

City of Englewood

City Council Budget Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2013 at 7:00pm

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

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

Council President Huttie 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:

Library:

- Presented by Katherine Glynn, President of the Library Board of Trustees, Arnold Brown, member of the Library Board of Trustees and Charlene Taylor, Acting Library Director.
- Ms. Glynn gave an overview of Library services:
 - Attendance rates for 2012.
 - Previous Director retired and Charlene Taylor has been Acting Director
 - Participates in BCCLS, which is a shared service.
 - Have invested in multilingual materials.
 - First run movies shown.
 - The Strategic Plan will be ready next month.
 - Spent money in 2012 on materials and BCCLS.
 - Have not replaced any positions since 2010.
 - Labor Contract settled.
 - Must replace Library Director as per N.J.S.A. and BCCLS.
- Mr. Brown spoke about the Budget:
 - Budget short \$211,000 of amount that was requested and they want a \$100,000 increase.
 - The Library is an aging facility which requires repairs.
 - Had to hire a Labor Attorney and it was costly.
 - Library pays for its own snow removal.
 - BCCLS membership costs \$44,000.
 - Feels that the City should pay for physical plant repairs.
- Mayor and Council comments:
 - Councilman Cohen asked when the building was built, 1965 and if it is cheaper for the City to provide maintenance on the building.
 - Councilman Forman asked the following:
 - Asked if they have a comparison showing Library usage for the past 3-5 years.
 - Have they conducted a study regarding hours of usage, and to be open additional hours during optimum times.
 - What is the balance in the Friends of the Library bank account? *Separate entity and the Library have no access to it.*
 - Has the numbers of volunteers increased?
 - Councilman Hamer asked if the Library does a periodic review to see what programs are no longer popular.
 - Councilman Skurnick asked the following:
 - If there is a handout of programs available.
 - Spoke about the Library being used by all the people in Englewood.
 - Asked why the City does not provide snow removal for the Library. *City does the parking lots but not the stairs and walkways.*
 - Asked about Labor Attorney. *They used the City's Labor Counsel for contract negotiations only.*
 - Optimum staffing and hours of operation should be looked at for all Departments.

- o Councilman Cohen asked if Library could do revenue generating programs.
- o Councilman Skurnick feels that the Library Budget needs more money added to it and should be treated equally across the City with all of the other departments.

Public Session - Library:

- Ella Urdang 461 Tenafly Road:
 - o President of the Friends of the Englewood Library.
 - o The Library Budget pays for the meat and potato items while the Friends provide funding for frills. In 2012 the Friends gave the Library \$25,000.
 - o The Annual Book Sale is April 6 & 7, 2013.
- Anita Newkirk Tryon Avenue:
 - o Does not feel that it is appropriate to charge for Library services and programs.
 - o Wants the City to fund the Library at 100%.
- Ann Sparanese 146 St. Nicholas:
 - o The Friends of the Library is a vital organization and provides needed funds and enhancements for the Library.
 - o Library has great children's programming.
 - o A 1 ½ percent increase in funding for the Library is not enough because costs are rising at a higher rate, and this may make it harder to find a good Director.
- Sandy Greenberg 449 Liberty Road:
 - o Feels that the Mayor and Council are unaware of the work put in by volunteers.
- Mary Jo Nutt 45 Hillside Avenue:
 - o The Research and Reference Desk at the Library is heavily used and so are the public computers.
 - o Attends the Tech Tuesday classes and there are many facets to the Library.
- Eugene Clements 175 Tenafly Road:
 - o Feels there is an anti intellectual bent towards programs for kids and more of an emphasis on sports activities in town.
- Betty Grossman Marlboro Road:
 - o Feels that the City does not have the guts to take a hard look at the Police Department payroll and pensions.
- Mayor Huttie wrapped up the public session for the Library by saying that decisions should be based on the Library as a whole and not just on the Budget. Focus on what the Library needs and what they are doing.

Code Enforcement Department:

- Departmental budget was presented by Walter Deptuch, Construction Code Official.
- Spoke about the new cloud based system that they will be installing in order to digitize records and provide better service in regard to the permitting process.
- Explained that the Vacant House Registry system will simplify tracking down the owners of vacant/foreclosed properties when maintenance issues arise.
- The department needs new two (2) new vehicles.
- A uniform program was instituted this year in order to make the Inspectors more visible and professional looking.
- Mayor and Council comments:
 - o Councilman Cohen spoke about the following:
 - Can a magnetic City Seal be placed on their personal cars? Asked about travel allowances.
 - Will additional revenues generated by the department cover additional expenses?
 - Asked questions regarding Salary and Wage line.
 - Elevator Inspections
 - o Councilman Hamer asked about illegal occupancies and where we currently stand and where does the City need to be on this. *Mr. Deptuch explained the process and the hurdles. Eight (8) cases were completed in 2012 with three (3) still in litigation.*
 - o Councilman Forman asked about unpermitted work being done on buildings. *Mr. Deptuch explained that it is difficult to enter an illegal unit but if you do find one then you have to look at all of the backup materials and evidence. Any Inspector can go in and inspect when they discover unpermitted work going on.*
 - o Councilman Skurnick stated that most of the calls that he receives are regarding illegal units and property maintenance issues. Wants tighter oversight on things that are reported. And suggested hiring staff for Property Maintenance (full time for \$50,000 per year).
 - o Mayor Huttie commented that houses where construction has been abandoned are dangerous and asked how many are currently in the City.
 - o Councilman Cohen commented on broken sidewalks and overgrown shrubbery.

City Clerk:

- Lauren Vande Vaarst, City Clerk reviewed the departmental budget.
- Mayor and Council comments:
 - Councilman Hamer asked about digitizing of records and backup of records.
 - Councilman Skurnick asked about the City Code.
 - Councilman Cohen asked about the frozen records from the flooding in City Hall.

Public Session:

- Theresa Thomas 279 Genesee Avenue:
 - Spoke about long ago City Clerk Joe Carney and complimented the current City Clerk on her professionalism and knowledge.
- Sandy Greenberg 449 Liberty Road:
 - Commented that the Code Enforcement Department needs to put more emphasis on illegal signs.

ADJOURN: 9:20PM

Motion: Hamer

All in Favor

Lauren Vande Vaarst, RMC
City Clerk