



**MINUTES
BOROUGH OF EMERSON
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP
JANUARY 25, 2011
7:30 P.M.
Borough Hall-Council Chambers
Emerson, NJ 07630**



Mayor Colina called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm. DPW Superintendent Joe Solimando led the salute to the flag followed by a moment of silence at the request of Mayor Colina in honor of the men and women serving around the globe in the military.

O.P.M.A. Statement

Mayor Colina read the Sunshine Statement announcing that the meeting of January 25th, 2011 had been adequately noticed and was in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Further, that the meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice Resolution transmitted to the Bergen Record and Ridgewood News on December 22, 2010; posted on the bulletin board in the Borough Hall, Municipal Place, Emerson, NJ 07630 and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of the notice was on file in the Office of the Municipal Clerk and had been available to the public since its approval by the Governing Body.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT:

Mayor Colina, Councilman Browne, Councilwoman DiPaola, Councilwoman Garis, Councilman Rivers, Council President Shaw

ABSENT:

Councilman Lazar

Also present were Borough Clerk Carol Dray, Borough Attorney Scott Mooney, Business Administrator Joseph Scarpa and CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector Catherine Henderson.

Mayor Colina announced that the order of business had been modified to allow for Public Comment at the beginning of the meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Before opening the meeting for comments from the public, Mayor Colina reminded everyone to turn off their cell phones, keep their comments as brief as possible and try to limit them only to governmental issues of concern to an Emerson resident. He further requested that if a subject matter was addressed and answered, to please refrain from repeating it unless they had something new to contribute. A five-minute rule was in effect for each speaker at the discretion of the Council. Mayor Colina asked that everyone do their part to be civil, to the point and respectful of another's point of view and opinion. He further warned that speaking out without recognition would not be tolerated and a second warning could result in removal from the Council Chambers.

☛ **Motion** to open the meeting for comments from the public was **moved** by Councilman Browne, **seconded** by Councilwoman DiPaola and carried.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Colina asked for a motion to close the meeting to comments from the public.

☞ **Motion** to close the meeting for comments from the public was **moved** by Councilman Browne, **seconded** by Councilman Rivers and carried at 7:40 p.m.

IV. BUDGET WORKSHOP -2011 Municipal Budget

Departmental Discussions:

➤ **Police Department**

Chief Rossi appeared before the Governing Body to present his budgetary requests for 2011:

- New patrol vehicle – He suggested going to a lease instead of purchasing a vehicle.
- Capital expenditure requests for 2011 – Chief Rossi asked to complete the digital camera project, replace two-way radio equipment for the entire department and replace computer systems in the vehicles.

The Governing Body reviewed the Chief's requests relating to costs, technology and current requirements.

Mayor Colina asked Ms. Henderson about the QPA process in relation to bidding requirements, noting that there were limitations on municipalities without a QPA. He noted that if the Borough was not utilizing that capability they had as a resource, they needed to put it forth as it would allow additional financial prudence and savings. Ms. Henderson said that the rules changed on January 1st so that if a municipality was not utilizing a QPA, the threshold was reduced. Mayor Colina stated that since Ms. Henderson was a QPA, the Borough was at a disadvantage not utilizing these skills. He asked about getting her on board in this capacity. Ms. Henderson explained that a resolution naming her as the QPA and setting the limits would be necessary.

Chief Rossi reviewed historic crime rates, security considerations, personnel and certification requirements, scheduling issues and promotional processes in the Police Department. He requested that the Governing Body consider the promotional process and hire an additional officer. The Chief emphasized that their service was essential to the community.

➤ **Emerson Volunteer Ambulance Corps**

Ambulance Corps Captain Dave Mason reviewed his requests for the upcoming year:

- New ambulance – He also discussed the option of chassis replacement for the backup ambulance. Councilman Rivers asked if the Corps had any money to put towards a new ambulance. Captain Mason said that private donations amounted to \$22,000 - \$23,000 which was used for items the town did not supply and there was probably not much left. He added that they still had the \$10,000 that Oritani Bank donated to them but wanted to hold on to that. He claimed that the fundraising that they do did not bring in a lot of money. The Captain said that some of the past donations were used for upgrades to computers. Councilman Rivers asked if some of that money could be earmarked for a new ambulance. Captain Mason said that it would depend on what they got in their annual fund drive.

Councilman Rivers proposed the feasibility of utilizing a paid ambulance service which he opined would potentially make it budget neutral for the Borough. Captain Mason claimed that the Borough would not collect as much revenue as they thought. He pointed out that if that option was chosen, the Volunteer Ambulance Corps would have to dissolve and the Borough would not get the

benefit of tax breaks and paid training and would eliminate the benefit of mutual aid agreements. He also mentioned new mandates that would require two EMTs, not just a driver and EMT and the issues involved with a paid group. Council President Shaw asked who earmarked the use of the donated funds. Captain Mason explained that the Executive Board reviewed and approved such expenses, but that some funds were kept aside for their emergencies. Council President Shaw asked if the Borough bonded for the \$94,000 chassis, how the Corps would feel about earmarking dedicated funds every year to return to the town for the debt service. Captain Mason did not think that the Executive Board would have a problem with that since everyone on the Corps was concerned about having an 18 year old ambulance and did not think it would compromise their budgetary constraints.

Councilman Browne mentioned a billed ambulance service as was done in Rochelle Park – a volunteer corps with a change in name which would bill insurance companies for their service. Captain Mason said that the Corps members would lose their volunteer status and not receive paid training. Councilman Browne asked if that could be offset by the payments. Captain Mason said that he did not think other towns would come in to help. He emphasized that Corps members volunteered because they were passionate about it, not as a job.

Councilwoman DiPaola and Mayor Colina requested that he provide the Governing Body with a cost benefit analysis to illustrate the tradeoffs. Councilman Rivers suggested that he and Councilwoman DiPaola sit down with Captain Mason and other Corps members to get a feel for what money had come in over the last two years in tough times, hoping that more would come in, and get a baseline of where they were to mutually figure out a way to handle it. Council President Shaw remarked that he did not think third party billing was the way to go.

➤ **Emerson Volunteer Fire Department**

Assistant Fire Chief Joe Castrovillari, Junior Captain Mark Brackenbury, Mechanic Joe Solimando and Treasurer Ron Berg reviewed their requests for the upcoming year:

- New fire rescue truck to replace two pieces with one – the 28 year old truck and the 12 year old engine.
- Turnout gear
- Generator for the Firehouse to run lights, heat and air conditioning
- Shed at Firehouse
- Software for new computer – per state requirements
- Air test equipment

Council President Shaw asked about mutual aid agreements for equipment and whether that was feasible. Assistant Chief Castrovillari said that it was not due to increased response time. Mr. Solimando said that other towns responded to support the municipality's firemen when there was a fire, but that was different than sharing equipment. But sharing manpower also presented issues that would impact safety and timely response. He also estimated that a new rescue truck would cost about \$750,000. Council President Shaw opined that a new truck was not a luxury, but a necessity at some point as it was so important to the community. Mr. Solimando explained that home owners' insurance rates were partly based on the age of the municipality's fire equipment. Councilman Rivers asked them to research the current cost of a new rescue

truck. Council President Shaw emphasized that it was not whether a new truck was needed, but how to figure out their options.

The Governing Body suggested educating Emerson residents on the condition of the current fire vehicles and ambulances and why new equipment was needed. Councilman Rivers suggested contacting Ms. Dray about auction sites about potential opportunities for used vehicles and at the same time research the price of a new truck to consider their options. Council President Shaw emphasized that they needed to educate the Borough about the difference between wants and needs and that the volunteer departments were telling the truth when they said that they need equipment, not just that they wanted it. Councilwoman DiPaola discussed the Westwood motorcycle fundraiser that appealed to people other than Westwood residents. Mr. Berg noted that the Chief's vehicle had been donated and that they not only tried to maintain their equipment but to obtain donated equipment as well.

Mayor Colina concluded that this would require commitment from various parties. He thought the idea of a fundraiser was great and asked Councilwoman DiPaola and Council President Shaw to give this some thought. He noted that Councilman Browne was spearheading the upgrade of the Borough website and thought that this would be a good place to get the message out as well as flyers. He agreed that educating residents was a good idea but noted that it was a major challenge with the cap and other pressures on the horizon. He said that creativity and mutual communication would help come up with creative ways to get the message out and get funds. Ms. Dray suggested that the Fire Department run raffles at all their events and said that it was a great way to raise money.

V. RESOLUTIONS ON CONSENT AGENDA NO. 52-11

☛ **Motion** to approve Consent Agenda Resolution #52-11 was **moved** by Councilman Rivers, **seconded** by Council President Shaw and carried by roll call vote.

RC: Council members:

YES: Rivers, DiPaola, Shaw, Garis

ABSENT: Browne

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| Ca 53-11 | Valley Health Medical Group – Drug and Alcohol Testing Agreement – January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011 |
| Ca 54-11 | Tax Appeal Settlement – Block 1101, Lot 5.01 – 46 Old Hook Road – John Sheridan |

VI. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to address, at the request of Mayor Colina, a motion to adjourn was **moved** by Councilwoman DiPaola, **seconded** by Council President Shaw and carried at 9:58 p.m.

Carol Dray, RMC/CMC/CMR
(Proofed 03/10/11)

March 1, 2011