

Finance Committee Minutes – 9/9/15

Present: Beaumont, Bergenfeld, Hamtil, Hoyer, Malek, Rich, Shute

Absent: Little

Other:

2015 WAT User Friendly Budget: Discussion of need for user friendly budget organized by department. Shute asked for volunteer to work it up.

2016 Budget Goals & Process: Major goal should be to provide all services while keeping amount raised by taxes flat.

FC involvement to begin in December and consist of 3 meetings, Revenue, Expenditures and Consolidation.

Road Resurfacing: Work recently performed by DPW looks good. Rocktown Rd. project will be done this year but only about .5 mile. Beaumont offered that WAT need a comprehensive plan to maintain local roads.

SHREC: No report

Shared Services:

Police merger apparently a dead end again. Shute proposed that the focus going forward should be on looking at the existing WAT department for cost savings.

PennEast: FERC filing imminent. Discussion as to whether landowners and WAT should change approach to dealing with PennEast after filing was inconclusive but consensus was that the time to have discussion is before FERC approval, which most see as inevitable.

Roadside Garbage: No report

Farmland Assessment Rollback Taxes: Shute reported that landowners can now allow their farmland assessment to expire without incurring rollback taxes as long as the use of the property does not change. If the property is actively farmed, it must continue to be farmed. If it is woodland no further maintenance is necessary.

Change of Phone Service Provider: Rich reported that the change from Verizon to Comcast is saving WAT \$500/mo.

Use of JCP&L Woodlands Mitigation Funds: Discussion of how to utilize the \$110K in funding. Rich outlined a proposal to use \$50K of as partial funding to provide a new soccer field on the municipal property with the school providing the remainder. Discussion of the benefit to the township, the location and maintenance of the field, etc. Rich asked the FC to consider the issue and provide a recommendation.

School Equalization Ratio: Beaumont outlined groundwork he has done to date in preparation for a possible appeal of the Ratio. The Committee supports this effort to eliminate improper real estate sales from the calculation of the Ratio for West Amwell. This could result in a significant reduction in the school tax rate in 2016 and future years.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 8 (Cancelled, now Nov. 19)

Submitted by Hal Shute 11/19/15