

The agenda meeting of Council was called to order by President Steffey at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Centers, 925 Old Clairton Road. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Councilwoman Bucy, Vice President Budd, Councilman Montgomery, President Steffey, and Mayor McCaffrey answered to roll call. Finance Director Haberstock, Solicitor McPeak Cromer, Chief Dziezgowski, Engineer and Acting Borough Manager Glistler, Consulting Engineer Minsterman, and Public Works Director Volpe were also present. Councilman Lynch, Councilman Reynolds, Councilwoman Ruscitto, and Borough Manager Stinner were absent.

4. Report from Borough Boards and Commissions

None

5. Borough Resident/Taxpayer Comments on Agenda Items

President Steffey read a comment from Dr. Linda Wojnar, 100 Pearson Road.

“Looking at the big picture - for 2024: Food prices have remained increased; Interest rates keep increasing; Sewage cost is increasing; Water cost is increasing; Gas prices have increased; Gasoline prices have increased; Electric costs have increased; Insurances (car, homeowners, medical) have increased; DirecTV costs have increased; and Xfinity/Comcast costs have increased. With all of the increases listed above, is this really the best year to add yet another cost increase adding more fuel to the fire for 2024? Please reconsider adding another tax increase to the already proposed financial burdens these increases will have on taxpayers.”

President Steffey read a comment from Mrs. Marilyn Grimes, 2616 Ridge Road.

“Please get back to me. That’s a very large difference almost double. Then considering raising taxes. We’ve paid taxes for a lot of years and our kids have been out of school a long time. We should be getting a break not paying more.”

6. Discussion to approve the monthly bills

Mrs. Bucy asked if the JH Council Members have approved to pay monthly bills, and a bill that was listed is not paid, is this lack of payment legal?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded I would need to know more facts to give you an answer.

Mrs. Bucy asked do you want me to ask you personally? It could be considered personnel.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded if it is personnel, definitely we would discuss it yes, at a later time.

Vice President Budd asked about the ABM Building Solutions and the truck charge. Is there any way to tell when they are coming here, and where they are coming from? Because they have an office in Pleasant Hills, and I would think \$100.00 to come from Pleasant Hills is a little steep.

President Steffey asked do we note that on the invoices or anything, when we receive one?

Mr. Volpe responded it is just a standard charge. Usually, their service guys take their vehicles home. I think it is just charging us a straight \$100.00 for them every time they show up.

7. Discussion to approve the monthly payroll

8. Discussion to approve minutes of agenda meeting November 8, 2023

Mr. Montgomery stated on page 388 it should be West Elizabeth Sanitary Authority, not Elizabeth Sanitary Authority.

Mrs. Bucy asked if we vote yes to the minutes, is the vote of yes to accept that the minutes reflect what was stated, or is it that a council member is in agreement with the accuracy and correctness of what was stated?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded it is a little of both. If there is an issue, you can put it on the record and say, can we clarify the minutes should reflect blah blah blah. If all are in agreement, then you would vote on that.

Mrs. Bucy stated it was when Vice President Budd made the statement that the police budget was down \$200,000.00, and the recreation and the parks budget was down \$38,000.00, and public works was down \$19,000.00. I do not understand where you got those figures.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer asked is your issue that the facts, that the numbers are not correct, or that it was actually stated?

Mrs. Bucy responded I do not think those numbers were correct.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer stated the minutes of the meeting are correct. You could vote to approve those minutes. If she said that, then you would vote to approve those minutes. It does not mean you are concurring with the numbers.

9. Discussion to approve minutes of regular meeting November 13, 2023

10. Discussion to approve the permanent appointment of Sergeant John Haas to the rank of Sergeant for the Jefferson Hills Police Department after successful completion of a 12-month probationary period per the Borough of Jefferson Hills Civil Service Rules and Regulations, Section 4.12 "Probationary Period"

11. Discussion to accept the resignation of Tyler Fisher from the Borough of Jefferson Hills Public Works Department

12. Discussion to promote _____ from Park Laborer to Road Laborer per the collective bargaining agreement with Local #1058
13. Discussion to promote _____ from Park Laborer to Road Laborer per the collective bargaining agreement with Local #1058
14. Discussion to advertise for the Park Laborer position in the Borough of Jefferson Hills Public Works Department

Mr. Glister stated we should clarify this one a little bit. Back in September, when Mr. Haberstock was hired as our finance director, he left a void on our Public Works Department. We advertised in August or September, I forget the exact date, for the park laborer position, which we ultimately filled at our October council meeting. At that time Public Works Director Volpe had some insight that there was a potential of maybe losing one or two more public works employees. When we went through the interview process, and narrowed down the pool, we usually only bring maybe the finalist back to Council, to give Council an opportunity to meet them. In this case, we realized that we may be needing to replace some additional public works employees in the near future, which is now. We brought in some additional candidates. Some of the discussions we had today and yesterday was whether or not we need to actually advertise or can we just go and select one of the candidates that we did not hire in September. We did bring them in, interviewed them, and Council agreed that they were qualified candidates. I did reach out to the two candidates from September, to see if they were still interested and available. So far I have not heard back from either of them yet. We may need to revise this for Monday, depending on what we hear back from them. If we do not hear back from any of the candidates, then it would probably remain the same.

Mr. Montgomery asked if they both say they are interested, are we going to interview them?

Mr. Glister responded that would probably be for personnel to discuss in executive session on Monday.

President Steffey stated we did interview them.

Mr. Montgomery stated they are good candidates.

President Steffey asked do you feel the need to re-interview them?

Mr. Montgomery responded I interviewed them both, and I thought they were excellent.

15. Discussion to appoint _____ one (1) seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Civil Service Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2026

Vice President Budd stated I believe this is supposed to be an alternate seat, as opposed to just a regular seat. I want to clarify that. If it is, I would like to amend that to say alternate seat. We were also supposed to have a swearing in this month, of another civil service member.

Chief Dziezgowski stated it is alternative seat. Are you looking for that person to be available on Monday also, if you were to swear them in the following their appointment.

President Steffey asked did we receive anything for civil service?

The clerk responded no.

President Steffey stated I did speak to somebody today that could possibly be interested. If they do submit their letter, then I will see if they will both be available on Monday.

There is still an open vacancy for anybody that might be interested in the civil service commission as well. You can send your letter of interest into mharris@jeffersonhills.net

16. Discussion to advertise two seats on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Recreation Board for a 4-year term expiring December 31, 2027

17. Discussion to advertise one seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Planning Commission for a 4-year term expiring December 31, 2027

18. Discussion to advertise one seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Zoning Hearing Board for a 5-year term expiring December 31, 2028

19. Discussion to advertise three seats on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Environmental Advisory Council for a 3-year term expiring December 31, 2026

20. Discussion to advertise one seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Environmental Advisory Council for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2025

21. Discussion to advertise three seats on the Jefferson Hills Public Library Board of Directors for a 3-year term expiring December 31, 2026

Mrs. Bucy stated since we have so many possibilities here of 7 different positions that people could fill, I would like to urge all of the Jefferson Hills residents to consider one of these vacancies, and to apply. We have many concerns that come to us regarding planning, zoning, the growth of the Borough, et cetera. This is an opportunity for you to possibly sit on one of these committees.

22. Discussion to advertise meeting dates for the Borough of Jefferson Hills Council and for the Boards and Commissions of the Borough of Jefferson Hills

23. Discussion to adopt Ordinance No. 903 amending Ordinance No. 206 of 1964, codified as section 1-101 of the Borough Code of Ordinances to modify the time of meeting to be held on the first Wednesday and the second Monday of each month and every month at 7:00 p.m.

President Steffey stated for those of you who attend our meetings regularly, for the new year I would suggest for you to remember that some of these dates are going to be changing. They are no longer going to be the second full week of the month, how it has been for the past many years. It is going to be the first Wednesday and the second Monday of each and every month.

24. Discussion to adopt Ordinance No. 904 authorizing the condemnation and taking by eminent domain of Parcel ID 1134-J-116 commonly known as Maryland Avenue for the PICCO Pump Station Project

25. Motion to advertise Ordinance No. 905 establishing the base Real Estate Tax rate for the year 2024 at 7.66 mills (General 7.077 mills; Fire .477 mills; and Ambulance .106 mills)

President Steffey called for a motion to advertise Ordinance No. 905 establishing the base Real Estate Tax rate for the year 2024 at 7.66 mills (General 7.077 mills; Fire .477 mills; and Ambulance .106 mills).

Vice President Budd moved to amend the motion to advertise Ordinance No. 905 establishing the base Real Estate Tax rate for the year 2024 at a 1 mill increase at 6.66 mills.

President Steffey stated this is just to advertise. We are not voting on any tax increase this evening. This is a motion to advertise. Is there a second motion for 1 mill raising?

Motion dies due to lack of a second.

26. Motion to advertise Ordinance No. 905 establishing the base Real Estate Tax rate for the year 2024 at 8.66 mills (General 8.001 mills; Fire .539 mills; and Ambulance .120 mills)

No motion being made, motion dies.

27. Discussion to adopt Resolution No. 38-2023 rescinding Resolution No. 43-2022 relating to capital reserve funds

Vice President Budd stated in relation to the tax increase, I have no problem with actually advertising that. I was one of the initial yes votes for the 65%. I actually wish I would have asked some more questions at that time. I have learned a little more of a responsible level of funding in those areas, around 2 to 4 months. That is approximately closer to 30% or 40%?

Mr. Haberstock stated we spend a little over a million dollars a month.

Vice President Budd asked if we would save either 30% or 40%, anything above that would then go back into being able to spend as taxpayer money?

Mr. Haberstock responded it already is.

Vice President Budd stated I think 65%, in my opinion is why there is even a consideration to raise taxes. I have been learning about this number, it is an extremely high number. No one around here has that number. Other places like Mt. Lebanon, just for an example, is at 15%. I think this is causing concern with cuts in the budget, combined with the potential tax increase, leading to a potential strangulation of services in the Borough. There are more residents. There is an increased demand for services. It is fun to say we have not raised taxes in a while, but it is putting a strain on things. I would much rather see this number lowered to a responsible amount that is not withholding taxpayer funds. We are not a savings account. People are paying taxes to have them spent on services. More people, more houses, and more roadways plus less services does not add up for me. It is evident from the 2010 comprehensive plan, now the current plan. Plus, just talking to people and seeing what they are saying. They are not interested in us just being a bedroom community. They want more. But quite frankly, with this budget, these cuts are cutting into normal everyday services, and not some of the extra, more recreational type things. I would

like to see what we can do to get this number down to again, what I consider to be a more responsible level of funding in this area.

President Steffey stated this resolution was adopted last year, at a recommendation for us to hold at least 65% of our budget as a reserved fund balance, which means it cannot be touched. We adopted that. Over the time, we have seen that we have a decent amount of reserves sitting there that cannot be touched. It does not make sense to have that sitting there, while we are entertaining possibly raising taxes. This has been a topic in our finance committee meetings. We have all done some extensive research, as Vice President Budd has done herself, to ask around to other communities who have this cap on a reserve fund. Most of the people that we contacted do not even have this resolution. They have 0%. You can just be fiscally responsible and not dip into your reserve fund. Our solicitor asked around to people that she represents also. Their finance directors thought 65% was astronomical. Now, having reserve funds also helps to keep our bond rating in the Borough. This is what we are discussing right now is to either completely rescind this resolution, and not have a cap on the reserve fund balance, or have some type of percentage in there.

Mrs. Bucy stated we do have \$10 million in reserve. At our finance meeting, I was under the impression that Mr. Haberstock had mentioned that he thought 5 months of reserve would be appropriate. That would mean that there was approximately still \$5 million left in there. I am not in favor of raising taxes when we have \$10 million in reserve. That is the taxpayers' money. We have been very diligent about having that money put in the reserve account. We have made a great deal of money as a result of that. I agree that the 65% might be high. When we look at our bills, we are about a million a month. We should try to have a minimum of 5 months to be able to pay our bills. That would be the number that I would be looking at.

Mr. Montgomery asked what percentage?

Mrs. Bucy responded that would be 50%.

Mr. Haberstock stated you mentioned the bond rating. When Moody's rates the Borough for its bond rating, it has 9 factors. They are weighted. Some things are more important than others when they come up with an overall bond rating. Most of the items are not within our ability to control. Resident income for example, and economic growth metric, we have no control over those. One of the things we have control over is our fund balance ratio. This accounts for 25% of the weighted rating. We were assessed back in August. Our fund ratio was so well that it rated triple A on that one piece of our bond rating. Now, we would stay at triple A at anything over 35%. We don't need it to be at 65% to maintain that rating. All other things staying the same, the 2-to-3-month recommendation of expenses, personally, I would recommend slightly more. I would like this rate to be more like 40%. I think that is more reasonable. One of the things that would lead to a downgrade is continuing to dip into your reserve fund balance. We can do that for the short-term, a couple of years. But eventually, you run out of it. Then we are back to square one. That is why at some point, taxes will need to be raised. How much is yet to be determined. Also, to clarify, the reserve fund balance for the general fund is \$7 million. It is \$10 million across all funds. \$3 million is sewer funding. That is a separate funding we do not have access to for general business.

Mrs. Bucy gave a presentation on the budget process.

Mrs. Bucy stated the finance committee has spent close to 40 hours going over this budget. There are a lot of people that have questions, in the community, about how this is set up. We decided to put a little presentation together, so that people would understand this.

The Jefferson Hills finance committee consists of the finance director Brian Haberstock, acting manager Mike Glister, and council members Melissa Steffey, Dave Montgomery, and myself. We have met for over 25 hours, trying to formulate the 2024 budget. I am going to present an assortment of information so you can be aware of our findings. Some JH council members may have previous knowledge of the points already presented. However, we found it necessary to include some background information, financial data, and possible solutions to be fair, accurate, and transparent, to promote our educated decision making. Each JH council member will be responsible for assessing the information and voting on numerous financial items, enumerated on the agenda, Monday, December 11th, 2023.

I will begin with defining the budgetary process and rules imposed by the Pennsylvania rules and regulations for budgets. First, we have a definition of a budget, which is a comprehensive plan that outlines income, expenses, and resource allocations within a specific time frame. Our budget, the Jefferson Hills Municipal Government, must have a zero balance. The budget has to be done by December 31st. We are not like the federal government where we can just have a debt. We have to go to zero. Currently, the status as we had in the preliminary budget, and was stated in previous meetings, we have a 1.5 million deficit in the preliminary budget, and 10 million in reserve. Let me clarify, 7 million in reserve, 3 in the sewer fund. We can maintain a positive bond rating, and our monthly bills are approximately \$1 million. We need to have a security of money, to make sure that the Borough is protected in case of a crisis, or in case of some kind of disaster that we have to be funding our own paychecks. I think we need to get realistic in Jefferson, we are a bedroom community. Pleasant Hills has the Cloverleaf, all the way down to the Coal Valley Road. All that tax money goes to them. Our commercial business area is very limited. In fact, we do have some light manufacturing, which I wanted to point out. Kurt Lesker, BAW Plastics, and TYK brickyard. We are very limited in our industry. The only one we have is Synthomer. The planning commission, in 2003, has had an increase in some tap sewers. They see the housing plans going up. But, they have not had meetings for four months in a row because there is no development. We have had zero commercial development applications.

What are some possible solutions to this 1.5 million deficit? Not only do we need to worry about budgeting it for this year, but we need to worry about budgeting for all the other years in the future. We need a multifaceted approach. We could take the 1.5 million out of the reserve. That is the bottom line. We keep 8.5 million, we know the categories. We will be protected in a crisis. However, that is just a one-time fix. The reserve will still accumulate money for the taxpayers, and the bond rating will be preserved. The question is, does the 1.5 million out of the reserve, by itself, solve the 1.5 million deficit that we have. What is it going to turn into in the future? We need to make our budgetary cuts. We have three examples. I think everybody is going to say how do you rate some category more important than another category because everybody comes to the table, and they want their own category not to be affected. If we take 3%, as an example. The library had \$250,000.00 last year. If you had them have a 3% cut, then their budget would be \$242,500.00. Public works had \$1,516,813.00. If we take 3% from them, it's \$45,504.00 that they need to come up with. The same with the police department. The police department's budget was \$4,419,155.00. Three percent for them is \$132,000.00. So, if we are going to ask one person to give up something, then everybody should be giving up the same amount. Everybody's budget is different in the amount that they have. Each department has to have skin in this game. That is another way that it will help us balance the budget.

If you raise the taxes of the Jefferson Hills residents, as stated in the agenda. Those motions did fail. We have the general category, the fire category, and the ambulance category. Does this tax increase by itself, solve the \$1.5 million deficit? One of our major concerns is our committed cost on contracts. We have a service-oriented budget. Eighty percent of our budget pays for service-oriented people. Whether they are clerks, whether they are park laborers, whether they are the police. So, 80% of that has to come from that budget. We only have about 20% left. We have contracts that are coming up. We have a contract for the police in 2025, that we need to take into consideration. We have the laborers in 2026. We did stagger these, so we don't get them all at one time. We have the clerks coming in in 2027. Probably 90% of these people will be sitting at the max rate. It might be more than 80%, at that point in time. We have to consider how long are these people going to sit at the max rate? They might be there for 20 years. All of this information goes into figuring out how the budget is going to be solved. One of the major things that we have been successful in completing sometime this year, is we need to focus on getting grant money. It is free money. You will see on the agenda, and I have to commend Mr. Glister for getting it in by November 30th, a grant for the playground equipment. This is a top priority. You have to find free money. You have to go out there for these projects, and the renovation, and equipment. It needs to be the responsibility of the people that are sitting in those positions. We know that we want to provide our Jefferson Hills residents with the best services and facilities that we can afford. That is the bottom line. A balanced budget needs multiple facets to be achieved.

Vice President Budd stated I wanted to touch on some points regarding our public safety departments, them being at the forefront of anything in the community. Without them, we could not have anything else. I spoke incorrectly in the minutes previously. I believe that the police budget cuts are more in the \$120,000.00 range, as opposed to what I previously stated. I have spoken regarding the demand on the police department previously. It is evident every month, in the very detailed report we all receive from the police chief. We receive updates on officer training, noteworthy events, progress on projects, and many statistics. One of the things that is a demand on the police department is a 17% increase in calls. Last year they were 6,000. This year it is up 17%. Year to date citations, 1,100; this year 1,688. It is 52% increase. Warnings are up 140%. There has been a slight increase in misdemeanor and felony arrests. Nothing has decreased considerably, and the year is not over. I cannot agree with the cut within the police department. Regarding the fire department, I understand this is a sensitive issue because of litigation, I cannot comment on specifics. In terms of the budget, there has been zero increase in the Borough's contribution to the fire department. Many other communities are taking lead from the shift crew program here at Jefferson, and paying higher wages, leading to the concern of firefighters leaving here. In 2022, they ran a total of 743 calls. Year to date, 2023, they are already at 822 calls, with 3 weeks left in the month. Regarding EMS, we have a 5-year contract with them, so their funds are not adjusted. However, it bears noting after speaking to their chief, they average about 170 to 180 calls per month. Over the past year that has been about a 10% to 15% increase in calls for them. Regarding public works, I consider them a part of this category. They often work hand in hand with police, fire, and EMS, in clearing up emergency issues. I have seen a decrease in the past couple of years, with their funds. I realize some of the projects that they are dealing with come out of different funds. Any cuts in the area of public works are still a strain on their manpower and day to day operations. We also receive a detailed report from them regarding road maintenance, sewage, engineering projects, winter weather maintenance, park maintenance, and the list goes on. They also respond to unplanned events such as storm clean up. I have spoken many times regarding the library. Now that it functions more as a community center than it ever has, as opposed to being known mainly as a lending institution. They have been able to increase demographics to many different areas. Last year, due to council passing the budget they did, they were able to hire a children's librarian, move the director into a specific senior services position, take on a partnership with the Borough

for the position of community relations coordinator. Further, with the teamwork of Councilman Lynch, the library is starting to work towards veteran services. Our contribution to the library directly affects their RAD funding. To illustrate some of their growing demand, there is a 53% increase in people visiting, a 94% increase of Wi-Fi minutes, 13% increase in computer use, 18% increase in children's programs, 36% increase in children's program attendance, and a 64% increase in adult program attendance. Their programs are reaching capacity of waiting lists before they are even advertised. For example, an upcoming program had room for 60 children, and they are in 100 on the waiting list. Taking away the increase to the library last year would be an obvious detriment to the community, and I fear could damage the partnership and collaboration between the library and the Borough that has been worked on over the past couple years, ultimately harming the community. Recreation goes hand in hand with the library in some respects. It continues to be the number one area for requests for improvement from residents. Summer rec had about 242 kids enrolled this past year, with about 32 still on the waiting list. That program continues to grow. The attendance combined from many of their events that they continue to have. For Community Day, Rocktoberfest, Fish Day, and Holiday in the Hills this past weekend, every year it grows, and grows, and grows. I think that there has to be some more creative problem-solving solutions. I do not necessarily want a tax increase, but we have to look at doing something with that on unreserve fund, in combination with something else. This Borough does not deserve these cuts to these services, to this level.

President Steffey stated I completely agree with you, not making any cuts to our services. We found out today that it has been exactly nine years since Jefferson Hills Borough has raised taxes. That is the Borough. Some of the comments we get, is I keep paying taxes and my kid has been out of school. That is the school tax. The school keeps raising taxes a lot. We understand that. In response to some of the public comments that were made tonight, we see these increases. We see the gas bill increases, and electric increases, but we see them here in the Borough as well. We understand that our residents are feeling that, but we also have to pay the bills here. We have been talking a little bit about tax increase and whether or not it is going to come sooner or later, depending on what happens with this reserve fund balance. I truly believe that Jefferson Hills should look into becoming a home rule charter. Some of my fellow council members were not in favor of that. A home rule charter is granted by the state constitution or the state statute. It allocates some autonomy for the local municipalities, for the local government. What I mean by autonomy is when we raise taxes, we feel that our senior residents here have paid their share. I have always felt that way. I do not want to see them keep getting increases in taxes. Under a home rule charter, you can freeze the senior residents' tax increase. There are so many different things that you can do under this home rule. I would like to see that become an option here in the near future. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, Solicitor Cromer, it does have to be put on a referendum on the ballot?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded correct, I can get you a timeline, and logistics, and everything that you would need to consider that.

President Steffey asked do you have any pros or cons, or anything that you could add, as far as a home rule charter. I do want to put it out there, while we are talking about the tax increase. I feel that there are other options, in order to protect our senior residents, as well as make some significant changes, or significant freezes under our own jurisdiction here if we are a home rule charter.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded I know there are advantages. I know there are numerous advantages. I represent at least one home rule community. I would have to take a look, but I am pretty sure there may be some advantages in regard to realty transfer taxes. So, yes, I think that there are definite advantages, and I am happy to help you assess.

President Steffey stated, getting back to this agenda item. This is discussion for completely rescinding the resolution. Would we like to see a number put in there for Monday's voting meeting?

Mr. Montgomery stated I would prefer 40%.

Vice President Budd stated I would be fine with 40%. That is what the Finance Director recommends.

Mr. Haberstock stated the last time the taxes were raised for the Borough was 2015 tax year. It was raised 1 mil to its current rate where it's been for the past nine budget years. In the 2015 general fund budget, our revenue was 9.3 million. Our expenses that year were 8.2 million. Contrast that with 2024's projected revenue of 11.5 million, and expenditures of 13.3. So, that is only a 24% increase in our revenue from 2015 versus 2024, but a 62% increase in our expenses. It is commendable that Council, for nine years, has not raised the taxes. They did that through some tough times, Covid, supply chain issues. The last three years alone have been inflation, you all see it. We all see it. Every time you go to the grocery store you see it. All those same factors are affecting the Borough as well. The price of a police vehicle is 25% more than three years ago. A public works truck at least 20% more. Gas, that is 70% than three years ago. The Borough has increased in size. There are more roads and sewers to maintain. There are more homes and communities to serve and protect. All these things created a larger workforce for the Borough. We are bigger than we were in 2015 as well. I wanted you all to have that information in mind.

President Steffey stated those numbers do bring you into reality, especially the 62% in expenses, when that rose, and comparing that to the revenue that we brought in. When we discuss maintaining our infrastructure that definitely is much more expensive than the revenue that we bring in off of residential taxes. It may sustain it for a little bit, but it certainly is not going to keep our head above water much longer.

Mr. Haberstock stated our taxes currently generate approximately \$5 million of our total revenue, the rest from other sources. Those other sources, we have no control over.

President Steffey stated we just wanted to paint a picture of a little bit of reality of maybe what is to come. We appreciate you all listening to us. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out. We would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. We will change that resolution to 40%.

28. Discussion to ratify Resolution No. 34-2023 authorizing application for Local Share Assessment (LSA) grant through the DCED for \$120,000.00

President Steffey stated we would like to really extend our gratitude and our thanks to Mr. Glister for completing this grant and getting it in truly, right before the deadline.

Mrs. Bucy stated I am in total support of obtaining grant money for the Jefferson Hills community. This grant application has been written to obtain updated playground equipment for Gill Hall Park, 885 Park, and Beedle Park. Steadfast efforts should be displayed by a borough manager, to obtain free money for our community. I applaud acting manager, Mike Glister, in his efforts to complete this LSA grant application before the November 30, 2023, deadline. I began the request of replacing unacceptable playground equipment in September of 2023. It was presented to JH council members and to representative Andrew Kuzma for obtaining grant money from the state and/or the county. JH Council

Members Melissa Steffey, Hilary Budd, and I worked with acting Borough Manager Mike Glister, and Public Works Director Mike Volpe, to evaluate the three parks to determine specific playground equipment and improvements in these parks. The grant application was completed successfully, and in a timely manner. We will wait to hear if the grant application was successfully granted. If we do not apply, we do not have any chance of getting anything. There are an awful lot of grants out there, and I really want to see them all explored. So, thank you, Mr. Volpe, and Mr. Glister, in helping us get that done.

29. Discussion to adopt Resolution No. 35-2023 amending the fee schedule of the Borough of Jefferson Hills for 2024

Mrs. Bucy asked if we pass this resolution, and an at will employee and/or a contract employee resigns, retires, or is terminated. Are we locked into these prices?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer asked on the fee resolution? We are on the fee resolution now.

Mrs. Bucy stated I am ahead one agenda item.

Mr. Montgomery stated the fees that are highlighted, they are the changed fees. Are these fees compared to other communities? I have heard we are low on fees.

President Steffey stated each department had given their input and information for those changes. These were compared to the other communities.

30. Discussion to adopt Resolution No. 36-2023 amending the salaries, compensation, and wages for Borough employees for the year 2024

Solicitor McPeak Cromer stated in response to Councilwoman Bucy's queries because it concerns certain personnel related questions and we are not adopting, we are simply discussing, I think we should probably address in executive session. Possibly tweak some language in the resolution.

Mrs. Bucy asked if we have somebody that has 20 years of experience, and that is their salary, and it is justified. But if somebody retires, or resigns, or whatever, we do not want to start them at that top salary. We do not know what they are capable of.

President Steffey stated this is just a generalization. We do not want to be locked into these salaries if we adopt this, and say one of our staff members leaves for another position somewhere else, and we interview and we find somebody that has less experience than the person that left, or vice versa. Are we locked into this specific salary for each individual?

Mr. Montgomery asked will your change the language or the numbers on this?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded I am just going to tweak some of the language.

31. Discussion to adopt Resolution No. 37-2023 appointing _____ as Acting Open Records Officer and _____ as Alternate Acting Open Records Officer of the Borough of Jefferson Hills pursuant to the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law

President Steffey stated this one came about last week, because our current right to know officer is not interested in doing it any longer. However, they changed their mind today, which is good. The only difference, and I do want to clarify this, to see if we need to make a different resolution. When we have general right to know requests that come to the Borough, and when we have police right to know requests, are they still under the umbrella of our right to know officer? Because this particular person who has been doing our right to know is no longer going to be the funnel for the police right to know. The police are still doing their own right to know, and then they are going to be sent to the Solicitor. The person that is on this resolution is not going to have any input on the police side. Do we need to change anything?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer stated ideally, she does not want to receive those. We will amend the resolution. Have the contact, and have the police right to know officer designated.

Mr. Montgomery asked is there an alternate?

President Steffey responded we did not have an alternate whenever we appointed Mrs. Horvat for this. They said it was totally fine to not have an alternate. Nobody is really jumping at the opportunity to be an alternate. It is a voluntary position. You cannot force anybody. Basically, it would come back to the Borough Manager.

32. Discussion to adopt Resolution 33-2023 approving the sale of the 2013 Ford Explorer (VIN# 1FM5K8AR5DVC35188) for \$3,500.00 to the best responsible bidder through the Perryopolis Auto Sales Auction

Mr. Haberstock asked does it have to be done in February? We had that discussion last month.

Mr. Montgomery stated you get better pricing in February.

Chief Dziezgowski stated this car was already sold in October. This is approval for that sale, and that price. The other two cars were put on hold until February.

President Steffey stated this is just approving what we have already been offered.

Mr. Montgomery stated this is ratifying the sale.

33. Motion to advertise the 2024 Borough of Jefferson Hills Budget

Vice President Budd moved to advertise the 2024 Borough of Jefferson Hills Budget, seconded by Mrs. Bucy, and carried unanimously.

President Steffey stated we should move forward in picking a special meeting date. If we are going to advertise the budget we should advertise the meeting date.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer stated it is nice to have it all in one advertisement. We are going to give the 10 days to review, and then have your special meeting, date, and time in there for the week between Christmas and New Year's, or whenever you choose.

President Steffey stated I know that we are missing members here, but we will put it out in an email. I would like to throw out the date of December 28th. I know sometimes the special meeting for this

budget adoption has been held during the day, I would like to propose to have this meeting in the evening. It is going to be quick. We can have public here to answer any questions. December 28th, Mrs. Harris, if you would like to put that in an email to all of Council and the Mayor, anybody that needs to be in attendance. We will make sure that that date works for everybody. Let's say 6:00 p.m. please.

34. Discussion to distribute the Real Estate Ambulance Tax of \$69,000.00 to Southeast Regional Emergency Medical Services (SEREMS)

35. Discussion to distribute the balance of \$36,000.00 to Southeast Regional Emergency Medical Services (SEREMS) for the annual ambulance services agreement

36. Discussion to distribute the 2023 Real Estate Fire Taxes in two, separate payments of \$40,000.00 to Floreffe Volunteer Fire Company and to 885 Volunteer Fire Company with remaining funds to be allocated to the Jefferson Fire Rescue (JFR) Truck savings account

37. Discussion to approve Application for Payment No. 4 and Final from Morgan Excavating, LP in the amount of \$28,269.56 for work completed on the 2023 Road Program subject to the receipt of the maintenance bond for 50% of the final contract amount for a duration of two-years and approval of the maintenance bond by the Borough Solicitor

38. Discussion to approve Quote No. 2023-637801r1 from Evoqua Water Technologies LLC to rent a VaporLink Hydrogen Sulfide Sensor for a one-year period in the amount of \$6,600.00

Mr. Montgomery asked was that the only price we got, or did we get other prices?

Mr. Glister responded this is sort of proprietary technology. There are not a lot of these types of sensors out there. We were working with Evoqua over the summer, on the initial study that we did between July and August. The data provided by that sensor was adequate. This is the same sensor. So, given the price, and for a whole year, this is what we came up with.

Vice President Budd stated I would also like to take a moment and commend engineer Glister, and engineer Minsterman. The engineers spent some time together with the WESA engineers going over some of the issues going on down there regarding H2S. At their last board meeting, I thought Mr. Glister did an outstanding job being present, and explaining what was going on. I really think this is going to be able to help keep us on the track to solving this issue.

President Steffey thanked Vice President Budd for her time involved in this as well.

39. Discussion to approve Work Authorization dated November 28, 2023, from Gateway Engineers, Inc. for miscellaneous Borough engineering and consulting services in 2024 in the amount not to exceed \$10,000.00

40. Discussion to approve Work Authorization dated November 28, 2023, from Gateway Engineers, Inc. for miscellaneous engineering and consulting services in 2024 related to the Clairton Sewershed in the amount not to exceed \$10,000.00

41. Discussion to approve Work Authorization dated November 28, 2023, from Gateway Engineers, Inc. for miscellaneous engineering and consulting services in 2024 related to the West Elizabeth Sewershed in the amount not to exceed \$10,000.00

42. Borough Resident/Taxpayer Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Chris Hess, 1505 Gill Hall Road, owner of Hess Landscaping, stated I have been there 34 years now. I have concerns with the Millstone development at the Matthews Bus garage. I am in a low-lying area, and I've done everything I can in the past to get the water under control, making provisions with my roads, my driveways, my trees. This past summer, though it's been kind of dry, we had a couple of rain events where we got just inundated with water. I've had some discussions with Mr. Glistner. We're going to meet there and look over some things. I just wanted to put on the record my concerns. I did talk to the developer. He said some of the ponds and things may not have been hooked up, but I don't know. I'm not good with engineering, and making sure that they are on track with everything. I can't afford any more water on that property.

Dianne Hess stated we spoke with Mr. Glistner yesterday, and he's on top of it. We're going to meet and everything. But like he said, we just wanted to go on record. That was his suggestion that we do that tonight.

President Steffey stated you sat through the longest agenda for you to go on record. Mr. Glistner updated me. You are going to have a site visit. He is always on top of helping the residents. We appreciate you coming tonight. He will definitely keep us updated on what the outcome is, and hopefully we can help

43. Reports

Fire Chief

The JHFR fire written report is on file in the administrative office.

EMS

Not Present

Engineer

The Engineering written report is on file in the administrative office.

Mrs. Bucy asked on the previous report for the Clairton Sewershed Consulting. It has here that the Gateway prepared and attached a work authorization to assist the Borough of Jefferson Hills with miscellaneous engineering and consulting services related to Clairton sanitary shed. It says after the meter is installed, we are asking for some form of reimbursement for the treatment of these flows from the Wall Plan that were not accounted for, prior to dedicated permanent billing meter. I just want to point this out to the audience; it is very hard to make a budget with an undefined amount. Was there any indication of an amount, at any point in time?

Mr. Glistler responded there has been some on and off discussions on this topic for a couple years now. In the past it was somewhere around \$100,000.00. They would rightfully be entitled to go back for as long as CMA has existed, and Wall Plan existed. We have not been paying for that sewage that they have been treating. They understand that there are limitations and so forth. We had some discussions back in 2018 or 2019. We have been aware of this for a while. The discussions stalled with some of the issues we were having with the litigations from the CMA. That is when I put all those discussions on hold to focus on when we are going to get our taps back. Then we need to figure out how we are going to move forward with phase 2. That is a good 3 or 4 years for us to get through all that. Now that phase 2 is finally underway, and that has all been resolved, CMA is now looking back and saying we need to go back and figure out what's going on with the Wall Plan. It is actually the Wall Plan, and a few houses on 885, as you head down towards Clairton. There are seven or eight houses down there as well. The one thing that CMA is working to do is to get a meter in place to stop the proverbial bleeding. They are trying to get that meter in place by the start of the year, so that in 2024, that flow is metered, and that flow is accounted for and billed.

We had a big leak in the interceptor, probably in 2017. That it took us a while to find, just cause of the remote location of the interceptor. What we were finding is that during rain events, during dry weather flow, there was no water getting into the interceptor. But once we got any rain event, the lake water would come up. It would fall into our interceptor, and it would run down to the treatment plant. Before the phase 1 upgrades were done, the flow coming in from the City of Clairton, which is a combined sewer system, and the flow coming in from the interceptor, which is a separate system, were going into the same wet well. They were permitted to overflow. This additional stream water that was getting metered, and we were being billed for it, it was not actually getting treated by the plant. It was just getting discharged. We did some rough calculations based on normal flow data. What we were seeing in the timeframe, until we were able to locate this break. It was around \$100,000.00 as well. The discussions, before they went cold in 2018, was they were looking for \$100,000.00. We had this extra flow that we paid for. Our argument is that it went right down into the river. We never had a firm answer on that. That is when things broke down. We are waiting on them to come back to us with a number. Mr. Minsterman and I had a conversation with them in September or August, to discuss getting the billing meter set up for 2024. Also, to start rekindling the conversation on what is CMA going to be looking at for all the flow that they received over the years that was not metered. The ball in their court, and we did not hear back from them. I think a good estimate is going to be somewhere in the \$150,000.00 range. That is your revenue, so that is accepted from the general fund discussions we were having earlier.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer stated when we talked about this at the engineering meeting. Regardless of what they request, does not mean that is what we are obligated to pay. It sounds like there is definitely room for negotiating, and the error was not ours. So, if it is \$150,000.00, that is not what we would agree to.

Mr. Montgomery asked I understand once the meters are established, we know when we would be charged. But is there any back charging or not? How is that determined to be?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded they are trying to figure it out. We have asked.

Consulting Engineer

Mr. Minsterman had nothing further to add to the Gateway Engineers' written report on file in the administrative office.

Finance Officer/Treasurer

Mr. Haberstock had nothing further to add to the written report on file in the administrative office.

Public Works Director

Mr. Volpe had nothing further to add to the written report on file in the administrative office.

Police Chief

The JHPD COPS written report is on file in the administrative office.

Chief Dziezgowski stated I have nothing to add to my written reported submitted. I just have one huge thank you to the James Jeffrey Insurance Agency, who purchased our traffic radar speed monitoring trailer. If you came to the Holiday in the Hills, you saw it stationed outside our police department. This is going to be a great addition to our speed enforcement and any DUI task force detail that we do within the Borough for signage and speed monitoring. It will help the JHPD well in its mission for traffic safety.

Mayor

Mayor McCaffrey thanked everyone who came out to our Holiday in the Hills event. It was a very successful beautiful day. A special thanks to the rec board, public works, Jefferson Hills police department, JHFR, Southeast Regional, our library staff, TJ band, TJ art students, and Caitlin Dinardo. Thank you again for all of your hard work to make this event possible. It truly takes a village, and we have a great one here at the Borough.

Acting Manager

Mr. Glister stated I will have my written report in the packets on Friday, for the Monday meeting. Other than that, I have nothing unless there are any questions.

Solicitor

Solicitor McPeak Cromer had nothing to add to the written report.

44. General Business

Mr. Montgomery gave the SHACOG report for two months. The police chiefs met in October and November. They have active shooter training on December 23rd, it will be two classes. Driver training will take place in November. Taser training is April of 2024. Firearms training is to be announced. The CIRT team had no callouts in October, and two callouts in November. Peters Township is buying the vests for the CIRT team. The fire chiefs met in both months, October, and November. Their focus is always on training, recruitment, and retention. That is what they talk about every month. The technical rescue team

had no callouts either month. Administrative committee met with the 12 communities present. The Joint Police Civil Service Test will be on May 14th, 2024. The physical agility will be in the morning, written exam in the afternoon. Rock salt prices will be coming out soon. The emergency services bid was opened on November 9th. That is for service for any sewer repairs, any emergencies that you pay the set price. The route 51 storm sewer study began October 30th. It is supposed to be done this year. Act 152, \$2 million was dedicated to the demolition. Communities received 4 out of the 7 grants applied for. We got none of them. CDBG, 47 is complete. That is that grant that started in July of 2021. CDBG 48 started in July of 2022. There is a 180-day extension. There are 5 projects complete. CDBG 49 starts in July of 2023. Six bids, two were delayed. CDBG 53, pre-applications were withdrawn. That is for July of 2024.

Mrs. Bucy reminded everybody that the Cloverleaf Ecumenical Food Bank held a distribution yesterday. That was on Tuesday, December 5th in the old St. Elizabeth High School. There will be another distribution before Christmas that will be held on Tuesday, December 19th, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

On Saturday, December 9th, it is projected to be a good weather day. I am planning on cleaning up Chamberlin Road. It has turned into a disaster within the last couple weeks. Starting at 9:30 a.m. if you would like to help in this cleanup, please meet me at the Jefferson United Presbyterian parking lot, off of Gill Hall Road. I have vests, gloves, and garbage bags for your use.

For the four demolitions that we have had on the list, we did send another letter with the help of acting Borough Manager Glistler, to Rich Fitzgerald in one last attempt before he left office, to move us up on the demolition list. For the four people that are still waiting for these homes to be demolished by them. That letter went out just recently, and we are hoping to at least get some kind of word about the demolition status of those four houses.

Mr. Montgomery asked is there any reconsideration on that because they said that we are not getting it.

Mrs. Bucy responded hopefully we can plead to the county as one last effort.

Mr. Montgomery stated I think that is admirable to try because there is money in that fund, more than there is for CDBG, they should be able to give it ample consideration.

Mrs. Bucy stated if you do not ask, you cannot get a yes.

Vice President Budd commended everybody for all the work they did for Holiday in the Hills this weekend. I thought it was a tremendous event. Very well organized. There were smiles on everybody's faces. Thank you for bringing that to the community. I also wanted to thank JHFR and JHPD for breakfast with Santa, particularly from JHFR, Ryan Stouffer, and from JHPD, Tara Revis. I know that they are both very instrumental in this. I am very grateful to this event happening in the community, between our emergency services.

President Steffey stated Ms. MoyerDinardo runs a lot of events for our public relations, here at the Borough. If you have not seen on our social media sites, she currently is doing our community resident of the month. We had a winner nominated and chosen last month. It was Mr. Kaufman, who works with our

Veterans Association. He has done a lot of work here in the community. So, a very well-chosen resident of the month. If there is anybody out there that you would like to nominate, as December's community resident of the month, we would be happy to hear from you. We have a link and a Google form for you to complete on our website. There are links on our social media pages. We would like to get a bunch of nominations. This is going to keep running month to month. It is a great way to show our gratitude to some of our residents who are out there helping our community. Also, we have a gingerbread photo contest going on until December 28th. If you have any gingerbread houses that you are doing, any traditions, take a few photos and you can send those into socialmedia@jeffersonhills.net. The residents will vote to choose the winner. The deadline is December 28th. This Friday the 8th will be the deadline for our toy drive that is run by JHFR and JHPD. Any unwrapped toys can be dropped off during borough work hours, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If anybody needs any assistance with a different time slot, feel free to contact somebody here at the Borough. You can call the main line, or you can get in touch with me, and I will be happy to meet up with you.

I would like to thank the Mayor for her wonderful Holiday in the Hills event. I know she worked hard on that, along with everybody else that was mentioned this evening, our staff, all of our public works, police, and fire. I wanted to thank the vendors, and mostly all the residents that came out to support it.

45. Adjournment

President Steffey adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Budd, seconded by Mrs. Bucy, and carried unanimously.

Michael Glister, PE
Acting Secretary/Borough Manager