Sansone** stated all municipalities are in the same boat as we all are personally also and the same goes for next year. We run lean and I feel we cannot take things away the residents will say they are paying all these taxes and we are getting less.

Administrator Seemon explained that there will be very visible projects for our residents this year such as the paving of Paterson Avenue a highly traveled road and a Community Development Grant for three other roads. We will discuss splitting up some other road projects over a few years. There is an Open Space Grant for upgrading the playground that is visible to the residents. In the year with an increase the residents will see a lot of work happening. **Councilman Sansone** stated it would be very helpful if someone pushed the County to get Godwin Avenue taken care of, that would be a homerun, we have been waiting three years for this project. **Administrator Seemon** noted the plans have been approved by the County, the process is tedious, and it is on its way. The DPW and I have been in constant contact with the engineers and the County Superintendent of roads, we are really hoping to move this along. **Councilman Iannone** asked how do we compared to other towns, **Administrator Seemon** stated we are all in the same boat the actually numbers have not been discussed.

Administrator Seemon recommended we go through the Capital, reviewing line by line and making suggestions relative to adding some of the items to a Bond. Several items were discussed in detail such as the number of Police Department vehicle's and SUV's vs Car's. **Councilman Sansone** stated that some are strictly use for road detail also that some of the officer's don't fit in the usual car due to size and equipment they have to wear. **Councilwoman Peet** suggests that all the vehicles not be parked out in the open for the community to see as she hears complaints all the time about the number of vehicles the Police Department has, **Councilwoman DeLuca** agreed and stated she understands those cars are for road detail however the public does not know can't they be moved somewhere. **Councilman Sansone** says the cars are ours, why would hide them, let it be known what they are for, they are actually revenue generators. **Councilwoman Peet** asked the Administrator for a list of vehicles and the milage on each, he stated this will be provide on a monthly basis going forward.

Administrator Seemon asked the Governing Body if there is a percent number in mind that they would be comfortable with getting to, that may be helpful for us tomorrow making some changes. If we get to that number tomorrow it may not be necessary to have the next Budget meeting on the 28th. The Councilman Iannone suggested realistically could we get form the current 6.3% increase down to a 4.8%, Councilwoman Peet suggested 4.2% as we have no idea what the school will be coming back with. Administrator Seemon stated we will try to get into the 4's and kick it back to you, via email.

CFO O'Hanlon suggested taking the Roll Off container out and adding the \$200,000.00 to the bond, that would drop us to \$117.00 from \$192.72. The Council was in agreement. **Administrator Seemon** noted we will be meeting with Bond Counsel and discussing a strategy for the future such as keeping the capital budget between \$450,00 and \$550,000 and the bond in the range of high 2's low 3's million, you will be a sweet spot moving forward. You can then return to putting aside for reserve purchases, with the bond we are just fronting the funds and getting reimbursed which will help build back our reserves. The Erie Avenue project depleted our reserves with all the changes and additions however it was the right decision.

Councilman Sansone inquired if OEM Coordinator Rau received reimbursements from FEMA, **CFO O’Hanlon** stated we have received reimbursements. **Administrator Seemon** also stated funds were submitted via the CARES ACT and we have received those reimbursements also. Some of this money has help us offset our loss of revenue. **Councilman Sansone** asked what was the interest rate of the note we received, **Administrator Seemon** stated it was under 1%, Bond Counsel will run more up to date numbers for the future bond.

Councilman Iannone asked the Governing Body if everyone was in agreement with not meeting again on the 28th if the number to 3.5 -3.8%. **Administrator Seemon** stated we will shoot for somewhere between 3-4% and kick it back to you all. There is a Culvert Grant project that is hurting us right now, we have no idea the cost of the project an how much we will have to front, as the prep work was not done by the previous grant writers therefore our engineers are starting from scratch. The engineer cost could be more than the project itself. We may have to have conversations with the State regarding this grant.

Councilwoman Peet inquired about the increase in Health benefits, **CFO O’Hanlon** stated the premium did not really go up however the increase is single to family participants, employees that previously waived are not participating, two new Medicare spouses were added and one new employee, this is where the increase came from its not the rate.

There being no response and no further business to address, at 6:36 P.M., on a Motion by **Councilman Sansone**, Seconded by **Councilwoman Peet** and carried, **Mayor Shortway** adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Martin, R.M.C.
Borough Clerk