

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD
SPECIAL WORK MEETING OF THE MAYOR & COUNCIL
MARCH 11, 2014 MINUTES
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
101 Washington Avenue
6:30 PM**

1. Opening of the Meeting:

The meeting was called to order by Council President Waneck at 6:35 pm. Council President Waneck then read the Open Public Meetings Law Statement: "This special meeting which conforms with the Open Public Meetings law, Chapter 231, Public Laws of 1975, is a regular Borough Council meeting. Notices have been filed with our local official newspapers and posted on the municipal bulletin board."

2. Roll Call:

Mayor Birkner – Present (arrived 6:36 pm)
Councilmember Arroyo – Present
Councilmember Bicocchi – Present
Councilmember Grefrath – Present
Councilmember Miller – Present
Vacancy
Council President Waneck – Present
Borough Administrator Hoffmann – Present
Borough Clerk Hughes – Present

Committee Assignments:

Police & OEM
Land Use
Finance, Administration & Capital Projects
Health & Recreation
Fire & Ambulance
Public Properties

3. Resolution #14 - 79: Executive Closed Session

Motion to adopt Resolution #14-79: Councilmember Miller Second: Councilmember Arroyo
Roll Call: Councilmember Arroyo – Yes Councilmember Bicocchi – Yes
Councilmember Grefrath – Yes Councilmember Miller – Yes
Vacancy Council President Waneck – Yes

4. Reopen the Meeting:

Motion to reopen the meeting: Councilmember Miller Second: Councilmember Bicocchi
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.
The time was 8:15 pm.

5. Roll Call II:

Mayor Birkner – Present / Councilmember Arroyo – Present / Councilmember Bicocchi – Present /
Councilmember Grefrath – Present / Councilmember Miller – Present / Vacancy / Council President
Waneck – Present / Borough Administrator Hoffmann – Present / Borough Clerk Hughes - Present

6. Flag Salute

Mayor Birkner led those present in the salute to the flag.

7. Public Forum:

Motion to open Agenda/Public Forum: Councilmember Grefrath Second: Councilmember Miller
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the Affirmative.

No one wished to be heard.

Motion to close Agenda/Public Forum: Councilmember Miller Second: Councilmember Arroyo

Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

8. 2014 Municipal Budget:

A) Recap of Budget Status by Councilmember Grefrath

As you remember at the last meeting, we asked Mr. Hoffman to go over the Departmental Budgets as well as the other portions of the budget, and come up with recommendations how to get our budget down from its current level to \$100 per average household.

Over the past couple of weeks, he met with Durene and Gary Vinci and did just that.

When we last left the Line-by-Line, we were at \$175 increase. Over the past two weeks, certain developments that will be explained pushed us back up to \$216 or a 7.54% increase on the average home; which I believe is now \$393,000, down from \$397,000.

So today, we have a chart with 5 segments in it. Tier 0 should be relatively painless, and I'll let Bob explain what that means. Tier 1 is a little painful; Tier 2 a little more. Tier 3 hurts. Tier 4 is brutal.

I'd like to look at this as a cafeteria offering. We will look at each line and ask, "Keep it", "take it out", or "Let's get back to it after we finish."

I'd prefer discussing each line by Tier number (0-A, 1-B, 2-E, etc.) because in that way we can talk in generalities. If something gets too specific, we will put it into the "Hold Off" section and move on.

I ask this Council not to "bog down" on any one line for more than 5 minutes and keep the process moving. I'll ask the Clerk to keep a "soft clock" on that. That might just mean we will finalize this list and move forward.

We should all keep in mind that the discussions we have made in the past have led us here tonight to the difficult decisions we have to consider. The decisions we make here tonight will be the basis of not only this year's budget but the financial stability of Westwood 2015 and beyond. Specifically, having the ability to generate surplus, which is what we use to offset tax levy increases, and continuing to have a strong bond rating which provides lower costs for borrowing for capital projects.

B) Review of Proposed 2014 Budget Modifications by Mr. Hoffmann

CFO Durene Ayer and Borough Auditor Gary Vinci explained the impact of the revaluation. Taking into account the school and county tax levies, taxes will go down on the average house by \$89 without having to make any additional cuts to the budget.

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The Governing Body reviewed the proposed budget modifications and approved some items. At the end of the meeting Mrs. Ayer advised that the taxes on the average house would see a decrease of \$95 overall based on the additional municipal budget cuts made.

9. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Councilmember Arroyo Second: Councilmember Miller

Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

The time was 8:45 pm.

Attest:

(signed) Karen Hughes

Karen Hughes, RMC, Borough Clerk

Proofed by: Denise Holmes, Deputy Clerk