

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES SESSION
AUGUST 23, 2011

The special advertised public meeting of the Township Council was held this date in the Municipal Building, Pascack Road. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Fred Goetz with the Clerk leading the salute to the flag. Members present: Glenn Beckmeyer, Steven Cascio, Joe D'Urso, Richard Hrbek, Fred Goetz. Also present: Janet Sobkowicz, Mayor; Jacqueline Do, Treasurer/CFO.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, this meeting was noticed with the Ridgewood News, posted on Municipal Bulletin Board and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

PUBLIC PORTION

A motion was made by Dr. Cascio, seconded by Mr. Hrbek to open the public discussion.

Ayes: Councilpersons Beckmeyer, Cascio, D'Urso, Hrbek, Goetz

Nays: None

William Ferrara 2556 Cleveland Avenue – Mr. Ferrara asked what is being done at Clark Field. He saw an NJ DEP truck dumping dirt on the site. The Mayor stated that the township DMF is doing a renovation project on the field to eliminate a wet spot, some trees are being cut down and more dirt will be brought in. She will find out the cost of the NJ DEP work. The project is expected to be finished by next week. Mr. Ferrara commented on the issues regarding exit 168 and suggested closing the existing exit while opening an exit where the existing entrance is presently located. Mayor Sobkowicz said that a reconfiguration could end up in a lawsuit.

BEST PRACTICES

The following is an accurate account of the Best Practices Worksheet and any written comments that were added to the copy sent to the state.

General Management

Question 1. Has your municipality adopted a pay-to-play ordinance pursuant to NJSA 40A:11-51? This law allows the municipality and its agencies to prohibit the award of public contracts to business entities that have made certain campaign contributions exceeding \$300 and to limit the contributions that the holders of a contract can make during the term of a contract to \$300. A model ordinance concerning pay-to-play can be found at: www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/muniaid/pay to play ordinance-contractor.doc

Answer: No

Comments: None

Question 2. Did your municipality evaluate and/or enter into at least one new shared service or cooperative agreement in 2010, outside of joining cooperative purchasing system?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 3. Does your municipality maintain an up-to-date municipal website containing , but not limited to: past three years adopted budgets; and the current year proposed budget including the full adopted budget for current year when approved by the governing body; most recent annual financial statements and audits; notification(s) for solicitation of Bids and RFPs; employee contact information; and meeting dates, minutes and agendas for the governing body, planning board, board of adjustment and all commissions?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: There are four years of Budget.....

Question 4. Does your municipality's legal counsel review procurement specifications and sign off on all major professional service contracts before the documents are signed?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: The attorney has not initialed the documents (but will in the future). Resolutions regarding the practice have been adopted.

Question 5. Does your municipality have an ongoing policy cross referencing the submittal of Certificates of Occupancy from the Construction Official to the Tax Assessor?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 6. Is your municipality's computer information backed up regularly, pursuant to a written backup policy and is data stored offsite?

Answer: No

Comments: None

Question 7: Does your municipality require its elected officials to attend basic courses on responsibilities and obligations in local government (i.e. budgeting, policy setting, local government contracting, risk management, and compliance with the Open Public Records Act)?

Answer No

Comments: None

Question 8: If your municipality assigns employees with vehicles that can be taken home after work hours, is there a written policy in place to prohibit personal use and does that policy ensure that the commuting miles are reflected in employee W-2s?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 9: Does your municipality sell personal property (fire trucks, road equipment, confiscated items, etc.) through an approved online auction system to broaden the market area for increased revenue?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 10: Are ordinances codified on an annual basis and made available electronically and /or in an existing ordinance book for the public?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 11: Has your municipality established and "Absentee from Meetings Policy" for elected officials and appointed board members?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: Elected official absences have been dealt with according to law. Board members keep absences in board minutes as documentation.

Financial Standards

Question 1: Does your municipality's newly (within the last six months) negotiated public employee contracts refrain from increasing base salary items by more than an average of two (2%) percent annually over the aggregate amount expended in the final year of the previous contract?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Question 2: Is there a system of checks and balances over the purchasing and disbursement functions, including payroll (e.g., the same employee who prepares the checks also reconciles the bank account would not be a proper system of checks and balances)?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Question 3: Does your municipality have written procedures pertaining to cash receipts and cash disbursements including but not limited to: receiving, recording, and preparing deposits for cash receipts; and processing, reviewing, and approving disbursements?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Question 4: Does management (department heads) review and approve all payroll disbursements, invoices, and purchase orders before final approval of the governing body by resolution?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: All directors sign vouchers and requisitions. Under the Faulkner Act form of government the Council does not have to grant approval. Bill list payments are forwarded to them monthly for information purposes only.

Question 5: Are bank statements and related canceled checks and validated deposit slips, reviewed and reconciled monthly to the general ledger balances?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Question 6: Are contracts for services over the pay-to-play threshold of \$17,500 awarded using bids or a fair and open process?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Question 7: Does your municipality maintain all documentation regarding bids including but not limited to: notices to potential bidders that include the plans, specifications and contracts; documentation that the bids were properly advertised; and bid opening documentation that include the submitted bids; bid tabulation sheet, and indication of which bid was accepted?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Question 8: Does your municipality perform an audit of your utility (telephone, fax, electric meters) accounts at least once every three years to ensure that inactive accounts are cancelled?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Budget Preparation and Presentation

Question 1: Has your governing body reviewed the municipality's annual financial statement with particular emphasis on surplus generation and usage, tax collection rates (including the status of tax liens), and delinquent tax collection statements?

Answer: Yes
Comments: None

Question 2: Did your municipality prepare a five (5) year summary showing the amount of surplus anticipated and the percentage of the budget that this represents?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: This practice is now being followed.

Question 3: Does your municipal CFO or auditor evaluate your capital balances annually to review and cancel unspent funds at the closure of capital projects?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 4: Do elected officials receive quarterly (or more frequent) reports on the status of all budget revenues and appropriations as they correspond to the annual adopted budget?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: Monthly budget reports have been forwarded to the governing body and the revenue report will be forwarded to the governing body going forward.

Question 5: Was a budget history and projection showing three years of history prepared in a "Viewer Friendly" style for public use?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: **The Finance office**

Health Insurance

Question 1: If your municipality does not participate in the State Health Benefits Plan (SHBP), a joint insurance fund (JIF), or a healthcare insurance fund (HIF), have competitive proposals for insurance been solicited in the last three years?

Answer: N/A

Comments: SHBP participants

Question 2: If your municipality is a member of the SHBP, have you transitioned from Chapter 88 (lifelong retirement benefits and Medicare Part B payouts) to Chapter 48 (healthcare cafeteria and select cost-saving provisions for all current and future employees)?

Answer: Yes

Comments: The Township never participated in Chapter 88; therefore we have followed state requirements. No lifelong retirement benefits for healthcare have ever been considered.

Question 3: Does your municipality perform an annual review for health benefit covered lives in an effort to delete employees, spouses or dependents who should no longer be receiving coverage?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 4: Do your municipal firefighters receive annual heart screening in conformance with NFPA Standard 1582, Chapter 7.4-7-7?

Answer: No

Comments: None

Personnel

Question 1: Does your municipality make available to the public fee of charge, either through an internet posting or on-site review, documents that show the current salaries of all personnel and additional documents that would allow the public to understand how your municipality's aggregate salaries have changed over a three year period?

Answer: Yes

Comments: Annual copies of contracts and salary ordinances.

Question 2: Has your municipality, consistent with NJSA 34:13A-8.2, filed a copy of all negotiated public employee contracts with the Public Employment Relations Commission, or will your municipality bring itself into compliance by having all contracts emailed to contracts@perc.state.nj.us?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 3: Are all applicants and employees hired, promoted and retrained in accordance with established equal employment opportunity (EEO) and non-discrimination policies?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 4: Does your municipality limit health benefits to full-time (35 or more hours weekly), employees and exclude from coverage all part-time employees, elected or appointed officials?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: Prior years it was offered to employees who worked 20 hours or more and continue to date. New employees will only be eligible if they work full time (35 hours or more weekly).

Question 5: Are standardized absentee forms completed and filed for all employee absences?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 6: Are formal records maintained by your Personnel Department (Human Resources office) to account for vacation and sick leave earned and taken by all employees?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 7: Does supervisory staff review and approve employee time and attendance reports before submitting to management?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 8: Does your municipality limit the carry forward of accrued vacation time to no more than one year's worth of such time (meaning no employee hired after the effective date of the limitation policy can have more than two (2) years of vacation time on the books in any given year)?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 9: Does the municipal governing body approve all payments of accumulated/uncompensated absence benefits?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 10: Does your municipality's personnel manual include policies covering the use of municipal computers, including internet/e-mail use?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 11: Does your municipality have a transitional duty program (light duty) to encourage employees out on workers compensation to return to work?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: Departments have encouraged light duty, but in certain cases workmen's comp would not allow light duty.

Question 12: Does your municipality provide annual employment practice liability training for elected officials, managers, administrators, department heads and supervisors?

Answer: Yes

Comments: Through JIF and MEL Insurance

Public Safety

Question 1: Does your municipality have a emergency management plan that is updated biannually and verified yearly through practical exercise and written reports distributed to all affected parties (police, fire, OEM, etc.) as required pursuant to L.1989, c222,s.20?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 2: Is your municipality's police department accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), or have senior officers had advanced training through professional agencies/academies?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 3: Are all required hazard- use inspections and reports performed in accordance with state standards, needed-relevant information disseminated to emergency response organizations and a copy of the report sent to local fire and police agencies?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 4: Does your municipality have formal written mutual aid agreements for all emergency response organizations?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 5: Does your municipality have a formal procedure to ensure that all park and recreation facilities are inspected/assessed periodically to determine whether proper maintenance is being done to ensure the safety of the using public?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Energy

Question 1: Has your municipality conducted an energy audit within the last three years to evaluate whether the energy consumption (i.e. heating, lighting, ventilation and air conditioning) of municipal facilities can be reduced?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 2: If your municipality issues published or posted newsletters to its residents, did such publications promote recycling efforts and solid waste management in compliance with the storm water regulations NJAC 7:8 et seq?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Municipal/School Relations

Question 1: Has your municipality held or scheduled a "Joint Yearly Open Public Meeting" between the local school board(s) and the

governing body to discuss community needs, shared services, and the school and municipal budgets?

Answer: Prospective

Comments: Will initiate this program as it is an excellent idea

Question 2: Do you share playing fields, recreation services, and/or equipment with the local board(s) of education?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Question 3: Has your municipality entered into any shared services with local board(s) of education pertaining to maintenance of fields, sharing of equipment, purchasing gasoline, snow plowing, etc?

Answer: Yes

Comments: None

Select	50
Yes	36
No	3
N/A	1
Prospective	10

Signed by:

Jacqueline Do Certificate #232

Date:

August 25, 2011

Mary Ann Ozment, Township Clerk

Fred Goetz, Council President