

DECEMBER 16, 2013 2ND BUDGET HEARING MINUTES

The December 16, 2013 Budget Hearing Meeting was called to order at 7:09 P.M. in Council Chambers at the Municipal Building. Mayor Anthony DeLuca presiding.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor DeLuca – Good Evening we will call this meeting to order, this is the second budget hearing, please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Underwood	Absent
Mayor DeLuca	
Dr. Kincaid	
Mrs. Kuhn	
Mr. Palumbo	

Also present were Manager Rayan, Secretary Sorce, Administration Carson, Director Finance Schrecengost, Director Senior Center Paciulli, Director EMS Fitzhenry, Director WPCD O’Grady, Controller Futules, Chief Burton, IT Director Day, Director DPW Nosal, Asst. Director DPW Shepard, Director Parks & Recreation Scaglione, Director Planning Davidson, Engineer Minsterman and Solicitor Alexander.

Mayor DeLuca – first we will give our comments about the Budget so Council any comments?

Mrs. Kuhn – Mr. Mayor – First of all I would like to thank Maureen for a wonderful job she did on the minutes from the 1st Budget on December 2 because of my son being taken into the hospital I was unable to attend but Maureen it was very detailed and by reading through it I feel that I got all the comments and opinions of the people in the audience who spoke and then that way I was able to decide on my answers to them and what I felt should be and shouldn't be done. So I do want to thank you Maureen it was very very informational.

Maureen Sorce – thank you Mrs. Kuhn.

Mrs. Kuhn – o.k. going through this I first want to say that number one I want to thank Moe, Ed and all the Directors this was really and truthfully I thought one of the best Budgets that I have seen since I have been serving on Council. I know that in previous years Dr. Kincaid and Mayor DeLuca can attest to when we had Budget Meetings they were nightmares to say the least because of the fact the situation that the Municipality was in we had to make decisions we had to cut positions which is very difficult to do because that is not why I wanted to run to have to vote on someone's livelihood but things warranted it and the Municipality was in some financial problems and so it took a good many years for us to come to not to see the light at the end of the tunnel but to actually come through it. So I believe that both the Sewer Budget and the General Budget is one of the best that I have seen. That being said I do have some comments I would like to make regarding the Budget. Number one you know Moe I always ask for my Firemen and what can be done for them and so I am very happy to see that you did put into the Budget that they would have their breathing apparatus that they need and as I tell everyone in Penn Hills if you had to pay for a paid Fire Department you would never ever be able to pay the taxes that we would have to charge you for the job these volunteers do. That being said I hope when they send out their donations to you that you respond because of the fact that is what they work by. We do fund them but that is not all that they need the funding that we give to them. So think of it that this is why your taxes are not increased because you are lucky enough to have a Volunteer Fire Department. So I do really ask that you make sure that you give a donation to them and not just set it aside because of the fact it is not

mandatory. That being said I did read over the minutes and I know that there was a lot of discussion on the Code Enforcement situation which anyone here on Council will tell you that we are well aware of the problems with Code Enforcement. I tell everyone that probably 70% of the phone calls that I get from my residents pertain to Code Enforcement. It is a shame that we have been without two Code Enforcement Officers for such a long time and that is due to litigation and our hands are tied on that and even though we don't have them as been explained we have to provide Budget for them. I would like to see something being done so that we can add somehow personnel into that situation and I believe that the Mayor will discuss more of that because he and the Manager had met on that so that we are able to at least get some help in that Department as best as we can. I know that we have a surplus and I read in the minutes that that was mentioned by several of the speakers and in this situation I believe that if we are able to put into the Budget something for an additional Code Enforcement person that would be well worth trying to resolve through our surplus but we will not have a surplus if we continue to just put in put in put in just because you have a surplus it would be like your own Budget. You do your Budget for 2014 you might have a \$10,000 surplus I don't think you are going to go out and buy a new vehicle or something because you don't know what the twelve months are going to bring. So I don't want to just use up that surplus because it is there because we have no idea what might transpire in the twelve months if we would need that and at the end I don't want to have to come back to the taxpayers and say well we were foolish we did have a surplus but we utilized it all and now we are in debt and we have to add for a tax increase which would not be what this Council is about. We work to make sure that this Municipality is running as a business should be run and it took a long time to do that and that is where we are at. Like I said those are really the only two issues that I had was to thank you for the firemen and the other was if we could do something with Code Enforcement. Other than that again I appreciate all the work that was done and I do apologize for not being here two weeks ago but my Son was in the hospital with a serious problem. I thank everyone who called and offered their prayers and support for that time. Thank you very much.

Mayor DeLuca – any other comments:

Dr. Kincaid – I will make some brief comments. I find also that what the Deputy Mayor said that this is a prudent Budget and one of the better Budgets that we have seen in several years in regards to the overall Budget as presented at this point in time. There still might be some changes between now and the finality but at this time I feel that we have a prudent Budget it is well organized, well presented, easy to read, good format and particularly I believe it is a good stewardship in regards to the tax payer's money that we see presented here in this overall Budget as I understand it. I also wish to commend Moe, Ed and all the Directors and Staff and everyone who has worked hard to put this together, we have been looking at it for several weeks now and discussed it and I discussed some things with the Manager that would not be part of this record necessarily but overall I feel we have a very good Budget, I feel comfortable with, no Budget is perfect to use an analogy, a metaphor no one knocks a home run every time they come up to bat. So I think we can all understand that so I feel in regards to the Municipality of Penn Hills as far as this Budget 2014 as it is being presented I feel very comfortable with Mayor, Manager and colleagues that we have a good Budget before us as we go forward at this point. Thank you very much.

Mayor DeLuca – any other comments.

Mr. Palumbo – (tape was inaudible).

Mayor DeLuca – I also want to commend the Manager and the Finance Director and all the Directors for doing a good job of keeping the expenses down and helping develop this Budget. One of the things me and the Manager have talked about was Code Enforcement and what we decided to do we are going to have it be a Fire Marshall/Chief Inspector and we already made some changes to the Job Description. It will be a Management Position that will report to John McCafferty in Code and he would also direct the two Code Officers in the Department. If any Code issues that would occur you would report them to John that would also bring John's job up to do more administrative duties and answer citizen's complaints. If there was

any stuff about the Fire Marshall he would report that to the Chief or the Manager. So that will take effect as soon as this Budget is passed and the other thing is in the Budget Message you saw that there was an 11% increase in the expenditures, part of that increase is due to the bonds, insurance, pension, we increased the paving program and fire protection. A couple of months ago me and the Manager and the Chief had a meeting on some changes we would like to see happen with the Police Department. Also with that 11% we also added another Lieutenant so now we have three Lieutenants on staff. One of the Lieutenants, Lieutenant Snyder will also be the Crime Prevention Officer. Make sure you get the word out that we are going to start up the Crime Prevention again and send out the e-mail and I believe Chief that is on the web-site now the Crime Prevention.

Chief Burton – Jack Day and I will be working on it and it is on the web-site.

Mayor DeLuca – on the web site it is crimeprevention@pennhills.org (this is the e-mail address) and you can sign up and we are going to do different things, if there is something going on in a specific neighborhood we will send out alerts we will also send out crime prevention tips and we would also, we are not going to have as many meetings as we have done before maybe like twice a year we will have like a Community Meeting you know for the residents. Also with the Police Department we are also increasing the Police Force by three, this administration has always took public safety very seriously so now that we have the money we are going to increase it. When I first became the Mayor we were down like ten Police Officers and we had to hire ten of them as soon as we got on, so Public Safety is very important. Also with this Budget we restructured the rates for our sewage. We guaranteed the Public five years it looks like we are going to get another two years on this rate structure that Penn Hills has set up just for our rates. We can't guarantee what ALCOSAN is doing. They have to make upgrades to their own system and unfortunately Penn Hills is tied into that system. So with that we will open up to the Public for any comments on the Budget.

Jim Carnahan – 201 Jefferson Road – I want to reflect on page 89. The Data Processing Clerk. I want to make a few comments on this. I want to go back to when this position was started. I know the former Director and had some assistance from the administration in writing the job description and at that time the former Director and I were on pretty good terms we worked together and when he put down that he was going to put in for four hours I said don't do that put in for six hours because I have seen this before during my hospital stays. Statistics are very very important even in a hospital and they are here. But he said no I am going to put in for four hours because my next Budget I will get the additional two hours and I said it doesn't work that way. Well it didn't work. I wrote some letters and I even sent a letter to the Mayor and Council and to the Manager unfortunately I never got an answer and the ones the former Director wrote and I asked if he got an answer and he said no. Now as far as I am concerned I didn't think they would answer me because I am just a volunteer I am not really anything, I just volunteer at the Senior Center. I am again asking that this be considered. I don't understand why there is no logical reason given why it isn't extended. It is needed. Believe me. Previously, we had two very good data processing clerks and they both moved on and you can't stop people from moving on to get a better position and we have a very good one now but this 3A's demand this these are mandatory and they want numbers. It concerns the funding and I don't think Mayor, Council or anybody want to see the Senior Center losing funding so I don't understand and what is the reason. Nobody has ever given anybody a reason why this has not been extended.

Mayor DeLuca - Jim you brought this up before and we did look into it and the Manager looked into it and the Manager doesn't feel that the four hours is needed so that is the reason why.

Jim Carnahan – you mean the additional two hours isn't needed.

Mayor DeLuca – two hours or whatever how many hours you brought up before.

Jim Carnahan – well what was the reason?

Moe Rayan – on several occasions Mr. Carnahan I talked to the former Director really never got a direct response from him as far as I just want to add the hours, never have gotten a solid reason to date from anybody, now we have an acting Director and hopefully when the Budget is passed she will move onto be the Director and if she feels that it is necessary then we will discuss it again. But at this point, Mr. Carnahan my answer is the same I didn't feel the additional two hours are warranted, the work is being done it was a matter of organizing and time management of the employees and that is all we needed at that time. There are no records that are mishandled or not submitted to the County as far as I know. We submit all our work on time, there are no deficiencies in submitting our Budget to the County and again being reimbursed for it so really if the new Director feels that we are going to need additional hours to make sure the work is completed then we will revisit that again but as of this point right now personally I don't feel that it is necessary to have additional hours added to that position.

Mr. Carnahan – you said that the former Director never gave you a solid reason for increasing those hours? I had copies of his letters.

Moe Rayan – yes all I heard was we need to make sure we submit the numbers. That is not a good reason for me sir.

Mr. Carnahan – alright thank you.

Irene McLaughlin – 8908 Upland Terrace – I am here on behalf of the Housing Committee of the Penn Hills Community Development Corporation as I have been for the last several meetings. Thanks for having us back and there are several members of the CDC here and I appreciate them coming out. We do appreciate your speaking to and considering the Code Enforcement changes. I just want to make sure I understand them. We had sent a letter and our basic issue as you well know we are as concerned about it as you are concerned about the processing and basic minimum property maintenance related to Code complaints and we are very interested in the leadership that will be necessary to really move into the future of Code Enforcement which is

really about strategic applications of Code Enforcement resources. So what I understood you to say Mayor was that indeed in addition to what we already applaud you for doing in this Budget in promotion of John McCafferty to a Code Director Position you are adding a position but it is the Fire Marshall Position

Mayor DeLuca – slash Chief Inspector.

Irene McLaughlin – slash Chief Inspector. The Fire Marshall was vacant so it will be filled but there will be a new aspect to that position of Code Inspector. The Code Inspector will report to the Code Director.

Mayor DeLuca – yes.

Irene McLaughlin – and so those other I believe it is 4 positions two of which are vacant because of litigation will remain. So as you said there are two filled positions two are vacant because of the litigation and that the Fire Marshall/Code Inspector will be working right now with those two Code Inspectors and ideally and hopefully will get those litigations completed and done, not you obviously. But that will be coming to some kind of resolution hopefully at some point in the future so that sounds good. So we appreciate your concern and hearing us and I was asked by some committee members to make the suggestion that perhaps the Housing Committee could start to have some kind of regular meetings assuming that it could benefit the Code Director, the Fire Marshall/Code Inspector and the department in terms of how this committee can really support and augment the work of the Code Enforcement Department for instance as I mentioned before wonderful members of the committee have taken on the task of doing Q&A's on what a Code Violation is and having links for the CDC website to your website and essentially just promoting the use of the on line complaints system through your departmental page. So we would love to be able to continue to promote that and of course we were hesitant as long as we thought that those other complaints weren't being addressed but we were certainly very hopeful and that they will be in 2014 and we would love again to find a way to work to collaborate to support the department. Does that make sense?

Mayor DeLuca – yes I think that is a great idea. Once we get all of this in place you set up a meeting with the Director.

Irene McLaughlin – so you made me think of another question Mayor. When you get all of this in place

Mayor DeLuca – once we pass the Budget then we have to advertise for the position and get the person hired.

Irene McLaughlin – o.k. for the Fire Marshall/Code Inspector. We will be looking for that. I am sorry Manager Rayan.

Moe Rayan – I just want to make sure that I am clear on Code violations that are not being addressed like you said. Have these been reported to the Code Department? Are they not responding or is it just the timing of those violations it appears at times they are not being addressed. It is a lengthy process. I just want to make sure I am clear on your definition.

Irene McLaughlin – I would love to be proven wrong on this count.

Moe Rayan – I am not saying wrong or right if there is a problem we want to take care of it. I just want to be clear of what you are alleging to code violation not being handled or they are being handled but it is taking forever to get done. That is part of the system as well.

Irene McLaughlin – well we were able to track on line and Code Enforcement complaints that were made and this goes back in the summer I have a total of 25 that were opened and only three of them were closed. So I don't have all the details on exactly what time period and of course Code Enforcement may be working on something else but these are pretty basic matters, grass, weeds, debris. So that raised our concerns.

Moe Rayan – o.k. just wanted to make clear on this.

Irene McLaughlin – many of the committee members are quite active and so would be glad to work with your department and again hopefully they are closed at this point. So again we thank you very much your responsiveness has been truly tremendous on Code Enforcement matters since I have been coming since October 7 and I know that is not a very long time and really look forward to 2014 and thank you.

Mayor DeLuca – are there any other comments?

Don Sanker – 780 Long Road – First of all before I begin Moe thank you the trash on Beulah Road was picked up about a week ago just about three weeks after we made the comments. First of all Sara how is your son?

Sara Kuhn – good thank you.

Don Sanker – Mayor you were also delayed for one meeting because one of your children was in the hospital?

Mayor DeLuca – he got injured during football practice.

Don Sanker – when I left the Budget Hearing on December 2, I began to think of a word that the presentation of the Budget meant to me. Later on that evening I came up with the word perception. Now allow me to address the Budget from a very different perspective. First of all the format for presenting the Budget I am not talking about content now I am just talking about presenting to the Public. The format for presenting the Budget has not changed for 30 years but technology has. I began to wonder why not pie charts. What percentage of the General Budget is used in Administration, what percentage is used for the Police Force, what percentage is used for Finance, etc? Within each of those departments what percentage is used for the various aspects within their particular Budget? What has been the trend line for the gas bills and the electric bills? I know last year you voted to replace the lights with the new energy saving lights what effect did that have on the electric bill at those locations. Where is that trend line? Wouldn't that information be helpful to you and the

public? (Inaudible). My perception is that the Budget process is fine put the presentation to the public needs to be updated because the technology that is being used is at least thirty years old and I am saying thirty years old because back when I was on Council back in 82 to 85 that format was exactly the same. It hasn't changed. I would think Moe you would be out here with a computer, a camera and a big screen showing the public exactly what the Budget looks like with pie charts. They are very simple to do. Then there is the web site. Mayor I did notice after my comment two weeks ago that your message at that time disappeared thank you. By the way congratulations on the picture. The web site does a great job for example portraying our parks, our recreation but we also have some great housing. One of our members of CDC had a house tour this year I think it was 13 houses. It was amazing the number of people who came in from outside of Penn Hills were amazed at the quality of houses we have here in Penn Hills.

Mayor DeLuca – Don if you could just stick to the Budget.

Don Sanker – I am sticking with the Budget, I am asking why there are no pictures of the housing on the web site. What I am looking for is there money in the Budget to upgrade the website? The worst thing about websites is that they are not continuously updated and ours is one of them. We are not continuing updating it. At the last meeting Mr. Mayor I touched briefly on the new EMT Garage and you said the Council was not going to let the \$600,000 Grant disappear. During the last couple of weeks I had a chance to talk to some people about that and as a result of those conversations the following suggestion has been made. While waiting for the money to come in why don't you ask the Planning Department to come up with five or six potential sites, why don't you do some preliminary engineering on those sites and then allow the department to come up with the top two or three sites and then allow that department to provide you with the pros and cons of each of those sites so you can make an intelligent decision as to which site would be best for the residents of Penn Hills. (inaudible).

Mayor DeLuca – are there any other comments? O.K. with that we will adjourn this Public Hearing. The final of the Budget will be December 31, at 3:00 P.M.

Mayor DeLuca – motion to adjourn.

Dr. Kincaid made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Palumbo seconded the motion.

All said I.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 P.M.

DATE

**MAUREEN M. SORCE
MANAGER'S SECRETARY**