COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2024
8:30 A.M., TOWN HALL

The Special Meeting of the Colts Neck Township Committee was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Mayor Rizzuto followed by the Salute to the Flag. The following statement was read by Township Administrator, Kathleen Capristo: "The notice requirements of the New Jersey Public Meetings Law have been satisfied by noticing the Asbury Park Press on January 24, 2024 stating that a special meeting of the Colts Neck Township Committee would be held on February 24, 2024 at 8:30 a.m., Town Hall. A copy is on file in the office of the Township Clerk."

Roll call by Ms. Capristo indicated the following:

Present: Mayor Rizzuto, Deputy Mayor Tara Torchia Buss, Committeeman Michael Viola,

Also Present: Kathleen Capristo, Administrator

Absent: Committeeman J.P. Bartolomeo, Committeewoman Sue Fitzpatrick

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1. REVIEW OF THE TOWNSHIP BUDGETS

Administrator Capristo opened the meeting advising that the workshop would focus on the department operating and capital budgets. Ms. Capristo stated that specific township employees and any recommendations regarding salary would be discussed at a future executive session meeting. Ms. Capristo thanked the Department Heads, Committee, Board and Commission Chairs, and the Chief Financial Officer, John Antonides for their hard work associated with this year's budget process. The following budgets for 2024 were presented and discussed:

- Police Department (Chief Paul Santucci)
- Fire Department (Chief John Sauter and Deputy Chief Michael Cusate)
- First Aid Squad (President Martha Leonhardt)
- Recreation (Director Colby Marques)
- Department of Public Works (Director Lou Bader)
- All other Departments (Kathleen Capristo and John Antonides)

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Piotrowski, resident. Mr. Piotrowski suggested the Township consider installing smart thermostats in the library and fire departments. Mr. Piotrowski also shared that he attended a recent meeting in Freehold in connection with the Kushner property stating that there was a great deal of discussion about the septic system and fears of potential water pollution.

Elaine Mann, resident. Ms. Mann stated that the trees along Heritage Way should have been removed and voiced concern that when they die and are removed the roots will impact the walking path. Ms. Mann further opined that there should be more support for the First Aid Squad and Fire Department stating that it would be more costly to have paid departments. Ms. Mann offered that Vin Gopal has a great bill to assist with attracting volunteers. Ms. Mann asked what security is going to be in place at the firing range. Ms. Mann opined that the Township should purchase more salt, stated that the poor fire department had to clear ice from Firehouse #2, and suggested that

the Town needs to plow the back area of #2. Ms. Mann looked to Mr. Bader and asked how many DPW workers are currently employed.

Fulton Wilcox, resident. Mr. Wilcox voiced support for spending money to assist the First Aid in adjusting back to their building. Mr. Wilcox advised that he is inclined to donate money to the squad to assist them. Mr. Wilcox reminded the Township Committee of the dark days when they considered putting the police in the block building at Bucks Mill Park and was glad it was deemed too expensive noting that the road is entirely unsuited for police purposes. Using the building for storage is a better idea for the park.

With no further comments from the public, Mayor Rizzuto called for a motion to close public comment. On a motion by Committeeman Viola, seconded by Deputy Mayor Buss and a unanimous voice vote, public comment was closed.

3. DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Rizzuto thanked those in attendance. In response to Ms. Mann's concern, he advised that if the trees are removed along Heritage Way, the roots would remain and the stumps would be ground down thus avoiding any impact to the walking path. Deputy Mayor Buss stated that the First Aid and Fire departments are indeed a priority for the Township but feels that the purchase of items such as bumper pool and TVs, which she agrees facilitates attracting volunteers, should be made from the funds donated and not taxpayer dollars. Ms. Buss also stated that she would be reviewing Mr. Gopal's bill. Mayor Rizutto added that the discussions regarding the First Aid's budget have been comprehensive this year due to the move.

4. ADJOURN

At 12:20 p.m., Mayor Rizzuto called for a motion to adjourn. Committeeman Viola made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Deputy Mayor Buss and unanimously carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

Kathleen Capristo, RMC
Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: 03/13/24