

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, September 8, 2022, 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 (7:37 p.m.), ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, VAUGHN, THOMPSON, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioner CARSWELL

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Township Solicitor CLARKE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the amount of speaking time; also, about the Old York and Susquehanna Road project where neighbors need to be notified of any demolition and asbestos removal next to their property.

Commissioner Spiegelman clarified that regarding the Old York Road and Susquehanna project, awarding the contract for demolition and any hazardous material abatement is what opens the door for making this a transparent and public-facing process for the neighbors, so once the contract is awarded, then the plans will be laid out and the schedule will be made.

There will be a meeting with the neighbors, Township staff and representatives from the demolition company to inform residents on what they can expect from the demolition process, the schedule as well as have their questions and concerns addressed.

In addition, the most important part of the project is the intersection improvements making one of the worst intersections become one of the best and most functional after the project is completed.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

To approve the minutes of the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting and Special Meeting of August 11, 2022.

To approve the sale of Parks Department small engine equipment at JJ Kane Auctions in Plymouth Meeting, PA.

To accept a grant award from the Bureau of Highway Safety and Traffic Engineering in the amount of \$183,715.00 and adopt Resolution No. 22-023 authorizing the Township Manager to submit the necessary applications.

To approve escrow release request #1 for LD-19-08 Galman Residential in the amount of \$334,916.40.

To approve the escrow release request #1 for LD-16-06, 1235 Meinel Road Subdivision in the amount of \$82,067.63.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-05-090822:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve advertisement of an ordinance amending the Code of the Township of Abington at Part II [General Legislation], Chapter 146 [Subdivision and Land Development], by amending and restating Article III [Plan Application Requirements] and Article IV [Plan Review Procedures] and adding Article VIII [Waiver of Land Development] to create additional exemptions of the land development process, to create a process for notification of property owners and residents regarding the review of land development applications by the Planning Commission, and to create a process for a waiver of land development.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-06-090822:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Resolution No. 22-024 approving an Intergovernmental Cooperative Cost Sharing Agreement between Jenkintown Borough and Abington Township.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad commented that Jenkintown Borough has already approved this cost-sharing agreement, and he asked his fellow Board members to do so as well.

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-07-090822:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to accept the 902 Development & Implantation of Municipal Recycling Programs Grant – Abington Township 202109241338 – Leaf and Yard Waste Collection Program in the amount of \$350,000.00 and designate eight (8) signatories and a witness to e-sign the grant agreement and supporting documents through separate accounts with the Department of Environmental Protection Grants Center.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-08-090822:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to award the 1100 Old York Road bids for the Abatement of Hazardous Materials of Existing Structures to Plymouth Environmental Co., in the amount of \$152,000 and for the Demolition of Existing Structures to BRB Contractors in the amount of \$168,500.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Spiegelman commented that there will finally be visible progress on the Old York and Susquehanna Road project, and he asked his fellow Board members to vote in favor of this agenda item. As soon as he receives information from the contractors, the neighbors will be informed as this will be a public facing process.

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item BOC-09-090822:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Winegrad to adopt Ordinance No. 2198 – Updating Fees for Collection of Delinquent Municipal Refuse and Sewer Claims on behalf of the Township of Abington and amending Chapter 92 – “Garbage, Rubbage and Refuse,” at Section 19 – “Payment of Fees; Collection,” subsection E – “Schedule of Fees,” and Chapter 132 – “Sewers and Sewage,” at Article VIII – “Rules and Regulations,” Section 45 – “Annual Rate or Rental,” subsection 3 – “Billings; Payment of Current Bills; Delinquent Collection Procedures and Fees for Collection of Delinquent Accounts,” subsection 5 - “Schedule of Fees,” and the Amendment of Agreement for Collection of Delinquent Municipal Claims on behalf of the Township of Abington.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Receive Treasurer’s Report:

Township Treasurer Jay W. Blumenthal reported that monies received from various departments deposited into Republic Bank in August 2022 totaled \$2,991,002 as compared to last year of \$3,437,083 representing a decrease of (\$446,081); YTD there was a net increase of \$6,423,473. Real estate taxes transferred to Finance Department totaled \$44,192 for the month of August 2022 as compared to last year of \$48,891 representing a decrease of (\$4,699). 97% has been collected with a balance of 3%.

Item FC-01-090822:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the July 2022 expenditures in the amount of \$2,758,940.63 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$3,221,328.12 and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of October 2022.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 13-0. Commissioner Carswell and Commissioner Brodsky were absent during roll call.

Item FC-02-090822:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Vahey to adopt Resolution No. 22-025 recognizing that the Township's minimum municipal funding obligation for the calendar year 2023 with respect to the Municipal Non-Uniformed Employee, Police and Non-Uniformed Employee Defined Contribution Plans is \$741,081.00, \$3,269,009.00, and \$250,000.00, respectively.

Manager Manfredi explained that every year there is a minimum municipal funding obligation that the Township must make towards each of the pension plans that is based on an actuarial valuation report.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item FC-03-090822:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Vahey to ratify NFP Corporate Benefits, PA as the broker of record for all Medicare lines of coverage.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item FC-04-090822:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Vahey to continue with United Healthcare as the retiree medical plan provider effective January 1, 2023.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Item FC-05-090822:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Vahey to approve the revised appropriation for ARPA funded Refuse truck.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 13-0.

Commissioner Brodsky entered the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Tobin, resident, asked about property tax revenue being “down,” and for the status on the matter of the Willow Grove Mall as well as the ordinance regarding working on Township projects where 75% of the employees need to go through an apprenticeship program.

President Hecker replied that at a recent meeting it was announced that the Board of Commissioners does not intend to move forward to formally review the proposal regarding the Willow Grove Mall. The second ordinance referenced will likely come back before the Board at some point and will be advertised at that time.

Mr. Blumenthal replied that property tax revenue is not down as collections are a matter of timing, and 98% collection rate will be reached by the end of the year.

Ross Able, resident, requested that the Board add a budget line item to create a more thorough bicycle and sidewalk master plan identifying protected lanes with emphasis on connectivity between parks, transit and shopping districts as well as identify funding opportunities. To fight climate change would be to support transportation alternatives such as bike riding and more walkable area.

Also, he asked the Board to update the accessory dwelling unit specifications to be less restricted to support more flexibility for homeowners to meet the increasing demand of housing options; and for Alverthorpe Park to be opened by the art center so more people can enjoy the park; and for the Township to work with Jenkintown and PennDOT to slow traffic on Rt. 611 near Jenkintown.

A resident from the Hollywood section expressed concern about traffic, and that a lot of apartments are being built; there are not enough jobs; grocery stores are empty, and to “think about how we are changing Abington because we will not get the chance to change it back.”

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that we have an “affordable” housing crisis. Also, she asked for all development meetings to be filmed and archived.

Steve Borland, resident, expressed concern about the amount of traffic on his street especially during the Rockledge Car Show where traffic is directed down Shady Lane, and every year, he asks if they would detour it through their own borough. He requested that the Board of Commissioners contact Rockledge Borough officials asking if they would do something about it this year.

Commissioner Rothman replied although there may not be too many alternatives regarding the car show situation; he will encourage Borough officials to see what they can do about it on that date.

Rick Bruce, resident, suggested altering traffic away from Pine so that traffic does not go down Shady Lane on that particular day.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary

The following ordinance and resolutions were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on September 8, 2022:

Ordinance No. 2198

Resolution No. 22-023

Resolution No. 22-024

Resolution No. 22-025