

Town of Camden
Public Workshop
Camden Municipal Building
May 20, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and noticed that this Public Workshop was being held in compliance with the Delaware Open Public Meeting Act by posting the agenda on May 10, 2019, in the following manner:

- a. The electronic sign,
- b. The Official Bulletin Board,
- c. The official Town of Camden Web Site,
- d. The Delaware State News, and
- e. The Dover Post.

Blake King led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor King led a moment of silence.

Council Attending: Mayor King, Vice-Mayor Torres, Councilman Dougherty, Councilman Schock, and Councilwoman Rhodes.

Absent: None.

Staff Attending: Town Manager Aaron Chaffinch, Account Specialist Amanda Marlow, Town Clerk Jamie Fenske, and Chief Financial Officer Tom Josiah.

AMENDMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Hall will be closed Monday, May 27th in observance of Memorial Day.

REVIEW/DISCUSSION

Proposed FY 2020 Budget

Mr. Josiah explained that there is currently at \$26,000 deficit. He added that he and Mrs. Marlow have been very aggressive and based FY 2020 budget on the actuals from the FY 2019 budget. He detailed that they pushed as far as they could on taxes. He added that switching to Shore United Bank has resulted in an increase of interest from \$3,000 to \$61,000.

Mayor King explained that Chief Whitney was unable to attend tonight's public workshop due to a family emergency. He detailed that he and Chief Whitney have went over the police department's budget in fine detail and he feels that it is as tight as they can get it. He added that

the police department is working on increasing the ticket revenue to back to what it was in fiscal year 2018.

Mayor King stated that he asked Mrs. Marlow to run different scenarios for the tax discount. He explained that the tax discount helps the Town obtain the tax revenue in the beginning of the fiscal year when the money is needed the most.

Mr. Josiah explained that the budgets that they put together are very good if everyone sticks to the plan. He stated that right now is the perfect time to plan for the next two years. He cautioned Mayor and Council that if there is a problem this year then it is going to most likely be a problem again next year.

Mayor King questioned why the building permits have been decreased a lot for FY 2020.

Mrs. Marlow explained that they must be cautious with the building permits because they are not guaranteed each year. She explained that they have factored in some new dwellings, but they built a lot in Tidbury last year that is not projected for this year.

Vice-Mayor Torres questioned if the COLA was discussed at the May Council Meeting.

Mrs. Marlow explained that the Philadelphia Index shows a cost of living of 2%. She added that this was presented to Mayor and Council at the May Council Meeting and has been included in the draft budget for FY 2020, but Mayor and Council tabled it to vote on at the June Council Meeting after the budget was reviewed farther.

Councilman Schock questioned how the tax revenue is affected with the delinquent property taxes.

Mrs. Marlow explained that the delinquent taxes hit a different line item so that they are not included the next year.

Vice-Mayor Torres questioned if future building permits are calculated into this budget, such as the projects that have been approved by the Planning Commission, and if the new development projects have been projected into the tax revenue.

Mrs. Marlow explained that it is hard to project the future building permits because we can not guarantee when they will start building or other agency approvals. She detailed that the property taxes are based on the year to date assessments.

Councilwoman Rhodes confirmed that there have not been any tax increases in the recent years.

Mr. Chaffinch stated that he may not be here the full FY 2020 and is looking at leaving in February 2020 which would result in some savings to the Town.

Councilman Dougherty cautioned the council to not look so much into the increase in revenues without looking at the increase in expenses that will also come. He explained that with more development may require more police officers and personnel which will increase the salaries.

Mr. Josiah reminded Mayor and Council that if changes are not made this year then they will be faced with them again when preparing the FY 2021 budget.

Councilman Dougherty stated that he is not opposed to take money out of savings for this year to obtain a balanced budget. He added that in 2-3 years he does believe there will be a bigger issue due to an increase in expenses and salaries. He detailed that he does not want to increase taxes prematurely but wants to keep a close eye on expenses as they go up each year.

Mayor King confirmed that only one police department vehicle is budget for FY 2020.

Councilwoman Rhodes questioned if the employees get a guaranteed raise every year.

Councilman Dougherty explained that there is a wage scale that gives a 3% increase to town employees every other year with an option of COLA every year, but the COLA must be voted on. The police department get step increase that are 3-5%, with the option of COLA every year.

Mayor King explained that the COLA is not guaranteed, and it must be voted on every year.

Vice-Mayor Torres explained that she does not agree with the full 2% COLA and that she would like to look at lowering the tax discount.

Councilman Dougherty explained they Mayor and Council do not have to offer COLA each year, but he wants to be cautious due to competitive employers.

Vice-Mayor Torres stated that if a 1% COLA is given it will save the Town \$8,300 and if a \$15 discount is offered it will save the Town \$6,200.

Mayor King detailed that he agrees with Councilman Dougherty and thinks that taking the deficit from savings for this year to maintain a balanced budget is not a bad idea. He added that a lot of residents rely on the tax discount. He explained that the tax discount also helps the town collect money in the beginning of the fiscal year instead of relying on a line of credit that would cost the Town more money.

Councilman Dougherty explained that there is an amazing amount in savings that has been accumulated by being very financially cautious over the years.

Vice-Mayor Torres added that she also agrees with using money from savings to balance the budget.

Mr. Josiah stated that he and Mrs. Marlow can review the revenue farther but there is not much room for adjustment. He reminded Mayor and Council that this is the perfect time to plan for the next two years. He added that he and Mrs. Marlow worked very hard, went line by line, to be as accurate as possible.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

James O'Brien – 34 Dill Ln, stated that he appreciates the tax discount, but he understands if the Mayor and Council need to discontinue the discount to help better the Town. He added that he really likes living in the Town of Camden.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor King thanked Mr. Josiah and Mrs. Marlow on their hard work on the FY 2020 budget and explained that he feels that they did another excellent job preparing the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made at 7:46pm by Councilman Dougherty, seconded by Councilman Schock, to adjourn the council meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Fenske, Town Clerk*