

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Work Session
November 11, 2020
7:30 PM**

Present:

H. Charles Wilson III, Chairman
Laura Smith, Vice Chairman
Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Treasurer
Richard Marino, Secretary
Daniel Bell, Asst. Treasurer/Asst. Secretary

Staff:

Robert A. Ford, Township Manager
Brooke Neve, Finance Director/Assistant Township Manager
Jack Dooley, Esq., Township Solicitor
Niral Modi, IT Staff
Paul T. Dickinson, Chief of Police

Present Remotely:

Colleen Ehrle, Assistant to Township Manager

Absent:

Tom Zarko, Township Engineer (Excused)

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Comments

Chairman Wilson made the following announcements:

- Due to the COVID-19 Emergency, the meeting is being held via Zoom video communications. The public was invited to participate remotely and e-mail questions to info@towamencin.org by 4:30 pm, prior to the meeting.
- Today, November 11th is Veterans Day. To all veterans of all branches in our Township: Thank you for your sacrifice, your bravery, and the example you set for us all. In short, thank you for your service.

Chairman Wilson added there was a nice ceremony held at the Veterans Memorial Park earlier in the day, coordinated by the Township's Veterans Advisory Committee. Mr. Wilson thanked the Committee members and Supervisor Marino for all their work that went into the ceremony.

- Immediately following adjournment of this business meeting, the Board will proceed to a budget workshop meeting. The public will also be able to view and hear the workshop meeting live remotely via Zoom.

Public Comments

Rakesh Godhania, resident of 1017 Thorndale Drive, commented: I wanted to reach out concerning the timeline with basketball courts being developed in our township. The budget township meeting was held on October 21st. Courts were placed in a lower priority section of the budget. I understand that this an expensive park addition, however township basketball courts currently do not exist in the manner they do in our neighboring townships. Hatfield, Upper Gwynedd, Worcester, Whitpain and Montgomeryville all have outdoor township basketball courts. There has been some discussion on how to drive up usage in our park system. Basketball courts will accomplish this goal. While a team sport, like the other sports, basketball courts give kids an opportunity to "just play" in a manner that other sports do not. Soccer fields are primarily used by TYA Soccer, and baseball fields are used by various leagues in the area. This contributes to a "pay to play" system in sports that can be expensive for families.

Basketball can be a free recreational activity in a way other sports cannot. I currently am an assistant coach for the Towamencin 6th grade basketball team. We recently started our season and in order to do so, held tryouts. Half of our tryouts were held outdoors due to Covid restrictions. Our organization paid Worcester Township to use Heebner Park. Instead of paying another township, it would be beneficial for all to pay Towamencin for court time. The interest is there, we need our own township basketball courts. We could also run a summer league that can bring exposure and revenue to our township. Thank you for taking the time to read these comments and thank you for all your hard work with the township.

Chairman Wilson thanked Mr. Godhania for his comment and continued that there is definitely a need for courts in the community. Mr Wilson added basketball courts are included in the recent parks master plan update and the Board will review these options when funding is available.

Towamencin Municipal Authority – selling inquiries

Mike Weber asked: What is the total debt of the township? Who is responsible for that debt? Why are you considering selling the only revenue making entity, the wastewater treatment plant?

Greg Opdyke asked: My first question is why are you looking into the possible sale of wastewater system during a pandemic. Is it so that the residents are limited to voice their opinion? And my second question is if you move forward on this will you allow your residents to vote on it?

Ralph Jacoby comment/question: Your thoughts of selling the Authority for a one-time windfall, causes me great confusion. I don't understand how this would benefit the community. The fact that you have the highest quality of staff operating the facility, which has always produced the highest quality of water that flows through the park, which your community members enjoy. Expect problems if sold !!!!

Also just the fact that all your community members should expect to have their rates increased, as much as 300%. How can this be a benefit to the community's seniors, retired service people or any

of the families living in this community? Especially during a pandemic. What is the dollar amount that the township is looking for that would justify this impact to the community, which the board represents?

Matthew Hickman asked: Will the sewer system ratepayers be able to vote on the matter of whether or not to sell the sewer system?

Chairman Wilson responded to the four comments/questions: At a previous Board meeting (October 14th), it was noted the Board has only approved evaluating the value of the sanitary sewer system to see if it would make sense to consider a sale in the future. The Board authorized a firm to assess the market value of the system to see how that fits with the Township’s needs. Nothing new has occurred since the Board authorized the sanitary sewer system analysis and valuation study. Mr. Wilson said the financial consultant would likely present their report at a Board meeting in January. While the Board authorized an assessment of the system, that does not translate to the system being sold. It has to make sense for our community.

Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development

None

Old Business

None

New Business

The Public Works Committee meets on a monthly basis to scope projects and identify efficiencies related to Township infrastructure, properties, and equipment. The Committee met on October 28th. Supervisor Marino provided the Committee’s report.

Improper Sump Pump Outlets – The Committee discussed potential alternatives for addressing improper sump pump outlets that extend through curbing along Township roadways. Proposed alternatives included: redirecting the sump pump discharge to rear yard areas, discharging pumps into onsite seepage pits, discharging pumps to “pop-up” drains within the right-of-way, and potential connections to available storm sewer systems within the right-of-way. The Committee suggested that the Township Engineer and David Hillmantel assess the 26 sump pump outlets identified in conjunction with the 2021 Roadway Improvement Program and determine on a case-by-case basis how each should be addressed. A summary report will then be presented to the Committee for further consideration.

MS4 Stormwater Program - The Committee discussed Stormwater/MS4 Program engineering and capital costs that are anticipated for inclusion in the upcoming 2021 budget. Tom Zarko noted that due to the current status of the Skippack Creek Alliance, it might be appropriate for Towamencin Township to consider proceeding alone with upcoming projects and engineering work as a conservative approach. The Committee also discussed the consideration of establishing a MS4 Stormwater Fee for the Township to fund projects required under the program. Mr. Zarko will provide estimated engineering and capital costs for the 2021 budget.

Central Drive Storm Drainage Improvement Project Update - Approximately 5,800 LF of storm drainage lines were evaluated, including 49 runs of pipe. From the assessment, 21 storm sewer runs require repair/rehabilitation. The recommendations for the repair/rehabilitation include: full replacement, partial replacement, or shotcrete channel repairs. The total estimated cost for the recommended repairs/rehabilitation is \$322,500. Inlet repairs were also identified as part of this assessment of the storm sewer system, which will be performed by the Public Works Department.

ADA Ramp Replacement Project Update - 43 of the 75 required ramps were completed to date. The contractor dispatched additional personnel and provided increased management of their crews, who have been onsite. This oversight is increasing production and quality of construction. The contract completion date is January 11, 2021; it is expected all work will be completed by that date.

Fischer's Park Pedestrian Bridge – The bridge footings and abutments were completed. The contractor is performing preparatory work for the upcoming trail installation. The pedestrian bridge has been fabricated and the contractor is currently coordinating a delivery date. The bridge is expected to be installed in late October.

2021 Budget – The Public Works Department had already presented their 2021 projects/needs, which include a significant amount of storm sewer improvements, as well as, preparatory work for the upcoming 2021 paving program. The means of financing upcoming capital projects was discussed along with potential alternatives.

Roadway Maintenance Program - The Committee discussed the status of the Township's Roadway Maintenance Program Update. At its September 22nd meeting, the Board approved proceeding with the RoadBotics assessment of Township roads. Mr. Zarko noted that RoadBotics is currently importing the Township roadway data into their assessment software. Once this has been completed, the roads can be driven and assessed.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Ehrle

Assistant to Township Manager