

The regular meeting of the Upper Pottsgrove Township Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, June 17, 2019, at the Upper Pottsgrove Administrative Office, 1409 Farmington Avenue, with Commissioners Trace Slinkerd, France Krazalkovich, Renee Spaide, Martin Schreiber and Elwood Taylor present. Also present were Township Solicitor Charles D. Garner, Jr., Police Chief Francis Wheatley, Public Works Deputy Director Joseph Alessi and Township Finance Assistant/Secretary Jeannie DiSante.

MOMENT OF SILENCE – The Commissioners requested a moment of silence in honor of the men and women who have served and are currently serving our country in the armed forces.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Those assembled pledged allegiance to the flag.

T. Slinkerd announced that after the meeting there will be an Executive Session to discuss a matter of litigation. No action will be taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT – T. Slinkerd noted Manager Reddick was absent from the meeting and if there are any questions on her portion of the agenda, they should be submitted to her via email. There were no public comments at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – M. Schreiber commented the minutes should be corrected to read the girl’s lacrosse team played in States for the first time in the history of the team, not that they placed 1st in States. Motion by R. Spaide, second by E. Taylor and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of May 20, 2019 as amended to accurately reflect M. Schreiber’s comments.

PAYMENT OF BILLS – T. Slinkerd noted the finance report was submitted to the Board for review. Motion by E. Taylor and second by R. Spaide to approve the payment of bills in the amount of \$157,804.68. M. Schreiber again commented the legal fees for the sale of the sewer system being paid from the Sewer Fund should be paid from the General Fund. Aye votes: Spaide, Taylor, Krazalkovich and Slinkerd. Nay: Schreiber. Motion to pay the bills carried 4-1.

REPORTS

TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION – T. Slinkerd again noted that Manager Reddick submitted her report to the Board in their packet and all comments or questions should be sent to her via email.

CHIEF OF POLICE – Chief Wheatley summarized his report for May 2019 noting five domestic related calls resulting in arrests in all five incidents. There were also two drug arrests.

The Cop Camp program started today for 10 and 11 year-old children and Chief Wheatley invited the Commissioners to attend; it runs 8:30a.m. to 1:00p.m. Monday to Friday. He noted the new part-time officer will be sworn-in along with the cadets at the Camp on Friday around noon should the Commissioners find time to attend.

The Chief outlined three training sessions that took place this month.

T. Slinkerd announced that Chief Wheatley has accepted a new position at Upper Dublin Township as their new Chief of Police. His last day with Upper Pottsgrove Township Police is June 28, 2019.

T. Slinkerd asked the Board Members to stand at the front of the table. He thanked Chief Wheatley expressing his gratitude for the work he completed in the Township Police Department. He then presented the Chief with a Battalion Coin of Excellence in recognition of his commitment and hard work for the Township. Chief Wheatley thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve and said he was honored to work for the Township the past three and one-half years. He appreciated the support of the Commissioners and previous Manager as the department was short staffed, there were equipment issues and a lot of work to be done to rebuild the police department. The Chief wanted the public to know that he was not looking for a new position; a job opened up in the town where he grew up and started his law enforcement career and they reached out to him to apply for the job to replace the retiring Chief of Police.

Chief Wheatley noted in his time as Chief of Police there have been three new officers sworn in, increased security in the building, new watch-guard equipment in the police vehicles, the purchase new rifles and handguns, continued officer training, a new server system and new community outreach programs. This is only a few of the improvements in the department and he again thanked the Commissioners for supporting him in these efforts.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR – J. Bean was absent from the meeting. J. Alessi submitted the report for Public Works asking if the Commissioners had any comments. Road work will be discussed in the Old Business portion of the agenda.

TOWNSHIP SOLICITOR – C. Garner addressed the Board concerning House Bill 1400 coming up for a vote in the very near future, as early as today. This has come up in the past and it is an attempt to take away municipalities’ right to regulate the right-of-way. In the past the Board has authorized a letter be sent to the local elected representatives in strong opposition to the Bill and the Solicitor recommended the Board do the same again.

Secondly, the Township’s Verizon cable franchise agreement is up for renewal and he recommends a hearing be scheduled to take public comment on the services Verizon has provided during their first term. Procedurally this is the appropriate first step to begin discussions with Verizon. In speaking with the Township Manager, he expects a hearing request will be on the Board’s July agenda.

There was a motion by F. Krazalkovich, seconded by M. Schreiber authorizing Township staff to send a letter to the local elected officials in opposition of House Bill 1400. After a discussion and clarification of the Bill the motion unanimously carried.

TOWNSHIP ENGINEERING AND BUILDING & ZONING – Commissioner Slinkerd noted the submission of the reports. There were no comments

FINANCIAL REPORT – The reports were submitted to the Board in their packets. There were no comments.

PLANNING LIAISON – E. Taylor reported that the proposed Kummerer Road age restricted development was briefly discussed at the last meeting. Since then the developer came back to the Planning Commission (PC) with a more complete presentation and they are looking to the Board for direction. Proposed is developing 112 acres and 279 age restricted single-family homes. The PC looked favorably on the plan however, the Board should consider the developer wanting to reduce the width of the interior roads with no parking and adding auxiliary parking lots. The developer is offering to take the roads as private to be maintained by an HOA.

C. Garner noted there will be a submission of the entire proposed plan by the end of June and these items can be discussed after review of the issues. There were comments from the Chairman of Open Space committee and T. Slinkerd noted all committees will get a chance to review and comment on the plan once it is submitted and accepted for review.

E. Taylor explained the PC was asked to review and submit recommendations on the Alloy 5 report, completed a few months ago, on the condition of the Township’s public buildings. They reviewed 50 years of history of the Township including age of buildings, population growth, more roads, new sewer system and police staff. The PC considered what the Alloy 5 report indicated as “critical” or “serious” that should be addressed within one to three years. Six years ago, the Board began seriously considering repairs and expansion; four years ago an opportunity was passed up to purchase a garage and offices for \$525K. Two years ago, the Commissioners failed to reach a consensus for building a new public works facility for \$1.5M. Today the salt shed is need of replacement, the Township is contracting for repairs of steps at the police facility after a citizen injury and, in anticipation of continued use of the existing 50-year-old Township offices building. According to the Alloy 5 recommendation of expenditures of \$684,600 over the next one to three years on just the ‘repairs’ of these facilities, the PC cannot justify any expense that anticipates their continued use. It is the recommendation of the PC that the Board of Commissioners consider the creation of a master plan for the construction of new buildings in configurations and locations that will maximize efficiency of service, energy savings and be able to meet the needs of the Township for the next 50 years.

The Board discussed what needed to be addressed immediately for safety reasons. The sale of the sewer system was discussed as to how that might play into the steps the Township needs to take to move forward with plans for the facilities. Public Works was asked to make a critical list of what needs to be repaired now.

T. Slinkerd asked that the PC look at the intersection of the Crossroads Development and Moyer Road, as there appears to be some potential safety issues, to find out if it complies with the development plan. E. Taylor said he looked at the intersection and there should be a stop bar painted on Crossroads road where people pull out of the development onto Moyer Road. Chief Wheatley said there is a line-of-sight issue due to the “S” bend and recommended review by the Township Engineer. T. Slinkerd will have the Manager ask the Engineer to look at the area.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION – R. Spaide reported on the number of public events held at the Althouse Arboretum and monthly Farmers Market in May. There were 854 in attendance. She also informed the Board that the trails at Sunset Part and Fox Run are washing out and need to be repaired or rerouted. Sunset Park is currently closed yet folks still walk though.

The Committee is working on Chapters 9, 10 and 11 of the Comprehensive Plan. The Veterans Memorial foundation and electrical work is completed.

R. Spaide met with the Pottsgrove Recreation Board; West, Lower and Upper Townships are represented on the Board. A School Board Director and member of the recreation board in the audience addressed the Commissioners to explain a new organization called Pottsgrove Village of 60 families with disabled members. None of the playgrounds in all three Townships have equipment accessible by handicapped children. She explained her ideas for getting handicapped accessible equipment into the playgrounds and parks. She detailed finding and designing whole areas for equipment and trail circuits for handicapped adults as well as children. The Director explained that she is looking out five years for this plan and is contacting elected officials, researching grants and approaching Township officials and sponsors such as PECO.

SEWER AND WATER – J. Bealer reported the committee did not meet this month. Their next meeting is scheduled for July 2, 2019. He reported they had 64% of the allotted sewer flows. The Joint Sewer Committee met on June 13th and the dryer is running at 90 capacity.

FIRE AND AMBULANCE – F. Krazalkovich reported the committee did not meet in June due to a lack of quorum; the report is in the Board’s packet and he read some of the statistics. The Commissioner noted he feels the Township should advertise for a Fire Marshal. He made some calls to possible interested parties and has not received any call backs. He recently received some concerns from some residents that we should be making sure other fire companies are assisting the Township Fire Company. He will discuss this issue with the fire committee.

OLD BUSINESS

CONSIDER AWARDING BIDS FOR THE 2019 ROAD PROJECTS – T. Slinkerd explained, in conjunction with the report from the PC concerning the proposed Kummerer development coming in, those roads being heavily traveled and the paving being a part of the negotiation process, he recommends rejecting the bids. On a motion by F. Krazalkovich, seconded by E. Taylor, the bids for the 2019 Road Projects are rejected. Motion unanimously carried.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSS PART-TIME PLANNING/ZONING/ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION – T. Slinkerd explained that Manager Reddick will prepare for the next Commissioner’s meeting, a plan to utilize a part-time person for the Planning/Zoning/Administrative position she previously held. The office staff has a part-time position open as V. Reichman resigned and there are funds available through the difference in the previous and current Manager’s salary.

CONSIDER ACCEPTING RESIGNATION LETTER FROM CHIEF WHEATLEY – T. Slinkerd asked for a motion to accept Chief Wheatley’s resignation letter. On a motion by E. Taylor, seconded by R. Spaide, Chief Wheatley’s letter of resignation is accepted, with regret. Motion unanimously carried.

CONSIDER APPOINTING CORPORAL ALBERT WERNER AS ACTING POLICE

CHIEF – T. Slinkerd, acknowledging Corporal Werner in attendance, asked for a motion to appoint him as Acting Police Chief effective July 1, 2019. There was a motion by M. Schreiber, seconded by R. Spaide to appoint Corporal Werner as Acting Police Chief effective July 1, 2019 until relieved. Chief Wheatley commented Al Werner was promoted to Corporal about 2 ½ years ago, he is 18 years in the police department and presently working towards his master’s degree, he has been sent to numerous leadership and management classes, one through the FBI. The Chief said he feels very comfortable leaving Corporal Werner in charge. Motion unanimously carried.

CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF JEANNIE DISANTE AS TOWNSHIP

SECRETARY – T. Slinkerd explained that J. DiSante has volunteered to take this position for the same stipend as was approved for Manager Reddick when she held the position, \$2400.00 per year (\$200.00 per month). He asked for a motion to appoint Jeannie DiSante as Township Secretary. There was a motion by R. Spaide, seconded by F. Krazalkovich to appoint Jeannie DiSante as Township Secretary. Solicitor Garner clarified that when Manager Reddick was appointed to this position and offered the compensation, the understanding at that time was that the secretary job was not to be done during working hours, given the compensation. The motion should be clear that those same terms and conditions apply to this appointment if the Commissioners so desire. After significant discussion of this issue as to when the Secretary duties would be performed, R. Spaide amended her motion to appoint Jeannie DiSante as Township Secretary compensated at \$2400.00 per year (\$200.00 per month) and when the duties will be completed will be at the discretion of Township Manager Reddick. Motion unanimously carried.

OTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tyron Robinson, 1488 Heather Place congratulated Chief Wheatley on his new job, expressed his good wishes and thanked him for his work in the Township.

Keith Kehl, 1941 Gilbertsville Road, commented about water running down a new driveway on Gilbertsville Road where two new houses are being built. The water lays on the roadway not draining away. Solicitor Garner explained that escrow funds are held to take care of the runoff once the construction is completed. Manager Reddick has contacted the developer.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

All the Commissioners, in turn, thanked Chief Wheatley for his work in keeping the community safe, that it was a pleasure working with him these years, that in a straw vote after his interview with the Commissioners 3 ½ years ago and before discussing the interview among themselves, his was the only name written down five times, that in travels around the County he is held in high regard in all 62 municipalities, that he will truly be missed.

Chief Wheatley thanked everyone for their kind words and said he is still vested in this municipality and he will be available during the transition, if needed.

**Minutes – Board of Commissioners
Upper Pottsgrove Township**

June 17, 2019

T. Slinkerd commented that in the near future he wants to have discussions with the Board about the role Commissioners play in the work with committees.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – T. Slinkerd announced the Board will go into Executive Session to discuss a matter of litigation with no action to be taken.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Jeannie DiSante,
Township Secretary