

Mayor
David A. Patriarca



Business Administrator
Dennis Gonzalez

April 17, 2019

CY2019 BUDGET MESSAGE

To the Residents of Pemberton Township and Honorable Members of the Township Council:

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the privilege of serving as your Mayor for another four (4) year term. I am also thankful that our residents have elected an effective and cooperative Township Council that shares our vision of the future for our Township. I begin this term as I have every previous term, by assuring you that our Administration and our Township Council will continue together to work hard for our residents, evaluate our present obligations, and make choices while looking towards tomorrow. It is important that we include the future in our decision making process and the impact these decisions will have ten and twenty years from now.

The message that I share with you today is that we have accomplished much during CY2018, and together – administration, council, employees, and volunteers – we will not rest on our laurels, but rather, we will direct our collective efforts and energies to continue to improve the quality of services that we provide to you.

As I say every year, we have a very talented and dedicated workforce for which we are most grateful. Thank you to all of our employees. Thank you to all of our volunteers. Without your commitment and dedication to our community none of what we do would be possible.

The CY2019 budget that I propose is a spending plan based on requests from our residents, completion of current projects, planned future improvements, an aggressive streets reconstruction schedule, and redevelopment. We will continue our practice of managing the budget throughout the year as unforeseen events and opportunities emerge.

The current and future needs and desires of our residents, and the financial impact that fulfilling these requests will have on taxpayers, always requires a balancing act and priorities, based on our community's needs, will continue to be included in our decision making.

The Township's financial outlook in CY2019 and beyond is excellent. There will be no reduction in services or efficiencies. The budget which I have presented to Council for adoption reflects the fiscal efficiencies and operational progress that we have nurtured throughout the past several years based on the requests from our residents.

There are always inevitable challenges. But, I am confident that together, we will face every unanticipated challenge with the attitude that we will find solutions. I am pleased to report that the Pemberton Township Tax Rate is the third lowest in Burlington County. I am even more pleased to report that we have been able to maintain a low tax rate while increasing public services. We must continue to manage our tax dollars responsibly to ensure that Pemberton Township remains not only one of the more affordable, but also enjoyable, places to live in New Jersey.

In my message last year, I acknowledged our highly successful road paving program, and further listed the many accomplishments of our Department of Public Works. I reported to you that “we installed road drainage systems and repaired thousands of potholes. We constructed parks. We remodeled and rehabilitated Township buildings. We demolished unsightly structures. We installed new water mains, water service lines, new water meters, fire hydrants and replaced miles of older iron water lines with new plastic lines. We repaired and maintained dozens of Township vehicles and equipment.” In CY2018, we did all of that, and much more.

We demolished the unsightly former Acme at the Browns Mills Shopping Center and the dilapidated former Presidential Lakes Fire Building. And, the new fire station and new recreational center in Presidential Lakes will be a reality by May 2019. We have started to drill new public water supply wells, and to plan the construction of a new water storage tank along with the installation of a new water main on the North side of the township which will provide better service to our residents, and more opportunities to our community. We have purchased the Deborah Hospital water system to enhance our public water supply system in Browns Mills. We continue to invest in our infrastructure, especially our utilities. We are mindful that failing to do so will have a negative impact on the future of our community.

The 2019 Budget which we have presented to Council continues to support the Department of Recreation and Senior Services, and we will continue to evaluate the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities in the Township. We will continue planning to enhance programs, and collaborate with not-for-profit entities to provide valued and much needed services to our residents.

One challenge that does not go away is the need for more aggressive code enforcement. What our Township looks like matters to each and every one of us. We now have three full-time Code Enforcement Officers as well as a part-time Code Enforcement Officer who also serves as the Township’s Construction official and Building Subcode Official. This function is of critical importance, and will require much effort to make the improvements we all want. This is not to question the efforts of our Code Enforcement Officers but to acknowledge that there are times where we are constrained by legal notice requirements, and that there is also room for improvement to address the concerns of our residents.

In CY2018, the Township realized a surplus of nearly \$2.75 Million Dollars. Again, I extend my thanks to the Township Council, and our operational and management personnel for their contributions to the financial health of the Township of Pemberton. It is through their efforts, along with Administration’s guidance that we are able to accomplish this.

Administration’s CY2019 budget proposal was introduced by the Pemberton Township Council on April 3, 2019.

I know I say this to you every year, but it is worth repeating. When we implement every adopted budget, we continue to evaluate and improve operations. We do not spend tax dollars because there is money in the budget. We spend tax dollars only when there is a need to provide services and meet our obligations to our residents.

Even after the Township Council adopts the annual budget, all Department Directors and members of my Administration are charged with evaluating and reevaluating budgeted expenses in an effort to save money throughout the year. Adjustments are always made which reflect a responsible approach to spending decisions.

The stabilization of surplus from year to year is an example of good spending decisions, and is a factor that demonstrates the Township's fiscal health. In CY2018, we spent \$883,930.74 less than the final CY2018 budget through the substantial efforts of Administration and our Department Directors. Most of these unspent funds can be attributed to salaries which must be included in the spending plan but remain unspent due to retirements and payments to employees as part of their salaries from workers compensation insurance. The remaining unspent funds is a direct result of department spending oversight by our department heads and the Department of Administration. The unspent funds are then carried forward as surplus for CY2020.

The CY2019 budget that I have proposed and which the Township Council has introduced is a carefully crafted spending plan and will be thoughtfully implemented throughout the year. The very modest tax increase of less than one-half of one penny to meet our financial obligations, ensures public safety, provides recreational opportunities, includes care for our senior citizens, continues to support our successful road reconstruction program, and maintains our parks.

I pledge for CY2019, as I have every year I have been Mayor, my administration will endeavor to continue to be fiscally responsible and to maintain municipal services to the greatest extent possible within the CY2019 budget adopted by the Pemberton Township Council.

A. CY2018 vs. CY2019

The proposed CY2019 budget is \$24,493,899.54, a reduction of \$388,999.08 from the final CY2018 budget of \$24,882,989.62.

The Fund Balance (surplus) as of December 31, 2018 was \$2,718,516.47 of which we propose \$1,710,000.00 be used in the adopted CY2019. The remaining \$1,008,516.47 will provide the safety net that good fiscal planning requires.

This administration strives to be thoughtful and prudent in the preparation and implementation of the CY2019 spending plan. The anticipated revenues and expenditures not only will provide the necessary services for which we are responsible to our residents but the plan will produce a consistent and sustainable annual Fund Balance to protect the Township against unanticipated expenses, and the possibility of significant spikes in tax rates in the future. We continue to achieve the consistency that we need for long term planning and tax stabilization.

B. Municipal Tax Rate

If the Township Council adopts the CY2019 budget that I propose, the municipal portion of the tax rate will increase by slightly less than 1/2 of a penny (0.45 cents), which would result in an increase of approximately \$7.06 of taxes in CY2019 for each \$163,978.20 of assessed valuation, which amount is the average residential property assessment in Pemberton Township.

The proposed CY 2019 budget is intended to continue to provide the quantity and quality of municipal services in our community while utilizing recurring revenues to stabilize taxes over the next five (5) years. I would like to thank our Township staff for their input and recommendations and acknowledge their dedication and commitment in working responsibly with administration to follow the spending plan and to protect the interests of our residents.

Sincerely,

David A. Patriarca, Mayor