

The meeting of the Upper Pottsgrove Township Board of Commissioners was held via webcast utilizing Zoom software through the internet at 7:00 pm on Thursday April 16, 2020 with Commissioners Trace Slinkerd, Renee Spaide, Martin Schreiber, Cathy Paretto and Dave Waldt present. Also present were Township Manager Michelle Reddick, Township Solicitor Charles D. Garner, Jr., Police Chief James Fisher, Township Sewer Committee Chair John Bealer, Township Engineer Chris Pelka and Township Secretary Jeannie DiSante. Other participants of the meeting included Township Special Council Marc Feller and representatives and legal counsel from PFM and PA American Water.

OPENING COMMENTS – T. Slinkerd welcomed the Commissioners and Township staff along with the public who logged onto the live webcast. He explained the meeting is a continuation of the public presentations to provide information on the sale of the Township’s sanitary sewage collection system. He detailed the procedure for signing in with name and address then asking questions at the end of the presentation.

Benjamin Kapenstein, PFM Financial Advisors, LLC (PFM) explained this meeting will review the same details that were presented at the April 14, 2020 meeting. The reasons for exploring the sale: retiring debt, replenishing unfunded pension liability, deteriorating infrastructure, eliminating capital spending exposure, eliminating system risk, tapping fee reduction and initial fee reduction with reasonable future fees. Also reviewed was PFM’s limited scope valuation results, the process of releasing a request for qualifications (RFQ), confidentiality agreements, meetings & tours with bidders and the processing of the bids submitted to the Township. Of the two companies, PA American Water (PAW) and Aqua that submitted bids, PA American Water had the highest bid of \$13,750,000.

Bernie Grundusky, (PAW) repeated his review of the slides detailing information on the company and their business model. The company is headquartered in Mechanicsburg, PA and is the largest water/wastewater company in PA, noting they serve approximately 2.4 million people in 36 counties, 19% of the population in PA. They serve 35,500 customers in neighboring communities including Royersford, Glen Alsace and Exeter Districts. The Company symbol is AWK on the NYSE. He reviewed their investment in water/wastewater infrastructure and explained the regulatory oversights from PA DEP, EPA and PUC. He provided slides detailing tapping fees, the current rate charged by the Township and historical sewer rate increases and the proposed lower rates PA American Water will charge as well as rates over the long term up to year 2028.

Other slides detailed the Township’s Act 537 plan, current Township projects planned that will be assumed by PA American and future connections for new homes. Also estimated tax increases without the sale of the sewer system and the Township’s reductions in municipal expenses.

The public was invited to ask questions. There again were numerous residents who provided their opinions as well as requested more details on the proposed sale. Some still wanting to understand why the Board is moving so quickly to vote when everything is shut down right now. Attorney Feller said Governments are not shut down. Certain elements have modified their arrangements to continue to work. Many Government entities in PA are continuing to do business, approving bond issues, holding zoom meetings, even the US Supreme Court will begin holding oral arguments using Zoom to continue to do business. A lot of business needs to be done for the public safety and welfare of residents.

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Residents asked if the recordings of these meetings will be posted online for the people who dialed in by phone and did not get the opportunity to visually see the speakers. Township Manager Reddick affirmed that the recordings will be posted.

Many residents approved of the sale noting excellent due diligence the Board put forth for the past fifteen months and providing the comprehensive details in these public meetings. Other residents asked if public sewer would be expanded into their area of the Township because they are most anxious to have it provided. Residents wanting to know when the bids expire were confirmed by the Township Solicitor that the bids expire on June 30, 2020.

C. Paretto noted there is still much work to be done if the Ordinance to sell the sewer system is approved. It is a lengthy process for 9-12 months working with the PUC and the closing process before the final papers are executed.

Questions were answered by the Township Manager and Board members, PFM and PAW participants in the meeting. Any questions that could not be answered during the presentation along with questions that were emailed to the Township Manager, will be compiled with answers and made available to the public through postings on the Township's website and social media webpage.

T. Slinkerd thanked all who participated and informed everyone the timeline going forward is the Commissioners will meet on Monday, April 20th in a public Zoom meeting at 7:00 PM. The Township's Solicitor and Special Counsel will talk about the Ordinance and the Asset Purchase Agreement (APA), the Board will then make a motion, get a second on the motion and allow all residents to comment. The Board will then debate with questions to each other and discussion. The Board will then vote on approval of the Ordinance. There is only this one item on the agenda for Monday.

M. Reddick commented that if any resident has any additional questions or did not get to ask their question, if they email to her by Friday morning, the 17th, she will have answers by Monday. Any later than Friday morning she cannot guarantee they will be posted before Monday night's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,


Jeannie DiSante, Township Secretary