

February 4, 2025

A workshop meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens held on February 4, 2025.

Mayor Holeman called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of Our Country.  
Please remain standing for a moment of silence for our military.

This meeting has been advertised in one newspaper, The Daily Record, in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

ATTENDANCE: Councilman Suarez, Councilman Glass, Councilwoman Hedgepath, Councilman Hale, Councilman Lorenzo, Councilwoman Garcia Montes.

ABSENT: None

Tonights meeting is for discussion on the 2025 Municipal Budget. At this time the meeting was turned over to Jason our CFO.

Jason said he doesn't have anything put together for us yet. He and Melissa met with the Auditor over the weekend to see how things are done here. I usually put in raises at 2 1/2 or 3 percent. I don't want to over estimate. I just need you to get me what you want to do about raises.

Linda is looking to move over to Edmunds/MSI in the future. It would be for the tax office. I surely recommend that. As payments come in all things will be updated in real time. Linda is currently on First Byte. I didn't know that anyone was still using that. It is expensive to get it done. It is about \$12,000. After that it is about \$3,000 per year. Finance is about the same.

Councilman Suarez asked if the Collector is not on MSI? No she is using what is called First Byte. We would have to pay for the tax conversion. Jason said he will build these into the budget and see what it looks like.

Jason said he is also looking at the payroll system. I want to get away from R & L. They are very basic. I don't mind basic but there are times when we need to investigate things quicker. If there is a question on an employee then I will be able to get right in there and see what is going on. I have a proposal from Prime Point. They are the biggest municipal player. I use them in Mendham.

Councilwoman Montes asked what is the price point on these two companies? R & L Data is \$3,400 per year. Prime Point is \$3,800 per year. The implementation fee, which is a one time fee is \$850.00.

Councilman Suarez asked if Prime Point is a better system? Yes. What is really nice about it is I don't have to be here if there is a payroll issue. I can log in from Mendham. I can look at it and get answers a lot quicker. It has an employees part where they can have access to all of their payroll information. We all have direct deposit but I like to have a paper check in my hand to look at it. Maybe some don't want a paper check and they will not have to have one. They will also be able to go in and print out their W-2's without having to wait for us to do it. It's a very modern system.

The Clerk gave me information tonight on the Health Contract, the garbage contract, the reval, and the Auditors. I need to look at PERS and the health benefits. Health benefits will be going up again.

At our next meeting I will have a draft for you. I will send it out to you before the next meeting.

Councilwoman Montes said we need that before hand so we have a chance to look it over.

Councilman Lorenzo asked if Jason can make the sheet more detailed. We want to see what the budget was last year and how much was left in each account at the end of the year. Yes, I will do that.

Councilman Suarez said we over paid the auditors last year by about \$12,000 maybe more. They did the work and we had to pay them but if our CFO did his job then we would not have had to pay those fees. Can you tell us that we won't have these fees again this year? Yes, I can tell you that. I know what the Auditors are looking for as both Melissa and I met with them over the weekend. This new system will make everything easier and the Auditors will have the reports they need. Councilman Suarez said that if we don't have to pay the Auditors extra money, that will be a big chunk to help pay for the new systems you want to put in place.

Councilwoman Hedgepath said we had an increase last year. Are we taking another one this year? We will discuss that at the next meeting.

The Mayor asked if the majority of towns are on MSI/Edmunds? Yes. I would say 90 percent are.

Councilman Suarez asked who would have access to the MSI/Edmunds? Linda would have it for the tax department. I would have it, Letty would have it and Debbe if she wants it. Our licensing would be for 3 and there would be no extra costs.

We have Melissa know so that will be a big help in the office. Melissa has straightened everything out with Pensions and Health Benefits. We are up to date and it will stay that way.

Councilman Suarez asked if Jason had the information from the Engineer on what he is looking for in a raise? I don't have the one you have.

Councilwoman Montes said that the travel costs went up also for the Engineer. The Clerk said they didn't they are the same as the last several years. She said she looked and they were 50 cents and now it is 60 cents. The Clerk said she will look but she is positive it did not go up.

Councilman Glass said the Engineer went up 2½ percent - some of it was only 2 percent. We did not get anything from the Attorney. If we didn't get anything from the Professionals then we don't have to give them anything.

Councilwoman Montes said with this new company is Leon still there? It is not a new company. It is still Anderson & Denzler. It is just a new owner that is keeping the name. The new owner has worked for Anderson & Denzler for about 30 years. Leon is still with them. He is just moving towards part time.

Councilman Suarez said he knows of a few places that are Engineering Firms. He will check with them on the prices. He will check with Suburban Consulting.

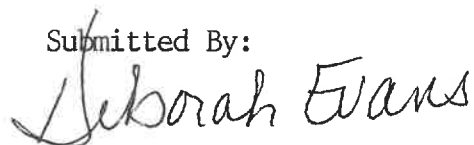
Motion to open the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Jim Janone - Your professionals, you based their salary on last years salary. How can you give them a raise. You can also check out Mott Engineering. It would be good if the public can see the budget paperwork also. Are we factoring in extra fees for the website? No, right now we are staying with who we have. They will continue at least for this year. What kind of projects are you planning for the year? Do you know how much is left in the American Rescue Plan monies? also, you will have 2 cannabis places going in. What kind of in kind gift will you get from them. What about the money for the reval? We put half in the budget last year and then half in this years budget. You were talking about payroll for the employees. It is strictly something that employees can use to check back on their pays or deductions, etc. Jim asked if it is for punching in and out and then you can get rid of a time clock. We don't have a time clock. We have 4 people.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Submitted By:



Deborah Evans  
Borough Clerk