

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Public Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Board of Supervisors was called to order on Monday, February 24, 2020 at 7:00PM at the Reading Country Club by David Speece, Chairperson.

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

Absent: None

Others in Attendance: Michele Gilbert, Interim Township Manager
Laurie Getz, Township Secretary
Ed Kelly, Fox Rothschild, Solicitor
Wendell Morris, Chief of Police
Clarence Hamm, Highway Superintendent
Joseph Rogosky, Great Valley Consultants, Township Engineer

REGULAR MEETING

The Meeting was opened with the Pledge to the Flag.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Gilbert announced that the Township Easter Egg Scramble will be held on Saturday, April 4th, 2020 at 11am at the Trout Run Sports Complex. There is a rain date of Saturday, April 11th. Proceeds from raffle ticket purchases at the event will benefit the Exeter Area Food Pantry, donation of canned goods will also be collected at the event.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Agenda Items

John Carmello; Asked a question about the purchase of new computers for the police department. The agenda states that they are out of compliance with security requirements, thought that security was a software issue versus a hardware issue. Questioned the price, thinks it's expensive.

Chief Morris responded explaining that the computers being referenced are old and unable to be updated with new security software. Chief also explained that the purchase price also includes security software.

David Hughes; Asked if the Board Members who previously disclosed that they are members of the RCC have received a response from the Ethics Commission. Questioned if it's appropriate to discuss the matter

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prior to that opinion coming in.

Mr. Speece responded indicating that the 30-day response time is not yet up.

Mr. Cusatis agreed that it might be better to wait until the opinion of the Ethics Committee is in.

Mr. Hughes discussed the appointment of Jen Savage as Berks County Tax Collection Committee Delegate. Expressed his opinion that she is not qualified for the position.

Bill Clark; Expressed thanks for the Board holding a public meeting for the RCC, he learned a lot that he did not know. Discussed finances of the RCC, feels that Board members are stewards of the Township's finances. Feels that prior Board members did not serve the public appropriately. Discussed High Associates, does not like that High was in charge of the search but also put in a proposal. Mentioned computers, asked if they are personal property or Township property.

Dorothy Reilly; Stated that she does not know what the RCC discussion will entail. Reiterated that she finds it difficult to comment on the agenda. She attended the RCC Town Hall in hopes of learning. Finds it difficult to find things on the website. Doesn't want to have to scroll down on the pages to find information. Summarized the RCC proposals that she reviewed on the website. Hopes the public's responses at the Town Hall meeting will be taken into account. Would like to see Town Hall meetings scheduled on alternate weeks from regular meetings.

REGULAR APPROVALS

Approval of February 10, 2020 Board of Supervisor Meeting Minutes

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board APPROVED the February 10, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes.

Opposed by Ms. Kircher

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Galtere asked what future revenues means. **Ms. Savage** explained that is from the budgeted revenues.

Mr. Staub asked about Landfill host fees.

Mr. Galtere asked about unemployment compensation, stated that it seemed high in the beginning of the year. Ms. Savage explained that you earn it in the beginning of the year, it's capped.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the January, 2020 Treasurer's Report subject to audit.

Disbursements

Mr. Staub asked about AJ Blosenski charge of \$45,000. **Ms. Savage** explained it is based on the recycling bid amount. Asked about BlackCypher monthly fee. **Ms. Savage** explained that this is being

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reviewed to see if it's a necessary service. It is a one-year contract which will expire in the summer.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Speece, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED payment of the bills presented on the Disbursement List dated February 24, 2020 in the amounts of \$214,844.28 in the General Fund; \$16,005.23 in the Utility Fund; \$440.00 in the K9 Fund; \$766.08 in the Developer's Escrow Fund; \$24,984.72 in the Sewer Fund; \$8,199.97 in the Golf Fund; \$6,085.55 in the RCC F&B Fund; \$6,078.40 in the Promenade Fund; \$23,455.17 in the State Liquid Fuels Fund.

OLD BUSINESS

Follow-up Discussion on RFQ Submissions for the Reading Country Club and Determination of Long-Term Plan.

Mr. Speece explained that the purpose of this discussion is to get feedback from the Board. There were 177 people in attendance at the RCC Town Hall meeting.

Mr. Staub stated that he thinks the RCC is a Township asset. He does not necessarily think that the Township needs to run it. His concern is that if it is sold, the Township may not get a fair price for it. He has seen incorrect information circulating regarding the original sales price. Finds misinformation to be a problem. There are 2500 municipal courses in the US, some local. Thinks food and beverage service needs to be up and running. Thinks the negative balances on the RCC's finances should be zeroed out, this includes legal fees. There should be a picture of the RCC on the Township website, does not think there is one. Would like to see us reach out to other municipal courses to form a plan.

Mr. Galtere stated that he is a member of the RCC. Asked the Solicitor if it should preclude him from commenting. Solicitor Ed Kelly stated no. Mr. Galtere would like to see it remain a golf course. Stated every Town Hall meeting yields the same result. 44 spoke, 39 were in support of the golf course. Last year, Derrick and Brian ran the course very well resulting in a \$10K profit despite many obstacles. Significant issue being the lack of a restaurant. Comment at the Town Hall regarding retail being a dying business resonated with him. If golf is a dying business, we still end up with open space. If it's developed and retail dies, there will be vacant buildings.

Ms. Kircher believes that the course was purchased to save the property. If it had been developed it would have resulted in more schools, more traffic, and higher school taxes. If it doesn't end up as a golf course, it will at least be open space. Open space is important, does not want more congestion. Everyone she has spoken to wants to keep the course.

Mr. Cusatis stated that the RCC is on the website, and it was in the newsletter when Mr. Cusatis became chair. \$36M is the amount it will cost in total. Would like to see it be a park, no opinion on golf either way. Thinks we should let the committees play out. Perhaps develop two holes on one side of the course into something. Does not think the Township should manage it either way.

Mr. Staub discussed the debt, right now the millage will cover the debt service. Eventually, that will not be the case. There is a balloon payment at the end of the term. Important to consider the totality.

Mr. Cusatis pointed out that the debt service had to be raised last year as a result of the misappropriation of bond payments by a prior Board.

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Ms. Savage explained that the balloon payment was not intended to be paid out of the debt service.

Mr. Speece expressed thanks to those who attended the Town Hall meeting. Stated that it's challenging to run a business without a long-term plan. Explained that the RFQ process began about a year ago to seek out all available options. Stated that we overpaid for the property, but that issue is a decision of the past. Debt service is the debt service, there is no way to get rid of it. We should learn from past mistakes. A choice was made in 2005 when the Township purchased the property to avoid seeing development on the land. Over the past 15-years there has been a lot of learning. The three businesses need to run as one, not competing. There needs to be a synergistic relationship. We need a long-term plan. He has reached out to other Townships who have a municipal golf course, they see it as an important part of their community. Larry Hirsch is in attendance to share information. Mr. Speece thinks that with the help of others, and by learning from past mistakes we can move forward and focus on optimizing the business. Perspectives need to be broadened. Wants green space no matter what, once it's developed that option is gone.

Mr. Speece opened the floor up for options. Sees two paths, optimizing the business or developing.

Mr. Staub asked if the motion should be made while the ethics committee opinion is pending.

Mr. Galtere stated that at a recent training he learned that submitting to the ethics committee would be a proactive thing to do, but is not required. If there are not three votes, he could vote.

Motion of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Staub the board APPROVED the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a manager for the entire Reading Country Club operation.

Mr. Speece and **Mr. Galtere** ABSTAINED.

Mr. Galtere suggested that the RFP should not be limited to just one set of options.

Mr. Speece asked Larry Hirsh to approach the podium for Q&A. Larry Hirsh provided his personal background, explained that he was approached by High Associates to assist in the golf search. Stated there is considerable interest in the RCC as a golf property, and food and beverage service. Biggest obstacle in marketing efforts were that they were limited to marketing as a lease opportunity and there was also a lack of commitment by the Township on capital improvements. Mr. Hirsh suggested in November that some feedback he received was that if the Township were to make a capital commitment, or if the Township would be willing to work with a management company on a contract basis that it would be likely to garner more interest. Suggested broadening the RFP more than the RFQ had been. He stated that there is competition in the market, but thinks that overall the property hasn't been effectively marketed and managed in the past. Suggested it would be a good idea to complete a market analysis, and determine what the physical needs are of the property. After all information has been obtained, it should then be put out for proposals. He likes broadening the RFP process because it allows for the Township's goals to be expressed while also receiving feedback from potential interested parties.

Mr. Cusatis asked Mr. Hirsh what some things are that can be done on the property other than golf. Mr. Hirsh stated that an inherent problem of a golf course is that it's an inefficient use of land. However, the Township has decided that it should remain a recreational property. Winter sports can occur, fireworks,

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community cookouts, other recreational activities. The property is not limited to just golf. Would like to identify what other places are doing more effectively on recreational activities. Determine best use for the property.

Mr. Hughes stated that the best restaurants in his experience are separate from the golf operations. Asked what Mr. Hirsh's recommendation would be. Mr. Hirsh stated that he is not opposed to the idea of splitting golf from food and beverage, but it would be easiest and perhaps best for the Township if the operator coming in can operate both. There are operators out there that are comfortable and very good at running both.

Mr. Speece asked for Mr. Hirsh's opinion on models, other local courses have varying models. Mr. Hirsh stated that it's important to consider multiple options. It might be best to deal with two parties, but easier to deal with one. **Mr. Speece** reviewed the RFQ process, explained that Mr. Hirsh handled the golf portion of the RFQ process. He asked what Mr. Hirsch would need going forward. **Mr. Hirsh** stated he would like to work with the Township to develop the RFP to ensure it's the most marketable option. The RFP needs to have flexibility.

Mr. Speece asked if it would be appropriate to have Mr. Galtere and Ms. Kircher work with Mr. Hirsh on the RFP as part of the Golf/Restaurant RCC Committees.

The Board agreed that Mr. Hirsh would prepare a proposal for review by the board for professional services.

NEW BUSINESS

Approve Resolution Appointing Jennifer Savage as Berks County Tax Collection Committee Delegate.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Speece, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Resolution No. 08 Appointing Jennifer Savage as Berks County Tax Collection Committee Delegate.

Appointment of DROP Police Pension Plan Trustee

Mr. Speece clarified that this is a temporary appointment in the absence of a Township Manager.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED appointing Jennifer Savage as DROP Police Pension Plan Trustee.

Approval of Revisions to Stormwater Quality Operations and Maintenance Manual

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Ms. Kircher, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED revisions to Stormwater Quality Operations and Maintenance Manual.

Approve Agreement with Simone Collins to Prepare and Submit DCED and DCNR Parks Grants Applications.

Ms. Gilbert explained that there are two grants that the Township would like to apply for in order to complete renovations and upgrades to our parks system.

Mr. Speece asked for clarification on the grant applications and the fees. **Ms. Getz** explained that the Township submitted a grant application in 2019 with the assistance of Simone Collins to DCNR, we did not apply in 2019 for DCED. We were not awarded the DCNR grant, but received feedback that the application was good it was just a very competitive year. Additionally, DCNR has rolled out an online application process for 2020 which will require the application to be re-created, we cannot simply submit the same application that we prepared for 2019. The DCED grant involves an arduous application process, and Simone Collins has expertise in this area that the Township lacks. The matching funds have been budgeted for in the Parks Fund for 2020 in anticipation of submitting these grant applications.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED agreement with Simone Collins to prepare and submit DCED and DCNR parks grants applications.

Adopt Resolution Authorizing Submission of Application to DCNR for Pineland Park and Farming Ridge Park Improvements.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Resolution No. 09 Authorizing Submission of Application to DCNR for Pineland Park and Farming Ridge Park Improvements.

Adopt Resolution Authorizing Submission of Application to DCED for Pineland Park and Farming Ridge Park Improvements.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Resolution No. 10 Authorizing Submission of Application to DCED for Pineland Park and Farming Ridge Park Improvements.

Consider Request from Boy Scout Troop 319 to Utilize the Upper Lot of the Township Property for their Easter Flower Sale April 8th – April 11, 2020.

Ms. Gilbert explained that Troop 319 is planning to hold a fundraiser and is requesting the use of Township property, this is the first time we have received this request. **Mr. Speece** stated that it is his understanding that they would be required to submit a certificate of insurance to the Township.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Ms. Kircher, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the request from Boy Scout Troop 319 allowing them use of the Township's Upper Parking Lot for their Easter Flower Sale subject to meeting requirements set by the Township's insurance company.

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Consider Permit Fee Waiver Request from Boy Scout Troop 319 for their Flower Sale being held April 8th – April 11, 2020.

Ms. Gilbert explained that there is a \$700 permit fee for using a tent for retail sales in the Township. Troop 319 is requesting a waiver.

Mr. Galtere asked if there are any other non-profits doing the same. **Mr. Brugger** responded that he is not aware of any others.

Mr. Staub stated that he thinks it's the right thing to do.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED permit fee waiver request from Boy Scout Troop 319 for their April 8th – April 11, 2020 flower sale.

Consider Approving Proposal from CTN Solutions in the Amount of \$33,922.22 for three (3) Server Replacements.

Chief Morris explained that the police department is currently operating on Windows 98 and received their last possible security update last month. Quoted price includes three servers.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED proposal from CTN Solutions in the amount of \$33,922.22 for three server replacements and installation.

Consider Approving Proposal from CTN Solutions in the Amount of \$22,143.97 for Replacement of Twelve (12) Computers for the Police Department.

Chief Morris explained that many of the computers in the department are over 10-years old and no longer receive updates. **Ms. Gilbert** explained that this is a budgeted item.

Mr. Galtere stated that there should be a better process in place to ensure that equipment is replaced more regularly.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Ms. Kircher, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the proposal from CTN Solutions, Inc. in the amount of \$22,143.97 for replacement of twelve (12) computers for the Police Department.

Authorize Advertisement for the March 9, 2020 and March 23, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meetings.

Mr. Staub mentioned a need to address the acoustics in the room. Suggested maybe using a side room instead of the ballroom.

Mr. Sandritter explained that he is working on a solution for the microphones.

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MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED advertisement for the March 9th, 2020 and March 23, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meetings to be held at the Reading Country Club at 7PM.

Authorize Purchase of Two (2) Police Vehicles at \$55,649.53 Each.

Mr. Piersol explained that these vehicles will replace two old vehicles that are no longer usable. These are budgeted items.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the purchase of two (2) police vehicles at \$55,649.53 each.

Consider Approving Application for Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) for 35 W. 47th Street.

Ms. Gilbert explained that LERTA was enacted in the Township in 2015 for the purpose of economic development. 35 W. 47th Street (Mama's Pizza) has applied.

Mr. Speece asked if there is any precedent, does it happen much? **Ms. Gilbert** replied that it is not common.

Mr. Staub asked if this is something that needed to have been brought up in the zoning process. **Mr. Brugger** explained that the LERTA application will go with the plans to the County Assessment Office with confirmation that the Board has approved it.

Mr. Speece clarified that the purpose of LERTA is to encourage investment in the community.

Mr. Cusatis asked if it's just the restaurant or also laundromat. **Mr. Brugger** confirmed it is just the restaurant.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board APPROVED application for Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) for 35 W. 47th Street.

Opposed by Ms. Kircher

Ms. Kircher is opposed because she thinks that the restaurant will cause additional traffic.

Mr. Speece stated that LERTA might be something to review and see if it can be updated.

Ms. Kircher explained that it is county-wide, so it would need to be extensively reviewed.

Mr. Staub commented that it is his understanding that it is a small portion of the Township that qualified for LERTA.

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DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clarence Hamm; Highway Department/Public Works: Mr. Hamm shared that Radio Shack is part of the Perkiomen Streetscape Plan. Radio Shack will be demolished, and has been offered to the Police Department for SWAT practice, followed by the Fire Department for training prior to it being torn down.

Highway Department continues to do catch basin work and pipe repair, tree cutting in preparation of paving. Signed agreement with CMS for larger paving projects, worked well last year. Had two sales of equipment resulting in \$2900 and \$4100 to the Township.

Mr. Galtere asked if the bridge project on Gibraltar/Shelborne is scheduled for this summer. **Mr. Hamm** and **Mr. Rogosky** explained that it will be bid out, work not to take place until 2021.

Chief Wendell Morris; Police Department: Officer Fox received an award from the PA Aggressive Driving program for his enforcement efforts, targets drivers who are aggressively driving. The Department also received an award for their participation.

Reminded residents not to leave their keys in their vehicle overnight.

ENGINEER REPORT

Joe Rogosky, Great Valley Consultants: Update on Norfolk Southern bridge project. Contractor has completed all stormwater work, concrete, and sidewalk. Paving has not started yet due to temperature and availability of asphalt. Expect it to happen late March. Paving is the last phase of the project.

Approached by Buddy's Nursery regarding roadways that they are paying taxes on but that the Township actually owns and maintains. Seeking permission to work with the Solicitor for an easy solution to correct this error. These streets should be removed from the tax rolls.

Motion by Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis approving Township Engineer to work with Solicitor on a plan to remove the streets from the tax rolls.

Mr. Hamm explained that the Highway Department has installed gates on both sides of the W. Neversink underpass so the road can be easily closed should flooding occur.

SOLICITOR REPORT

Ed Kelly, Fox Rothchild: None

MANAGER REPORT

Michele Gilbert, Interim Township Manager: None

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PUBLIC COMMENT

David Hughes; Announced that he has a clipboard with a list he is asking people who couldn't hear to sign. Mentioned a presentation that was done previously by High Associates, we contracted with them for the RFQ process that yielded only 4 results. High subcontracted work to Larry Hirsh. Still looking for the podium. Heard it was destroyed. Stated that Mr. Staub promised that it would be back in the room for his first meeting.

John Dominicis; Has lived in the Township for 70 years. Has a copy of the Township's zoning ordinance, says 422 is Highway Commercial District and states all properties must have utility sewer and water. He doesn't have either, along with 5 businesses next to him. Is concerned about being able to re-sell his property. Wants to know if he can disregard that ordinance because we don't own the sewer plant anymore.

Mr. Speece suggested that he meet with the Zoning Officer for the answer.

Dorothy Reilly; Asked about the Town Hall meeting that is scheduled for this Wednesday. Wants to know what will be discussed. Will it be to discuss other cable options?

Mr. Speece stated that it is not to discuss other options, but about the creation of a long-term agreement with Service Electric.

Dorothy Reilly asked if there will be a Town Hall meeting to discuss the Promenade Shopping Plaza.

Mr. Speece stated that he would think there would be a Town Hall meeting at some point.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

Mr. Galtere: Provided an update on the Communications Committee, 7 community members attended. Positive process, brainstorming session. One outcome was the creation of a suggestion box for Board of Supervisors meetings which has been implemented as of today. Mr. Galtere and Ms. Kircher will be meeting with Mr. Sandritter tomorrow as part of the RCC Committee.

Ms. Kircher: Looking forward to beginning to work on the RCC committee. Would like to see a list being made of what the residents think are a priority. Residents can put their lists in the suggestion box, or email to supervisors directly. Likes the new agenda.

Mr. Cusatis: None.

Mr. Staub: Golf Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10th at 6pm at the Reading Country Club.

Motion by Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Cusatis to the Board unanimously approved advertising a Golf Committee Meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 10th at 6pm at the Reading Country Club.

Mr. Staub responded to Mr. Hughes' comments regarding the podium. He clarified that he thinks it's important to have a podium and that's one of the reasons to hold the meeting at RCC.

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Mr. Speece: Explained that the Service Electric meeting is intended to be a listening session. He explained that Service Electric, Cohen Law Firm, and some supervisors are not available for the date scheduled. Thinks it is important to have the correct people at the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis the Board unanimously approved postponing the Service Electric Town Hall Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis, seconded by Mr. Speece, the meeting adjourned at 9:06 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Getz
Township Secretary