

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Work Session
April 14, 2021
7:30 PM**

Present:

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

Staff:

Robert A. Ford, Township Manager
Brooke Neve, Finance Director/Assistant Township Manager
Jack Dooley, Esq., Township Solicitor
Mary Stover, Township Engineer
Niral Modi, IT Staff
Timothy Troxel, Chief of Police

Present Remotely:

Colleen Ehrle, Assistant to Township Manager

Absent:

Laura Smith, Asst. Treasurer/Asst. Secretary

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:36 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 just prior to and will meet after this evening's meeting to discuss matters of personnel and potential litigation. The Board also met in executive session on Saturday, March 27th and Tuesday, April 6th for personnel matters.
- Both the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue recently announced the income tax filing due date for individuals for the 2020 tax year will be automatically extended from April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021. For local earned income taxes, the Montgomery County Tax Collection Committee has adopted a policy establishing a limited time amnesty program waiving penalty and interest charges should any individual taxpayer file a final 2020 tax return after April 15, 2021 but on or before May 17, 2021.

Awards & Recognition

Veterans Advisory Committee Presentation to Jeanie Sinz

On Veterans Day, November 11, 2020, the Township Veterans Advisory Committee held a ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park to recognize the passing of the late Jim Sinz, Captain, United States Navy, retired. Jim was a member of the Township Board of Supervisors and a founding member of the Township's Veterans Advisory Committee. On that day, an American Flag was flown over the cemetery in Jim's honor.

Michael Lewis and Joe Meehan, Chair and Vice Chair of the Veterans Advisory Committee, expressed their gratitude to Jim's commitment and dedication to his Country, the Township, the Veterans Advisory Committee, and the Memorial Park. They then presented Jeanie Sinz with the American flag and pictures taken from the ceremony. Jeanie thanked the Committee members and the Board for the gesture. Chairman Wilson thanked Mr. Lewis and Mr. Meehan for all their time and work on the Committee.

Public Comments

Resident James Richwine, of 2060 Spring Valley Road, raised concerns regarding the Township potentially selling Towamencin Municipal Authority, the Township's sewer authority, see attachment.

Chairman Wilson thanked Mr. Richwine for his comment, noting the points he raised were all considerations the Board would have to study and account for with a financial analysis as they move through the process. Mr. Wilson added the Township is only in the bidding phase, with bids expected in June. A full review of the monetization information, along with a financial analysis, will be presented in the future.

Resident Vishnu Shah, of 1807 Red Oak Way, made traffic suggestions related to a street sign at Reinert Road, the Allentown/Reinert Road intersection and suggested the realignment of Allentown, between Forty Foot and Reinert Road, see attached.

Chairman Wilson noted the street sign concern would be forwarded to the Public Works Department for the removal of any overgrown vegetation to improve visibility of the Reinert Road street sign. In response to the suggested traffic light addition at the intersection of Allentown and Reinert Roads, Mr. Wilson noted that traffic count criteria must be met to warrant an additional traffic signal. He noted adding a light may actually increase the frequency of short-cuts in the area.

Mr. Wilson noted major improvements along Allentown Road, a state road, such as realigning the roadway, would be very costly with two water crossings and right-of-way acquisitions and it would not be something the Township could financially take on alone. He recommended Mr. Shah reach out to the local State Representative and State Senator documenting his concerns and his realignment suggestion. Mr. Wilson noted this roadway is not included as part of PennDOT's 12-year transportation plan.

Zoning, Subdivision and Land Development

Starbucks Signage Application Review

Starbucks is seeking approval to place a second wall sign on the building currently under construction, located at 1735 Sumneytown Pike, at the corner of Towamencin Avenue and Sumneytown Pike. The code allows one wall sign on a building façade along each street frontage. Starbucks is proposing a wall sign on the western side of the building, facing the interior private drive. The Township has determined that the private drive is not a street and therefore the additional proposed wall sign is not permitted. The property is subject to a 2006 court stipulation and, therefore, the application requires Board approval.

Kimberly Freimuth Esq., representing the applicant, reviewed the Starbucks' sign application package, focusing on the proposed interior sign, labeled sign B, at the building's frontage. The Board had no concerns with the proposed sign.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Marino, the Board directed staff to prepare a resolution for consideration of approval at the next Board meeting.

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

Chairman Wilson asked when is the anticipated opening. Ms. Freimuth responded August.

Old Business

None

New Business

Strategic Stormwater Management Plan Update

At the recommendation of the Public Works Committee, the Board authorized an update to the Township's 2007 "Strategic Stormwater Management Plan" in order to better evaluate locations where stormwater related problems are occurring, develop potential solutions with associated cost estimate and provide a prioritized ranking based upon severity.

Township Engineer Mary Stover provided a summary of the recently completed update. The project scope included an updated plan from 2007, with additional locations identified by Township staff. Overall 16 locations were evaluated, seven of which were identified for potential improvements. The priority list was reviewed noting the concerns for each, mapping each location in Township. The priority list of potential improvements, include:

- Keeler Road Bridge, between Michael Way and Quarry Road
- Former in-stream detention basin and stream crossing at Rittenhouse Road, near Ridgewood Way
- Weikel Road, between Snyder Road and Orchard Lane
- Storm sewer repair at Grist Mill Drive and Spur Road intersection

- Keeler Road between Tennis Circle and Allentown Road
- Reiff Road - low point in road
- Basin modification near Grist Mill Drive and Spur Road intersection

Ms. Stover then reviewed the next steps for tackling the priority list, which included:

- Review priority projects with Public Works Committee;
- Determine which projects can be addressed by Public Works;
- Potential meeting with Weikel Road residents;
- Discuss budgeting with Township staff and/or Finance Committee.

Supervisor Bell asked if the plan’s prioritization would remain the same even after temporary measures are taken to address the structural concerns of the Keeler Road Bridge. Ms. Stover responded that the Keeler Road Bridge would likely remain a top priority.

Supervisor Littley asked if the Weikel Road area would include curbing. Ms. Stover replied the Township would have to gauge resident preferences, noting they may prefer a walkway and storm sewer system.

Authorization to Advertise Ordinance Amendment – Weight Restrictions / Keeler Road Bridge

Following recent inspections by the Township Engineer and structural engineering consultants, it was determined that the existing bridge on Keeler Road, between Quarry Road and Michael Way, is deteriorating, resulting in a reduction of its structural capacity. While the engineers’ analysis concluded that continuing deterioration will be gradual and provided evidence of potential failure over a period of time, they have recommended the condition of the bridge be formally monitored so that it can continue to be used until it is reinforced. Additionally, they have recommended that the bridge be posted with a weight limit of 8 tons in order to decelerate further deterioration. This proposed ordinance would amend Chapter 147 (“VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC”) of the Towamencin Township Code to ordain a weight limit on this bridge.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Marino, the Board authorized staff to advertise the proposed amendment and schedule for adoption at the Board’s April 28th meeting.

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

Resolution 21-14: PennDOT Traffic Signal Maintenance Agreement

A traffic signal application must be submitted to PennDOT for any new traffic signal installation or modification to an existing traffic signal. A resolution is required to be submitted to PennDOT for each application. PennDOT has implemented a new process for such applications that will eliminate the need for a resolution each time. The new agreement applies to all traffic signals owned by the permittee in perpetuity. The Township’s Traffic Engineer researched the changes and recommends that the Township proceed with the resolution and signing the associated maintenance agreement.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Marino, the Board approved Resolution 21-14, PennDOT Traffic Signal Maintenance Agreement.

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

Police Department – Acceptance Donations Request

The Police Department recently received the following donations:

1.	Wilbur & Elsie Eastlack	\$100
2.	Immanuel Church of the Nazarene	\$50

The Board must consider acceptance of this gift in accordance with the Township’s Donation Policy.

On a motion by Supervisor Bell, seconded by Supervisor Littley, the Board authorized the Police Department’s acceptance of the noted donations.

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

Ratify Approval of Change Order #3 – Forty Foot Road Widening Agreement

Change Order No. 3 includes the additional quantities of work necessary to remediate all areas where undercutting was deemed necessary due to unsuitable soil conditions as identified by PennDOT. During a meeting held on April 1, 2021 between all parties, it was determined that the contractor’s proposed price of \$113.36 per cubic yard for the additional quantity is not agreeable to the Township. For that reason, the contractor and Township agreed to authorize the additional work at a minimum of the bid unit price of \$87.00 per cubic yard and a maximum of \$113.36 per cubic yard, with the final price to be established by the cost of work provisions set forth in the contract.

Supervisor Marino questioned the contractor’s proposed unit price in the change order compared with the noted unit price cited in the contract for the same work description. Mr. Marino explained his experience in the construction business, noting often when there is significant unforeseen work added to a contracted project, the unit price is reduced, not increased.

It was the consensus of the Board to table the item until the next meeting upon receiving more information and a better justification for the unit price increase for the additional undercutting work.

Authorization to Advertise 2021 ADA Ramp Replacement Project for Bids

The Township intends to seek bids for a contract to replace 24 handicap ramps to meet ADA compliance on streets scheduled for paving in 2022. The work will include 460 linear feet of concrete curb replacements, 3,527 square feet of concrete sidewalk replacements, and 263 linear feet of concrete cheek wall.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Marino, the Board approved the advertising of bids for the 2021 ADA Ramp Replacement Project.

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

Amendment to Human Resource Agreement to Consider Additional Consulting Services

At their January 27th meeting, the Board approved the engagement of human resource consulting services from the firm Comunale & Wagenmann to conduct a search for a new Township Manager with Township Manager Robert Ford notifying the Board of his plans to retire later in the year. The Administration has recommended an amendment to the Comunale & Wagenmann human resources agreement to conduct additional human resources services in the amount of \$12,000.

On a motion by Supervisor Littley, seconded by Supervisor Bell, the Board approved the Comunale & Wagenmann amendment for additional human resource services in the amount of \$12,000.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Ehrle
Assistant to Township Manager

From: James Richwine (2060 Spring Valley Rd)
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 2:36 PM
To: Info Towa
Subject: Public Comment for Supervisors

I respect and appreciate the Board's service for us. But, your decision to go down the path towards selling the sewage system has me concerned and puzzled. You have couched a sale as a means to avoid future upgrade and replacement costs, and as a windfall for the township. But I think that business fundamentals prohibit both of those benefits from being realized. As to cost avoidance, the new owner will have to pass on to us ratepayers every penny of expenses they incur, plus a share of their corporate overhead, plus profit. A sale would not avoid costs to residents, it will increase them. As to the windfall, the new owner must pass on to us their interest and principal payments on the purchase money. The tragic irony is that residents will be paying over again for a system they built long ago. The sale would not be a windfall, it would simply be an advance on what effectively is a tax increase.

What am I missing here? If, in the wake of Upper Gwynedd's bailout, you simply feel we can't afford the system on our own, please try to forge a new alliance with a neighboring municipality (including Upper Gwynedd).

James Richwine
Brookside Farms development
Towamencin township
(2060 Spring Valley Rd)

From: Vishnu
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:58 PM
To: Info Towa
Subject: Township Meeting

We would like to make following suggestions for township meeting on Wednesday, April 14, at 7 :30:

1. It is very difficult to make right or left turn from Reinert Road to Allentown Road. This is due to heavy traffic and the curve on Allentown Road. Travelers take short cut to go to NE Extention Turn Pike. Traffic light at Alllentown Road and Reinert road will help. People in development live with small children.
2. The street sign of Reinert Road is not visible due to trees and utility pole. Visible street sigh will help.
3. Allentown Road between Forty Foot Road and Reinert Road is irregularly curved and it is not safe to travel. Realignment of Allentown Road will help.

Thanks.

Vishnu and Rashmi Shah

1807 Red Oak Way
Hatfield, Pa 19440