

March 27, 2006

A special budget meeting of the Riverton Borough Council was held on the above date. Mayor Martin presiding.

PRESENT: Council members Daniel, Villari, Dr. Smyth, Mr. Smyth, Kinzler, Cesaretti Solicitor Bruce M. Gunn and Auditor Robert Stewart

The following statement was read by Mayor Martin:

Public notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given by the Municipal Clerk in the following manner:

(a) Having written notification of this meeting published in the Burlington County Times on March 17, 2006

(b) Posting written notice on the official bulletin board on March 13, 2006

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Dr. Smyth asked if we could consider incorporating the sewer charges in with our tax rate. Mr. Kinzler stated that he believes there is a lot of merit to doing this. However, we need to look at this for the year 2007. There are some issues regarding this that need to be addressed and ironed out before a final decision can be reached. Mr. Cesaretti believes we should set up an agenda or timeframe to make this happen for next year. Council then reviewed various line items in detail, making adjustments deemed necessary. Mr. Kinzler stated that we are looking at a 3% salary increase for Borough employees.

Council then reviewed the "CAP" Law. Mr. Smyth believes we need to keep salaries and wages below 3.5% or lower or we will be outside of CAP. The auditor responded that that was correct. Mr. Smyth stated that other towns are dealing with these issues also. Other towns have had to lay people off and/or reduce the wage increases just to stay within CAP. Mr. Smyth asked how we can deal with this dilemma. Mr. Stewart stated that a lot of our other expenses are exceeding the CAP by a great amount. Mr. Stewart explained that you have to budget for items such as electric, gas, pensions and those costs are going up. Mr. Stewart stated that you have to abide by any contractual agreements. Mr. Stewart further stated that in most towns, the biggest chunk of the respective budgets is the Police Department. Mr. Stewart stated that what the state is really trying to do with the CAP law is force regionalization. Mr. Stewart explained that there are ways to get around the CAP law. One would be to apply to the State for a CAP waiver (one year only). This forces you to use your surplus to spend that money. Another possibility would be to go to public referendum to exceed the CAP, which could be rejected by the voters. Mrs. Villari asked where we stood regarding the CAP with a 3% salary increase for employees. Mr. Stewart responded that as of now, with all of the adjustments made tonight, we are still below CAP. Mr. Stewart stated that currently we are at a 4.2 cent increase based on the changes made tonight.

Council then moved on to an in depth discussion regarding the police budget. Mr. Cesaretti stated that the Chief had placed \$75,000.00 in his overtime line item of the budget. That amount has been cut by \$30,000.00. Mr. Cesaretti reviewed correspondence sent by the Chief to Council listing what could be eliminated or restricted if the overtime costs were reduced that much. Those items could be radar check points, DWI check points, click it or ticket program, ongoing investigations in town, in service training, Riverton Town Watch (National Night Out) would be eliminated, Palmyra Public Safety Day, most if not all of the police interaction with the Riverton school, including Adopt a Cop Program, Movie Night, Cooper Trauma Center visit, the Great Adventure trip, Mt. Misery sports, and the police presence at any special events, including the 4th of July parade. Mr. Kinzler also took exception to the letter that the Chief sent. The Chief stated that he made a small cut in the overtime costs to bring it down to \$70,000.00. However he is not comfortable with that. He stated that we are already at \$18,384.91 in overtime expenditures so far this year. Mr. Kinzler stated that there is no doubt that if we continue with the status quo and manage the way we have done in the past that the overtime costs will be \$75,000.00. What we are saying here is that the status quo cannot continue. Mr. Kinzler is not convinced that we have really looked at the overtime issue and managed it properly. A lengthy discussion then

ensued. Mrs. Villari stated that she didn't know what other resources we would have to offset these costs. Mrs. Villari further stated that you just can't make such a large cut without suggesting solutions to the problem. Mr. Smyth stated that he has experience working with unions and has been pretty successful in cutting overtime costs. While we don't want any cuts in services, Mr. Smyth stated that there must be alternatives from a management perspective to keep these costs down. Discussion resumed. Dr. Daniel asked if there have been any discussions between the Police Department and Council on ways to decrease the overtime issues. The Chief responded that he met with the Finance/Administration Committee during the preliminary budget process once to review his budget request. Dr. Daniel believes another meeting needs to take place. If it is determined after that time that the extra overtime money needs to be reinstated to the budget, then that's the way it has to be. Dr. Smyth recommended that we add \$12,000.00 to the police overtime line item just to cover eventualities. Council can then make arrangements to take a further look at this issue at our earliest convenience. Dr. Daniel reiterated his position that a discussion on this issue is necessary before any numbers are decided. Mrs. Villari stated that she is not comfortable with the suggested police overtime line item figure of \$45,000.00. She believes that is too low. It was the consensus of Council that the Finance/Administration committee will meet with the Chief to thoroughly review this issue. Dr. Smyth moved that we table taking any action on the budget until this discussion takes place. This was seconded by Mrs. Villari. A poll vote was then taken. Dr. Daniel aye, Mrs. Villari aye, Dr. Smyth aye, Mr. Smyth aye, Mr. Kinzler aye and Mr. Cesaretti aye. It was the consensus of Council to introduce the 2006 Municipal Budget at the April 12th meeting. The Auditor will be present at this meeting.

Meeting open to the public

Michael Robinson, 6 Second Street, asked if the library's budgetary request for 2006 (no increase) would be considered. The response was yes.

James Moffatt, 202 Fulton Street, suggests that if the Riverton Businesses Association wants to hold special events, they should pay the police out of their own pockets. Mr. Moffatt stated that he thinks the Council lacks guts. Mr. Moffatt is of the opinion that for the past three years Dr. Smyth has done nothing but say let's table or delay this or that. Mr. Moffatt feels the issue has been swept under the rug as Dr. Smyth always advises people to do. Mr. Moffatt believes that Dr. Smyth is always in favor of delay.

Muriel Alls-Moffatt, 202 Fulton Street, congratulated Michael Kinzler for his common sense. Mrs. Alls-Moffatt asked why we have five (5) police cars. Mrs. Alls-Moffatt asked if there had been any discussion on reducing our police fleet. Mr. Kinzler responded no. Chief Norcross responded that we only have four (4) vehicles-three (3) marked and one (1) unmarked. Mrs. Alls-Moffatt asked if there has been any discussion at all with Palmyra or Cinnaminson as to merging the police departments. Mr. Cesaretti responded not by him. Mrs. Alls-Moffatt asked if she should assume that this issue has been tabled by the Council. Mr. Smyth stated that he received the okay from Council about a month or two ago to have informal discussions separately with Mayor Gural from Palmyra and Mayor Donnelly of Cinnaminson. Mr. Smyth stated that that was done with Mayor Gural. Mr. Smyth stated that he believes there are rumors that he said certain things about the police. Mr. Smyth stated that he didn't really say anything about the police. Nothing was agreed to-- just an open door policy. Mr. Smyth stated that he has not had a meeting with Mayor Donnelly, but that will happen. Mr. Smyth believes the Borough needs to do some things differently to keep us under the CAP.

Sgt. Gerard Furrer commented that when Mr. Smyth was previously asked about this, he denied even talking to Mayor Gural about it. Mr. Smyth responded that what he denied was discussions about the Palmyra police filling in on any shifts in our town. Sgt. Furrer stated that he believed it was about any mergers. Mr. Smyth stated that he did not talk to Mayor Gural about mergers. Mr. Smyth stated that Mayor Gural spoke to him about mergers. Sgt. Furrer believes Mr. Smyth had been asked by the Police Association's President if he had

talked to Palmyra and Mr. Smyth absolutely said no. Sgt. Furrer stated that this was stated in an e-mail.

Chris Halt, 400 Linden Avenue, stated that on behalf of the Environmental Commission, he was looking for enough money to purchase some equipment as a grass routes effort to initiate volunteer clean-up days. Scott Reed commented that he might be able to assist the Commission through our recycling funds.

Brad Young, Licensed Wastewater Treatment Facility Operator, asked if the line item for a jetter would be increased by \$3,000.00. Mr. Kinzler stated that this issue would be discussed at a later date.

RESOLUTION 44-06

**A RESOLUTION PERMITTING THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM A MEETING IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES PER SECTION 8 OF THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT C.231 P.L. 1975
(IN FULL IN RESOLUTION BOOK)**

The above Resolution was read by title only by Dr. Smyth, who moved for its adoption. This was seconded by Mrs. Villari. A poll vote was then taken. Dr. Daniel aye, Mrs. Villari aye, Dr. Smyth aye, Mr. Smyth aye, Mr. Kinzler aye and Mr. Cesaretti aye. It should be noted that a personnel matter will be discussed.

At this time Dr. Smyth moved that we return to public session. This was seconded by Mrs. Villari. A poll vote was then taken. Dr. Daniel aye, Mrs. Villari aye, Dr. Smyth aye, Mr. Smyth aye, Mr. Kinzler aye and Mr. Cesaretti aye

RESOLUTION 45-06

**A RESOLUTION APPOINTING MARY C. LODATO AS ZONING OFFICER/CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OFFICER FOR THE BOROUGH OF RIVERTON FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2006
(IN FULL IN RESOLUTION BOOK)**

The above Resolution was read by title only by Mr. Smyth, who moved for its adoption. This was seconded by Dr. Daniel. A poll vote was then taken. Dr. Daniel aye, Mrs. Villari aye, Dr. Smyth aye, Mr. Smyth aye, Mr. Kinzler aye and Mr. Cesaretti aye.

At this time Dr. Smyth moved that we return to closed session. This was seconded by Mrs. Villari. A poll vote was then taken. Dr. Daniel aye, Mrs. Villari aye, Dr. Smyth aye, Mr. Smyth aye, Mr. Kinzler aye and Mr. Cesaretti aye. It should be noted that a litigation matter will be discussed.

At this time Dr. Smyth moved that we return to public session. This was seconded by Dr. Daniel. A poll vote was then taken. Dr. Daniel aye, Mrs. Villari aye, Dr. Smyth aye, Mr. Smyth aye, Mr. Kinzler aye, and Mr. Cesaretti aye.

There being no further business to discuss, D. Smyth moved that the meeting be adjourned. This was seconded by Mrs. Villari, with all present voting in the affirmative.

Mary Longbottom, RMC
Municipal Clerk