

The stated Working Session of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, August 14, 2025 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 8:08 p.m.

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

Also Present: Assistant Township Manager Wehmeyer
Township Solicitor Clarke

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the minutes from the Working Session of June 12, 2025.

MOTION was ADOPTED 11-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Update on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding Parks and Recreation Field Improvements and Pavilions:

Ms. Ashley McIlvaine, Assistant Township Manager, said we are providing an update on ARPA funds that were committed back on November 14, 2024, when a Memorandum of Understanding was approved outlining some of the projects that can be done with the remaining ARPA dollars.

We are still working on field renovations and pavilions, and this is an update on the plan as well as the plan moving forward.

We engaged Carroll Engineering to help evaluate the parks, prepare preliminary cost estimates and will help us work through the bidding process for the field renovations and pavilion projects. We need to spend the ARPA funds by 12/31/26 and we will spend every dollar to make our parks the best they can be.

The anticipated schedule for field improvements was presented, and in October, we will bring an authorization to bid and then a motion to award in December with construction of field improvements to begin between January and April 2026.

The schedule for pavilions and trails will be in February and then we will come before the Board for an authorization to bid and then a motion to award contracts in April. Construction of lands and trails will be from May through August 2026.

We are committed to stretching these dollars as far as possible, so the improvements of demolition of fences, removal of bleachers, and concrete pads will be done in-house.

Ms. Jessica Tholey, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented an overview of the previous improvements that have been made as well as proposed improvements as follows:

Alverthorpe Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, pavilion rehabilitation.

Ardsley Community Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches.

Ardsley Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, dugouts, soccer field reestablishment.

Conway Park – Backstops.

Crestmont Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, dugouts, lighting.

Ethel Jordan Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, park benches, sunscreens, trash cans.

Hallowell Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, realignment of fields.

North Hills/Dougherty Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, dugouts, gazebo replacement.

Penbryn Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, shade screens, picnic benches, trash cans.

Roslyn Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, soccer field reestablishment, pavilion, picnic tables.

Roychester Park – Backstops, bleachers, field benches, retaining wall, relocation of fields, lighting.

Rubicam Park – Pavilion, picnic tables.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Rothman clarified that Field C at Alverthorpe Park has not been identified for new dugouts. Is that correct?

Ms. Tholey replied not as of now.

Commissioner Rothman continued that they are falling apart and dangerous.

Commissioner Young-Gertz asked will the plans for Rockwell Park impact the hill used for sledding?

Ms. Tholey replied no. The retaining wall will be along the first baseline of the lower field, which has a very steep hill.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified that the timing for bids for field renovations will be by October. Is that correct?

Ms. Tholey replied yes.

Commissioner Winegrad questioned whether there will be a certain amount allocated per field, and the scope for Carol Engineering seems to be a lot.

Ms. McIlvaine replied staff from Parks and Recreation have identified and prioritized the needs of all the fields. When we receive the bids, we will be looking for recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Department as well as the Board of Commissioners. We are still trying to strategically craft the bids with Carroll Engineering, and add-ons will be part of the bid as options, if we have enough funds.

Commissioner Laney-Martin asked has the actual location for the pavilion at Rubicam Park been decided?

Ms. Tholey replied Carroll Engineering reviewed the location and provided some guidelines as to where they felt an appropriate place and size of the pavilion would be as well as how many tables would fit.

Discussion of the Abington Township Solid Waste Disposal Services Bid and Refuse Program:

Mr. Mike Jones, Director of Public Works, said the current vendor is Reworld for the Township's solid waste disposal and they haul Abington's refuse using their equipment for disposal at their facility. The contract extension was approved by the Board in June, and it expires October 2025. Currently, we are paying \$79.35 per ton and the township averages 18,500 tons.

Bid option one: Township hauls to an outside facility.

Bid option two: Successful bidder hauls to their facility.

Three responsible bidders provided bids as presented.

Option 1 - Township Direct Haul - Reworld at \$60.00 per ton for a total cost of \$1,110,000.00 in year 1.

Option 2 – Bidder hauls and Township operates transfer station - \$95.00 per ton for a total of \$1,757,500.00 in year 1.

Refuse budget –

Mr. Jones said for the past 10 years, the refuse fee has not been increased, and with the fluctuating recycling market, some years we had additional funding, and other years, we took a loss. We have 18 refuse trucks, three of the 18 are within the average life span. Anticipated operational costs and capital needs were presented.

Refuse Budget & Fee Impact for Residents:

2026 Rate Option 1:

95-gallon \$375

65-gallon \$348

35-gallon \$320

2026 Rate Option 2:

95-gallon \$400

65-gallon \$373

35-gallon \$345

If we increase the fee by \$100 per household with the Township hauling, we will be able to put money aside for capital purchases because as of now we are at a deficit. If we increase the fee to \$125 per household there will be no service changes to how we operate today.

We will come back before the Board of Commissioners in September with a recommendation to meet our deadline for the expiration date of the current contract.

President Hecker said we will need to take action in September as the contract ends in October, and we will need to consider the options that will be economically viable as well as continue to the level of service the residents expect. If we go with Option 1, he wants to be sure that we will have recycling service on all holidays as we do today.

Commissioner Rothman questioned whether there is an option for residents to not have to incur a \$100-\$125 fee increase.

Mr. Jones replied no. We have not raised rates for the past 10 years because we had a favorable bid back then.

Commissioner Winegrad said regardless of options 1 or 2, we are still looking to set aside \$1.2 million for new trucks. Is that correct?

Mr. Jones replied with the increase; yes, we will be able to put that money into capital to purchase the trucks that we need.

Commissioner Winegrad said with the new contract, are we still within budget for the rest of this year?

Mr. Jones replied yes.

Commissioner Schreiber questioned whether this would affect the transfer station.

Mr. Jones replied Option 1 does. We would no longer be operating a transfer station.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked when the last time refuse fees were raised.

Mr. Jones replied in 2015.

President Hecker asked for any public comment.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern that the Boy Scout Preserve was not on the list, which is in “horrendous” shape, so please add it. It is a nature reserve and not a sports arena, but something needs to be done. Also, she asked for the budget documents to be presented before the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary