

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, December 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 ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Hecker announced that Items e. and f. as listed on the agenda are separate Public Hearings, and public comment will be taken as part of those hearings.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Adele Kubel, resident, expressed concern about the minutes and meetings not videotaped from start to finish, and that the “intention is to build a hostile environment and intimidate citizens who are against the scripted agenda.” Also, she was concerned about records not being maintained as well as severe blight and quality of life issues.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the large agenda; the county planner’s contract being extended; and no one asked the residents what they wanted to have on the new website. Also, regarding the budget, there are millions of dollars in excess and the 4% tax hike increase is completely unnecessary, and there should be no tax increase.

Ross Able, resident, commented that he approves and supports renewing the county planner’s contract as he loves all the work done on the Comp Plan.

Connie Briggs, resident, thanked the Board of Commissioners for their service throughout the year, and she hopes to strike a partnership between the Township and residents as there is concern about a “lack of transparency,” as well as rapidly rising property taxes. Abington is facing structural financial pressures that require a Townshipwide strategy such as the Willow Grove Mall assessment appeal.

While EDC is working on the Keswick Village area, residents are looking for a comprehensive effort that addresses commercial conditions and revenue risk across the Township.

Also, regarding long-term fiscal planning, the Township's strategic plan emphasizes fiscal sustainability, predictability and responsible decision-making; however, the plan does not include a multi-year financial plan. Many municipalities publish 5–10-year forecasts so residents and elected officials can understand future tax pressures and revenue trends.

Our Comprehensive Plan looks ahead to 2035, but focuses on land use, development and community planning, and it does not include the type of long-term financial modeling that helps the public understand how today's decisions affect future tax levels. She could not find any documents that provide long-term revenue/expenditure projections on the Township's website or budget materials. Does Abington have a multi-year financial plan, and if not, is it something that could be developed in 2026 with input from residents?

Manager Christman replied as we look to develop future budgets, we will review long-term planning for the Township, and we can certainly include multi-year planning as a tool to help make decisions as far as taxes are concerned. Also, there are opportunities throughout the year for Township staff to provide regular budget updates to the Board that will help with decision-making.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

To approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of November 13, 2025.

To adopt Traffic Safety Ordinance No. 2240 amending Chapter 156 "Vehicles and Traffic," Article II "Traffic Regulations" – Section 14 "Stop Intersections," to add the following "Stop" sign on Stonewall Court, at the intersection of Meinel Rd., "Stop" signs on Spruce Ave. east and west at the intersection of Cricket Ave. Article III "Parking Regulations," at 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 Here To Corner" on Rockwell Rd. west side 30' south of Grovania Ave., on Abington Ave. east side 30' north and south of Kenmore, on Sylvania Ave. east side 30' north of Keswick Ave. and west side 30' south of Keswick Ave.

To approve the Planning Assistance Contract between Commissioners of Montgomery County and Abington Township.

To adopt Resolution No. 25-033, a resolution of the Board of Commissioners of Abington Township approving a Memorandum of Agreement between Abington Township and School Crossing Guards for years 2026 and 2027.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item BOC-05-121125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt the Annual Budget of the Township of Abington for Fiscal Year 2026, Tax Levy and Appropriation Ordinance No 2239.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-06-121125:

Presentation and update on the new Township website –

Ms. McIlvaine thanked the Board of Commissioners for the investment they continue to make in communication. In 2025, the Board of Commissioners approved funding for the Township to move to one platform, so we consolidated five separate websites into one platform to increase effectiveness in getting information to residents and improve the search tool. She thanked Ms. Grace Sekelewski, who has been the project manager coordinating with all departments on this project.

The new website was presented to the Board. The Township's website is www.abingtonpa.gov. The police department's website is www.abingtonpd.org and the fire department's website is www.abingtonfd.org.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Spiegelman said many residents have expressed their frustration when searching for anything on the current website.

Ms. McIlvaine replied this is a very cleaned up version and she feels confident about the new search function.

Commissioner Bole clarified that the “Report an Issue” function is just like the Citizen Service Request function. Is that correct?

Ms. McIlvaine replied yes.

Commissioner Henry questioned whether the calendar, after the meeting date has passed, will be populated with information from the previous meetings such as minutes, videos and other information.

Ms. McIlvaine replied all the information is dedicated to the agenda page and she will need to look into whether it will be depicted on the calendar page after the meeting.

President Hecker said previously, there was a page for meetings that had a link to every meeting agenda, video and minutes from the entire year, and after that year was over, it would go to an archive page.

Ms. McIlvaine replied we will transition the historical data that is on the current webpage; however, it will not be in the same format, but all on one page.

Item BOC-07-121125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to approve LD-25-03 Noble Town Center South Parking Improvements – Preliminary/Final Land Development Plans and adopt Resolution No. 25-034.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad called on Mr. Hassan, Township Engineer, to verify that all outstanding items have been addressed by the applicant.

Mr. Hassan said the applicant has addressed all comments identified in his review letter dated October 10, 2025. The only remaining item is that the applicant is preparing a traffic study to confirm there are no traffic safety issues for crossings and circulation due to the new improvements and layout of the parking area, and he will verify that before the project is recorded.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified with Mr. Hassan that he is satisfied with this to move forward. Is that correct?

Mr. Hassan replied yes.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-08-121125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington Tax-Exempt Bonds Reimbursement Resolution No. 25-035.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-09-121125:

Public Hearing and adoption of Ordinance No. 2236 of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article V of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance of 1991 to amend Section 146-51 to permit a waiver from the land development plan approval process for a partial nonconforming structure restoration.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to open the public hearing.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0. Public Hearing opened at 7:33 p.m.

A court reporter was in attendance to transcribe the testimony of the public hearing.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to close the public hearing.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0. Public Hearing closed at 7:52 p.m.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to adopt Ordinance No. 2236 of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article V of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance of 1991 to amend Section 146-51 to permit a waiver from the land development plan approval process for a partial nonconforming structure restoration.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-10-121125:

Public Hearing and adoption of Ordinance No. 2237 of Abington Township. Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article VI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance of 2017 to amend Section 1904 to allow partial reconstruction of a nonconforming building or structure for a permitted use.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to open the public hearing.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0. Public Hearing opened at 7:53 p.m.

A court reporter was in attendance to transcribe the testimony of the public hearing.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to close the public hearing.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0. Public Hearing closed at 8:01 p.m.

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to Ordinance No. 2237 of Abington Township. Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article VI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance of 2017 to amend Section 1904 to allow partial reconstruction of a nonconforming building or structure for a permitted use.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-11-121125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Resolution No. 25-036 to ensure the undisturbed use of the proposed new Abington Township Public Library main branch building as a public library for 50 years or the useful life of the project to be funded by the grant, whichever is shorter.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Spiegelman said this is a great leap forward.

Ms. Liz Fitzgerald, Library Director, thanked the Board of Commissioners on behalf of the library staff, the Board of Trustees, and our community. This will be an important project for the next few years that will have a lasting impact on Abington.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-12-121125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize advertisement of the 2026 Board of Commissioners, Committees, Commissions and Councils meeting schedules.

Manager Christman said throughout the year we have discussed how the Board conducts business in open sessions, so he has been tasked with evaluating how public meetings are conducted and how our business operates. His recommendation is for the Board to have two meetings a month beginning in January that will allow Township business to move more efficiently, so the Commissioners will have another open session and not be bogged down with another working meeting followed by a separate business meeting. It can all be conducted at the business meeting.

This will allow us to get business done in a timelier manner and advertise the new meeting schedule up front rather than continuing advertising throughout the year. Also, the Board has flexibility in scheduling separate meetings for whatever purpose as well as cancelling meetings for lack of business.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Bowman clarified that meetings can be canceled if there is no need. Is that correct?

Manager Christman replied yes.

Commissioner Spiegelman said this Board responds to our neighbors that we represent, and he is very proud of this Board.

Commissioner Rothman clarified that the Board has flexibility in holding any number of meetings if needed. Is that correct?

Manager Christman replied yes, the Board of Commissioners always reserves the right to schedule meetings with 24-hour public notice in the newspaper of general circulation.

Commissioner Bowman said he hopes we exercise our right to cancel, because as much as there may be a need for a second meeting on occasion, there are times when our one meeting is thin. We will see how this goes, and he is certainly willing to give it a try.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-13-121125:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to approve a 5-year agreement with OpenGov, Inc. Software for years 2026-2030.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-14-121125:

Presentation of the Abington Township Invasive Plant Management Plan by Natural Lands –

Ms. Kelsey Boyd with Natural Lands, presented the Invasive Plant Management Plan that Natural Lands was asked to create for Abington Township. Natural Lands is an environmental nonprofit organization based in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey. Mission focuses on saving open space, caring for nature, connecting people with the outdoors, and working with municipalities to help them protect and care for their open spaces.

The purpose of this plan is laid out in the RFP to assess where invasive plants are currently present at the 23 township parks and to provide recommendations for how to manage invasive plants that currently exist as well as how to deal with them going forward with any changing future conditions.

We created a plan with multiple components including Townshipwide recommendations focusing on invasive plant management program; how to prioritize parks as to where to begin the work, and recommended priority actions. We looked at each park individually and provided a summary of current conditions and recommendations for each. And as part of this project, we included a summary of public input as well as an assessment of current staffing levels and what the needs would be to implement the recommendations in this plan. And then what potential funding options there might be through grants programs.

Part of the planning process included park assessments – site visits; stakeholder input; a narrative report; review of draft plan by staff, STC, and EAC; and finalized plan. Priority and Townshipwide recommendations were presented as well as invasive plant management by species and park summary components.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Item FC-01-121125:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to award Urban Design Ventures as the Community Development Consultant and authorize the Township Manager to enter into a contract.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item FC-02-121125:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to remain with The Hartford as the Life and Disability Insurance provider for the Township through October 31, 2027.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item FC-03-121125:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize the Budget Transfers and supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year 2025.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item FC-04-121125:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the October 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$2,952,902.98 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$3,640,227.09 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 January 2026.

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

PENSION COMMITTEE:

Item PC-01-121125:

Commissioner Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Zappone to adopt Resolution No. 25-037 setting the Police Pension contribution rate for 2026 at five percent (5%) of compensation.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adele Kubel, resident, commented that a year ago she submitted a petition for a library improvement for Roslyn Library and “it was refused to be taken.” She expressed concern about the Glenside Local publishing “fabricated information.”

Patricia Gallagher, resident, commented that she is involved with the Shade Tree Commission, and our tree canopy and open spaces are under threat by many factors. Managing invasives should be a top priority for existing natural spaces. The Township has been successful in getting grants for restorations, but there are never funds for maintenance. She has been managing the Phase I Ardsley Wildlife Restoration Sanctuary since it has been completed in 2019, and the cutting down of invasives, so that the restoration can proceed and establish itself. It is important that we adopt this plan, but we really need to think about how we are going to fund it.

She supports the Natural Lands approach as it’s important to manage deer within our township and it would be great to have a countywide approach, but we can start here. We need to begin by cutting out the invasive vines from our tree canopy to preserve the existing canopy, which is critical as it is killing the trees.

Marian Founder, resident, requested that Abington develop a deer management program. The Whitetail Deer population in Montgomery County and Abington far exceeds what our suburban setting can support creating health, safety and property risks. We know deer spread Lyme and other serious tick-borne diseases. Montgomery County has some of the highest Lyme case numbers in Pennsylvania.

Deer cause vehicle accidents resulting in human fatalities. Excessive deer strip their habitat, starve themselves and other wildlife. Deer do not have enough woodland, so they resort to private property. We can expect our deer population to continue to double every two to three years because the average female deer produces dozens of offspring and the solution is a deer management program.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission states, “deer are a valuable natural resource, but they must be closely managed or they will quickly overpopulate. Population control can only be facilitated through regulated harvest of female deer.” A sound management program is essential, and it is achievable as nearby townships as well as environmental groups have successfully implemented controlled deer hunts and management programs.

As an informed resident, it is time to reduce our deer population, and she urged the Commissioners to prioritize a safe and effective deer management program for the benefit of all Abington residents and our deer.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the Comp Plan and about getting information regarding finance. We used to have committee meetings and then the main meeting “and now, we are jumping two nights together on the same night, which is what caused all the problems, and then the speaking rights were removed.” Also, the new website will be an improvement.

President Hecker acknowledged Manager Chris Christman who joined us last year, and on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, it has been an excellent year under his leadership. We are incredibly grateful for the direction and guidance that Chris has provided, and we are excited about the work ahead. We are glad that he decided to join us a year ago and we are thrilled that he is here. We thank him for his dedication, leadership and patience helping us learn more, and it has been a pleasure working with him.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary

The following ordinances and resolutions were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on December 11, 2025:

Ordinance No. 2236

Ordinance No. 2237

Ordinance No. 2239

Ordinance No. 2240

Resolution No. 25-033

Resolution No. 25-034

Resolution No. 25-035

Resolution No. 25-036

Resolution No. 25-037