

## City of Englewood

### City Council Budget Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2013 at 7:00pm

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A Budget Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Englewood, Bergen County, New Jersey, was held in the City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room, 2-10 N. Van Brunt Street, Englewood, NJ commencing at 7:00 P.M.

**Roll Call:** Present: Council member Michael Cohen  
Council member Marc Forman  
Council member Eugene Skurnick  
Council member Wayne Hamer  
Council member Lynne Algrant  
Mayor/Council President Frank Huttle III  
City Manager Tim Dacey  
City Clerk Lauren Vande Vaarst  
CFO Ronald Amorino

Council President Huttle called the meeting to order.

The City Clerk stated that adequate notice of this meeting was given by the posting, filing and distribution of the notice as required by the Open Public Meetings Act.

#### Budget Workshop:

- Presentation by Scott Karcich of Command Radio Communications, Inc. providing information on the equipment, costs and compliance of the digital/analog radio system with the FCC narrow band requirements.
- Reviewed the narrow band requirements and that the City has a current license which was granted on February 1, 2013. The City has 8 months from the date of the license to construct the narrow band radio system.
- Mr. Karcich discussed the studies which were conducted by Kenwood to determine the equipment and coverage needs of the Englewood Police Department.
- The City is planning on purchasing a digital system which is capable of being used as an analog one in order to best communicate with the Englewood Fire Department and the surrounding communities that still use analog. The console in the Dispatch Center will be able to work on both digital and analog, even simultaneous use by two separate dispatchers. Discussed which models of radios and mobile (for vehicles) units that are being considered for purchase.
- Mr. Dacey explained that the total cost of the project has been reduced by \$400,000 from the original \$1 million dollars.
- Whether or not the City obtained a FCC waiver was discussed.
- The Joint Dispatch Center scheduled to open on July 1, 2013 has been in the works since the 1998. New equipment will be purchased for the EPD but not the EFD since they just purchased new analog narrow band radios 2 years ago. The EFD chose analog because other departments had expressed difficulty with the digital radio system.
- The difference between analog and digital was explained; with digital you either get the transmission or you do not and with analog you will still get a faded transmission.
- Suggested that the larger buildings in the City be required to purchase and mount repeaters on their buildings to aid the communication system.
- The question was asked if DPW will be getting radios also so they can communicate with the EPD and the EFD during emergencies because their system is extremely old and they currently cannot communicate with either entity.
- P25 which is apparently the new public safety standard was discussed. Since the EPD is not purchasing P25 capable radios can they be upgraded? The equipment that the EPD is purchasing can all be upgraded to P25 but they were not purchasing that to begin with because they were told that cost was an issue.
- If the system as proposed is purchased are there any deficiencies that would still exist? It was explained that nothing is 100% but the studies were conducted to alleviate this concern. The new system will allow the City's emergency personnel to communicate with all of the other agencies that it needs to from the State, County and local municipalities.

#### Public Session:

- Adam Brown 186 Elm Road:
  - Stated that his family's company invented narrow band radio.
  - Asked why the City is not buying a full digital system for the EPD and not buying new equipment for the EFD. Agrees that EFD should stay with analog if they are more comfortable with that system.
- Elle Kelly 350 Shepard Avenue:
  - Said that the City should buy the top shelf equipment and get DPW radios as well.

## Fire Department

- Departmental budget was presented by Chief Gerald Marion and Captain Erik Enersen.
- Explained that in the 2013 budget they are not asking for an increase past the 2012 budget or to expand services.
- The Fire Department is making the following requests:
  - Capital Funding for equipment purchases
  - Increase staffing levels- the Fire Department is at its lowest levels and does not even meet basic staffing levels. The highest staffing levels was in 2008 and it has been on the decline ever since. In the past 3 years 6 Firefighters have been lost due to retirement, transfer and one death and none have been replaced. The Fire Chief is requesting to hire eight (8) new Firefighters in order to bring staffing levels up. The department staff is aging and experiencing more frequent and more severe injuries due to age, and reaching the maximum on overtime due to reduced staffing and injuries. Chief was asked what he foresees with future retirements; possible 4 in 2013 and 6 in 2014.
  - Deputy Fire Chief- the EFD currently has five (5) Captains and no Deputy Fire Chief, the Captains are union members and it is a conflict when one must act in a managerial capacity. The question arose as to how much more a Deputy Chief would cost, and the base pay is \$5,000 to \$10,000 more than a Captain but a Captain will ultimately earn more because they average \$18,000 per year in overtime. A Deputy Chief cannot earn overtime.
- Mayor Huttler asked the Council if they were willing to fulfill the Chief's hire request and if not, would they be willing to hire upon the next retirement. Council member comments included; that it is cheaper to pay overtime than to incur the additional ancillary costs (benefits), have an independent analysis conducted on Fire Department staffing, and staffing levels need to be raised,
- Mutual Aid was discussed as a solution to the low staffing problem, and the issue of "Call Verification" for false alarms was also discussed.
- Automatic Aid Agreement was defined as an agreement with another municipality that when a call goes out both towns' departments respond simultaneously. As compared to a Mutual Aid Agreement, when a call goes out to other fire departments only if they are needed. We currently have Mutual Aid Agreements but no Automatic Aid Agreements.

ADJOURN: 10:10PM

Motion: Hamer

All in Favor

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Lauren Vande Vaarst, RMC  
City Clerk