

The stated Working Session of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, February 10, 2022 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:36 p.m.

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

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

There were no minutes to approve as this was the first working session of the Board of Commissioners.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Joe Rooney asked for the difference between the Committee of the Whole and the Working Session.

President Hecker replied that the Committee of the Whole was a vehicle where every matter before the Board was discussed and then voted to either send it to a committee meeting or to the full Board of Commissioners Regular meeting, and we found that it turned into a bottleneck in terms of getting business done, so we did away with it to have more flexibility in addressing issues that come before the Board. The working session is meant to provide more time and context to absorb the matters before taking a vote.

Lora Lehmann asked will there ever be Public Works, Public Affairs and Land Use Committee meetings again.

President Hecker replied that the Public Works, Public Affairs and Public Safety Committee meetings are no longer in operation and were replaced with the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and the Infrastructure Committee to align our activities around the strategic priorities of the Township.

The Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee will review any proposed text amendments and standard Land Use matters will be brought before the Board but could also be reviewed during a working session depending on whether significant discussion is warranted as opposed to something relatively straight forward. There will be a committee meeting every month in addition to the monthly Finance Committee and the schedule for those meetings has been published on the Township website.

Ms. Lehmann asked about the PREIT matter.

President Hecker replied the Board has the option to decide where that matter will go next, and if it is the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee, we can schedule a special meeting of that committee for the purposes of reviewing that matter.

Manager Manfredi agreed that any proposed text/map amendments of the zoning ordinance will go before the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee.

Ms. Lehmann questioned whether that committee has the option to “open the zoning to the way the text amendment proposes.”

President Hecker replied that the committee would have the option to recommend that the matter be forwarded to the full Board of Commissioners for consideration to advertise for a public hearing for the purpose of making those requested changes. The CPCC does not have the authority to determine on its own, but it can vote to move the process forward to the full Board.

Manager Manfredi added that the policy for the committee meeting process is located on the Township’s website and there was a lengthy presentation followed by adoption.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider alternatives for the Transfer Station Operations, Transportation (hauling), and Recyclables Processing of Township generated recycling materials:

Mr. Mike Jones, Director of Public Works, explained that Abington Township is a member of a local recycling consortium comprised of seven municipalities as listed, and the Township currently collects recyclables curbside, and deposits them at the recycling transfer station on Fitzwatertown Road. The recycling transfer station is owned by Abington Township located in Upper Dublin Township built by the consortium using DEP recycling grants.

J. P. Mascaro & Sons has operated the recycling transfer station since 2015 and hauls Township comingle recyclables from the recycling transfer station to their Birdsboro, PA. processing facility.

The cost to the Township for these services is \$143 per ton and our contract expires on April 21, 2022. Previous Board actions were three, six-month extensions: October 22, 2020 - April 21, 2021; April 22, 2021- October 21, 2021; and October 22, 2021- April 21, 2022.

The consortium began meeting to discuss bid options in fall 2021 and MSW Consultants were hired to assist with the bidding process and recommended the following separate bid options:

Bid Option 1: Recycling Transfer Station Operated by Independent Operator – respondent J.P. Mascaro & Sons.

Bid Option 2: Hauling by Independent Operator – respondent J.P. Mascaro & Sons.

Bid Option 3: Processing Independent Operator with Township direct haul and Township operation of the transfer station - respondent J.P. Mascaro & Sons and Republic Services.

Recommended is to reject Bid Option 1 due to the cost for the operator to run the transfer station is greater than the cost to the Township to run it and we utilize existing staff to cover this need. Also, to reject Bid Option 2 as it is more affordable to use our own trailer and Township's cost to haul is approximately \$20 a ton at \$329 a load and J.P. Mascaro & Sons cost to haul is approximately \$54.44 a ton at \$896.08 a load.

Recommendation is to award bid to Republic Services with a contract term of seven (7) years with three, one-year extension options at the same rate of \$105 per ton.

There will be no change in services provided to residents on their refuse collection day, and the savings from direct haul will allow the Township to stabilize refuse fees.

Immediate savings of \$40 per ton from \$145 to \$105 with an approximate savings of \$136,000 annually, and rather than shuttering or abandoning the existing station, we would utilize the facility to dump recycling and transfer the material into our trailer.

Revenue Share Component – revenue share is the amount that the operator receives after marketing and selling the commodities. The total amount fluctuates based on the market price. This amount is not factored into the quoted amount and will further reduce the price paid by the Township. Graph was presented showing the terms of the bid from Republic Services and J.P. Mascaro & Sons.

There are three alternatives to be considered going forward:

- **Alternative 1** – Consortium could organize as an authority or enter into an inter-municipal agreement, which would provide additional grant opportunities through DEP and the ability to apply as a region to purchase equipment and update the facility. A feasibility study to operate the recycling transfer station as a consortium would be conducted.
- **Alternative 2** – Conduct a feasibility study for the Township to run and operate the recycling transfer station.
- **Alternative 3** - Shutdown the facility (requires some reimbursement to DEP for grant funds, if prior to 2024).

In summary, we request that the Board consider awarding the bid to Republic Services with a contract term of seven (7) years with three, one-year extension options at the same rate of \$105 per ton.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff.

Manager Manfredi noted that the future alternatives are not for consideration this evening and will be discussed going forward.

Commissioner Schreiber clarified that we have the manpower, and the equipment is in good working order. Is that correct?

Mr. Jones replied that is correct. We would utilize our existing staff at the trash transfer station, and we are working on logistics for moving material.

Vice President Vahey commended Mr. Jones for his time and diligence resulting in savings for the taxpayers for refuse collection. Previously discussed was leasing the transfer station or generating a profit from that facility, so how does that fit into this?

Mr. Jones replied that the trash transfer station is what we discussed at that time, and we are seeing a benefit from savings. In the future, we may be able to accept trash from other municipalities and that is when we could see a larger impact on the budget.

Vice President Vahey questioned whether there is an issue with timing on this item.

Mr. Jones replied we will be within the limits if the Board votes at the March meeting.

Commissioner Carswell commented that many of her colleagues who live in Bucks and other municipalities in Montgomery County had a lot of issues with trash collection, and we never had those issues here in Abington, and she appreciates that this is one service that truly has not changed. Were supply and labor-related issues factored into the RFP?

Mr. Jones replied 21 different companies reviewed the bid, but most did not bid on it and all of them are having issues with drivers, supplies, etc., but we do not have that with our in-house service. Many municipalities are considering providing their own trash service as some have visited to review our program.

Manager Manfredi asked Mr. Jones to further explain the bid process.

Mr. Jones replied through the consortium Upper Dublin took the lead with the entire bid process with input from other municipalities.

Commissioner Thompson thanked Mr. Jones for his financial diligence, and he appreciates the fiscal responsibility taken on behalf of Township residents. In considering sustainability and maintaining environmental stewardship for the community for years to come; one of the bidders rises to the top in terms of the types of plastic they can recycle. J.P. Mascaro is one of the few that recycles flexible plastic packaging such as the small sandwich baggies, plastic from foods and plastic cups from Dunkin Donuts, etc., and they can recycle a lot more plastics that are used on a day-to-day basis more than what Republic can recycle.

Despite the fact that Republic is closer and there is a smaller carbon footprint in terms of transporting plastics to King of Prussia versus Birdsboro, he questioned whether a carbon footprint analysis was done to see what the carbon emissions would be?

Mr. Jones replied we have not done that type of analysis. We did ask Republic about their future use of that type of flexible plastics, and they have considered it, but there needs to be a lot more of it to have any type of an impact as well as to invest in processing and collecting it. Right now, J.P. Mascaro is the only one in the region who does that, and we looked at their plant, which runs for eight hours and only produces a small amount of recyclables because it is so compacted.

Commissioner Thompson asked what exactly is being discarded in the blue recycling bins?

Mr. Jones replied soda and milk plastic bottles, plastic coffee containers, and clamshell plastic containers, which are recycled by Republic.

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

Board of Commissioners Working Session

February 10, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary