

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - TOWNSHIP OF EDISON
JULY 18, 2018**

A Special Meeting of the Municipal Council was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Complex on Wednesday, July 18, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Council President Patil, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were Councilmembers Diehl, Gomez, Joshi, Lombardi, Patil and Sendelsky.

Councilmember Coyle was absent.

Also present were Township Clerk Russomanno, Deputy Township Clerk McCray, Township Attorney Northgrave, Business Administrator Ruane and Mayor Lankey.

The Township Clerk advised that adequate Notice of this meeting as required by the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, has been provided by a Special Notice sent to The Home News Tribune, The Star Ledger and the Sentinel on June 23, 2018 and posted in the Main Lobby of the Municipal Complex on the same date.

Council President Patil opened meeting to Welcome Mayor Lankey to present the budget.

Mayor Lankey thanked Council President and members of the Council. We are here tonight to show some details on the budget. He said he will spend approximately 15 minutes doing the presentation.

Mayor Lankey starting with Page two our names are there, remember when we took office our goal is to try to stabilize the Township we need to bring in rateables, our infrastructure was crumbling, we need to spend a lot of money to bring us to the 21st Century. It would take a few years to do so. Over the past few years it not just a one year project, this budget continues to do that and does so in a fiscal responsible way.

Summary starting with Page three, we are the sixth lowest tax rate within Middlesex County. Page four shows us our taxes compared to the rest of the twenty municipalities in Middlesex County. The pie chart on page five shows 2018 Tax levy Breakdown, Page six is the 2014-2018 Tax levy breakdown which shows only 1.40% increase. The Budget Message on page seven shows 2018 Local Tax is under Tax Levy Cap. On page eight is the Non- Property tax revenue, page nine are the 2018 Appropriations, page 10 Total Assessed Value, page eleven our tax appeal overview, page twelve Municipal Tax Refund paid by Tax Levy 2009-2017, and page thirteen is our Tax appeal Debt Repayment. The next pages Mayor Lankey shows us for the years 2014 through 2017 the Township's infrastructure investments we have made, equipment, buildings, recreation and our extension Road improvement program. He explained what is necessary to keep Edison Moving forward. We need to sustain our continued momentum around redevelopment, expand our economic base, and increase our commercial ratable base to ensure a stable residential tax rate. We need to improve, find the balance to move forward with our goals.

Council President Patil, county contribution, a half million toward new community center great job.

Council Vice President Sendelsky, asked if we are using pilot monies toward community center. With more pilot programs would we use toward infrastructure and roads.

Mayor Lankey, our total pilots are a minimum there are just a lot of discussions right now on redevelopments. They would be used for a number of things the community center would be one.

Councilmember Joshi, on page fourteen it says the town will increase by 15 million, what is the split between these departments?

Mayor Lankey, on page Forty (C) of the budget shows the capital break down.

Councilmember Joshi asked for explanation on the 1.9 million in Police and the 6 million regarding roads.

Ms. Ruane explained the breakdown is part of the General Capital Budget when we do the ordinance.

Councilmember Diehl, good job on your presentation. Pilots are very important as a member of Education Committee he asked if we can we designate some pilot money toward the overcrowding problem we have. His hope moving forward the Administration work together to form a position, direction and philosophy on how we work with the Board of Education with the up, coming pilots we are looking to obtain.

Mayor Lankey, we need to look at everything, pilots are not just the answer. There are a lot of things we do for the schools we don't charge for. There are a lot of thing to look at we need to sit down to try to figure the 21st Century solution. Let's figure out the best way for the future together.

Councilmember Lombardi, thanked Mayor Lankey. Looking at page nine the cost of Health Insurance is just under 20%, of our budget, what efforts the administration took to reduce this cost.

Mayor Lankey, health Insurance is important to shop for better deals, negotiated union contracts to eliminate higher cost to get the best bang for our dollar. We have reviewed the claims, and changed our Prescription provider.

Councilmember Lombardi, the purposed tax increase is 1.4% what does that amount to in tax points.

Mayor Lankey, about two tax points.

Councilmember Sendelsky, Sheet 11 tax appeal overview it looks like we are going up in tax appeals still pending. Do we see that number going down?

Mayor Lankey explained they are still pending from those years. They are not cumulative they are from that year. We are actively fighting the appeals.

Ms. Ruane, the number of cases are going down.

Councilmember Gomez, one of the things now we have been able to directly pay for tax appeals instead of going to financing through DCA which allowed us not to incur additional debt. Economic Development has helped a lot, he applauded this administration.

Council President Patil, he believes we have enough room to cut down expenses. There are multiple areas that can be outsourced, also bringing back the skills in house of financing and engineering. Have you looked into these aspects?

Mayor Lankey replied we look at these not just at during the budget they look at day to day because that is the prudent fiscally responsible way to do things. You have to understand one thing unlike the private sector, unemployment we are self-insured and we don't save any money. The Budget you have in front of you in my opinion is the best budget you are going to have. He doesn't believe our sourcing those items you mentioned or replacing our financing or engineer to spend any less money.

Council President Patil based on the revenue he feels we have the room to bring the talent in house. One part of the tax increasing the tax and what are we giving the tax payer. Is there any change in this budget to improve the quality of life to residents?

Mayor Lankey, we look at every project to try to make sure there isn't any negative impact. Regards to Top Golf and Amazon the solutions are put in place, he apologizes to the residents. Every project we look at every negative and positive unfortunately some things are unforeseen.

Council President Patil asked if the administration can submit a report to the council when they are review and shopping the insurance.

Mayor Lankey replied sure no problem.

Council President Patil asked if the 1.4% tax increase include an average salary increase of 2.5% across the board.

Mayor Lankey said the answer is yes, but understand the budget is an assumption not reality yet.

Council President Patil, what is the dollar amount of the increase.

Mayor Lankey 1.7 million.

Mayor Lankey said he doesn't believe there is anything we can do to change this budget lower than 1.4% increase without having a negative impact on the quality of life for the resident of the town.

Council President Patil asked about the Community Center design would be complete.

Mayor Lankey said we will have someone retained and have more meetings. We do have a couple of locations we have looked at, hope to fast track. It will be a few years down the road.

Council President Patil asked since Stelton Community Center is being closed is there a site to relocate temporarily.

Councilmember Lombardi, we did relocate a group to move the Edison Shelter Workshop to a new building and should be operational by end of year.

Mayor Lankey said some other programs have moved out of Stelton already.

Council President Patil asked if we anticipating to vote on this budget at the next council meeting. Reason asked since one councilmember isn't here.

Mayor Lankey, yes, he feels we need to pass as soon as you can and if Councilmember Coyle has questions, feel free to call him. The Council has had this budget since May.

Council President Patil asked if any Councilmembers feel they need to take more time, seeing none he is fine with that.

Council President Patil opened the meeting to public comment.

Maria Orchid, 83 Jefferson Avenue, she didn't see Mr., Fix

Ms. Ruane explained that is in the CBGB Grant.

Ms. Orchid, under public safety do we have the numbers.

Ms. Ruane, Police is 185 and Fire is 141

Ms. Orchid asked if there is anything on Green Energy

Council President Patil, explained we formed Net Zero Committee to do a study. We will be looking into grants.

Ms. Orchid asked about Wind Energy.

Councilmember Lombardi, the state is looking into that he believes Assemblyman Karabinchak is one of the legislators going to Germany to look into that.

Hearing no further comments from the public Councilmember Diehl made a motion to close the public hearing, which was seconded by Councilmember Sendelsky and duly carried.

On a motion made by Councilmember Joshi, seconded by Councilmember Sendelsky, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Ajay Patil
Council President

Cheryl Russomanno, RMC
Municipal Clerk