

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, September 11, 2025 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 ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, LANEY-MARTIN, BROWNE, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, YOUNG-GERTZ, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioner BRODSKY

Also Present: Township Manager Christman
Township Solicitor Clarke

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUCEMENTS:

President Hecker announced that it is a hard to believe that nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. What began as a beautiful Tuesday morning, ended in unimaginable loss that also gave rise to stories of extraordinary heroism, compassion and humanity. For those who have visited the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, you know it is a sacred place of remembrance. A quote from Virgil etched on the museum's wall reads, *"No day shall erase you from the memory of time."*

With that spirit in mind, tonight, we pause to honor three Montgomery County residents who lost their lives on that day.

The first was a young man named Jeffrey Coale from Souderton, Montgomery County. Jeffrey was an Assistant Sommelier at Windows on the World. He had previously worked at a government bond trader and was taking night classes at the French Culinary Institute. His passion for wine led him to Windows on the World and he was actively exploring properties in New York and Greece for his first restaurant.

The second gentleman was Lawrence Donald Kim, 31 years old from Blue Bell, who just began working at Marsh and McLennan at the North Tower at the World Trade Center. Lawrence was a voracious learner teaching himself German so he could read Freud in its original language. He owned multiple additions of Heidegger's "Being and Time" and could quote Gerte Faust. His intellectual curiosity was matched by his quiet determination.

And thirdly, Johanna Sigmund was 25 years old when she passed away on September 11, 2001. She was an investor liaison for Fred Alger Management in the North Tower. Her obituary described her as someone who ran in the New York Marathon, blared Janet Jackson and U2 at all-night parties, bought meals for a homeless couple near her apartment and regularly cooked breakfast for her three roommates.

Johanna's father, John Sigmund who unfortunately passed away in 2001 was from Jenkintown and went to Immaculate Conception School, and before he passed, John was quoted as having said, "We have been supported by our bedrock of faith and are now members of a worldwide club we did not want to join, survivor families of victims of tragedy. We have learned that we can only move forward. We still believe that good ultimately outweighs the evil that is present in this life."

Tonight, we shall pause for a moment of silence in remembrance of these three individuals along with the nearly 3,000 Americans who lost their lives on 9/11.

Also, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, we express our sincere appreciation to all community members who have shared their concerns regarding immigration enforcement whether through public comments at our meetings, personal conversations with Board members or through email correspondence, and we deeply value your engagement and understand the seriousness of the concerns that have been raised.

Abington Township remains committed to being a welcoming and inclusive committee for all. In response to requests for the Board to adopt an ordinance or resolution addressing these concerns, we as a Board want to be transparent about our decision. After thoughtful deliberation and consultation with the Abington Police Department, the Board has determined that we will not be pursuing such legislative action at this time.

We firmly believe that the Abington Police Department exemplifies community-based and progressive policing. The department has and continues to handle sensitive issues with professionalism, compassion, and fairness.

To further clarify our position, the Board will release an official statement tomorrow on the Township's website. We encourage you to review it and we welcome continued dialog with you thereafter.

If you are here this evening to speak on this matter, we invite you to share your thoughts during the general public comment period at the conclusion of tonight's meeting and we thank you for your continued care, concern and commitment to our community.

And earlier this evening, the Board of Commissioners held an Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to land and legal issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Lora Lehmann, expressed concern that her speaking rights “keep disappearing.” Also, items are not vetted at any Commissioner meeting and then they are brought up for a vote. The public comments are moved to the end of the Working Session, and there are no proper committee meetings, so she asked the Board to go back to having proper committee meetings with proper responses.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

To approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of August 14, 2025.

To hire the next three (3) qualified candidates from the 2025 Civil Service Eligibility List.

To adopt Traffic Safety Ordinance No. 2235 amending Chapter 156 – “Vehicles and Traffic,” Article II – “Traffic Regulations,” Section 14 “Stop Intersections” to add “Stop” signs on Fleming Ave. east (northbound) and west (southbound) at Mt. Vernon Ave. and Article III – “Parking Regulations” Section 25 – “Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours, No Stopping or Standing” to add “No Parking” on Old Welsh Rd south side from Fitzwatertown Rd. to the property line between 2914 and 2920; No Parking Here to Corner on Tyson Ave. west side 30’ south from intersection with Hillthorpe Ave. and Horace Ave. north side 30’ east of the driveway exit (west side) and “No Parking Between Signs” on Horace Ave. north side in front of the hospital 20’ east and 20’ west of the marked crosswalk and “Parking for Community Center Only” violators fined \$30.00 in the Ardsley Community Center Parking Lot 2828 Spear Ave. Section 28 – “Special Purpose Parking Zones” to add Handicapped Parking at 1013 Maple Ave., 1411 Birchwood Ave., 618 Edgehill Rd., and 1415 Hallman Rd.

To approve a contract time extension for MECO Constructors, Inc. through November 1, 2025 for the Inclusive Park and Playground.

To award the printing of the Abington Township 2026 Calendar to Fort Nassau Graphics in the amount of \$23,100 to print 22,000 Township calendars.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-06-091125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to approve a 60-day lease extension between the Township School District for the property located at 2828 Spear Avenue, Ardsley, PA 19038.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-07-091125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Winegrad to award the Abington Township Solid Waste Disposal Services BID to Reworld Sustainable Solutions, LLC for Bid 2: Disposal Services from the Transfer Station and authorize the Township Manager to execute the agreement.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-08-091125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to approve the contract amendment and renewal agreement with Abington Township, Mad Hatter Experience, LLC and the Abington Art Center.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-09-091125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to approve the parking agreement for Astra Lumina Lightshow at Alverthorpe Park.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked for clarification on the parking agreement.

Commissioner Winegrad replied previously, parking was held at Manor College for offsite parking and now it will be at Alverthorpe Park. They are all existing spaces, and Astra Lumina is paying the Township per spot.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked if it would be the front or back lots?

Commissioner Winegrad replied it would be the front lot and back lot on Fox Chase and the ones by the baseball field in the middle.

Commissioner DiPlacido questioned whether the shuttle service will still be available.

Commissioner Winegrad replied yes.

Commissioner Browne said with the parking arrangement, would there be any potential bottlenecks with activities ongoing at Alverthorpe, specifically with the Raiders?

Commissioner Winegrad replied that Astra Lumina is aware of the Raiders games and the dates of their games, so starting times for their shows will be moved back to make sure there will be no problem with parking for the Raiders games.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Item FC-01-091125:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the July 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$2,800,030.82 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,639,512.97 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 October 2025.

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

Item FC-02-091125:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to consider Independent Blue Cross as the retiree medical plan provider effective January 1, 2026.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item FC-03-091125:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Vahey to adopt Resolution No. 25-024 recognizing that the Township's minimum municipal funding obligation for the calendar year 2026 with respect to the Municipal Non-Uniformed Employee, Police and Non-Uniformed Employee Defined Contribution Plans, is \$1,633,434.00, \$4,850,762.00, and \$384,000.00, respectively.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Anna Nicholadi, resident, commented that SPS announced that they would like to rebuild their factory and she is concerned for a myriad of reasons. First, the danger they put them in when the factory caught fire, which was one of the biggest in Montgomery County's history. She stayed up all night wondering if her home would be burned down, and she and her family were evacuated for three days, kids missed school, and they spent the next several weeks fearing water quality safety. Directly after the fire, the EPA found elevated levels of arsenic in Tookany Creek near the site.

Many of us read about the history of this factory and its long negligence with regards to the storage and use of toxic chemicals. For example, in 2023, SPS entered into a consent agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and paid \$109,805.00 to resolve multiple hazardous waste storage and disposal violations including improperly accumulating and storing multiple toxic chemicals such as cyanide.

We also learned they are exempt from Mercantile taxes as a factory and only pay \$22,000 a year and a similar percentage to the school district.

She believes that SPS has proven itself unworthy of residing in such a dense residential suburban area with hundreds of children and families, so she would like to voice her strong opposition to their return.

Colby Kaiser, resident, commented for years she smelled fumes from SPS, and she is very sensitive to it. When it caught fire, it was horrific, and she was worried about going to sleep, and she woke up with a headache, so she knew there was bad stuff in the air. It is a big concern of hers that they are considering rebuilding. It was an industrial area, but it is not now, and there are kids and families here, and she is shocked that this is being considered. Also, how much is SPS paying for all the water running nonstop at full force?

Joe Dunn, resident, thanked President Hecker on how he opened the meeting, and he enjoyed the stories of the three people. Growing up in Roxborough near the Wissahickon creek there is a statue of a Quaker in the woods along the creek that was donated by a gentleman for the centennial, 150 years ago, and at the bottom of the statue it says, "tolerance." Today, after listening to the speech tonight and after the assassination of that young man, we really need tolerance. We need to be aware of how important it is to be tolerant and the violence and hatred that he sees is so disturbing. Also, he agrees about having transparency in committee meetings.

A resident from Roslyn commented that he appreciates everything the Board does. He has three children under the age of 4 and the new playground scenario is awesome. It is great and he and his family appreciate it. Thank you.

Ellen Staerk said she is speaking tonight as a volunteer for the Greater Glenside Patriotic Association, and we are tasked with putting on the Independence Day celebrations. The parade has been ongoing for 122 years, next year will be 123rd. She thanked the Township Manager, Emergency Management Office, Public Works, the Police Department, and our Fire Department, for their tireless support they have given at these GGPAs events, we could not do it without them. She also thanked Commissioners Bole, Vahey, and Bowman for their support on the day of the parade.

Next year, will be the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America. We are planning a huge celebration, and it is also the 25th Anniversary of the tragedy of 9/11. We would like the Board's support in holding a Memorial Service for 9/11 to be held at the VFW or the Memorial Island.

Most of the funds for the Independence Day, Memorial Day and the 9/11 services come from residents and businesses as well as selling T-shirts. This year, we were able to obtain a grant from the Department of Pennsylvania Community Service with the generous help of State Representative Sanchez.

She requested Board members to attend a meeting and maybe volunteer. We can use as many volunteers as we can get on that day. We meet on Tuesday nights at 7:15 p.m. at the Weldon Fire House.

Also, as a citizen, she knows three people were called out as being disruptive to the meeting and she has been to the meetings and heard them, so she understands, but a level of responsibility needs to be taken as their level of frustration is quite evident in the lack of communication. She does not agree with what they say or do, but we need more communication from the Board as she thinks it will help in that regard.

Also, she would like to see members of the police and fire department recognized at a meeting once a month or so for the good things they do and the services they provide, that are above and beyond.

Adam Share, resident, commented that he is completely 1000% in favor of tolerance. Also, he noticed an uptick in solicitors coming to his house, walking up his driveway while he is sitting in his backyard, trying to sell stuff, and they don't go away, which is unnerving. He knows there are ordinances, and they are supposed to get permission or some type of ID. The solicitors are going to every door in his neighborhood, and they won't take "no" for an answer, and it is increasingly happening. He asked for someone to look into it.

President Hecker said it has been a while since the solicitation ordinance was put in place, and it may be worthwhile to refresh everyone's recollection about what can be done and who has permits. You are well within your bounds to call 9-1-1 and report them. 9-1-1 is for every call not just for emergencies anymore.

Chief Molloy said sometimes there is transient criminal activity. Calling 9-1-1 is simply to get a police officer to your house and we also have signs with our badge on it that can be put on your property that says, "No Solicitation," and we can include you on that list. We have been receiving numerous complaints, so call 9-1-1.

Lora Lehmann, resident, commented that regarding SPS, there should have been a large investigation, and she was stunned at how quickly it was over and how quickly they are demolishing the building. Also, she does not consider the 20 years she has been here to be disrupting the meetings, and we need to discuss what went into the paper.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary

The following ordinance and resolution were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on September 11, 2025:

Ordinance No. 2235

Resolution No. 25-024