

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
BUDGET MEETING – February 25, 2025**

Mayor Mueller *calls the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.* announcing that all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

PRESENT: Mayor A. Mueller, Deputy Mayor V. Panico, Mr. J. Albanese and Mr. J. Huelsebusch

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator R. Sheola, Acting Municipal Clerk A. Lehberger, Attorney A. Fisher (*left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.*)

ABSENT: Mr. J. Heller

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Clerk read the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION
EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.*, the Open Public Meetings Act, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist and desires to authorize the exclusion of the public from the portion of the meeting in accordance with the act;

NOW, THERFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the specified subject matter as set forth in the following Exhibit “A.”

EXHIBIT A

<u>Subject Matter</u>	<u>Basis of Public Exclusion</u>	<u>Date Anticipated</u> <u>When Discussion Will</u> <u>Be Disclosed to Public</u>
Administration	Personnel	Certain information at the discretion of Township Committee shall remain confidential
Finance.....	Personnel	“ “ “
Police.....	Personnel	“ “ “
Community Options.....	Contract Negotiations.....	“ “ “
Affordable Housing.....	Potential Litigation.....	“ “ “

1. It is anticipated at this time that the stated subject matter will be made public on or about the time set forth in Exhibit “A”.
2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

The meeting reconvened at 6:55 p.m.

Mayor Mueller led those present in the *Salute to the Flag*.

Executive Session:

Personnel / Administration

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to appoint James Curry as Acting Township Administrator, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Mueller - Aye

A ***MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico to appoint Christina Schwartz as Director of Land Use and Special Projects, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Huelsebusch - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Mueller - Aye

Personnel / Finance

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Personnel / Police

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Contract Negotiations / Community Options

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Potential Litigation/Affordable Housing

Mayor Mueller stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

2025 BUDGET DISCUSSION

- **Fire and Rescue Services**

Matt Hoffman, Chief of Readington Fire, spoke to the increase in the number of response calls from all agencies in 2024 over 2023 and discussed the budget operating requests of the fire companies and rescue squad including an increase in funding for equipment, personal protection equipment replacement, equipment maintenance and training. He reviewed the capital requests which included replacement of air packs and bottles on a continuing basis, hose for the new engine coming in this year, forcible entry door, ventilation fans, upgraded technology and a mini pumper engine truck.

- **Office of Emergency Management**

Chris Szymanski, Office of Emergency Management Coordinator, discussed his operating budget request including equipment, training, and personal protection equipment. He reviewed his request for capital, stressing the need for a mobile command center for public safety and emergencies and the purchase of a high-water rescue vehicle.

- **Police**

James Curry, Director of Public Safety, reviewed the 2025 budget proposal for the Police Department and summarized the expenditures of the budgeted line items stressing the importance of having the necessary tools to perform the job and ensure safety. Mr. Curry spoke to an increase in the operating budget this year by creating programs to replace items needed on a regular basis, He addressed the need

to replace four older civilian vehicles that are not police certified through a three-year lease program using operating rather than capital. He also spoke to adding new line items for ballistic vests, community outreach team, and drug testing. He reviewed the capital requests for a variable message sign and radar trailer and an emergency service vehicle.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ron Christy, Department of Public Works (DPW) Director spoke to the extensive maintenance required on the older police vehicles.

Tim Apgar, Chief of Whitehouse Fire, spoke to the professional quality of the work done by the DPW employees, and also the need for police vehicles to have water cans.

Chris Symanski, DPW Supervisor, spoke to the money that is saved by doing work in house.

COMMENTS FROM THE GOVERNING BODY

There were none.

As there was no further business, ***A MOTION*** was made by Mr. Panico at 8:45 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Huelsebusch with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Submitted by:

Ann Marie Lehberger, *RMC*
Acting Municipal Clerk