



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Budget Worksession Minutes March 14, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. Present were Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, and Lynn White. Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen and CM Maria Robles had an excused absence. CM Dennison arrived 5 minutes late. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

### 1. Mayor

**Announcements:** There were none.

### 2. Budget

**Code Compliance:** TA Cowles gave an overview of the Code Compliance Department budget. She said that the FY 2017 proposed budget continues to fund 1 full time code supervisor and one part-time clerk at 10 hours per week, but increases code officers' part time hours from 30 to 35 hours per week. The increased part time hours would be utilized to expand inspections of properties for clean lot and other violations during the busy spring and summer seasons, especially during weekends and evening hours. In response to questions, TA Cowles said she anticipates that the increase in part time hours would apply to the entire year for recruitment purposes. If hours were to be cut back during the winter, it would have to be spelled out in the hiring agreement. Another reason for more part time hours is to have someone on board who can fill in for the code supervisor when he is on vacation.

TA Cowles continued that the FY 2017 budget reflects proposed spending that is closer to FY 2016 actual expenditures. Thus the *postage* line item was reduced by 13% or \$200 reflecting less mail sent by regular postal service and fewer certified letters. Further, she recommends increasing the *training & seminars*, and books & periodicals line items to enable the code supervisor to take specialized training and develop professionally. The *communications* appropriation went up by 42% or \$500 to pay for the data plans of three iPads used by the code officers to collect information and write reports in the field. *Capital outlays* <\$500 was phased out because the items costing less than \$500 can mostly be absorbed in the *supplies* line item. In the van program, she added \$200 for gas expenditures in anticipation of more frequent use of the call-a-bus now that it has been repaired.

Under revenues, *building permit fees* were budgeted conservatively at \$8,000 or \$500 less than what is projected for the remainder of FY 2016. *Rental license fees* are also expected to decline by 12% reflecting a decrease in rental housing units over the last year. *Dumpster permit fees* are expected to decline by 55%, while *code fines* revenue is projected to go up by 15% or \$2,500. Revenues from liens, which are delinquent code fines deducted from homeowners' tax bills, have not been itemized and are included in the code fines line item.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy wondered if money has been budgeted to purchase a decibel meter and specialized testing equipment used in rental inspections, which former code officer Hall owned. TA Cowles said she would check.

Police Department budget: TA Cowles gave a summary of the Police Department budget. She said that the FY 2017 proposed budget funds two promotions to corporal requested by Chief Antolik, which is reflected in an 8.4% increase in the salary appropriation. No changes are proposed in the shift differential and locality pay appropriations. Other noteworthy changes include increased funding for professional development reflected in the *dues & conferences* and *training & seminars* line items. In combination with competitive salaries, this is intended to help retain a professional police force. As in the code budget, the postage appropriation was budgeted closer to expected FY 2016 actuals.

In response to questions, TA Cowles explained that funding for *National Night Out* is dependent on what parameters are set for this event. It may require making an assessment of what Town staff and residents would like this event to accomplish. The appropriated \$2,500 should be sufficient if additional funds can be drawn from the *public relations* line item. New bullet proof vests are funded in the *uniforms* line item, but could instead be funded from the Public Safety Reserve. A \$4,000 request for *telephone* service was reduced by 54% or \$2,300 because substantial savings are projected from the Town-wide implementation of Voice over Internet Phone (VOIP) service.

Police revenues from *fines & forfeitures* show a slight upward trend but are dependent on how many Town citations are issued. The Council in 2015 authorized a new fine for vehicles that do not have a license plate in front and back ends. Speed camera revenues are subject to great variation and limited to expenditures related to public safety. Any funds not used for public safety expenditures roll over into the Public Safety Reserve. State police aid to municipalities has gone up by 7.6% and can be used without restrictions.

Public Safety Taxing District: TA Cowles explained that the Public Safety Taxing District (PSTD) budget is funded from a special tax on commercial and industrial establishments located in the Town. This revenue did not experience the dramatic decline that happened with residential properties, and continues to go up in small increments. Use of PSTD revenue is restricted to expenses related to the commercial district. The Town funds the salary and equipment of one police officer assigned to the district. Last year, the Town purchased a new police vehicle for this officer but had to use the PSTD fund balance. In FY 2017, the PSTD is proposed to fund the promotion of this officer, which requires the use of \$6,700 from the fund balance. The recent reassessment in real property may bring in enough additional revenues to cover the officer and a new car two or three years from now.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said, at the next budget worksession, LGIT insurance representatives will be here to explain their health insurance program. Also to be discussed will be non-departmental, cable, employee benefits and capital projects budgets.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

*Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*