

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Monthly Meeting
September 23, 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
Jack Dooley, Esq., Township Solicitor
Tom Zarko, Township Engineer
Clayton Reed, IT Director
Paul T. Dickinson, Chief of Police

Present Remotely:

Colleen Ehrle, Assistant to Township Manager
Brooke Neve, Finance Director/Assistant Township Manager

Absent:

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 prior to the meeting.
- The Township's final concert will be held on Thursday, October 1st, at 6:30 pm, featuring the band "Don't Call Me Francis." Due to the Governor's COVID-19 Emergency directive, space is limited to 250 attendees. Wristbands will be distributed upon entry to the concert area. Attendees must wear a mask, practice social distancing, and adhere to CDC Guidelines.
- Work sessions to prepare the 2021 Budget will be held on October 7th, October 21st and November 4th, starting at 7:00 pm. Due to the continuing COVID-19 Emergency restrictions, these meetings will be held via Zoom Video Communications. The public will

be able to view and hear the meetings live remotely. The proposed budget is tentatively scheduled for release on November 11th, with formal adoption scheduled on December 9th.

Public Comments

None

Approval of Minutes: September 9, 2020

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the September 9, 2020 minutes.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development

Waiver of Damages - 1492 Maxwell Court

Following the newly adopted ordinance amendment allowing fences to be placed in an easement, the Township has prepared a waiver of damages for the owners of 1492 Maxwell Court to place a fence within the stormwater easement. A PA one-call is required. Public Works staff will locate the pipe in order to provide direction for proper location within the easement.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved the waiver agreement for 1492 Maxwell Court.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

New Business

The September warrant list was presented for approval. On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved the warrant list in the amount of \$1,577,222.50.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Sewer Committee Report

The Township's Sanitary Sewer Committee met on September 3rd. Chairman Wilson read the report noting the following discussion items:

Valuation of Sewer System - In June 2017, the Board of Supervisors directed the preparation of an original cost study of the sanitary sewer system in order to comply with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 34 requirements. The purpose of the study was to help the Township understand what assets it owns in relation to the system and how much those assets have depreciated over their estimated useful lives. The Township's Wastewater Engineer, Bill Dingman, briefly summarized the study noting the following:

Total Original Sewer System Cost	\$60.4 million
Depreciation of Sewer System	\$36.9 million
Net Sewer System Cost	\$23.5 million

Monetization of Assets – After the independent study (Hazen & Sawyer) of the collection and treatment systems several years ago was completed, there were initial concerns whether the existing system would be able to meet future permit limit requirements without significant capital expenditures. The question was raised whether the Township should consider “monetization” (selling) of the system as other Pennsylvania municipalities and authorities have done recently. Monetization is the process of converting assets into economic value.

These other municipalities had concerns similar to Towamencin - that their systems needed millions of dollars of improvements to bring them up to current state and federal standards with possibly millions more needed to accommodate future mandates by the federal government. In order to determine whether there are better alternatives to achieve these results, and at the same time achieve financial benefits for the community, these municipalities conducted a detailed independent financial analysis.

Representatives of Public Financial Management (“PFM”) attended the Committee's meeting and reviewed the process of evaluating and whether monetization is a worthwhile option. The Committee believes it is the responsible and prudent action to examine whether it is in the Township's best interest, or not, to monetize the sanitary sewer system.

Inflow & Infiltration Abatement Program Update - Due to the COVID-19 Emergency and related restrictions, this past spring there was a pause in the video inspection and maintenance program of the Township's collection system. In late June, operations resumed with completed inspections of nearly 8,000 linear feet of collection lines and ten (10) “cured in place pipe” linings by mid-summer. Priority efforts were on tributary lines to the Kriebel Road Interceptor, as expenses are being funded via the Commonwealth Small Water & Sewer Grant for \$100,000. Township Public Works crews relocated flow meters from various manholes and recorded video of actual flow levels during storm events this summer to identify storm water inflow entering the system from the Morgandale Community.

Additional Small Water & Sewer Grant Award - In August, the Township was awarded a \$425,000 grant through the Pennsylvania Small Water and Sewer program. This grant will help the Township investigate, repair and rehabilitate the Skippack Creek Interceptor portion of its sanitary

sewer collection and conveyance system. In 2021, bids will be sought to complete repairs and improvements based on the scope of work detailed in the grant application.

Upper Gwynedd Township Request for Relief Valve – KRI - Upper Gwynedd Township continues work on its plan for diversion of sewer flows that will redirect flows from the Towamencin Municipal Authority treatment plant to the Upper Gwynedd’s facility as specified in the agreement when UGTMA was dissolved. Upper Gwynedd asked if Towamencin would allow a control valve to be placed at the interceptor currently bringing flows from Upper Gwynedd, instead of it being disconnected or “hard plugged.” This would be used to divert flows from their plant in times of emergencies (perhaps like the storm on August 4, when their plant received major damage).

The Committee is not amenable to the placement of a relief valve to allow flows from Upper Gwynedd to be diverted to Towamencin’s facility. The Committee feels it would be unmanageable and could affect the operations of the Towamencin plant under such emergency conditions, as well as, the additional flows anticipated from future development and customers. The Committee recommended declining Upper Gwynedd’s request to allow the relief valve.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board denied Upper Gwynedd’s request to add a relief valve that would allow flows from Upper Gwynedd to be diverted to Towamencin’s plant.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell

Voting No: N/A

Abstaining: N/A

Absent: N/A

Finance Committee Report

The Township Finance Committee met on September 14th. Supervisor Littley provided a report to the Board, including the following discussion items:

YTD 2020 Financial Impact of COVID-19 on Revenues (EIT, LST, RTT) - August 31, 2020 YTD revenue comparatives were reviewed. When comparing EIT, LST, and realty transfer taxes from 8/31/20 vs. 8/31/19, the news is mostly good. 2020 EIT and LST are surpassing 2019 by about \$184,000 combined. Whereas, realty transfer tax is lagging at by approximately \$120,800. Overall, no major concerns were noted with the Township’s present standing. Conscious efforts to spend on essential operating purchases remains the current focus. The Committee recommended continuing with curbed spending and revenue monitoring for any deviation from expectations.

Capital Purchase Update / Requests - The General Capital and Park Capital Funds were reviewed. An analysis was presented comparing budgeted requests to actual totals spent as of August 31st. Also included was end of year projections for both funds with continued curbed capital spending, but accounting for a few necessary purchases between now and the end of fiscal 2020. The necessary purchases include: an unmarked police sedan, two unmarked patrol vehicles, Administration Building lobby security barriers, a pick-up truck and plow for Public Works, HVAC parts for Administration and Police Buildings, a scoreboard for the softball field at Bustard Park, and the necessary replacement tiles for the pool. The total cost of these purchases is approximately \$227,000 for General Capital and \$20,000 for Park Capital. It was noted that even

with these proposed purchases, both funds are projected to end favorably to budgeted expenses as most capital spending has been halted for the year due to COVID-19. The Committee recommended approving the purchase of the aforementioned capital items.

Montco CTP Grant Projects - The Township had been awarded a 2017 Green Light Go (GLG) Grant and the Montco CTP Grant for traffic signal improvements. A list of future projects was prepared to account for these available funds. However, when COVID-19 struck, the 2017 GLG Grant Funding was pulled and is no longer available, leaving just the Montco CTP Grant of \$42,700 to be spent. A meeting was held by staff and the traffic engineer where suggestions for spending was discussed. The suggested projects were presented to the committee, including: left turn signals at the intersections of Sumneytown Pike & Forty Foot\Bustard Roads and Allentown & Troxel/Orvilla Roads, and a video/radar stop bar detection system installation at Forty Foot & Detwiler/Quarry Roads. Out of pocket costs to the Township would be approximately \$3,150. The Committee recommended proceeding with the traffic signal improvements as outlined, as they appear to benefit the Township most.

Electricity Contract/Pricing - The Township's last energy procurement contract was with Constellation Energy, and expired on July 1, 2018. Towamencin is currently being billed monthly based on the market rate (which can vary month-to-month). BidUrEnergy was utilized to shop for possible contracts based on our recent billing information. It was the Committee's recommendation to continue without a contract at the market rate for electricity. With the minimal savings calculated, based on estimated rates, the Committee thought the Township would fare better in the long run remaining variable and not contractually locked into a rate.

DCNR Consultant Contract - The Township was awarded a \$25,000 DCNR Grant to be used for the Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan. The Simone-Collins agreement totals \$50,000 for this work and has not yet been executed. DCNR inquired in to the status of the agreement. It was the Committee's recommendation not to execute the agreement at this time, as another \$25,000 grant is being sought. Should that grant be received, the contract should be executed. If it is not received, self-funding for this project will be included in the proposed 2021 budget for possible Board approval.

Fire Company Contribution and Potential Loan Questions - The Towamencin Township Fire Company inquired about potential reductions in their contributions for the rest of 2020 and 2021, due to COVID-19. They asked if the Township would be interested in securing a loan on their behalf for \$200,000 to use toward a new fire truck ordered, scheduled for delivery by year-end. The Committee recommended advising the Fire Company the Township is not anticipating any reduction in their 2020 contribution. The 2021 contributions will be evaluated through the 2021 budget process. The Finance Director will reach out to current lenders to see what options are available to acquire the \$200,000 loan. The Township Manager should set up a meeting with the Fire Company representatives to discuss the loan and fire truck replacement plan.

Increase of Accounts Payable ACH Limit - There is currently a \$100,000 per day limit for accounts payable ACH vendor batches. ACH vendor payments have been exceeding this limit; a request was made to increase the limit to \$150,000. It is the Committee's recommendation to allow the ACH limit increase to \$150,000, per day.

On a motion by Supervisor Bell, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board authorized increasing the ACH daily limit to \$150,000.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

2021 Budget Assumptions - Various items for the 2021 budget were discussed. Cost analyses will be put together for varied rates of salary increases, as well as, a review of various health insurance plans. A \$1,000,000 loan to potentially be drawn over 3 years was discussed for future paving projects and their associated curb replacement needs. A stormwater fee was mentioned and will be evaluated further at the next Finance Committee meeting. The sewer rate structure was reviewed as Upper Gwynedd's diversion project is wrapping up. Various rate structures will be put together and further discussed to possibly address the revenue shortfall this will cause. The Township Manager will look into the billing process in which Towamencin bills Worcester residents for sewer as well.

Township Radio System - Supervisor Littley expressed his concerns about the performance of the Township radio system during the latest search and rescue event. He noted the antennae is not high enough and some replacement parts are needed to upgrade the system. The Committee's recommendation was to coordinate an Emergency Management Committee meeting to discuss and get costs to bring back to the committee.

Other Business - The Committee also discussed the Sewer Committee's recommendation to authorize the analysis and valuation study, which will provide information needed to make an informed decision on monetization of the sewer system. The Finance Committee agreed with their recommendation.

Consider Proposal – Analysis & Valuation of Sanitary Sewer System

As noted previously, the Sewer Committee recommended that an "Analysis & Valuation" study of the sanitary sewer system be conducted to collect the needed information to make an informed decision on monetization. Public Financial Management (PFM) has submitted a proposal for such work. Scott Shearer of Public Financial Management presented background on the company and reviewed the monetizing sewer system concept and process, and why municipalities consider the service.

Supervisor Bell asked Mr. Shearer who is usually their municipal point person during this process. Mr. Shearer noted it usually is the Township Manager. Mr. Ford added the sewer engineer and Sewer Committee members would be involved as well.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board accepted Public Financial Management's proposal to perform a sanitary sewer system analysis and valuation study for \$9,500.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A

Absent: N/A

Resolution 20-48: Disposal of Property (Police Vehicle & Trailers)

According to §1504 of the Second Class Township Code, the Board of Supervisors must authorize the disposal of personal property. Anything with a fair market value of \$2,000 or more needs to be advertised and sold at auction. The Township intends to dispose of equipment through auction so that it may recoup a portion of the costs. This resolution authorizes the disposal, through sale via Municibid, of one Dodge Ram patrol vehicle and two trailers used by the Police Department.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved Resolution 20-48, Disposal of Property (police vehicle & trailers).

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell

Voting No: N/A

Abstaining: N/A

Absent: N/A

Public Works Committee Report

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 September 22nd. Supervisor Marino provided the Committee's report.

Stormwater Fee – The Committee discussed the implementation of potential fees associated with the Township's MS4 Stormwater Program. Mr. Ford noted that the Finance Committee had already initiated work on establishing a potential MS4 fee. It was noted that the fee would need to generate approximately \$350,000 annually to cover costs associated with the MS4 Program. Mr. Zarko provided a status update concerning the parties currently involved in the Skippack Creek Watershed Alliance related to the MS4 Program. Both Worcester Township and Lower Salford Township left the Alliance, the Committee questioned if they may reconsider should a more equitable distribution of costs be proposed.

Central Drive Storm Drainage Improvement Project – Mr. Zarko reported that the final set of video inspection reports, pertaining to the supplemental flushing work, had been submitted to CKS. CKS is reviewing the inspection reports and expects to issue a summary memorandum outlining recommendations for repairs/costs to the Board of Supervisors in October. Alternatives to address the remedial repairs was also discussed. Public Works could potentially address inlet repairs and storm sewer extensions that tie into the main stormwater management system. However, repairs to the main stormwater management system would need to be bid publicly to an outside contractor.

2020 ADA Ramp Replacement Work –The Township's contractor is significantly behind schedule and there have also been issues with the work completed at several ramps. Mr. Zarko and Mr. Hillmantel met with the owner of the company to discuss the problems with the project's progress and efforts that need to be taken to get the project back-on schedule. The contractor expressed changes would be made in staffing for the project to increase production/efficiency. CKS will closely monitor the contractor's operations to be sure that the problems are addressed.

Fischer's Park Pedestrian Bridge – Mr. Zarko noted that the position of the bridge had to be shifted slightly to avoid the outfall pipe from the Township's wastewater treatment plant. He also noted that excavation of the bridge abutments was scheduled to commence shortly and it is expected that the bridge will be delivered for installation in mid-October.

2021 Budget – Mr. Ford provided an update on the 2021 budgeting process. Mr. Hillmantel noted that he would be requesting another employee to add to the Township's current road crew, as well as, service and pickup truck replacements to be included on the 2021 Capital Purchase List.

Winter/Snow Removal Program – Mr. Hillmantel reported all equipment and supplies were ready, noting the sufficient salt stockpile available due to the limited snowfall in the region last year. It was recommended that requirements for residential snow removal from public sidewalks should be placed in the upcoming newsletter article.

Roadway Maintenance Program – Mr. Zarko provided an update on the RoadBotics software app, which would be used to develop a road maintenance program for Towamencin. CKS implemented a free 5-mile trial run within the Central Drive Area using the app. Data from the survey was obtained from RoadBotics and is currently under review. CKS will be developing a presentation of the RoadBotics application related to the preparation of an overall Township Road Maintenance Program that will be discussed with the Board of Supervisors at an upcoming meeting.

Towamencin Avenue Street Lighting – PSDC has taken the lead on resolving the existing problems through their electrical contractor. A number of existing lighting fixtures were replaced and rewiring of the system is underway. After this work is completed, coordination with Peco will be required to convert the existing transformers from 480V to 230V.

Rittenhouse Culvert Erosion and Sedimentation – The Committee discussed the status of response to the drainage complaints received by the Township for the property immediately downstream of the Rittenhouse Culvert (Kerr). It was noted that there are two upstream issues that are related to this drainage complaint. The first involves the reestablishment of the stormwater management basin within the Charlestown Development. The second involves the straightening of an "S bend" in the drainage way upstream of the culvert. Several months ago, CKS had previously discussed resolving these issues with PADEP. However, PADEP was reluctant to approve any changes. Mr. Ford will reach out to State Representatives in an effort to obtain assistance to resolve these issues.

Recycling Containers – Mr. Hillmantel reported that he had obtained pricing for recycling containers to be installed within Township parks. The estimate included 69 recycling containers with an estimated cost of \$36,000 to \$40,000. Mr. Ford noted that this could potentially be funded through recycling funds/grants.

Maintenance Concerns - Supervisor Marino referenced an overgrown meadow area along Finch Road. He requested that Public Works inspect the area to determine if any maintenance is required. In addition, vegetation maintenance was needed at the entrance to Veterans Park, along Allentown Road.

Change Order No. 2 – Fischer's Park Pedestrian Bridge

Through an internal video inspection, the location of the Towamencin Wastewater Treatment Plant outfall pipes were recently established in the field. Unfortunately, the location differs from the original expectation and therefore a shift in the location of the bridge abutments will be required. It was noted that the bridge would be moved 10 feet eastward to eliminate the conflict with the


outfall pipes. This will require further excavation and additional stone fill to support the abutments, but with the deletion of a temporary cofferdam, the net increase to the contract with this change order is \$3,851.40.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Change Order No. 2 – Fischer’s Park Pedestrian Bridge.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, III, Laura Smith, Daniel M. Littley, Jr., Richard Marino, Daniel Bell
Voting No: N/A
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Ehrle
Assistant to Township Manager