

The stated meeting of the Strategic Plan Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, via webinar with Chairman Commissioner Bole presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 6:05 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Chairman BOLE, Vice Chairwoman SCHREIBER (6:22 p.m.), WINEGRAD, CARSWELL, HENRY

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Commissioners SPIEGELMAN, THOMPSON

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bole made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Carswell to approve the minutes of the Strategic Plan Committee Meeting of April 6, 2022.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0. Commissioner Schreiber was not in attendance at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discuss and consider a recommendation for the Strategic Plan consultant:

Manager Manfredi explained that in 2019, the Board of Commissioners began budgeting, operations, and prioritizing the strategic planning process, and tonight, the Strategic Plan Committee will discuss and consider hiring a Strategic Plan consultant.

Commissioner Bole added that one of the first steps for the Strategic Plan Committee was to issue an RFQ (Request for Qualification), which was posted on the Township's website on March 2, 2022. As a result of the RFQ, nine consultants submitted proposals ranging in cost between \$24,000-\$96,000.

During our first Strategic Plan Committee meeting, we discussed qualities and backgrounds of consultants that includes making sure flexibility and creativity is part of the vendor's approach, so the Township can gather as much information from all relevant stakeholders to be as effective as possible; also, diversity and expansiveness in the firm's client base having experience working with municipalities.

We explored during the interviews what the final product should look like with primary importance that the deliverable is practical, actionable, and measurable, and considered how other municipalities have adopted and used similar types of strategic plans. Also, it is important to have a strategic plan that would be interconnected with other plans of the Township such as Stormwater Management Plan and the Comp Plan.

After evaluating nine proposals, three candidates were invited for interviews, and tonight, we are joined by Ms. Julia Novak, Executive Vice President of Raftelis, who would serve as project director.

Ms. Julia Novak said that Raftelis has assisted local governments throughout the U.S. with strategic planning and performance management. The strategic planning process will be approachable, actionable, and implementable for the Township and her team will ask the Township to consider what they know to be true today as a community; what are the future goals and vision; and how will it be implemented.

Proposed scope of services begins with understanding the context and working with Township Administration; interviewing elected officials; listening sessions with Chairs of Boards and Commissions; survey of Township employees and develop an environmental scan that includes a trend analysis; and then ultimately, have the Board of Commissioners adopt the entire strategic plan. We plan to engage with employees to develop mission and value statements; develop preliminary vision and outcomes areas; solicit community input on the framework, and then finalize that framework with the Township.

Presented were several styles of implementation templates used by the team for other organizations, and once the framework is completed, the team works with the Township to identify metrics to show whether they are moving the needle in accomplishing its goals and identify what is being done to support the outcomes.

Development of final deliverables includes innovative approaches such as virtual engagement, visual facilitation, anonymous polling, trends analysis, one-page strategic framework, and high-quality, easy-to-communicate deliverables.

Commissioner Bole asked for further clarification on environmental scans.

Ms. Novak replied that environmental scans create a common base of knowledge for everyone who will be participating in the strategic planning process by providing data on demographic trends of the community; engage with the Township's Boards and Commissions about the strengths and weaknesses of the Township; and then put all of that information in one place so when the vision is established and the goals are set, there is a shared understanding of the starting point.

Commissioner Bole asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad asked about the timeline of when the Township can begin using the data and analysis.

Ms. Novak replied after the contract is approved, work would begin in July taking 20-24 weeks for completion and the framework would be completed by the fall for the Township's budgeting purposes.

Commissioner Winegrad asked how much staff input will be needed?

Ms. Novak replied vision and outcomes are informed by the community and Township staff, and agreed to, and developed by the elected officials, and the mission and values should reflect the work of the Township. Once we have the framework, then we move to the implementation phase.

Commissioner Carswell asked for further clarification on working with the public helping them understand the strategic planning process.

Ms. Novak replied the format used in getting community engagement is a technique called, *World Café* where roundtables are set for each goal as well as a table for the vision and then we spend time speaking with the neighbors about what fiscal sustainability means to Abington Township. Notes of the discussion are taken, and a final report will be provided.

Commissioner Schreiber commented that one of her frustrations as a commissioner is that no action has resulted from some previously written plans, so she wants to be sure that this would not be another one placed on a shelf, and that there will easy actionable steps to take to implement this plan. Also, she asked about other organizations where action steps were taken moving them forward.

Ms. Novak replied that the implementation step is intentional where the team works with the Township to form implementation teams sharing ownership for achieving the result in the goals' statement.

Commissioner Henry asked for an example of one of the most exciting improvements that resulted from this type of plan being put into action by other organizations.

Ms. Novak replied there is a community in Lancaster, Texas where it was gratifying to see the improvements made over a few years.

Commissioner Winegrad asked about the timeframe for the plan itself.

Ms. Novak replied that the strategic plan framework has lasting power, although the priorities may change every year or two.

Commissioner Carswell made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to recommend entering into a contract with Raftelis based on the proposal that was submitted for discussion and vote at the full Board of Commissioners Meeting on June 9, 2022, at 7 p.m.

Commissioner Bole asked for any public comments.

A resident expressed concern that this should be a process driven by the citizens, and there was just a tax increase, and we will have to pay for this too.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the timeline where the residents will be part of a few online townhalls after it is put together, and it is not what this Township needs.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

Lora Lehmann, resident, commented that the strategic plan for this Township should be to deal with the needs and wants of the residents.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary