

Mayor Dunwell called the Meeting of the Common Council of the Borough of Alpha to order at 7:00 p.m. on April 7, 2016

Mayor Dunwell announced that adequate notice of the meeting was given and posted on the bulletin board in the Clerk's office satisfying the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act:

NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting has been given. On April 4, 2016, the Municipal Clerk delivered to the Star Gazette/Express-Times and posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Clerk's office a notice containing the date, time, and place of this meeting of the Borough Council. Also said notice has been mailed to persons requesting the same.

Mayor Dunwell led the salute to the flag.

Roll Call: Present; Councilwoman Grossman, Councilman Pettinelli, Councilman Preiss, Councilwoman Ronan, Councilman Schwar and Councilman Seiss.

Public Comment:

Mayor Dunwell asked for Public Comment at approximately 9:45pm, there was no one in attendance.

2016 Current fund and Utility Proposed Budgets

Councilman Schwar distributed the budget document to Mayor and Council, in State budget form. Mayor asked him to start with the budget and surplus. Councilman Schwar said we will have another year without tax levy. School taxes go up because we are a sending district to the High School and the fewer amounts of students we send, the more it costs per student to the High School.

Mayor Dunwell went to the 1st page of the document, analysis, local rate for 2016 ½ cent higher. If anyone is uncomfortable with that we can make up the approximate \$13,000 to keep rate the same. Councilwoman Grossman, Councilman Pettinelli, and Councilman Seiss asked about surplus. Can the \$13,000 be taken from surplus to keep rate the same? Mayor is proposing to put \$35,000 into capital, can put the \$13,000 there too. Councilman Seiss would like to see lower tax rate to help citizens with school taxes. Mayor is not in favor. Councilman Seiss and Mayor Dunwell then discussed the surplus amount.

Mayor Dunwell said he spoke with Bob Swisher over the phone & gave him the current fund balances. Difference of surplus for this year is due to DR Horton purchase.

Councilman Schwar stated he and Mayor went to the last school board meeting and informed them we were looking to buy DR Horton property.

Mayor Dunwell said we are looking to lose \$40,000 this year in taxes. Councilwoman Ronan feels the school is an asset. Mayor wants to introduce Budget on April 12th. Voted for tax rate to be kept flat: Roll call: Ayes; Grossman, Pettinelli, Preiss, and Schwar. Nays; Ronan and Seiss. Passes.

Mayor Dunwell spoke about Utility surplus being transferred to Current fund, last year \$100,000. Said it's typical of municipalities to take utility surplus to add to their Current Fund. As a gesture, return \$138,500 to utility. Councilman Schwar said we have misappropriated a lot of funds to keep money and took from utility. Vote take to return funds to utility: Roll call: Ayes; Grossman, Pettinelli, Preiss, Schwar, and Seiss. Nays; Ronan, does not want to return it all at once. Passes.

Public Property

Received bids on April 7th for Firehouse generator. There should be no inspection costs as we have Kevin Duddy and now the plumbing inspector. They can do this.

Councilman Schwar asked everyone to go to page 19 regarding the request from the Emergency Squad. Our donation plus the tax break on the building comes out to the same amount as last year. Proposing to reduce the cash donation to the squad from \$15,600 to \$6,000. Vote taken to reduce cash donation to the emergency squad. Roll call: Ayes; Schwar. Nays; Grossman, Pettinelli, Preiss, Ronan, Seiss. Does not pass. Donation being given to the emergency squad will be the amount of \$15,000.

Councilman Schwar then spoke of the Capital Improvement Fund. Flood mitigation, Homa Lane, behind Lacaruba is estimated to be \$200,000. Items not included in the budget are Municipal Building roof \$50,000; Council chambers \$15,000; new phone system \$25,000. We have money aside for the Mason Dump \$75,000. There is Industrial Drive, SR 122 realignment, 2nd access road. Proposing to put a \$133,000 down payment for a \$750,000 bond ordinance to complete list of public property jobs. Vote taken for \$750,000 bond ordinance for public property improvements. Roll call: Ayes; Grossman, Pettinelli, Preiss, Schwar, and Seiss. Nays; Ronan. Passes.

Open Space and Recreation Capital Plan Review

Discussion of Special Events, budget increased. Councilwoman Ronan asked why there is so much more money in the budget this year from last year. Councilwoman Grossman said they are looking to do more community events such as movie nights, community day, etc. Councilwoman Ronan feels it's a luxury.

There is \$50,000 for basketball court improvements, \$35,000 for playgrounds, and \$50,000 for the Veterans memorial. Discussion then began regarding the Pool. No one is against it but would like to see the actual numbers and estimates for the work before voting on it. Councilwoman Grossman is to get the estimates and present to Mayor and Council with a budget of \$400,000. Reaching out to other townships such as Lopatcong, Washington, and Ridge to see if she can obtain lists of their yearly expenses to run the pools. If the pool should not open, the building can still be used for recreation.

Utility Capital Plan Review

Currently receiving revenue from two cell towers.

Mayor Dunwell, zero capital improvements. Revenue is \$1,151,000 and expenses \$820,000. \$330,000 difference per year to either pay more debt service or do more capital improvements.

Sewer has \$300,000 left on bond from few years ago. Sewer engineer gave list of items that could be done with that such as getting new meter pit, pump station alarm, new shed, stringline, etc.

Utility Rate Review

There are four things listed to be done which are chlorination, neutralization, distribution, and Frace Street well. Discussion ensued regarding each item. Votes were taken for each of the items. Vote for chlorination: all were in favor. Vote for Neutralization: all were in favor. Vote for distribution: Ayes; Grossman, Preiss, Schwar. Nays; Ronan, Seiss. Councilman Pettinelli abstains. Vote for Frace Street well: Ayes; Grossman, Preiss, Schwar. Nays; Ronan, Seiss. Councilman Pettinelli abstains.

Councilman Schwar proposed changing the flat rate per 5,000 gallons from \$80 per quarter to \$55 per quarter, decreasing the amount by \$25 per quarter. Vote was taken for the decrease in flat rate: Ayes; Grossman, Preiss, Ronan, Schwar, and Seiss. Nays; Pettinelli. Passes.

Adjournment:

Seeing no further business to come before Council, motion made by Councilman Schwar to adjourn this meeting at 10:37 pm, motion seconded by Councilman Seiss, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Sharpe

Deputy Borough Clerk