

WORKSHOP MINUTES
MARCH 6, 2024
7:00 P.M. AT BOROUGH HALL

The workshop meeting of the Borough of Interlaken was called to order at 7:00 p.m., by Council President Butler. The Sunshine Statement was read by Municipal Clerk/Administrator, Lori Reibrich. "The notice of the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act has been satisfied by forwarding notice to the Coaster and Asbury Park Press. A copy of the notice is posted on the Borough bulletin board and is on file in the Borough Clerk's office."

Present: Council President Butler, Councilmembers Delia, Franks, Blasucci

Absent: Mayor Nohilly, Councilwoman Horowitz and Councilman DeSarno

Also Present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Lori Reibrich, CFO Joseph Zanga and Borough Attorney Richard Shaklee,

1. **2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET DISCUSSION** – Council President Butler turned the floor over to CFO Zanga for the budget discussion.

CFO Zanga stated that the Finance and Administration Committee met last week to go over the details of the budget. The budget in this discussion is being presented with the Committee support of the items.

CFO Zanga explained that the Budget is an estimate and planning document. The Borough is in compliance with both the State of NJ Appropriation Cap Law and the Tax Levy Cap Law. There are no cuts in service in this Budget.

Highlights in 2024 Appropriations include: A big win for the Borough was the MCIA Loan that was approved by the Governing Body last year. The Borough received a premium as well as a favorable interest rate and now has a fixed pay back schedule. The Statutory and Pass-Through Expenditures from Pension decreased even though the rate increased due to a decrease in pensionable salaries. The Borough settled with the union for a 10-year contract. Interlocal Agreements for Police, Fire and Trash Removal increased a reasonable 2% according to the contracts. Liability and Worker's Comp insurance increased by 16.01%. This number is not in the Borough's control. A huge help to offset this increase is that the Health Benefit line item has decreased. Since the Borough left the State Health Benefit Plan in May of 2023 the Borough anticipates saving \$25,271.52 in premium costs.

Highlights in 2024 Revenues include: Revenues have started to increase since Covid. Municipal Court, Construction, Interest rates higher. The State continued to provide Municipal Relief Fund Aid to which the Borough received \$11,612. This is double last year's budget. The Borough received \$41,291.74 from the American Rescue Plan in 2022 and 2023. This is no longer available as revenue. This was offset by the decrease in debt service. The Ratable base has increased from \$461,832,660 to \$525,320,300 so the Municipal Tax Rate will decrease.

The average residential unit assessed at \$1,317,049.87 will see an increase of \$98 for the year or \$8.18 a month for the municipal increase.

Capital projects planned for 2024 include various roads and possible computer/IT upgrades.

Councilman Blassucci asked about the MonCIA Loan interest. CFO Zanga explained the 9-year payback and how the interest rate was very favorable at 3.38%.

Councilman Blassucci questioned the library line item and how it applies to the budget when the residents are already taxed through Monmouth County Tax for the County Library use. He stated that he utilizes the digital library with Monmouth County. He was interested in knowing the usage of the town library.

Councilman Delia questioned the existence of the Interlaken library and the cost in the budget. He requested that data be given to the Council so that data can be reviewed. If Monmouth County taxes are being paid as well as funding in our municipal budget, is it right to tax the Interlaken taxpayers an additional municipal tax?

Councilman Franks showed support for the library and said that the librarian is very helpful and thoughtful. She delivers books to a resident’s house if they are not feeling well enough to pick up books.

The Council had a brief discussion regarding the benefits and drawbacks of having an additional library service in the municipal tax.

BA Reibrich stated that she would request the log of patronage from the librarian and also look into the county library tax to confirm if there are municipal tax benefits to being a member library.

The Governing Body made no changes to the budget at the workshop and moved to introduce this budget on March 20th. The public hearing and adoption will be held on April 17th.

2. **NEW BUSINESS:** No new business was discussed at this meeting.
3. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** Council President Butler opened the floor for public comment. Noting there was no public present, Council President Butler closed the floor.
4. **ADJOURNMENT:** Councilman Delia made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Franks and unanimously carried.

	Mayor Nohilly	Council President Butler	Councilwoman Horowitz	Councilman Delia	Councilman Franks	Councilman DeSarno	Councilman Blasucci
Motion to Approve				X			
Motion to Second					X		
Approved		X	X	X	X		X
Opposed							
Abstain/ Recuse							
Absent/ Excused			X			X	

Lori Reibrich, RMC/CMR
Municipal Clerk/Administrator