

The following notice appeared on the Township Committee's January 22, 2022 Workshop Agenda and was read by Mayor Miller Prunty at the start of the Meeting

**TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD
SUNSHINE NOTICE
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2022**

Due to the ongoing public health emergency, and the Governor's Executive Orders related to the same, the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford will conduct the January 22, 2022 Budget Workshop Meeting remotely and by electronic means.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 (the "Open Public Meetings Act") and consistent with the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services guidelines, the Township Committee Meeting will be open to the public by electronic means.

Members of the public who wish to participate in the virtual meeting for purposes of making a public comment or to participate in any scheduled public hearing can access the videoconference at meet.google.com/efu-rqry-qoy or by telephone at 1-904-580-6156, with the access code (PIN): 921677998#.

Members of the public may submit written comments in advance of a meeting, which will be read during the public portion of the meeting. Written public comments submitted prior to the meeting must identify the name and address of the commenter. No anonymous comments will be accepted. Written comments may be submitted via e-mail with the subject line "Public Comment-Township of Cranford Township Committee- Meeting Date of _____" to the Clerk of the Township Committee, Patricia Donahue at clerk@cranfordnj.org or by mail addressed to: Patricia Donahue, Municipal Clerk, Township of Cranford, 8 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, NJ 07016. E-mailed comments must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 21st. Mailed comments must be received by 12:00 p.m. on Friday, January 21st.

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **January 22, 2022** at 8:0 a.m. remotely and by electronic means.

THIS MEETING IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE "OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT" AS ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY E-MAILING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO THE WESTFIELD LEADER, THE UNION COUNTY LOCAL SOURCE, THE STAR LEDGER, AND TAP INTO CRANFORD, BY POSTING SUCH ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE ON A BULLETIN BOARD IN THE TOWN HALL RESERVED FOR SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE FILING OF SAID NOTICE WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK OF CRANFORD. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

Present: Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty
Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews
Commissioner Jason Gareis
Commissioner Gina Black

Commissioner Mary O'Connor

Absent: None

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Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Administrator Jamie Cryan, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue were present.

Commissioner O'Connor stated that she would leave and return the virtual meeting due to her attendance at funeral.

Public Comments

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue stated that no public comments mail had arrived via the U.S. Post service and no emails pertaining to public comments had been received by the Clerk's Office email account. Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

2022 Municipal Budget

Administrator Jamie Cryan stated that he was in attendance at the Workshop Budget Meeting with Chief Financial Officer Lavona Patterson. He spoke about the transparency of the Budget process and the day's tight agenda with many Department Heads present.

DMC Special Improvement District

District Management Corporation (DMC) Director Caren Demyen provided an overview of the DMC budget lines and noted that the DMC budget was slightly decreased from the previous year (CFO Patterson later explained this was tied to the slight decline in the SID's valuation.) Commissioner Andrews inquired about the utilization of sponsorships in the work of the DMC. Ms. Demyen responded and spoke about the use of sponsors for events such as the Souperhero Stroll as well as the use of sponsors for items such as planters. A brief discussion ensued. Mayor Miller Prunty commended Ms. Demyen on the sponsorships. Commissioner O'Connor stated that Ms. Demyen does a wonderful job. Ms. Demyen thanked the Township Committee for their time.

Park and Recreation/Swim Pool Utility

Recreation and Parks Director Steve Robertazzi spoke about the increased "Salaries and Wages" budget lines for full-time and part-time personnel. He then spoke about the decreased "Salaries and Wages" budget line for "Temporary/Seasonal" staff. Mr. Robertazzi noted that the State's Minimum Wage Rate would be increasing.

Mr. Robertazzi noted the Township's second bus would be utilized more this year and briefly elaborated. He then spoke about the proposed increased "Public Events: Miscellaneous" budget line. Mr. Robertazzi stated that the Community Center needed a new boiler.

Mr. Robertazzi discussed the 375 Centennial Avenue Recreation facility and associated operating expenses which totaled \$95,000. A brief discussion ensued including discussion how the budget was associated with a full year of operating costs. Mayor Miller Prunty requested that these budget lines be decreased. Mr. Robertazzi said he would decrease the budget lines to \$50,000.

Discussion ensued including a proposed staffing inquiry (Commissioner Gareis) and revenue projection inquiry (Commissioner Andrews) for 375 Centennial Avenue. Mr. Robertazzi responded.

Commissioner Andrews then inquired about the broken bathroom at Cranford West. Mr. Robertazzi responded noting that he needed to get a quote to fix the bathroom

Mr. Robertazzi asked CFO Patterson to provide an overview of the Swimming Pool finances. Ms. Patterson stated that surrounding municipalities were coping with declining pool revenues and briefly elaborated how surrounding municipalities were responding with declining pool revenues. She spoke about the finances associated with the Township's Pools including declining revenues, diminished surplus, health insurance coverage by the Township for Pool employees and use of the State's ARP (American Rescue Plan) funding. Ms. Patterson noted that changes had to be made including changes at the Indoor Pool. Ms. Patterson noted that

the Indoor Pool cost about \$650,000 to operate and revenues for such Pool were only about \$300,000. She discussed increasing the Pool fees, the addition of the Splash Pad and needed additional (\$15,000) funding at the Centennial Avenue Pool. Ms. Patterson elaborated further about the Township's budget for the two (2) Outdoor Pools and the one (1) Indoor Pool. She stated that a plan for the Pools had to be implemented by March. Commissioner O'Connor responded that information was needed for the long term, not just for the current budget cycle. Commissioner O'Connor stated that she would love to see all three (3) Pools remain opened and stated that the Township needed a plan. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that Ms. Patterson's overview was excellent. She referred to the Swim Pool Utility's presentation in late 2021. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that everyone was in agreement that the Pools were a big issue and noted that tough decisions were required. Mayor Miller Prunty thanked Ms. Patterson, Mr. Paine and Mr. Robertazzi for their work.

Mr. Gareis inquired about the plan that was expected to be formulated by March. Ms. Patterson spoke about the Westfield YMCA's interest in working with the Cranford Pool & Fitness Center. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired if the Westfield YMCA was only interested in the Indoor Pool. Ms. Patterson responded in the affirmative. Commissioner Gareis inquired whether the Swim Pool rates were competitive. Discussion ensued, including discussion that raising the Pools' membership fees alone would not solve the Pool's financial issues (Ms. Patterson.)

Further discussion ensued regarding the damaged pump at Centennial Avenue Pool (Commissioner Andrews), opening the Centennial Avenue Pool for the community (Commissioner Andrews) and whether the Splash Pad would be ready for the 2022 Summer Season (Commissioner Andrews.)

Commissioner O'Connor thanked Mr. Robertazzi and Ms. Patterson for their work.

Police Department

Police Chief Ryan Greco provided an overview of the Police Department's "Salaries and Wages" budget lines. He stated that the Department's administrative professional was reassigned to another department and that the Records Clerk position had been changed from a full-time position to a part-time position. Chief Greco spoke about the "Overtime – Uniformed" budget line and the proposed increase in the "Terminal Pay" budget line. He spoke about the increased use of "Professional Expenses" monies for psychological testing for prospective Police Officers.

Chief Greco reviewed the "Clothing Allowance" and "Claims/Traffic Lights-Vehicles-Etc" budget lines. He spoke about the Department's previous practice of a vehicle purchase of every two (2) years. Chief Greco stated that he had recently presented a new Department vehicle acquisition practice in which the Department would seek to purchase new police vehicles instead of leasing them. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired about the number of Police vehicles. Chief Greco responded that there were six (6) Police Officer vehicles in the Department's fleet.

A brief discussion ensued regarding traffic and speed limit enforcement (Commissioner Andrews and Chief Greco.) Chief Greco spoke briefly about the number of Police officers and 411 phone calls.

Chief Greco then spoke about the "Parking System: Maint. and Repair" budget line and noted that the fifty-two (52) pay stations which were seven (7) or eight (8) years old. He stated that during the next year, discussion would ensue regarding developing a new plan for meter collection.

Administrator Jamie Cryan inquired about the "Terminal Pay" budget line and whether there were retirements expected this year. Chief Greco stated that there were two (2) officers who had over twenty-five (25) years in the Department. He noted that 2024 could be a challenging year as there would be many officers eligible to retire.

Commissioner Andrews inquired about the decline in Parking Meter revenue. Chief Greco spoke about the recent uptick in "Parking Permit" purchases. Discussion ensued.

Office of Emergency Management

Police Chief Greco stated that he would present the Office of Emergency Management as Fire Lieutenant was unable to attend the Budget Workshop Meeting. Chief Greco stated spoke about the proposed increase for the "Emerg. Mgt.: Other Expenses" budget line and noted that such funding would be utilized for the water rescue equipment and more equipment for the Township's mobile command post. He noted that the Township was seeking to find Humvee vehicles.

Police Department (continued)

Administrator Cryan inquired about expected Police Department Capital Budget requests. Chief Greco responded that he expected such requests would include Mobile Data Terminals and E-Ticketing Systems.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Dan Czeh reviewed Fire Department budget lines including the “Hydrant Service” and “Gasoline/Diesel Fuel” budget lines. He spoke about hydrant costs as well as the increased costs associated with gasoline and diesel. Discussion ensued regarding the “Salaries and Wages” budget line, “Uniform Fire Code” revenues and the regulated use of expending such revenues. Chief Czeh then spoke about proposed vehicle spending.

EMS

Chief Czeh spoke about the labor shortage associated with the EMS Department. He noted that the proposed “Regular Part Time” budget line had increased by \$50,000 to staff the EMS Department. Chief Czeh spoke about ways to assist EMS with the labor shortage by introducing full-time EMS positions and a weekend crew of Per Diem EMTs to work during the day. He stated that the introduction of an EMS weekend crew was expected to reduce Firefighter overtime and EMS stipend payments. Chief Czeh advised that even though CFAS (Cranford First Aid Squad) had primary medical coverage in the Township on the weekend, the Fire Department had responded to a total of 141 weekend medical calls in 2021, 126 weekend medical calls in 2020, 107 medical calls in 2019 and 90 medical calls in 2018. He noted that the EMS hourly (wage) rates were more competitive in nearby departments. Chief Czeh stated that EMS calls increase each year. He noted that the billing rates for EMS had not risen since 2009 and suggested that the per/transport fees be increased and elaborated. Further discussion ensued regarding EMS calls covered by Fire Department staff, the “Miscellaneous Material & Supplies” budget line, the number of calls versus Ambulance Corps calls, the Fire Department’s practice of offering soft billing to Township residents, stipends for Fire Department employees who handle patient care, proposed upcoming Township Committee discussion regarding increasing the EMS transport fees and insurance reimbursement for EMT transports.

Further discussion ensued regarding proposed Capital budget items for the Fire Department including SCBA upgrades, a replacement Fire Vehicle for Engine 1, roof replacement for the Firehouse, Mobile Data Terminals (MDT’s).

Commissioner O’Connor left the Virtual Meeting at 9:26 a.m.

Administrator Cryan stated that last year’s request for turn-out gear would not be submitted again this year as donations had been received for such purpose. Chief Czeh briefly elaborated about the receipt of such turnout gear. Chief Czeh thanked his colleague Cathy Scotti for her technical assistance.

Building Department

Construction Code Official Frank Genova spoke about the Building Department’s work in Garwood at the Russo project. Discussion ensued regarding Building Department vehicles, the reimbursement rate for fees, the “Property Maintenance Inspector”, the “Postage and Printing”, the “Purchase of Equipment” (i.e., SDL costs) budget lines. Further discussion ensued regarding increasing revenues, increasing Building Department fees and staff training.

Public Works

Department of Public Works Superintendent Erik Hastrup spoke about increased “Conservation Center” costs and the “Salaries and Wages” budget line. He noted that the proposed “Outside Professional Expenses” budget line had increased by \$5,000 to assist with tree cutting expenses. Mr. Hastrup noted that “Brookside Detention” budget line had increased by \$1,500 and the “Clothing Allowance” budget line had increased by \$2,000. Mr. Hastrup spoke about the expenses associated with the Municipal Building such as Air Group and Arrow Elevator costs. He noted that the expenses had been allocated in 2021 to the “Municipal Building Miscellaneous” budget line for mold remediation work and briefly elaborated. He noted that the proposed “Downtown Street Light Maintenance and Repair” budget line had increased and briefly elaborated about a contract. Mr. Hastrup then spoke about proposed vehicle spending specifically for a front-end loader and a salt-spreader vehicle to replace the Mason Truck.

Discussion included discussion about replacing the roof at the Roundhouse which was expected to cost \$15,000. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that some of the costs associated with (maintaining) 375 Centennial Avenue would not occur over each of the twelve (12) months of the year. Mr. Cryan responded that the Building and Grounds (outside) work would be year-round and the inside work was expected to be less.

Commissioner Andrews briefly elaborated about the Downtown Street lights and the Hanson House’s roof replacement.

Municipal Court

Court Administrator stated that her employee headcount was reduced from three and a half (3.5) to three (3) employees as the part-time position was eliminated. She noted that subsequently the proposed “Outside Professional Expense” budget line had been increased for per-diem staff coverage. A brief discussion ensued regarding expected Municipal Court revenues for the year and the “Outside Professional Expense” budget line.

Clerk’s Office

Township Clerk Patricia Donahue discussed the Clerk’s Department “Salaries and Wages”, “Professional Development”, “Postage & Printing”, “Codification”, “Township Committee Full-Time Personnel” and Township Committee “Professional Development” budget lines.

Commissioner Black inquired about the “Miscellaneous Other Expenses” budget line, specifically why its actual expenses each year were greater than the allocated \$500. CFO Patterson and Ms. Donahue explained that the records move to the Community Center basement during the past few years had incurred shelving and security cages expenditures.

Tax Assessor’s Office

Tax Assessor Bryan Flynn reviewed the budget associated with the Tax Assessors’ Office. Discussion then ensued regarding North Avenue Redevelopment area appraisals (Commissioner Black), revenues brought into the Township by the Department as added assessments (CFO Patterson) and tax appeals (Administrator Cryan).

Planning and Zoning

Zoning Officer Kathleen Nemeth spoke about the Planning and Zoning Board’s “Salaries and Wages”, the “Professional Development” and “Outside Professional Expenses” budget lines. She noted that the Department was planning on hiring a part-time employee. Ms. Nemeth spoke about the Department’s plans to purchase a new laptop. Commissioner Andrews and Administrator Cryan complimented Ms. Nemeth on her work. Ms. Nemeth noted that Ms. Kathy Lenahan and Ms. Ruth Nicholas were invaluable to her.

TV35

TV 35 Manager Ed Davenport spoke about TV35’s “Salaries and Wages” and the “Miscellaneous Other Expenses” budget lines. He noted that the other TV35 budget lines were “flat”. Commissioner Andrews noted that Mr. Davenport was always working and stated his appreciation.

Finance

CFO Patterson provided an overview of the “Salaries and Wages” budget line for the Finance Department. She stated that the Finance Department needed a part-time employee. Ms. Patterson provided an overview of the “Professional Development” and “Outside Professional Expenses” budget lines. Ms. Patterson then spoke about the Tax Collector’s Department, noting that the tax collection rate was 98.5 per cent. She provided an overview of the “Salaries and Wages”, “Advertising Legal”, “Outside Professional Expenses” and “Postage and Printing” budget lines for the Tax Collector’s department. Ms. Patterson spoke about the Department’s recent efforts to assist residents with tax payment such as direct bank account withdrawals.

Liabilities

CFO Patterson provided an overview of the Township’s 2022 budgeted insurance, liabilities, debt and equity information. She stated that costs had risen for insurance, the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) and pension contributions. Ms. Patterson spoke about how lower interest rates affected the Township’s BAN and bond portfolio. She noted that recycling fees for 2022 were expected to decrease by \$100,000. Ms. Patterson spoke about increased tax assessments and the Township’s excellent tax collection rate. She noted that the Township’s Fund Balance from the previous year had declined by one (1) million dollars. Ms. Patterson spoke about the Township’s drop in revenues and the cost of Hurricane Ida to the Township. Commissioner Andrews thanked Ms. Patterson for her work. He spoke about the significant increase in Group Insurance. Discussion ensued.

Library

Library Director Michael Maziekien provided a brief overview of salary and expenses at the Cranford Library. He spoke about the Library’s Strategic Plan. Mr. Maziekien spoke about the Library’s interest in shared services and expanding the hours of operation. Mr. Maziekien stated that while the Library did not receive recent grant funding from the State of New Jersey, the Library was interested in renovating the Children’s Room. Commissioner Black inquired about the number of Library employees. Mr. Maziekien responded that there were nine (9) full-time employees and twenty-five (25) part-time employees. Further discussion ensued

including discussion regarding the work and financial contributions of the “Friends of the Cranford Public Library” and plans for the Children’s Room. Mr. Maziekien stated that while the Library had lost out on the recent State grant funding opportunity, they had secured the Township’s financial commitment in 2018. Ms. Patterson spoke about the Township’s 2018 ordinance which had committed approximately \$960,000 to the Library and noted that there was a period of five to seven years to determine whether such ordinance should be cancelled. Discussion ensued.

Administration

Administrator Jamie Cryan spoke about the salaries in the Administration Department and noted that such salaries included the Administrator’s salary which was contractual, half of the salary of the Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) Director and the Department’s Assistant to the Township Administrator. He spoke about a proposed part-time hire for the Administration Department who would work on Human Resources matters. Mr. Cryan then spoke about the “Professional Development” budget line and spoke about Joint Insurance Fund trainings. He provided overviews of the “Outside Professional Expenses”, “Office Supplies”, and “IT” and “Planning & Engineering” budget lines. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue inquired about the salary allocation for the Constituent Services Coordinator.

Commissioner O’Connor returned to the virtual Workshop Meeting at 11:29 a.m.

Legal

Mr. Cooper provided a brief overview of legal costs expected during 2022. He noted that the Township’s legal budget had remained flat for the last five (5) years despite significant legal challenges. Commissioner Andrews inquired about the legal fees associated with the Cell Tower litigation.

Health

Mr. Fitzpatrick spoke about the Personnel costs associated with the Health Department. He noted that the “Professional Development” budget had decreased due to more online (instead of in-person) training opportunities. Mr. Fitzpatrick then spoke about the “Outside Professional Expense” budget line which pertained to inspector and nursing services. Mr. Fitzpatrick then reviewed the Health Department’s “Maintenance & Repair”, “Office Supplies”, “Vital Statistics” and “Miscellaneous” budget lines. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired about the increase in the Vital Statistics spending which had occurred in 2022 and Mr. Fitzpatrick responded that increase was attributed due to the purchase of Safety Paper needed for the printing of official documents. Ms. Patterson spoke briefly about the fees associated with the Township’s agreement with the Township of Bloomfield for public health services, noting that last year approximately \$124,000 had been expended to the Township of Bloomfield.

Commissioner Andrews thanked Mr. Fitzpatrick for his work and briefly elaborated He asked Mr. Fitzpatrick how information could be better communicated to the public and inquired about the Township’s public health role. A brief discussion ensued. Mr. Fitzpatrick spoke about the Township’s “Animal Control” services contract and the need to go out to bid again this year for such contract. Commissioner Andrews inquired about large animals, including deer situations, and assisting residents with these matters. Discussion ensued.

Engineering

Mr. Cryan stated that Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann would be presenting an Engineering update (and plan) at the Township Committee’s Tuesday night Workshop Meeting (on January 25th). He spoke about staffing needs for the Engineering Department including the possibility of hiring a retired engineer for the Department and hiring an administrative employee dedicated to the Department. Discussion ensued regarding the Engineering Services \$145,000 annual contract to Colliers Engineering & Design and what that contract encompassed as well as Hurricane Ida-associated costs. Mr. Cryan noted that the weekly meetings devoted to Township engineering matters were very helpful.

Late Starter - Revenue

Ms. Patterson spoke about the Township’s expected 2022 revenues noting that the year’s projection was based on what was received during 2021. A brief discussion ensued regarding the Health Department’s increased revenues, interest on investments, revenue from grants and the ARP (American Rescue Plan Act) and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund grants monies.

Late Starter – Commissioner and Professional Comments

Mr. Cryan spoke about the Township Budget process and the ensuing transparency offered to the Township’s residents. He stated that the Budget numbers were real with no “fluff.” Mayor Miller Prunty thanked Ms. Patterson and her staff, Administrator Cryan, Ms. Donahue and the Department Heads for their work on the

Township Budget preparation and briefly elaborated. Ms. Patterson stated that the Budget should be introduced by the second set of Township Committee Meetings in March and adopted by the last Official Meeting in April. Mr. Cryan stated that the earlier the Budget was adopted, then the earlier the Capital Budget process could begin.

On motion of Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue
Township Clerk

Dated: January 22, 2022