

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Work Session
December 9, 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
Tom Zarko, Township Engineer
Clayton Reed, IT Manager
Paul T. Dickinson, Chief of Police

Present Remotely:

Colleen Ehrle, Assistant to 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 by 4:30 pm, prior to the meeting.
- The Board met in executive session prior to this evening's meeting to discuss an issue of litigation and a personnel matter.
- In accordance with the Pennsylvania 2nd Class Township Code, the Board of Supervisors will meet on Monday, January 4, 2021 at 7:00 pm to re-organize.
- The Elected Auditors Reorganization Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 pm, Tuesday, January 5, 2021.

Public Comments

Resident Vishnu Shah, of 1807 Red Oak Way, made the following comments/suggestions:

1. Street sign at Allentown and Reinert Road is not visible due to trees and utility pole, may need repositioning of street sign.

Chairman Wilson noted this concern would be forwarded to the Township's Public Works Department to address.

2. Allentown Road, between Forty Foot and Reinert Roads, is very difficult to navigate due to curves, may need to realign Allentown Road.

Chairman Wilson noted this was a state road and would be a very expensive project. One the Township would not be able to address on its own. Township staff is familiar with the issues. In the past, signage and line striping improvements were added by PennDOT.

3. Need traffic light at the intersection of Allentown and Reinert Roads, due to heavy traffic from the short cuts to the northeast extension.

Chairman Wilson responded that years ago safety improvements were made to this intersection, including new signage, improved sight lines and the removal of overgrown vegetation. Traffic counts in the past did not warrant a traffic light at this intersection.

Announcement and Introduction of New Chief of Police

After over 15 years serving as the Towamencin Township Chief of Police, Tim Dickinson will be retiring on January 4, 2021. Following an extensive recruitment and interview process, the Board is pleased to announce and introduce the law enforcement professional who has been selected to be the Township's next Police Chief, Timothy Troxel.

Troxel succeeds Chief Timothy Dickinson, who will be retiring from the force at the end of this year following a 43-year career in law enforcement, the last 15 of which were spent as the Chief of Police with Towamencin Township's Police Department. Troxel will commence his new position on January 4, 2021 following the administration of the oath of office at the Board of Supervisors' Reorganization Meeting that evening.

Timothy Troxel has been a police officer for over 25 years. He is currently a lieutenant with the Upper Moreland Township Police Department, serving as a member of the Command Staff for 38 full-time sworn police officers and six civilian staff. Upper Moreland is a 7.5 square mile municipality, with a population of 24,000, located in Montgomery County. Over the course of his law enforcement career, Troxel has served as a patrol officer, detective, patrol sergeant, and lieutenant. He was a member of the Montgomery County SWAT Team (East Region) for 22 years ultimately serving as Deputy Team Commander of the 50-officer unit.

Troxel holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and a Master's Degree in Public Safety Management from Saint Joseph's University. He has graduated from several police executive level management academies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation National

Academy and Northwestern University Center for Public Safety's School of Police Staff and Command.

Troxel has also been a police instructor for the past 22 years. He has guest lectured at Temple and Penn State Universities, and has presented for several professional association conferences at both the state and national level. He has received numerous awards over the course of his career, including the Meritorious Community Service Award from the National Liberty Museum, and the Team Member of the Year Award from the SWAT Team.

Chairman Wilson noted that Mr. Troxel made the selection easy and that he will be a great match for the Police Department, as well as, the community.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved the selection of Timothy Troxel as the new Police Chief, and approved his employment agreement, effective January 4, 2021.

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

Voting No: N/A

Abstaining: N/A

Absent: N/A

Mr. Troxel thanked the Board for their appointment, noting this was the pinnacle of his career and was looking forward to assuming this new role.

Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development

Conditional Use Hearing – Fitness Center (Towamencin Village Shopping Center)

The applicant is seeking conditional use approval per the Township's Zoning Code to allow a health club in the Entertainment Lifestyle Overlay District. A conditional use is a use that is appropriate for the zoning district in which it is permitted, but is subject to specific standards and a more detailed and formal review.

Chairman Wilson introduced Township Solicitor Jack Dooley, who presented the associated hearing exhibits. Mr. Dooley introduced Carl Weiner, Esq., representing the applicant, who made a presentation to the Board, along with John B. Anderson, P.E. of Cornerstone Consulting. A court reporter was present remotely to make a complete and formal record of the hearing. Solicitor Dooley closed the hearing, noting the Board of Supervisors would render a decision at one of their future meetings.

Waiver of Land Development - Fitness Center (Towamencin Village Shopping Center)

The Philadelphia Suburban Development Corporation is requesting a waiver of a formal land development process for the property that was subject of the preceding Conditional Use Hearing. Per the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, an improvement of a non-residential property or the division of space to create a leasehold is a land development.

Carl Weiner, Esq., and John B. Anderson, P.E. of Cornerstone Consulting, both representing the applicant, reviewed the Township Engineer's comments and the applicant's requested waivers with the Board of Supervisors, as outlined in the CKS review letter dated December 1, 2020.

On a motion by Supervisor Smith, seconded by Supervisor Littley, the Board authorized the preparation of a waiver of land development document by the Township Engineer and Solicitor, specifying site improvement provisions for a fitness center within the Towamencin Village Shopping Center.

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

Old Business

None

New Business

Warrant List

The December (1 of 2) 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 \$842,364.82.

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 November 24th. Supervisor Marino provided the Committee's report.

ADA Ramp Replacement Project Update - 63 of the 75 required ramps were completed to date. The increasing production and quality of construction has improved. It is expected that the contractor will complete the project prior to January 11, 2021, the contract completion date.

2021 Road Paving Program - RoadBotics roadway data collection was approximately 90 percent complete, data had been submitted to RoadBotics for assessment and the results are expected within the next few weeks. This data will shape the selection of roads to be included in the 2022 Paving Program. Supervisor Marino recommended that the specs for the 2021 program be completed for release in early spring of 2021 and include the 2020 and 2021 Roadway

Improvement Projects. It was suggested that a separate contract be prepared for the ADA ramps that would be completed in conjunction with the 2022 Paving Program. Finance Director Brooke Neve noted that \$1,650,000 has been budgeted for the 2021 Road Paving Program. David Hillmantel will prepare the paving bid documents and Mr. Zarko will prepare the ADA ramp bid documents. Supervisor Marino suggested Public Works consider using cold mill recycling for roads that do not include curbs for future roadway improvements.

Improper Sump Pump Outlets - The Committee discussed options for addressing sump pump outlets discharging through curbs, correction would be required in conjunction with upcoming Roadway Paving Programs. 26 locations were identified, where sump pumps are discharging through the curbing, via pipe penetrations. Options discussed included: installation of a u-drain manifold by Public Works to accommodate multiple sump pump discharges, back yard diversions, pop-ups outside of rights-of-way, seepage beds and storm inlet connections. CKS was preparing a list outlining the recommendations for each of the 26 locations. David Hillmantel will perform some preliminary investigation work in to the u-drain installations to ensure there are no potential conflicts.

MS4 Stormwater Program – A status update of Skippack Creek Alliance was provided by Tom Zarko. It was previously noted, the Alliance was disbanding due to perceived inequities in cost sharing. Recently, Worcester Township developed an optional approach where each municipality would save a uniform cost percentage, as compared to proceeding alone. It appears that the five (5) remaining municipalities are on board with this modified approach. At this point, the Inter-Municipal Cooperative Agreement is being revised and will be presented to Township Officials so that work with the Alliance can potentially move forward.

Resolution 20-51: Transfer of Titles – Regional SWAT Vehicles

There are two SWAT trucks titled to and insured by Towamencin Township. This was done several years ago because the trucks were at one time stored here and the previous Chief of Police was in charge of the SWAT team. The trucks were purchased with funds from the member municipalities of the original North Penn Tactical Response Team. Neither of the trucks are stored here, nor are they directly under the Township’s control. One of the trucks will be stored at Hatfield Township. The other is stored at Upper Gwynedd Township. Maintenance and repair issues would be more easily addressed in-house, by Hatfield and Upper Gwynedd, if the trucks were titled and registered to those respective jurisdictions. Staff recommends that the Board authorize the transfer of the titles to the two respective municipalities.

Vehicle	Transfer to
2004 GMC Savana	Hatfield Township
2007 Chevrolet 3500 Express	Upper Gwynedd Township

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Resolution 20-51, Transfer of Titles for Regional SWAT Vehicles.

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

Ordinance 20-07: Verizon Franchise Agreement

At the November 24th meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved the renewal of a franchise agreement with Verizon to continue providing cable video service throughout the Township. The action this evening would codify the agreement in ordinance format and provide for enforcement for any violations of the agreement.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Ordinance 20-07, Verizon Franchise Agreement.

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 20-52: 2020 Budget Amendment

The Second Class Township Code provides that the Board of Supervisors may amend the operating and capital budgets transferring unencumbered appropriations from one account to another. The Finance Committee has closely monitored revenues and expenditures throughout the year, and based on a year-end projection prepared by staff, it has been determined that certain budget line items need to be amended in the 2020 Budget as we close out the year.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Resolution 20-52, 2020 Budget Amendment.

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 20-53: Adopt 2021 Budget

The Township Supervisors authorized the advertising and release for public inspection of the Township's 2021 Budget at its November 18, 2020 meeting. This resolution will adopt the budget as presented.

Highlights include:

- Increase in property tax millage by .75 mills (first increase in 10 years)
- No increase in sewer rental fees
- Retention of Homestead / Farmstead Exception at \$45,000
- Retention of 5% General Fund Balance

- Funding for the Volunteer Firefighter incentive program
- Continuation of robust Sanitary Sewer System maintenance
- Expanded Road Paving Program, triple the total miles
- Completion of the Forty Foot Road Widening Project
- Broadening programming to include six concerts at Fischer’s Park during summer
- Pool tiles to be replaced and pool to remain open under StandGuard Aquatics
- Construction to begin on the KRI trail with grant funding
- Tree and shade to be provided at Fischer’s Park tot-lot
- Development of the Veterans Memorial Master Plan

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Resolution 20-53, Adopt 2021 Budget.

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 20-54: Sewer Capital Fund Transfer in lieu of “TAN”

Certain Township funds incur temporary indebtedness in anticipation of the receipt of taxes and other revenue during the first two quarters of the year. Rather than incur the costs of a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) from a bank, the Sewer Capital Fund has funds available to temporarily lend to the General, Fire, Park and Recreation and Debt Services Funds as needed in the short term. Staff recommends that a short-term loan not to exceed \$600,000 from the Sewer Capital Fund be made available in anticipation of taxes and other revenue. The loan shall bear interest at the weekly variable rate computed on the basis of a 365-day year, and paid monthly to the Sewer Capital Fund. The principal portion of the loan shall be repaid no later than December 31, 2021.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Resolution 20-54, Sewer Capital Fund Transfer in lieu of TAN.

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 20-55: North Valley View Way Street Light District

The Township’s only established Street Light District is located near the intersection of Valley Forge Road and Morris Road. Property owners within this area are assessed annually to fund the operation and maintenance of the six streetlights in this development. These lights were converted to LED lamps in 2017. The amount assessed to each property is \$35.00 annually.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved Resolution 20-55, North Valley View Way Street Light District.

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 20-56: Sewer Rental Rate

This resolution will establish the annual sewer rate of \$375 for an EDU, which will retain the same rate as in previous years.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved Resolution 20-56, Sewer Rental Rate.

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 20-57: Tax Levy

This action establishes the millage rate at 4.558 for 2021 to satisfy the requirements of the budget.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Resolution 20-57, Tax Levy.

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 20-58: Homestead Exemption

This resolution establishes the Homestead Exemption at \$45,000. In 2000, the County implemented the Homestead Exemption Program that allows for the reduction of the amount of assessed value of a property taxed by the Township. In order to participate, the property must be the primary residence of the property owner. Commercial properties and rental properties do not qualify. Once a property is participating, it will remain in the program unless its status changes (i.e. sold or rented). A new buyer is required to register with the County in order to participate. As part of its budget process, The Township annually determines the amount of exemption. Those participating homeowners will receive an exemption on the township portion of their tax bill only.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved Resolution 20-58, Homestead Exemption.

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 20-59: Farmstead Exemption

The farmstead exclusion is a similar method of targeting real property tax relief to farmers. It allows real property tax relief to farmers on the taxes they pay on farm buildings (other than the farm house, which receives tax relief through the homestead exclusion), as long as at least one farm owner lives on that farm. This is in addition to other existing real property tax relief programs aimed at farms, such as Act 319 (often referred to as "Clean and Green"), which reduces the assessed value of farmland.

By law, if homestead exclusion is offered in a taxing jurisdiction, the farmstead exclusion must also be offered. The farmstead exclusion rate is set by the governing body, and cannot exceed the amount of the homestead exclusion. This establishes the Farmstead Exemption at \$45,000.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved Resolution 20-58, Homestead Exemption.

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 20-60: Adoption of 2021 Fee Schedule

This resolution establishes the fees charged for various Township permits and services, including zoning, land development, building, fire suppression systems, etc.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved Resolution 20-60, Adoption of 2021 Fee Schedule.

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 20-61: Investment Policy

At the recommendation of the Township Appointed Auditors several years ago, the Finance Committee prepared an investment policy that was subsequently approved by the Board. The purpose of the policy was to establish cash management and investment guidelines for the stewardship of public funds under the jurisdiction of Towamencin Township. It is the policy of Towamencin Township to invest its funds in a manner that will provide the highest investment return with the maximum security, while meeting the daily cash flow needs of the Township, and to comply with all state statutes governing the investment of public funds. In accordance with the recommendation of the auditors, the policy is reviewed annually. The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve the continuation of this policy for 2021.

(This policy includes investments permitted for Second Class Townships through Act 10 of 2016. Act 10 was signed in March 2016 to expand the allowable investments to add “Prime Securities” to the list of permitted types of municipal fund investments. Prime Securities include Commercial Paper, Bankers’ Acceptances, and Negotiable Certificates of Deposit.)

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved Resolution 20-61, Investment Policy.

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

Appointment to Towamencin Township Infrastructure Authority

Due to a member’s passing, a vacancy occurred on the Towamencin Township Infrastructure Authority. The Authority is charged with the construction of transportation improvements within the Village area. The Board is asked to consider an appointment to fill the remainder of the vacant term to December 31, 2022.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board appointed Supervisor Daniel Bell to fill this TTIA vacancy.

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

Proposal to Update 2017 GASB 34 Sewer Evaluation Study

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 Finance Committee has recommended that this report be updated to include data through 2020. The cost to complete the update will be between \$4,000 to \$8,000.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Smith, the Board approved proposal to update the 2017 GASB 34 Sewer Evaluation Study.

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

Chairman Wilson wished residents a safe and happy holiday season, a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The Board will reconvene for its Reorganization Meeting on January 4, 2021. He added that Fischer's Park will be open at night for the remainder of the holiday season for residents to enjoy the holiday decorations.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Ehrle

Assistant to Township Manager