

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

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

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

Also Present: Township Manager Manfredi
Township Solicitor Clarke

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Hecker announced that he regrets not being physically present this evening as he is attending to a family matter. Also, former Ward 14 Commissioner Dee McGrath passed away on June 25th at the age of 86, and we send our condolences to her family.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern that one of her petitions was not described in the minutes and they do not match the recording, and her petitions were refused. She was also concerned about Covid money not being put towards maintenance or resources and high rent keeping people poor. Home ownership promotes financial stability for all.

Karen Milovcich, resident, said regarding the massage therapy agenda item, the Flamingo Spa located at 718 Huntingdon Pike is open 7-days a week and google reviews indicate the type of services offered there. They are not licensed providers, and she does not know why they are still in business. It is also a site for human trafficking that needs to be shutdown.

Joe Rooney, resident, thanked the Greater Glenside Patriotic Association for putting on a great 4th of July parade and fireworks show. He also thanked the Police Department, Public Works Department, Cheltenham Police Department as well as Mr. Manfredi for their hard work.

Also, he expressed concern about the fine Abington Township will be paying to the environmental protection agency for failing to do their paperwork. The Greater Glenside Patriotic Association worked all year to raise \$70,000 and the Township gets a bill for more than \$35,000 for their lack of administrative paperwork, and that could have paid for half of GGPA's fee.

Joe O'Brien, resident, questioned whether petitions are being accepted by the public.

President Hecker replied yes, and we are in receipt of the petitions submitted by Ms. Kubel.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that the massage parlor is a human trafficking event that was not closed down. Also, she was concerned about the waivers for the school district and about not having line items for those funds.

Mike Tobin, resident, read the googled description for the Flamingo Spa into the record. Also, what is the process for citizens to have their concerns/issues reviewed by the Board? Is it only through petitions or is there another way?

President Hecker suggested that Mr. Tobin work with his ward Commissioner on any particular concern or issue to be brought forward.

Mr. Tobin said he would like there to be a question-and-answer period during a meeting with citizens and Commissioners on matters such as the status of the EDC, etc.

President Hecker replied we can find ways to answer any questions. Regarding the EDC, they had their organizational meeting earlier this summer and elected a Chair and a Vice Chair, and that is the extent of their activity to-date. There is also opportunity for public comment at their meetings.

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 June 13, 2024.

To adopt Resolution No. 24-026 for a Pennsylvania Commonwealth Financing Authority's Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant application in the amount of \$2.5 million and committing \$110,065 in FY 2025 budget funds for Phase 5 of the Abington Jenkintown Connection Project.

To appoint Robin Eisman to the Shade Tree Commission for a term ending 12/31/2027 as included in Exhibit A and as recommended by the Shade Tree Commission.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-03-071124:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to authorize advertisement of an ordinance amending the Tow fees.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Item FC-01-071124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Brodsky to adopt Resolution No. 24-027 Fire Inspection and Permit Fee Schedule.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item FC-02-071124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Resolution No. 24-028 establishing a fee schedule for licenses for alternative and massage therapy.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item FC-03-071124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to authorize \$299,206.30 to be expensed from Refuse Fund Balance for the purchase of a Tri-Axle Container Lift Truck.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item FC-04-071124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize \$34,100 to be expensed from Refuse Fund Balance for the payment of a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Civil Penalty.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Laney-Martin clarified that procedures have been put in place so something like this will not happen again. Is that correct?

Manager Manfredi replied yes, a lot of work has been done to remediate the errors made. He and Mr. Jones, the Director of Public Works, have addressed this and we are confident that all measures now in place will do as much as possible to prevent any human error.

Commissioner Laney-Martin continued that during her time as Commissioner and meeting with all the directors within the administration, she knows everyone strives to do their best, and although we make mistakes, sometimes they come with big dollar figure consequences. And she appreciates that the penalty amount was brought down as much as possible, and measures are now in place so this will not happen again as we do take our obligation to be fiscally responsible seriously.

Manager Manfredi commended staff from the Public Works Department/Refuse Division who were honest about what happened so we could make the correction, and they do a tremendous job every day. Also, there was no environmental harm done.

Solicitor Clarke said this was related to a former employee not filing timely reports, and in some instances, not filing reports at all. It was discovered by DEP, and in short order, we showed them what procedures will be put in place as a failsafe so this will not happen again. DEP was happy that the Township voluntarily established these protocols and agreed to reduce the fine. There were never any environmental violations, it was for paperwork and permit issues that the Township is being fined for.

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item FC-05-071124:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to approve the May 2024 expenditures in the amount of \$5,816,640.13 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$3,433,831.42 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 August 2024.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 13-0. Commissioners Rothman and Browne were absent during roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adele Kubel, resident, presented a petition for the Roslyn Library. She expressed concern about blight on Old York Road as it continues to be trashed by commercial businesses and apartment owners. And corporations and speculators are not held accountable for blight at Raymour & Flanigan. Also, there is trash in the garages owned by Abington Hospital and their parking lots are poorly maintained, and the homes surrounding the hospital are neglected. And she asked about the new Roychester playground.

Joe Rooney, resident, commented that tax bills were received today, and wouldn't it be great if we could pay them later and then be able to negotiate a reduced fine? Also, he thanked the Police Department and congratulated those who were recently promoted and retired, and they should be recognized tonight.

Carol Fulforth, resident, commented she is hopeful that we can talk and get these issues addressed.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that massage parlors should not be getting a permit and a license to operate in the Township. And we need a place every month where we can meet with the Commissioners before the main meeting to ask questions about important matters.

Mr. Tobin commented that a lot of people want to be involved with the community, but they are frustrated as they feel they are not being heard and decisions should be made based on what the citizens want. These meetings should be a working session between the citizens and the Board.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary

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

Resolution No. 24-026

Resolution No. 24-027

Resolution No. 24-028