

Introduction to the Citizens Service Request System:

Manager Manfredi said the Board of Commissioners have committed to communicating with its citizens and staff has been working in earnest to develop this new system providing a way for the community to reach out as well as to gather data to help make better business decisions.

Ms. Ashley McIlvaine introduced the new Citizens Service Request System that provides a better mechanism for residents to communicate service requests and issues to the Township. The new system establishes a uniform process across all departments for handling and managing the requests and providing a clear and consistent response as well as provide data that can be used to better inform management with decision-making and budget planning.

This new system is accessible and transparent engaging with the public for collection of nonemergency service requests by creating a ticketing system for Township departments that will improve a response increasing efficiency. It will also provide data analytics and reporting to inform management.

Requests can be made by phone, tablet, or computer by creating a log-in, as a guest, or anonymously, 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

The workflow deploys several ESRI products to accomplish the goals of the program and the primary products include ArcGIS Online, Workforce Application, and Collector Application.

There are three types of users: submitter, dispatcher, and field worker. Residents submit service requests, there is a notification email sent to staff and added to the workforce; dispatcher assigns request; field worker receives request in workforce application; field worker updates progress and request is addressed. Data is collected of each step of the workflow. Demonstration and video of how the system works was presented.

Next steps are to address Commissioners' feedback; continue internal testing across all departments; finalize promotional and informational materials such as website, flyers, social media package, newsletter information, and videos. Timeline for going live to the public is August 2022.

President Hecker questioned whether the Commissioners will be notified as part of the workflow that a complaint has been made through the system.

Ms. Ashley replied no, we mirrored our existing system, but it could be modified in the future.

President Hecker commented that he would like to be informed perhaps in a summary with some frequency, so that if it required intervention on the part of the Commissioners, we would have the ability to do so. He asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Schreiber asked if a resident does not have access to a computer, and they call in a request, will the person who answers input the information into the system.

Ms. McIlvaine replied yes, they will manually input the information when taking the call.

Commissioner Bole asked if a resident uses their name when making a request, would they receive an email notifying that the job has been completed.

Ms. McIlvaine replied that is something we are working on. As the system works now, they will receive notice that the request has been received, but they need to check back on the status.

Commissioner Bole questioned whether ESRI upgrades their system.

Ms. McIlvaine replied yes, the applications that we currently use are being upgraded and we have the flexibility to manage and update as we see fit.

Commissioner Schreiber questioned whether residents will be able to see all the information such as the dashboards, etc.

Ms. McIlvaine replied the goal is to provide each director with a dashboard that is unique to their interests and what they would like to see. On the public facing map, residents would be able to see statistics through the website versus a dashboard.

Commissioner Spiegelman said this is a masterwork, and he cannot wait for it to be put online. He also would like to see some type of mechanism for Commissioners to be notified when a request is made. Also, if a request is made that does not pertain to the Township, does the system have a mechanism for handling that?

Ms. McIlvaine replied that the department heads are advised to follow protocol when communicating with residents informing them that the matter would be forwarded to the School District, for example, and does not pertain to the Township.

Commissioner DiPlacido thanked Ms. McIlvaine for a great presentation.

President Hecker announced that public comment will be taken on this presentation as part of the Board of Commissioners Working Session following tonight's Regular Board Meeting.

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, July 14, 2022, via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners BRODSKY, ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, THOMPSON, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, CARSWELL, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioner VAUGHN

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Township Solicitor CLARKE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Lora Lehmann, resident, asked about escrow posted by Toll Brothers and whether staff time is paid from that escrow. Also, she expressed concern about an “excess of consultants.”

Manager Manfredi replied escrow is initially posted by the applicant and replenished for professional services per the MPC. Also, staff time is not paid from escrow.

Steve Miller, 131 Egerton Avenue, said regarding the agenda item for an inclusive playground, he has a 10-year-old son who is a fulltime power wheelchair user, so this is an important topic for his family. After review of the proposal, he supports Engineering & Land Planning Associates, Inc. due to their focus on play, commitment to community engagement and their research-driven approach and out-of-the-box thinking, which makes them the most qualified.

Also, his family’s goal is a universal redesigned approach to play to eliminate barriers that make peer socialization and forming friendships harder for disabled kids, and we want to make sure that the Township stays focused on making sure this park is a place where disabled and able-bodied kids can play as equals.

Mike Tobin, resident, questioned whether funds are budgeted at the beginning of the year for consultants.

President Hecker replied yes.

Mr. Tobin questioned whether Toll Brothers proposal is the same as previously discussed.

Manager Manfredi replied substantively it is the same.

President Hecker added that the Board is not reviewing the substance of their proposal this evening. It is a procedural vote to send their proposal to the Planning Commission for review and then send it to the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee before coming back before the full Board for any consideration.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

To approve the minutes of the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of June 9, 2022.

To approve the 2022 CDBG Annual Action Plan and associated amendments and adopt Resolution No. 22-020.

To approve the installation of experimental “Stop” signs on Pine Avenue at Cricket Avenue and Washington Lane at Robinhood Road.

To approve advertisement of Traffic Safety Ordinance No. 2194 amending Chapter 156 – “Vehicles and Traffic,” Article II – “Traffic Regulations,” Section 14 – Stop Intersections” and Article III – “Parking Regulations,” Section 28 – “Special Purpose Parking Zones” to add a “Stop” sign on Joyce Road at Osbourne Avenue and a “Handicapped Parking” sign with Fine Placard on the west side of Hall Avenue, five (5) feet north of the driveway for 2901 Susquehanna Road.

To advertise Ordinance No. 2195, amending Chapter 154 of the Code of Ordinances of the Township of Abington, County of Montgomery, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; to establish general and specific standards relating to small wireless communications facilities in the rights-of-way and Ordinance No. 2196 amending Article XXVIII of the Zoning Ordinance of the Township of Abington, County of Montgomery, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; to establish general and specific standards relating to wireless communications facilities.

To ratify the change order for the Edge Hill Fire Company restroom renovation.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner DiPlacido referred to the minutes from the June 9, 2022 Regular Board Meeting and noted that he voted “no” to TABLE agenda Item BOC-01-060922. The record will reflect the vote to be 13-1. Commissioner DiPlacido opposed. (Commissioner Vaughn was absent during that vote.)

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to amend the MOTION to approve the items listed under Consent Agenda with the correction to the minutes from the June 9, 2022 Regular Board Meeting as stated by Commissioner DiPlacido.

MOTION as AMENDED – PASSED 14-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-06-071422:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to promote Sergeants Joseph Blei and Drew Kent to the rank of Probationary Lieutenant effective July 15, 2022 providing they successfully complete the remaining portions of the promotional process.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-07-071422:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Thompson to refer application of Toll Mid-Atlantic, L.P. Company, Inc. (Toll Brothers) for Zoning Text and Map Amendment to the Abington Township Planning Commission and Montgomery County Planning Commission. The Township Planning Commission shall issue its recommendation by August 24, 2022. Upon issuance of the Township Planning Commission’s recommendation, the application shall be referred to the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee on August 31, 2022.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-08-071422:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to recommend engaging Engineering & Land Planning Associates, Inc. as the Inclusive Park and Playground consultant at the fee included in their proposal dated June 21, 2022.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-09-071422:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to recommend engaging Delta Development Group Inc. as the consultant for a feasibility study for potential Economic Development in Abington Township at a fee not to exceed \$74,350.00.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad asked about the timeline.

President Hecker replied there are items being adjusted based on feedback to Delta.

Manager Manfredi added that there are various components with different timelines; however, the end-product should be by the spring.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-10-071422:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Thompson to recommend engaging Simone Collins, Inc. Landscape Architecture as the Comprehensive Recreation, Open Space Planning Services consultant at the fee included in their proposal dated June 14, 2022.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Vice President Vahey said to address the public comment regarding the number of consultants hired by the Township; Manager Manfredi was hired to execute policies and priorities of the Board and he does an excellent job. In addition, Mr. Manfredi manages a \$68 million dollar budget; he oversees approximately 250 municipal employees, and the Township is the home of nearly 60,000 residents, so to expect him to be an expert in economic development, developing parks and recreation as well as all other services that we expect experts to handle is not reasonable.

The Township is paying for a team to provide an exceptional work-product. So, this is a “steal and bargain” for Township residents and there is a very sound reason why the Board of Commissioners chooses to execute the priorities in this matter.

Commissioner Carswell said in reaching out to residents who may be good candidates for the advisory committee, they are excited that the Township is looking into investing in its parks and bringing in an expert, and so is she.

Commissioner Rothman added that by investing in a consultant whose expertise focuses on gathering ideas, keeping an eye on the cutting edge, and compiles lists is critical, which saves the Township money and time as well as getting it done right the first time.

Commissioner Bowman commented that he agrees with Vice President Vahey’s remarks. We are about to invest a great deal of money in our parks and recreation facilities, and it is only logical to engage experts to assist the Township in that regard, and he is glad we are moving forward.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-11-071422:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Carswell to adopt Resolution No. 22-019 extending guidelines and policy for outdoor sales of food and merchandise of existing businesses in Abington Township.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Receive Treasurer's Report:

Township Treasurer Jay W. Blumenthal reported that monies received from various departments deposited into Republic Bank in June 2022 was \$14,019,734 as compared to last year of \$5,475,215 representing an increase of \$8,544,519; YTD \$64,305,152 as compared to last year of \$57,565,856 representing an increase of \$6,739,296. The Real Estate Tax report for June 2022 was included in the Board's packet for review noting that collections are ahead over prior year.

Item FC-01-071422:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Carswell to approve the May 2022 expenditures in the amount of \$3,675,499.80 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,013,022.28, and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of August 2022.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Darice Eppinger, resident, Fox Chase Manor, questioned whether the tennis courts in Alverthorpe Park will be converted to pickleball courts.

Commissioner Rothman replied there is a plan for a conversion mechanism of the courts, although he does not have anything definitive at this time. He will provide an update going forward.

Lora Lehmann, resident, asked for fireworks to be limited in certain areas; also, she expressed concern about the Comp Plan.

A resident asked about updates to the master sidewalk and bicycle plans as well as the status of the Abington Jenkintown Connections Plan.

Manager Manfredi suggested the resident contact Assistant Manager Tara Wehmeyer for assistance.

Commissioner Winegrad added that he is pushing hard to move the Abington Jenkintown Connections Plan forward. It is a five-phase project and Phases 2 & 4 will be sent out for RFP this fall and more information is needed for Phases 1 & 3. He will provide an update going forward.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary

The following resolutions were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on July 14, 2022:

Resolution No. 22-019

Resolution No. 22-020