

Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes  
April 23, 2015

A Work Session of the Mayor and Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor White.

Mrs. Vander Wende announced that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act were met by the required postings and notice to publications. In addition, this evening's meeting is being recorded.

The following individuals answered roll call: Council members Bernstein, McSwiggan, Wilczynski and Mayor White. Mr. Strauch was in attendance by phone. Mrs. Homan and Mr. Sasso were absent. Mrs. VanderWende and Mr. Wiss were also present.

*2015 Municipal Budget*

Mr. Charles Ferraioli was present to review the 2015 Budget with the Mayor and Council.

Mr. Ferraioli began by commenting on the Annual Debt Statement which he said is a statutory requirement for all towns in New Jersey.

Allendale's net debt is \$12,336,927.72. That is the amount of bonds, notes and bond ordinances that have been passed and have been borrowed as of December 31, 2014. In order to determine the Borough's outstanding net debt percentage, that number must be divided by the average true real estate value for the last three years. In Allendale's case, it is divided by \$1,666,066,407 which makes the Borough's net debt outstanding under one percent, at 0.74%. It was slightly higher last year at 0.787%. By New Jersey law a municipality is allowed to have 3 1/2% debt which Mr. Ferraioli does not recommend. He stated that Allendale's debt is in a safe range.

Mr. Ferraioli said that a tax point in 2015 is equal to \$166,390. In New Jersey a tax point is assessed at one penny per \$100. The average home in Allendale is assessed this year at \$648,000 which means a tax point for the average home is equal to \$64.80. For the year 2015 the budget will reflect an increase in the levy of \$220,018. There was a reassessment in Allendale in 2014, and because of that reassessment, the average home should see a decrease in their taxes of \$9.57.

Mr. Ferraioli said the municipality has two banks to deal with, the CAP Bank and the Appropriations Bank. He noted that Allendale is in a "tremendous position" and is way under the two percent CAP Bank. Mr. Ferraioli then talked about the Appropriations CAP which was put into place in 1977 but hasn't had the desired effect of keeping real estate taxes down. Allendale is \$711,000 under the Appropriations CAP. He stated the municipality in the fortunate position of not exceeding either the CAP Bank or the Appropriations Bank which allows the municipality of flexibility of determining what services to provide to its residents and at what cost.

The total budget for 2015 is \$12,783,481. The amount of surplus used for the 2015 budget is \$1 million which is less than the amount used last year, but the decision was made to limit the contribution from surplus in order to protect the surplus going forward. Mayor White said that the importance of keeping enough surplus became very clear when talking with Standard and Poor's about Allendale's Bond Rating.

Mr. Ferraioli said Allendale has a good credit rating and a stable tax rate on the municipal portion of the tax levy.

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Mrs. White said there is a handout on the front table that will also be put on Allendale's website concerning the 2015 budget. The top three expenses in the budget are Public Safety salary and wages, Debt Service and Sewer Charges. She mentioned that the Council is committed to pay down Allendale's debt. In this year's budget more debt was paid down than was required and she noted that the Borough will not engage in deficit spending. The municipal tax rate is at .523 for 2015, down from .552 in 2014.

Mrs. White thanked Mrs. Mayer for her amazing work on the budget.

Mr. Bernstein said he was proud of the budget and the time spent working on it. He thanked both Mrs. Mayer and Mr. Ferraioli and said the budget was approached in a fiscally responsible manner as it has been for more than eight years. Cuts were made where they needed to be made but not at the expense of the town. As evidenced by Allendale's AAA rating from Standard and Poor's the Borough has been doing the right thing.

Mrs. Wilczynski said it was her first year on the Finance Committee and she also thanked Mrs. Mayer and Mr. Ferraioli for their help. She felt that Standard and Poor's realized that Allendale's past practice for almost a decade has been no deficit spending while still improving infrastructure and increasing services to residents.

Mrs. McSwiggan complimented both Mr. Ferraioli and Mrs. Mayer. She said Mrs. Mayer has done a terrific job in guiding the Council's budgeting plans in a very realistic way.

Mr. Strauch said he first joined the Council twelve years ago. At that time deficit spending was the norm. When Mr. Barra first took over as Mayor, he put a stop to deficit spending and Mr. Strauch is pleased to have been a part of the Councils that moved forward in reducing the Municipal debt. Also Allendale's credit rating has gone up over the past years. He thanked everyone who has been involved in the process and looks forward to continuing this progress in the future.

*Public Comments*

Mr. Bruce Rohsler of 40 Meeker Avenue said he wanted to speak about the deer population in town. He noted that there is an exploding deer population in Allendale and the County and he is concerned there is not enough being done to control it. He lives and works in town and his wife was treated for Lyme Disease this year and his dog is currently being treated for the same illness. In addition, his lawn is littered with deer pellets. He doesn't feel comfortable being in his lawn or in his nursery due to the issues with deer ticks. He believes New Jersey is among the top three states for Lyme Disease.

In addition, there is a considerable problem with deer on the roads.

Plant devastation is another problem. When planters were put out in front of his nursery the plants were quickly eaten down. Although there are deer resistant plants, the deer are eating almost everything, every night. He doesn't know how this loss of landscaping is affecting property values, but he believes the County, the State and the town need to start to take action on this problem. He asked if there is a

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time line on how the governmental agencies will proceed. Mr. Rohsler asked if deer fencing is allowed in town.

Mrs. White said she will inquire about deer fencing, but in November of 2013 she and Mrs. McSwiggan attended a deer management seminar at Duke Farms. There is only one way to manage the deer population and that is to eliminate them. The other methods are not reliable and are not an extended solution to the problem.

A presentation on deer management was done in Allendale last May with approximately 50 to 70 people in attendance.

Although there is an ordinance in town that does not allow for the discharge of firearms, there is the possibility of bow hunting to control the deer population. The deer management season is in the Fall but the concern is that this must be a region wide project. A concerted effort would have to be made on the part of multiple towns, and the issue has come up in the Northwest Bergen Mayor's Association. Mayor White believes that such an effort would be supported by the Council. She noted that Mr. Rohsler has been granted a bow hunting license for his commercial property and to manage deer on his property in this way would not violate any ordinances in town.

Mr. Rohsler said there are positive benefits to even one town implementing a deer management program.

Mayor White said she talks about this issue with residents all the time. Most of the time women are in favor of a deer management program but men are not.

Mrs. Wilczynski said she believes the County has to get involved in order for this issue to be adequately addressed.

Mrs. White said this is the right time to start this discussion.

Mrs. Wilczynski said the more people who hear about this issue, the more who understand there is a problem that has to be addressed. When people understand that we are losing species of plants and animals and that there are issues with disease and car accidents they realize we will have to work together to manage this issue in the right way.

Mr. Rohsler offered his services in any way he could be of help.

Mrs. White said Saddle River has already put together a Committee to study the issue and they may soon be making recommendations. She also suggested the Fyke Nature Association would be helpful. She suggested Mr. Rohsler contact his counterparts in other municipalities and also enlist any of his clients who are willing to become engaged in this process.

Jay Heldman of 20 Crescent Bend said he has lived in Allendale for twenty-seven years. For twenty-five of those years it was very unusual to see a deer but in the last two years the population has exploded. He believes action needs to be taken soon. He has had herds of a dozen or more in his backyard. They have devastated his shrubs and he spends weekends picking up deer feces.

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*Allendale Veterinary Hospital – Pet Adoption Day*

Mrs. White said the Allendale Veterinary Hospital is having a pet adoption day on May 16, 2015. Sgt. Griffith will close Central Avenue for a couple of hours to facilitate pet adoptions on that date.

*Administration*

Agenda Review

Mayor White said there will be a public hearing and adoption of the Budget this evening. A couple of new ordinances will also be introduced that the Land Use Committee and Mrs. McSwiggan have worked very hard on.

Mayor's Report

Mayor White said Allendale was awarded another \$150,000 grant in Municipal Aid to pave both West Maple Avenue and part of Erie Plaza.

On a motion by Mrs. McSwiggan, seconded by Mr. Bernstein, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane VanderWende  
Deputy Municipal Clerk

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