

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021

Public Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Board of Supervisors held virtually was called to order on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 7:01 PM by Greg Galtere, Chairperson.

Supervisors Present:

Gregory Galtere, Chairperson
David Speece, Vice Chairperson
Michelle Kircher
John Cusatis
Joseph Staub

Absent:

None

Others in Attendance:

Jeff Bartlett, Township Manager
Laurie Getz, Township Secretary
Clarence Hamm, Highway Superintendent
Elizabeth Magovern, Hartman Valeriano Magovern & Lutz, P.C.
Wendell Morris, Chief of Police
Joseph Rogosky, Great Valley Consultants, Township Engineer
Jennifer Savage, Finance Director
Will Brugger, Zoning Officer

REGULAR MEETING

The Meeting was opened with the Pledge to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Agenda Items

Public comments were submitted in advance of the meeting via email and voicemail. The e-mail comments were dictated by computer software.

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Galtere announced two executive sessions. One held on January 18th to discuss personnel and real estate. The second was held this evening prior to the meeting to discuss personnel.

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REGULAR APPROVALS

Regular Minutes – January 11, 2021

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Ms. Kircher, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the January 11, 2021 Board of Supervisors Minutes.

Disbursements – January 25, 2021

Ms. Savage explained several items included in the disbursements. Derivan Electric charges was related to lighting installed at the RCC to assist with the HVAC replacement project, Foremost is an annual order of Police Department community handout items, Simone Collins charges were for land development review and charges related to the parks grant application, McCarthy and Co and TriState Finance is for Business Privilege Tax related charges.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED payment of the bills presented on the Disbursement List dated January 25, 2021 in the amounts of \$123,155.61 in the General Fund; \$15,415.72 in the Utility Fund; \$4,340.90 in the Developer's Escrow Fund; \$9,711.75 in the Sewer Fund; \$1,783.89 in the Golf Fund; \$6,176.62 in the RCC F&B Fund; \$200.00 in the Promenade Fund; \$13,942.50 in the Capital Improvements Fund; \$350.00 in the Equipment Fund; \$27,832.98 in the Debt Service Fund; \$75.00 in the Park Fund; \$9,942.72 in the State Liquid Fuels Fund.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Savage reviewed the year-end report. Several revenue items came in under budget, the first was the recycling grant. These were timing-issues, we will receive the money but it did not come in prior to the end of the year. Earned Income Tax was the largest revenue item impacted by the pandemic, ended about \$223K under budget, which was less than we anticipated. Landfill host fees came in under budget, it's a best approximation based on anticipated tonnage provided by the landfill. This year the estimate was about \$100K off.

Transfer from the reserve fund (old sewer fund), \$575K under budget. The monies received there were past-due sewer payments. The budget anticipated that we would receive payment from outstanding insurance claims which unfortunately have not yet resolved.

Expenditures were about \$400K over budget and the primary factor was the residential recycling cost. The bid was received after the budget was completed in 2019 and the increase had not been anticipated.

Mr. Staub asked about an error on the report. Ms. Savage explained that the cover sheet had a typo, encumbrances were not included in the total expenses line-item. Recommended approving subject to that correction.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the December 2020 Treasurer's Report with the correction to the encumbrance line, subject to audit.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Monthly Golf Report

Mr. Galtere explained that the report is available on the Township's website. **Mr. Staub** commented that rounds were up by about 5000, and the club for the year was \$116K revenue over expenses for the year. **Ms. Savage** commented that the course saw the highest number of rounds ever since the Township owned the course.

Mr. Galtere shared that for 2021 memberships have increased about \$20,000.

Update on Outstanding Sewer Accounts Receivable Balance

Ms. Savage made a presentation on the outstanding sewer accounts receivable balance, a copy of this report is attached to these minutes.

30-day demand letters were sent to accounts with significant outstanding balances. 30-day period has passed at this point, many established payment plans the rest will be filed in civil court.

Discussion on Proposed Fire Department Tax Incentive Program

Mr. Galtere explained that this item was first discussed on December 14th.

Mr. Bartlett explained that the Township's current ordinance allows for 15% property tax credit for fire department volunteers, the newly enacted legislation allows for up to 100% and expands the availability to the school district for consideration. The decision before the Board currently is whether to increase the percentage in our ordinance.

Mr. Cusatis asked if the Earned Income Tax Credit also changed in the new legislation. **Mr. Bartlett** replied that it did not. Only the property tax credit has changed.

Mr. Galtere discussed the disparity that exists between the amounts of current credits being received. **Mr. Cusatis** replied that the credit is on property taxes, so the larger home or higher value home the higher credit the person received.

Mr. Cusatis stated that he would be willing to go to a 50% tax credit at this point. **Mr. Speece** stated that people who are renting get no benefit at all. Would be open to considering options for better incentive programs. Asked if this percentage can be adjusted at any time. **Mr. Bartlett** explained that it can be changed, it becomes more of a budgeting matter.

Discussion on benefit of tax credit program and future potential financial impact, and effectiveness of the program as a recruitment tool.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Speece, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED to increase from 15% to 50% for the 2020 Tax Year.

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MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Speece, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED authorizing the Township Solicitor to advertise and amend the Township's Ordinance to reflect the increase to 50%.

NEW BUSINESS

295 W 49th Street Variance Request

Mr. Brugger explained that the applicant on this matter would like to construct an in-ground pool. They are seeking relief from the front yard setback. This is a corner lot, so there are effectively two front yard setbacks to meet. The Planning Commission recommended to the Zoning Hearing Board approving the variance because the two front yard setbacks is considered a hardship. The Board tonight can take a no comment stance, or make a recommendation for or against the variance. The Board may also request the Township Solicitor to attend the Zoning Hearing Board meeting.

The Board opted to remain neutral on this matter.

Consider Approval of Bid Proposal for Hilldale Road Storm Sewer Project

Mr. Rogosky explained that bids were opened on January 19th, four bids were opened. The lowest bidder is Bertolet Construction which is a local company out of Wernersville. The bid came in at \$295,320. Recommending that the Board award the low bid.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED awarding Hilldale Road Storm Sewer Project to Bertolet Construction in the amount of \$295,320.

Consider Preliminary Plan Approval for Berks County MDC 23-2-03

Mr. Rogosky explained that at the last meeting plans were presented for waiver request for this property. The plans have been reviewed by all parties, and were presented to the Planning Commission on January 18th. The Planning Commission has recommended approving the preliminary plans contingent upon addressing all outstanding items.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Speece, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Preliminary Plan Approval for Berks County MDC 23-2-03.

Consider Approval of Traisr Permitting Software Contract

Mr. Brugger explained that Township staff have been researching new permitting software for some time. The existing system is outdated and is in need of an upgrade. Several options were researched, and this is the best option as opined by the staff. Several other municipalities employ this software. This is a budgeted item.

Mr. Galtere asked if the staff talked with other municipalities who use it. **Mr. Brugger** confirmed and received good reviews from other users. Discussion on the cost of the software, and contract length. There is only a one-year commitment. The data belongs to the Township.

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Mr. Bartlett stated that he has had a positive experience with this software before coming to Exeter. There are many components to the software, and it may be helpful to other departments and not just the Engineering Department. Recommends approving.

Mr. Staub would like to see the proposal contain more specific costs and contract information. There are a lot of options included, and would like more certain information. **Mr. Bartlett** explained that the variance comes into play because it can't be fully anticipated the amount of work that will go into the implementation of the software. Suggested that he and Mr. Brugger bring this item back to the next agenda with a more concrete cost.

Authorize Purchase of 2021 Mack 10 Wheel Dump Truck with Plow and Salt Spreader at a cost of \$223,000

Mr. Piersol explained that this will replace a 1991 model that has exceeded its useful life. Explained that we are also trying to transition away from manual transmissions because they require different CDL licensing.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Authorize Purchase of 2021 Mack 10 Wheel Dump Truck with Plow and Salt Spreader at a cost of \$223,000.

Approve Resolution Supporting the Filing of an Application to DCED for the Designation of a Keystone Communities Enterprise Zone

Mr. Bartlett explained that this resolution is to support the Greater Berks Development Fund to update their program application with the state. This designation allows for businesses to apply for state tax credits. Could be an incentive to developers, and does not impact the Township's tax base.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Approve Resolution Supporting the Filing of an Application to DCED for the Designation of a Keystone Communities Enterprise Zone.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clarence Hamm; Public Works Department: Continuing to cut trees at the Reading Country Club. Contractor completed new stairs on the RCC property. Removed all picnic tables from Community Park in preparation of demolition work. Preparing for potential winter weather tomorrow.

Joe Rogosky, Township Engineer, Great Valley Consultants: Nothing to report.

Chief Morris; Police Department: The Department has begun recruiting for vacancies in the department. Information is available on the Department's website, Indeed, and other sites.

Elizabeth Magovern, Solicitor; Nothing to report.

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Jeff Bartlett, Township Manager: Provided a COVID update, have been working on internal policies and attending local trainings to obtain the most up to date information. Continuing to work to keep staff safe.

PUBLIC COMMENT – General Comments

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None

SUPERVISOR REPORTS:

Mr. Cusatis: Nothing to report.

Ms. Kircher: Nothing to report.

Mr. Speece: Wished everyone well struggling with COVID.

Mr. Staub: Thanked local businesses and golf community for the over \$27,000 raised for charity in the area. Congratulated everyone who was a part of it.

Mr. Galtere: Stated that someone has approached him regarding Gibraltar Road, there are a number of people who walk on the road where there is no sidewalk. Concerned with the safety. Sharing the comment for consideration by the Township.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis, seconded by Mr. Staub, the meeting adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Getz
Township Secretary