

MINUTES CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP
NEW JERSEY

THIS IS A SPECIAL MEETING TO HOLD A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP HELD VIA AUDIO-VIDEO CONFERENCING ON TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2025, 7:02PM.

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmember Kerry J. Coley, East Ward (*Arrived at 7:43pm*)
Council Vice President Tency A. Eason, North Ward
Councilmember Quantavia L. Hilbert, West Ward (*Arrived at 7:15pm*)
Councilmember Weldon M. Montague, III, At-Large
Councilmember Clifford R. Ross, At-Large
Councilmember Jamie B. Summers-Johnson, South Ward
Councilmember Adrienne K. Wooten, At-Large (*Arrived at 7:03pm*)

Also Present: Joyce Lanier, City Clerk
Chris M. Hartwyk, Business Administrator
Laquana Best, Planning Director
Nile Clements, Chief Financial Officer
Marlin G. Townes, Legislative Research Officer
Blair Landolfi, Budget Consultant
Margarette Homere, City Clerk's Office
Trisha Scipio, City Clerk's Office
Derrick Brown, Fire Chief
Michael Dawson, Firefighter
Chris Bailey, 2025 CBAC Member
Marsha Escalliere, 2025 CBAC Member
Carl Fields, Jr., 2025 CBAC Member
Janicea Jones-Vance, 2025 CBAC Member
Shara Morrow, 2025 CBAC Member
Carol Perkins, 2025 CBAC Member
Charles H. Pryor, II, 2025 CBAC Member
Coram Rimes, 2025 CBAC Member
Jeffery L. Wingfield, 2025 CBAC Member
Veronica Scott

Absent: Tamara Robinson, Deputy City Clerk
Gracia R. Montilus, Esq., City Attorney

The City Clerk's Office announced a Moment of Silence.

The requirements of N.J.S.A. 10:4-9 et. seq., "Sunshine Law" has been met. A notice of this meeting was sent to the Record Transcript, published in The Star Ledger on April 25, 2025, posted on the City's Website (www.orangetwpnjcc.org) and the Council's Website (www.orangenj.gov) and filed in the Office of the City Clerk

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Calendar Year Budget 2025 - Budget Workshop

Chief Financial Officer Nile Clements opened the floor to the Departments for presentations

The discussion centered on the 2025 budget process, revealing a \$10 million budget gap attributed to decreased revenues and increased expenditures. Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk outlined the budget's origins, including a \$4 million decline in revenue from sources such as delinquent taxes and construction fees, alongside \$6 million in rising costs, including salaries and legal settlements. To mitigate this gap, the administration proposed cutting discretionary spending by \$2.3 million and workforce reductions totaling \$2.9 million.

The proposed budget is approximately \$89.8 million, reflecting a slight increase of less than 1%, with a \$2 million rise in the municipal tax levy. Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk noted that police and fire services account for 62% of the total budget.

Nile Clements, the CFO, presented the salary and wage requests for 2025, indicating a decrease due to workforce reductions and a request for \$6,000 in overtime, which Hartwyk emphasized is necessary for essential tasks. Councilmember Clifford R. Ross raised concerns about the overtime budget, suggesting a reduction to \$30,000, while Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk confirmed that any cuts would require departmental adjustments. The administrative services budget request remained consistent with the previous year, and discussions included inquiries about specific budget items, such as office supplies and fleet management costs, with Hartwyk clarifying the reasons for increases in certain areas.

The meeting also addressed the water utility's operating budget, which requests \$11,875,200, reflecting a \$1 million increase due to prior deficits and new contracts for lead service line replacement. Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk highlighted the challenges faced by the water utility, including regulatory requirements and the need for a PFAS treatment facility. Fire Chief Derrick Brown reported a rise in fire-related calls and emergency medical incidents, emphasizing the need for adequate staffing to meet NFPA standards. He also discussed efforts to reduce overtime costs and the necessity of reallocating funds for vehicle repairs to maintain safety compliance.

Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk outlined the challenges faced in the 2025 budget process, including a \$10 million budget gap stemming from a \$4 million decrease in revenues and \$6 million in increased expenditures. Key actions taken included cutting discretionary spending, workforce reductions, and restructuring debt. The proposed budget totals approximately \$89.8 million, with a \$2 million increase in the municipal tax levy.

CFO Nile Clements noted a decrease due to a RIF and a \$6,000 overtime request. Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk clarified that the overtime budget is essential for various departmental functions, despite a freeze on overtime usage this year. Councilmember Clifford R. Ross questioned the necessity of the overtime budget, suggesting potential cuts.

The budget for administrative services was discussed, with Nile Clements, CFO, noting a request of \$1,018,500, unchanged from the previous year. Council Vice President Tency A. Eason questioned the allocation for office supplies, leading to clarification from Chris M. Hartwyk, Business Administrator, about bulk purchasing. Councilman Weldon M. Montague III also sought clarification on charges related to Comcast, which were identified as contributing to an increase in costs.

Business Administrator Chris M. Hartwyk detailed the current vehicle fleet, noting a total of about 140 vehicles, with 110 leased and a reduction of 25 leased vehicles expected. Councilman Clifford R. Ross asked about the auction of 49 owned vehicles and the revenue generated from it, which Hartwyk confirmed would be classified as unanticipated miscellaneous revenue. Councilwoman Quantavia Hilbert followed up on the future purchasing plans for vehicles, emphasizing the need for capital purchases for larger trucks.

Nile Clements, CFO, indicated that a budget line item must be increased by \$6,000 to fulfill a contractual obligation after the council's resolution set the amount at \$61,200. Council Vice President Tency A. Eason inquired about the tracking of affirmative action compliance on development sites, to which Chris M. Hartwyk, Business Administrator, confirmed that compliance reports are reviewed. Additionally, discussions included the Mayor's salary request and the Municipal Alcohol Beverage Control Board's budget.

Councilman Clifford R. Ross questioned the need for the \$5,100 budget for employee training, citing a lack of training opportunities in the past. Council Vice President Tency A. Eason proposed a budget cut to \$3,000, arguing that this amount would suffice for the training needs of the three board members. Business Administrator Chris M. Hartwyk confirmed that mandatory training is required for new board appointees.

Nile Clements, CFO, outlined the public defender's salary request and the water utility's operating budget, which includes a \$1 million increase from the previous year. Chris M. Hartwyk, Business Administrator, explained the reasons for the increase, including new contracts for lead service line replacement. Councilwoman Quantavia Hilbert inquired about overtime expenses related to emergency responses.

Business Administrator Chris M. Hartwyk addressed the difficulties the water utility is experiencing due to regulatory pressures, including the funding for a PFAS treatment facility and the requirement to replace lead service lines by 2031. He also mentioned ongoing damage to dams during storms, which necessitates constant maintenance and repair efforts. CFO Nile Clements supported this discussion by prompting further inquiries.

Fire Chief Derrick Brown provided a detailed presentation on the Orange Fire Department's operations, emphasizing its commitment to public safety and community outreach. He reported an increase in fire-related calls and outlined staffing challenges, noting that current levels do not meet NFPA standards. The Chief also discussed the department's efforts to reduce overtime costs and manage vehicle repairs effectively.

Business Administrator Chris M. Hartwyk will:

- Provide a breakdown of the school budget in the final presentation if the council requests it.
- Evaluate the overtime budget line and consider a reduction to \$30,000 as suggested by Council Vice President Tency A. Eason.
- Increase the grant writer's budget line item to \$61,200 to meet the contractual obligation.
- Provide copies of affirmative action compliance reports to the council.
- Prepare a report on the water utility's operational challenges and regulatory requirements for the next meeting.

ADMINISTRATION | MAYOR | WATER

Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk shared the power point and discussed the introduced Budget. Deputy Business Administrator Laquana T. Best was present.

The 2025 Budget Process

- 10 Million Budget Gap
 - \$4 Million Decrease in Revenues
 - Delinquent Taxes - \$1.3 Million
 - Interfund - \$1.6 Million
 - Construction Code Fees - \$800,000
 - \$6 Million Increase in Expenditures
 - Salary & Wages - \$1.7 Million
 - Other Expenses - \$2.7 Million (Departmental Requests, Refuse Removal, etc.)
 - Pension Increase - \$1.0 Million
 - Legal Settlements - \$400,000

Administration Action Plan

- Cut \$2.3 Million in Discretionary OE Spending (flat-funding)
- Reduction in Workforce (RIF) / Furlough - \$2.9 Million
- Restructuring of Water & Sewer Debt - \$2.0 Million
- Sale of Municipal Property - \$600,000

2025 Introduced Budget – City Council

- Total 2025 Spending Plan - \$89.8 Million
 - Increase of \$625,861 (Less than 1% increase)
- 2025 Municipal Tax Levy - \$67.0 Million
 - \$2 Million Increase in the Municipal Tax Levy (3%)
- No Appropriation Cap Waiver Application Required

2025 Introduced Budget

- Salary & Wages including Benefits 59%
- Pension Deferred Charges & RUCT 19%
- Operating Expenditures 16%
- Debt Service & Capital Improvement Fund 6%

2025 Introduced Budget by Department

- Total Department Expenses (including salaries & wages)
 - Police Department 40%
 - Fire Department 22%
 - Public Works 9%
 - Mayor | Administration 7%
 - Community Service 5%
 - Law Department 4%
 - Planning Development 3%
 - Municipal Court 3%
 - Finance 3%
 - Library 2%
 - City Council 1%
 - City Clerk 1%

Total Expenses \$3,130,620

- Salaries 44%
- Fleet Management 21%
- Citywide Expenses (Supplies, Cable/Internet, Copiers, Services, etc.) 21%
- Administration OE (Computer Services, Cloud Housing, HR Software, etc.) 12%
- Grant Writer 2%

Total Expenses \$16,350,000

- Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission 23%
- Woodard & Curran 20%
- Interconnect Agreements 18%
- Capital Outlay 16%
- Debt Service & Deferred Charges 15%
- Other OE (Professional Services, Traffic Control, Gas & Electric, etc.) 8%

CBAC

Carl Fields, Jr. was the representative for CBAC and began his inquiries. He asked the actual number of jobs lost from RIF – He asked for clarification on RIF. Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk spoke to the RIF.

Chris M. Hartwyk focused his closing remarks on the Water.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Derrick E. Brown, Fire Chief

Michael, Firefighter | IT & Procurement

Mission Statement

As first responders to fires, public safety and medical emergencies, the Orange Fire Department protects the lives and property of the City of Orange Township residents, stakeholders, and visitors. The department prides itself on the advancement of public safety through our fire prevention, community outreach and educational programs. The delivery of these crucial services enables the OFD to maintain the safety of the City of Orange Township and Office of Emergency Management efforts.

Vision Statement

It is the vision of The City of Orange Fire Department to provide professional service to its residents in a fashion that is unparalleled in public service that exceeds expectations. To be the benchmark by which all service delivery agencies measure themselves and their progress. We shall accomplish this by continuously investing in our development, creating meaningful partnerships and evaluating our impact within our community through cost effective programs and a pro-active approach.

The Orange Fire Department is operated as a unified command organization that is structured as a paramilitary organization that has a chain of Command system.

Chief 1

Firefighters 66

Deputy Chief 5

Admin 10

Captain 15

Staffing

The Orange Township Fire Department uses full-time paid personnel consisting of 86 uniformed personnel and 3 civilians:

- New development presents greater challenges for fire suppression.
- Changes within NJ DFS now impacts annual fire in-service inspections. In addition, new developments subsequently increases the amount of annual life-hazard inspections performed.
- While staffing levels have increased, they still do not meet the NFPA 1710 standards for structural firefighting: Low Hazard = 17 FF Medium Hazard = 28 FF High Hazard = 43 FF
- The overall objective is to ensure adequate staffing levels among all positions

In 2024, the OFD had **3,026 fire related calls** (182 of which were confirmed fires) and assisted with the over 6,000 **emergency medical incidents**.

- 2025 to date – 1038 fire related calls (72 confirmed fires) and 326 First Responder calls.

Operations

Structure fires have remained consistent, what has come more prevalent is the increase in first responder and total incident calls. The chart below shows the progression for the years 2022-2024. Two Fire Stations:

- Fire Headquarters 419 Central Avenue
- Washington St. Station (Closed since May 2017) 257 Washington St. (Fund new firehouse)

Overtime Report

In 2022, there was a rise in overtime due to staffing and recalling of members for high hazard incidents. Due to the hiring of new firefighters and promotions, the three year statistical Chart shows the cost savings of up to 54%.

Vehicle Repair & Maintenance

Apparatus Maintenance Agreement increased from \$50k in 2022, \$65k in 2023, emergency \$161k in 2024, and \$90k in 2025

- 2024 CY spend is \$103,052
- Approximately (172) individual repairs
 - These figures are based on individual line items per work order.
 - Apparatus age > 5y
 - Engine 2 (2015): 27
 - Ladder 1 (2015): 68
 - Apparatus age < 5y
 - Engine 3 (2021): 30
 - Engine 4 (2021): 10
 - Squad 1 (2021): 37

Fire Prevention and Inspection

Fire Code Enforcement has been consistent for the last 3 years, but 80% of the certified inspectors retired. Revenue gains have shown some increase over the last 2 years.

Grants

- FEMA Grants funding halted for a variety of programs, including those that directly fund fire departments and emergency preparedness.
- Outgoing awarded grants are frozen (2021 – 2024)
- FEMA Assistance to FF
- FEMA Fire Prevention
- FEMA SAFER
- Firefighter Grants

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Community Relations
- Emergency Response

Weaknesses

- Facilities
- Young Department

Opportunities

- Improvement on Staffing
- Training

Threats

- Attrition

All recommendation request is to ensure that the OFD will provide professional and the most efficient service to the residents and visitors of The City of Orange Township. It is my sworn duty as the Fire Chief and the 85 members of the Orange Fire Department to promote the vision of: Mayor Dwayne D. Warren Esq. and the Orange Municipal Council Continuing to Move Orange Forward.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember Quantavia L. Hilbert and seconded by Council President Adrienne K. Wooten

Motion Adopted

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm.

Approved: May 20, 2025



 Joyce L. Danier
 City Clerk



 Adrienne K. Wooten
 Council President