

MINUTES
BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BUDGET MEETING
March 27, 2024
5:30pm PM
MAYOR BARSA

COUNCILMAN ASCOLESE	COUNCILMAN BRIZZOLARA
COUNCILMAN CONDOLEO	COUNCILMAN FOSCHINO
COUNCIL PRESIDENT HAUSMANN	COUNCILMAN KIM

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Norwood was held at Borough Hall on the above date.

Mayor Barsa called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM and led those in attendance in a salute to the American Flag and asked for a moment of silence.

Mayor Barsa stated:

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, setting forth the time, date, place and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in the Record and Star Ledger, filing a copy in the Borough Clerk’s office, and posting on the bulletin board.”

ROLL CALL OF THE COUNCIL

Roll Call:	Mayor Barsa	Present
	Councilman Ascolese	Present
	Councilman Brizzolara	Present
	Council President Condoleo	Present
	Councilman Foschino	Present
	Councilwoman Hausmann	Present
	Councilman Kim	Present

Mayor Barsa began the meeting by thanking Council President Condoleo, Chris Battaglia and Steve Wielkotz for their hard work on the budget. He advised those in attendance that when the process began, there was a 10% increase in the budget. After the preliminary meetings it was lowered to 8% but he would like to see it even lower than that.

Mr. Wielkottz listed the five (5) main reasons as to why the budget increase is higher this year than in years past.

1) There is no money left from the American Rescue Plan. Over the past two Years the funds have been depleted.

2) The debt service interest rate has risen to 4.5%.

3) Liability insurance rate has increased.

4) The pension contribution has increased.

5) Grants have been used in the previous year.

Mayor Barsa informed the Council that Council President Condoleo and Lt. Chris Federici were working to develop a new hourly rate of pay for officers doing a traffic detail.

Council President Condoleo said they surveyed several surrounding towns and found Norwood to have the lowest rate. He suggested raising the rate to \$167.00 per hour. This would be a flat rate and would not have administrative fees, which would make it more streamlined and easy to calculate.

Councilman Brizzolara said he sees the rates from other towns due to his work and some are upwards of \$200.00 per hour.

Councilman Ascolese asked Lt. Federici is a normal detail is eight (8) hours. Lt. Federici said each officer gets a minimum of four (4) hours per detail and some details can go fourteen (14) to fifteen (15) hours per day.

Councilman Brizzolara said other towns, like Mahwah, outsource their traffic details to a company. Lt. Federici said he feels that the department can continue to handle the traffic details as they come.

Councilman Ascolese asked Lt. Federici if the officers compare their rate with the rates of other towns. Lt. Federici advised the Council that it is difficult to compare rates with other towns because you are not seeing what the office is being paid, you are only seeing the final number. That number could include an administrative fee which is not part of the officers hourly rate.

Councilman Foschino suggested raising the rate of \$195.00 per hour due to not creating enough revenue at \$170.00. There has not been a raise in this rate in a number of years.

It was moved by Councilman Foschino and seconded by Councilman Ascolese to approve an hourly rate increase to \$195.00 for officers working a traffic detail. In the roll call

vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion, with the exception of Councilman Brizzolara who abstained.

Mayor Barsa advised the Council of a budget request from the recreation basketball program. The basketball program asked for \$25,000.00 to hire coaches. The Mayor did not feel this was a necessary expense. Councilman Foschino stated that he reviewed all the recreation budgets and advised the CFO to allocate \$6,000.00 to the basketball program which will cover the cost of the use of the school gyms. Councilman Foschino said all recreation sports will be seeing a cut in their budget form last year.

Mayor Barsa also said other items that have been discussed, such as Alpha Dog Solutions, an increase to the fire department stipend program, and Livingston Street Beautification should also be held off.

Councilman Foschino informed the governing body that he had a meeting with the DPW Director and the Assistant Director and they were able to cut the budget by about \$50,000.00.

Councilman Foschino asked if there will be enough money in the budget for Police Department promotions this year. Mr. Battaglia said that was in the budget under salaries and wages and there is enough to cover promotions.

Council President said by cutting Alpha Dog, the increase to the fire department stipends, Livingston Street beautification, and the DPW \$50,000.00, that would bring the budget to a little under 7%.

Mr. Battaglia asked that anyone making changes to the budget should advise him of these changes no later than ten (10) days from today.

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. All council members present approved the motion.

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. All council members present approved the motion.

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann. All council members present approved the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Padovano, Borough Administrator/Clerk