

REGULAR MEETING

CITY COUNCIL

MAY 28, 2013

7:30 PM

The Regular Meeting of the Long Branch City Council was held on Tuesday, May 28, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 344 Broadway, Long Branch, New Jersey.

Present: Joy Bastelli, Council President; John Pallone, Council Vice-President; Kathleen Billings, Councilwoman; Dr. Mary Jane Celli, Councilwoman; Michael Sirianni, Councilman

Others Present: Howard Woolley, Business Administrator; James Aaron, City Attorney; Ronald Mehlhorn, Finance Director; Kathy L. Schmelz, City Clerk

Absent: Mayor Adam Schneider

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and certification was read into the record.

PRESENTATIONS:

None

HEARINGS: 2013 Municipal Budget

Motion by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilwoman Celli to open the public hearing on the 2013 Municipal Budget. Ayes 5

Diana Multare – 21 North Bath Avenue

Asked about the impact of Superstorm Sandy on the budget.

Mr. Mehlhorn stated that the only impact from the hurricane was a \$5,000,000 emergency that was passed in November of 2012 and we are required to pay off 1/5 of the emergency appropriation each in the next five years. This year there is a million dollar appropriation in debt service that increased the debt service over last year by nine hundred and some thousand dollars otherwise there would have been a decrease but its offset by revenue of a million dollars from FEMA so it has no impact on the taxes. There are some ongoing small expenses relative to public works that are ongoing right now. There will be some larger later but that will be paid for by FEMA upfront. It won't have an impact on the taxes in the foreseeable future.

Gerry Scarano – Long Branch

Asked about foreseeable cuts, shared services and health benefit costs.

Mr. Mehlhorn stated the health benefits amount to approximately \$5,000,000 and they are in the budget. With regards to cuts on operating expenses, that was started probably 20 years ago and we are at bare bones. The Police Department has \$10,000,000 in salaries that has less than a half of million worth of operating expenses. There really is nothing to cut. It's reviewed every year.

Mr. Woolley stated that as far as shared services, we continue to explore that. We are working with the County for shared services. The City just took on the West Long Branch Building Department, gasoline is a shared service. The City was sharing services before the term came to be.

Mr. Scarano asked that a committee be set up a Finance Committee to help and go over the budget.

Rich James – Bath Avenue

Spoke regarding tightening the budget.

Councilwoman Billings stated that many of the departments had a 0% increase in their budget and quite a few people were laid off two years ago. We are working on it but there are some things that are out of the City's control such as health insurance.

Mr. Pallone explained further about items that are out of the City's control, health benefits, unions, insurance etc...daily operations have increased practically zero.

Vincent Lapore – 80 North Broadway

Asked about the average increase per household.

Mr. Mehlhorn stated just short of \$160.00

Went on to speak about tax abatements and pilots.

A motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilman Pallone to close the public hearing – Ayes 5

READING AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

May 14, 2013 - Motion was made by Councilwoman Celli, seconded by Councilman Pallone to approve the minutes of May 14, 2013 was carried out upon the following roll call vote: Ayes 5

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

PUBLIC HEARING AND FINAL CONSIDERATION

None

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION:

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

A motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilwoman Celli to open the public portion of this meeting.

Wendy Lou Parker Smentkowski – 259 6th Avenue

Spoke regarding flooding on 6th Avenue.

Mr. Woolley stated that the engineer has been out there and we're trying to get funds from FEMA. The biggest problem is when the river floods and it comes out the storm sewers. We are in the process of having FEMA fund back flow prevention devices for the end of the pipes.

Diana Multare – 21 North Bath Avenue

Asked Mr. Pallone to repeat what he stated regarding the 1.1 million dollar in taxes.

Mr. Pallone went over the \$700,000 increase, relative to health costs, 2% CAP increase and the overall assessment of the City and half of that is a result of Sandy related items and the other half was tax appeals.

Mr. Mehlhorn explained further. Property taxes will go up 4.25 cents per \$100.00. The average assessment is about \$378,000 and the average municipal tax will be just short of \$160.00 increase.

Mrs. Multare spoke regarding layoffs. The Council stated that it was two years ago.

Gerry Scarano – Ocean Boulevard

Spoke regarding the paving of Bath Avenue. The City needs a beautification program. Went on to speak about the budget, GPS systems in the cars, would like to see a Financial Committee by citizens and spoke regarding Oceanfest.

Vincent Lapore – 80 North Broadway

Spoke regarding the budget, parking meters, redevelopment lawyers, 3 ½ million in unsecured promissory notes on Abbottsford Avenue, litigation costs, Ocean Place Development presentation, vacation of Abbottsford Avenue request by AFP104 Corp. and an article in the Wall Street Journal regarding the Jersey Shore rebuilding.

After ample time was given and no one else came forward, a motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilwoman Celli to close the public portion of this meeting. Ayes 5

RESOLUTIONS:

On file in the Clerks Office and posted on the City's Web Site.

APPLICATIONS:

None

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Councilwoman Billings – I just like to say that we had a wonderful weekend in spite of the rain on Saturday here at Long Branch. The boardwalk was full, the beaches were clean, the access points were wonderful and all I heard were positive comments from everyone that was down and again publicly I'd like to thank DPW and all the personnel involved in getting our ocean front ready for the summer season. Thank you.

Councilwoman Celli – To the Director of Public Works, I'd like to personally thank you and all your men for the wonderful job that you did making that beautiful staircase that I had the opportunity to see on Memorial Day. It really is nice and please thank the men. Thank you.

Councilman Sirianni – Also thank you to Public Works and also all the other departments that were able to get the City up and running, not just after the storm but as we're approaching our summer season which is our busiest season and we look forward to a very fun summertime here at the shore and thank you very much for coming out especially some new faces and voices to hear from. Thank you for taking the time to come out to the Council meeting. As you can see, we really pack them in sometimes.

Council Vice President Pallone – I'd just like to thank everybody for coming this evening and I would also like to thank all the City staff and employees for getting everything ready for the beach. Everything looked great and you did a great job and thanks for all your time and effort.

Council President Bastelli – And I'd like to thank my fellow Council men and women. As you can see tonight by their answers, their preparedness about the budget and I'm very pleased with all of our answers and I thank everyone that did come out for questions. I had

the privilege of buying my first daily beach badge yesterday. I did go down to the beach and it was a real joy to walk down the steps at West End and the beach looked beautiful and I tortured myself for an hour in the wind and that's all I could take but it really was a happy moment to see that the beach was opened and there was many people on it and the ticket taker said that the sales were very good and it was a good day in spite of the fact it was a little chilly down there but thank you again and I need a motion to adjourn...

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Sirianni, seconded by Councilman Pallone to adjourn this meeting at 8:30 p.m.