

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

May 18, 2020

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 Monday May 18, 2020 with Commissioners Trace Slinkerd, Renee Spaide, Martin Schreiber, Cathy Paretti and Dave Waldt present. Also present were Township Manager Michelle Reddick, Township Solicitor Charles D. Garner, Jr., Police Chief James Fisher, Road Foreman Justin Bean, Township Sewer Committee Chair John Bealer and Township Secretary Jeannie DiSante.

T. Slinkerd announced an Executive Session was held May 7, 2020 to discuss legal and personnel matters. No action taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion by M. Schreiber, second by C. Paretti and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of April 14, 2020. Motion by C. Paretti, second R. Spaide and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of April 16, 2020. Motion by R. Spaide, second by D. Waldt and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of April 20, 2020. Motion by R. Spaide, second by C. Paretti and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of May 4, 2020.

PAYMENT OF BILLS – Motion by D. Waldt, second by R. Spaide and unanimously carried to approve the payment of bills in the amount of \$108,119.94.

REPORTS

TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE – M. Reddick advised her report was included in the Commissioners’ packets. The initial draft of the 2021 budget has been prepared however, additional work is necessary to reduce the budget deficit. M. Reddick is working with the Township’s financial consultant on a four-year budget plan.

A draft copy of the 2019 audit has been received and M. Reddick has submitted the MDA letter as required. The auditor has indicated our final audit report should be received within a few weeks. Being short staffed due to the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the submission.

The March 31, 2020 and the April 30, 2020 financial reports were submitted to the Board. M. Reddick advised the Board that the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to impact the Township revenue streams, including real estate transfer tax, earned income tax, local service tax, building permits and investment income. Revenue streams funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, such as pension state aid and liquid fuels are also expected to be impacted. The staff will monitor this situation and impact on the current year and future year budgets.

All transfers of the uniform and non-uniform pension plans have been completed and CBIZ is currently issuing all pension retiree payments. Township staff and consultants are working to finalize the bids for the trail repairs at Sunset Park and Fox Hill Trails. However, survey work will be necessary before proceeding.

Two minor subdivision plans have been submitted and when reviews from the Township Engineer and the MCPC are received the plans will be listed on the June agenda for Commissioners’ review.

CHIEF OF POLICE – Chief J. Fisher submitted his report to the Board and was available for any questions. He expressed his gratitude and thanked the Township personnel, his department and emergency first responders for their hard work and help during the stressful past few months. C. Paretti asked if the Crossroads development has started their maintenance office yet. Chief Fisher said they are there three times a week however, they do not have maintenance personnel living in the community at this time. He also confirmed this is only maintenance, not security.

PUBLIC WORKS FOREMAN – J. Bean submitted his report noting that as a result of smoke testing, dye testing on Hanover Drive was negative; no leaks into the storm drains.

TOWNSHIP SOLICITOR – C. Garner reported during the past month much time was invested on the sale of the sewer system. For the Commissioners’ next meeting he plans to have ready a draft of the required ordinance. It will include rate adjustments that need to be passed, language changes to the mandatory connection portion of the ordinance. PA American Water requested and the Board has to decide, if you want to eliminate the optional billing method based upon water usage for sewer rates. Currently there are two restaurants in the Township that use this method.

TOWNSHIP ENGINEERING AND BUILDING & ZONING – M. Reddick stated she had nothing to highlight to the report in the packets other than asking the Board to be aware of zoning issues on page two and three of the report.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION – The Committee did not meet the past month.

SEWER AND WATER – J. Bealer submitted his report and noted the Sewer Committee May 5th meeting was canceled and he expects to have one the first Tuesday in June. Engineer C. Pelka is coordinating a pre-construction meeting with Doli Contractors for Regal Oaks IIA sewer project on May 20th. A Joint Wastewater Treatment meeting was held May 14th. YTD costs are over budget estimates, the bulk of which is a direct result of the COVID-19 impact to operations. The plant is operating with split teams of employees and emergency repairs required additional expenses. As feared, the plant is receiving a great increase in solid contaminants, i.e. rags, “disposable” wipes, latex gloves. The Headworks bar screen filter compactor is operational and performing well in capturing this refuse and to-date, just over two months, has collected 7 cubic yards of refuse. To help understand this amount of refuse J. Bealer explained that a cubic yard is 27 cubic feet of material. Picture a two cubic foot bag of mulch; there are 14 of those in a cubic yard. The price tag could be approaching \$700,000.00 to \$800,000.00 for the Headworks bar screen equipment.

The Pottstown Borough Municipal Authority is gathering information on Waste to Energy possibilities at the treatment plant. All parties are in agreement that going forward, all projects at Municipal borders warrants communication with all to coordinate improvements and save money.

FIRE AND AMBULANCE – D. Raudenbush did not attend the meeting and T. Slinkerd noted the reports were included in the meeting packets.

OLD BUSINESS

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 716 EXTENDING TAX DEADLINE -

Solicitor Garner explained the Governor passed ACT 15 on April 20, 2020 which allows Municipalities two options. To either extend the discount period, for real estate taxes due on or before December 31, 2020, until August 31, 2020 or waive any penalty or fee so long as taxes are paid on or before December 31, 2020. Municipalities can also exercise both options. At the Board's last meeting the Solicitor was instructed to prepare this resolution indicating the Board did not wish to change anything with the discount period however, they would extend the face period time to pay taxes to June 30, 2020. There will be no fee or charge as long as taxes were paid by June 30th under this resolution. There was a motion by M. Schreiber, second by D. Waldt and unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 716 extending the tax deadline.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF SUMMER HELP FOR PUBLIC WORKS -

M. Reddick asked J. Bean for a report detailing justification for summer help and additional mowing staff. His report was supplied to the Board and she pointed out that in the past this was done without any monies set aside in the budget and there are no funds in the 2020 budget to hire additional seasonal/summer help. She recommended if the Board considers this request that they consider authorizing the hiring at the discretion of the Township Manager for one or two employees. She anticipates one additional summer help employee. J. Bean said his reason for summer help rather than someone to mow is to cover vacations and sick time and road work. R. Spaide asked if all open space needs to be mowed; can it not be left in a natural meadow. M. Schreiber asked if they can let the mowing go while everything is closed. J. Bean said it would then be more work because they would have to rake the cuttings. As far as letting the areas grow into natural fields that is up to the Board.

M. Schreiber questioned J. Bean on the corrective action plan for the sewer work for Pottstown in his report and what is involved. J. Bean said they are measuring manholes for inserts, ordering them and will re-open the manholes and install the inserts when delivered. He is also digging a swale at the Pine Ford Road pump station.

M. Reddick said she would advertise for summer help for June 15 to September 15. T. Slinkerd noted the loss in EIT and property tax revenue during this downturn needs to be taken into consideration in the use of the Township assets in hiring part-time work. He recommended that with the discretion of the Township Manager, public works wait until it is absolutely necessary to bring someone on board. Motion by D. Waldt, second by R. Spaide and unanimously carried to authorize the Township Manager, at her discretion, to hire a part-time summer employee from June 15 to September 15, 2020 at the pay rate of \$12.50 per hour and to discharge the employee as needed at the best interest of the Township. M. Schreiber said the person will be told that they could be let go due to budgetary reasons. M. Reddick agreed.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL CAPACITY AGREEMENT

FOR SEWER – C. Garner explained that with the two projects, Ming/Moyer and Regal Oaks Phase IIA the Township needs to purchase additional sewer capacity from the Borough Authority. There is an agreement in place that allows the Township to do so. This agreement states the Township is buying 60 EDUs which is the equivalent of 18,000 gallons at \$5.72 per gallon and that is a variable cost per gallon however, it will be locked in if the Board approves the agreement this evening. The Township has 30 days to make payment and it is understood that the Borough will approve this agreement at their meeting tomorrow, June 19th.

Motion by R. Spaide, second by C. Paretti and unanimously carried to approve the purchase agreement for additional EDUs for the Ming/Moyer and Regal Oaks Phase IIA projects. There was continued discussion as to any leftover EDUs when the projects are completed and if the Township would sell them to PA American Water.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Approval of Amendment to Substitute Financial Security Agreement for Crossroads Development – C. Garner explained when the Township approved the Crossroads development the financial security agreement was with the developer and Wells Fargo Bank. A letter of credit was posted for security that the work would be completed. Only a few improvements remain and the developer has asked the Township to accept the cash amount of the remaining balance in the letter of credit of \$250,000. This requires an amendment to the financial security agreement and if approved, the Township will then have the funds available if needed to complete any work. M. Reddick said this is enough funds to complete the project and the Township engineer agreed. Motion by C. Paretti, second by D. Waldt and unanimously carried to approve the Amendment to Substitute Financial Security Agreement for Crossroads Development.

OTHER PUBLIC COMMENT

- France Krazalkovich, 92 Stone Hill Drive and former Upper Pottsgrove Township Commissioner thanked M. Reddick and everyone involved in the birthday parades happening over the past months noting his soon-to-be stepdaughter's birthday was late April and the parade made her day. He thanked Mrs. Paretti and Mr. Waldt and his former colleagues for having seen through two items dear to him, the pension fund change and sale of the sewer system. He reminded everyone to vote in the upcoming primary election and to take note of the change in polling places in their locations.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

- C. Paretti thanked everyone for tuning into the Zoom meeting and she hoped this can continue even when the Board is back to meeting in person at the Township building.

- M. Schreiber thanked the Police Department and Fire Company and Township Manager for doing the parades as it is good community service. He also recognized the EMS providers during this EMS and Police week and thanked them for their hard work.

- T. Slinkerd commented on the four-year budget plan as M. Reddick spoke of and they are making headway on the data. This is something that seriously needs to be done. On the sewer sale, work is being done on the asset collection. Township and PAW engineers are combined in working on the complete list of assets for the PUC. The next Commissioners meeting will be on June 15th and in June, July and August there are no work session meetings the first Monday of those months.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Jeannie DiSante, Township Secretary