

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, January 11, 2024 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners BRODSKY, ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, LANEY-MARTIN, BROWNE, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, CARSWELL, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioner BOWMAN

Also Present: Township Manager Manfredi
Assistant Legal Counsel Gallagher

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Hecker announced that Item BOC-08-011124 has been removed from the agenda and will be considered at a future date.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Joe Rooney, resident, expressed concern about the amount of speaking time on agenda items. He requested that any openings on the Boards, Commissions, Committees and Councils to be announced at the Board of Commissioners meetings each month as well as a police report provided. Also, he asked for the status of the Economic Development Corporation.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about reducing the number of members on the Planning Commission; also, that the traffic signal improvements were not discussed in committee prior to being approved.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve Items a. – c. as listed under Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of December 14, 2023.

To reject the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary Phase 2 Project Bids received in the amount of \$234,423.60, \$249,150.00, and \$296,992.50.

Ratify Melillo Consulting's Abington Township's IT Infrastructure Data Center Upgrade Project Change Order #1 resulting from a system failure and required mitigation work.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-03-011124:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to award the traffic signal improvements bid to Lenni Electric Corporation, Inc. in the amount of \$251,246.34 for the 2019 Green Light Go intersection improvement projects and authorize the Township Manager to execute the contract.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-04-011124:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Resolution No. 24-004 authorizing, empowering, and directing the proper officials of the Board of Commissioners to execute an agreement with Berkheimer whereunder Berkheimer is retained as the exclusive Tax Officer for the collection, administration, receipt and enforcement of the provisions of the respective tax enactment of the Board of Commissioners levying and assessing the Local Services Tax for the term herein defined, together with such extensions as may be agreed upon, said tax enactment having been adopted under and pursuant to the authority of the Pennsylvania Local Tax Enabling Act (Act 511, P.L. 1257); and approving and adopting the rules and regulations prepared by Berkheimer to administer and enforce the Local Services Tax.

Mr. Blumenthal explained that administration and processing in the Tax Office has become overwhelming as staff has been inundated with new applications as well as new clients requiring additional correspondence. It would be beneficial and a savings for the Township and taxpayers to have Berkheimer collect the Local Services Tax in which they do so for many other municipalities.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Browne questioned whether an analysis could be done to determine the amount of savings at the end of the year.

Manager Manfredi replied yes, that can be done.

Commissioner Winegrad asked who should residents send their questions to?

Mr. Blumenthal replied Berkheimer.

Manager Manfredi added that taxpayers will be advised who to contact and the number to do so.

Commissioner Schreiber clarified that it is the employer who pays the LST to Berkheimer and not the citizens. Is that correct?

Mr. Blumenthal replied yes. Berkheimer will be collecting the LST from any employer who employs a resident of Abington Township, and staff from his office will certainly help residents with any questions.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-05-011124:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to appoint members to the various Boards, Commissions, Committees and Councils as included in Exhibit "A."

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-06-011124:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to approve a settlement regarding the appeal of the Zoning Hearing Board decision regarding 974 Leopard Road and authorize the Solicitor to execute the Stipulation of Settlement and take all necessary steps to resolve the appeal.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-07-011124:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Resolution No. 24-006 designating Fulton Bank as the depository for Abington Township funds.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad asked for further explanation on this item.

Manager Manfredi explained that the Township used Republic Bank to deposit its funds, and after review of their services, it was determined to send out RFPs to various other financial institutions. 15 RFPs were sent out, four responded, two declined, and nine never responded. After thorough review of the proposals, it is recommended the Board consider designating Fulton Bank as the Township's depository for its funds.

Ms. Jeannette Hermann, Finance Director, added that some of the criteria reviewed were interest rates, banking features, branch location, fees, security features as well as consultative services as we want to make the process for remote deposits more efficient.

Commissioner Winegrad asked will there be any issue switching over to the new financial institution and would it take effect immediately?

Ms. Hermann replied the staff of the Finance Office have gone through bank changes previously so we are familiar with the process, and it will take effect approximately 30-60 days from now.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Item FC-01-011124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the November 2023 expenditures in the amount of \$2,389,267.68 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,183,033.57 and authorize the proper officials to sign and approve invoices and supporting documentation in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of February 2024.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 14-0. Commissioner Bowman was absent during roll call.

Item FC-02-011124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Brodsky to adopt Resolution No. 24-005 authorizing the Finance Director and his/her designate to invest Township funds in any and all such financial institutions as permitted by First Class Township Code.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item FC-03-011124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to adopt Resolution No. 24-007 authorizing the disposition of certain Finance Office records as set forth in Exhibit "A."

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern about Raymour & Flanigan's parking lot being surrounded by blight and no actions have been taken to force them to make repairs. Another blighted area is the Edgehill Apartments with yards of demolished curbside, and there are two broken benches in front of Zips Cleaners that should be replaced.

Joe Rooney, resident, expressed concern that there should be a full understanding of the Local Services Tax before it is approved. Also, the ongoing theft crimes are troublesome, so we need to get rid of the "bad" ordinances and enforce "good" ordinances.

Karen Milovcich, resident, expressed concern about transparency of financial statements and that taxes have been increased by 50% in the past five years. Also, she was concerned about blight, crime, trash, and shopping carts at the mall across the street.

Ross Abel, resident, expressed concern about the roads in the Township as well as the roads across the state becoming “deadlier” for pedestrians and bicyclists. He strongly advocated for the Township to take significant firm action to pursue pedestrian and bike infrastructure, traffic calming, and automated enforcement making the streets safer for everyone. He would like the Bicycle Master Plan to include physically protected lanes for cyclists; green space near Noble; and a dedicated Parks, Recreation and Open Space Committee who would support many of the ideas from the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the speaking rules; also, about the residents of the 100 York Apartments.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary

The following resolutions were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on January 11, 2024:

Resolution No. 24-004

Resolution No. 24-005

Resolution No. 24-006

Resolution No. 24-007