

MINUTES
EXETER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2020

Public Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Board of Supervisors held virtually was called to order on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 7:00 PM by David Speece, Chairperson.

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

Absent: None

Others in Attendance: Jeff Bartlett, Township Manager
Clarence Hamm, Highway Superintendent
Laurie Getz, Township Secretary
Wendell Morris, Chief of Police
Joseph Rogosky, Great Valley Consultants, Township Engineer
Elizabeth Magovern, Hartman Valeriano Magovern & Lutz, P.C.

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.

John Carmello; Discussed HVAC repairs at the RCC, commented on the price as it came in higher than initially stated and asked where it is budgeted.

Mr. Speece explained that the estimate quoted at prior meetings was 4-years old, so they anticipated the price coming in higher. This is a very involved project.

David Hughes; Commented on recycling fee, thinks this only benefits the Mascaro organization. Commented on the budget process, is unsure why it is starting prior to the township receiving the audited financial statements. Discussed Service Electric franchise agreement, would like to see it on the agenda because revenue is being lost.

Mr. Bartlett stated that the agreement is available on the website for public review, and created a FAQ document. The agreement will be on the next meeting agenda. The old agreement remains in place, so we

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are still receiving 5%, that does not change.

Mr. Speece stated that recycling is paid to AJ Blosenski. **Ms. Savage** clarified that collection is paid to Blosenski, the processing is paid to Total Recycle.

Ms. Savage explained that the DCED financial report is due by April 1st each year, ours was filed slightly late and DCED has confirmed no issues with that timeline due to COVID. Second Class Township Code does not establish guidelines or requirements for audited financials, we do an audited financial statement each year but there is no filing requirement. There have been delays for multiple reasons, but it is still in progress.

Ms. Getz explained that Mr. Hughes submitted a second comment indicating that it was for a non-agenda item, but the comment is related to an agenda item. Recommended playing it during agenda comments.

Mr. Hughes; Discussed Reading Country Club HVAC repairs. Questioned the amount allocated for these repairs. Thinks there are other items that need to be handled.

Mr. Speece referenced prior minutes in which the repairs and amount of repairs were discussed.

REGULAR APPROVALS

Regular Minutes – September 14, 2020

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the September 14, 2020 Board of Supervisors Minutes.

Disbursements – September 28, 2020

Ms. Savage explained several bills. Berks County Industrial Authority is for TIFF financing of Exeter Commons. Solicitor bill was for general issues and other matters. Landis Mechanical was for a new HVAC unit at the library.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED payment of the bills presented on the Disbursement List dated September 28, 2020 in the amounts of \$196,299.94 in the General Fund; \$13,807.57 in the Utility Fund; \$6,079.00 in the Fire Fund; \$3,464.00 in the Developer's Escrow Fund; \$20,508.61 in the Golf Fund; \$3,439.57 in the RCC F&B Fund; \$11,831.05 in the Promenade Fund; \$18,595.75 in the Debt Services Fund; \$1,719.27 in the Park Fund; \$21,859.07 in the State Liquid Fuels Fund.

Treasurer's Report – August, 2020

Ms. Savage discussed and explained the amounts demonstrated in the funds that are included on the report.

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

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Consider Authorizing Closure of Butter Lane Bridge

Mr. Rogosky explained that the bridge has structural issue. The removal of the structure has been discussed with the utility companies that are attached to the bridge, and DEP has issued a permit for removal. Asking for authorization to close the bridge to traffic in order to remove the bridge.

Ms. Kircher asked how much was spent to reopen it when changes were made a few years ago. **Mr. Rogosky** explained that there was money spent on the Harvey Bridge several years ago. Butter Lane has not had any work. **Mr. Hamm** confirmed, and explained that it has been the plan to remove Butter Lane after Harvey was replaced.

Mr. Staub asked if the bridge is being replaced. **Mr. Hamm** stated that it is being permanently closed and eventually removed.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED authorizing the closure of the Butter Lane Bridge.

Discussion on Township Engineer RFP Responses and Selection

Mr. Bartlett explained that the Board has reviewed the RFP submissions, asking the Board to take action to either make a new selection or decline to make a new selection.

Mr. Speece stated he has reviewed all of the RFP's and is pleased with Great Valley Consultants, feels that their fees are competitive. **Mr. Galtere** agreed. **Mr. Cusatis** also agreed, would like to stay with GVC for this year. **Ms. Kircher** stated that she thinks the Board should review the fees and look at other options to try and improve costs. **Mr. Speece** asked if Ms. Kircher reviewed the RFP's, Ms. Kircher stated that she was unsure if she received them. **Mr. Staub** stated he felt all the proposals submitted were good, the process has been delayed by COVID and the start of the new manager. Supports staying with GVC at this time.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board APPROVED making no change to the existing Township Engineer Contract and authorizing the Township Manager to notify the other submitters of that.

Ms. Kircher is opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on Trick-or-Treat Date Establishment

Ms. Getz explained that each year the Board is asked to establish trick-or-treat night for the township. This year with the ongoing COVID pandemic, there is a question as to whether trick-or-treat will be cancelled. Stated that CDC has issued guidance on safe trick-or-treat. Asked the Board for direction on trick-or-treat.

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Ms. Kircher asked if the school is doing anything, suggested donating money to them if they are. Doesn't feel going trick-or-treating is safe. **Mr. Cusatis** suggested that by not setting a date it might encourage more trick-or-treating on additional nights. **Mr. Galtere** stated that the schools are facing challenges due to clubs not being able to operate, doubts that a trick-or-treat program at the school will happen. **Mr. Speece** stated that he thinks a date should be set, likes the idea that has been suggested by the administration of a drive-thru event for the township.

Mr. Galtere asked if there is any liability with the township setting a trick-or-treat night. **Ms. Magovern** stated no.

Ms. Getz stated that the CDC guidance will be posted to the township's website. Will begin promoting the Halloween trick-or-treat drive-thru to be held at the township building.

Mr. Galtere asked why the event is being held at the township building rather than the Promenade. **Ms. Getz** stated that the property is more ideal for decorating, and we would not have to cancel due to rain.

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Establishing October 31st from 5:30PM-9PM.

Approval of 2021 Special Budget Meeting Dates

Mr. Bartlett explained that the time has been moved to 6pm, and is seeking authorization to advertise. The process will be the same as the regular Board Meetings.

Mr. Cusatis is unable to make the November 2nd.

MOTION of Ms. Kircher seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board Choose an item. authorization to advertise the 2021 Special Budget Meeting Dates to be held on October 5th, October 19th, and November 2nd, 2020 at 6PM. *The motion failed to pass.*

Discussion on location, **Ms. Kircher** asked how comments will be given. **Ms. Getz** explained it can be handled as regular Board Meetings, information will continue to be posted as early as possible to allow for sufficient public comment period.

Discussion surrounding the need to amend the motion to include the location, and virtual versus in-person meetings. **Ms. Kircher** is in favor of an in-person meeting.

Ms. Kircher withdrew her motion as she is opposed to the virtual meetings.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board APPROVED authorization to advertise the 2021 Special Budget Meeting Dates to be held virtually at 6pm on October 5th, October 19th, and November 2nd.

Ms. Kircher is opposed.

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Discussion on Delinquent Sewer Account Balances and Policy on Penalty Waiving

Ms. Savage reviewed the sewer accounts receivable balance report. The report is attached to these minutes. Unpaid outstanding sewer payments receive a 5% penalty. There is currently about a \$1.7M sewer accounts receivable balance. Average balance is \$2000, some people have not made a payment in 10 years or more. Accounts with \$1000 or more balance have had a lien placed on their property. Reminders are sent out monthly.

Mr. Speece asked the cost for filing a lien. **Ms. Savage** responded \$58 plus attorney's fees, which will now be able to be added to the balance.

Ms. Magovern explained that in other municipalities their firm files DJ actions against those with a balance of \$1000 or more rather than just filing a real estate lien.

Mr. Staub stated he would be hesitant to seize people's personal property if a judgment is reached. **Mr. Galtere** stated he agrees it should be collected, but is concerned that some people will not have the money and the fees accumulating will make it harder. **Mr. Staub** agreed. Would like to see repayment plans halt late fees.

Mr. Cusatis stated that the policy needs to be consistent.

Ms. Magovern suggested that if the Board would like to waive late fees for payment plans to create a form letter.

Mr. Speece stated that he would like to see a reminder sent to those who do not have a lien that one could be filed, offer payment plan, contact those with a lien explaining that DJ action may be taken if not satisfied.

Ms. Savage recommended starting with the balances of over \$10,000. **Mr. Speece** suggested having the Solicitor contact those individuals explaining that a payment plan needs to be established or DJ action will be filed.

Ms. Savage recommended a minimum payment plan amount. **Mr. Bartlett** agreed.

The administration will work on the notification to delinquent accounts.

Discussion on 2021 Township Recycling Program

Mr. Bartlett discussed challenges in the current recycling market causing the service to be quite costly. Based on recommendations from Berks County, the Administration is seeking to re-bid recycling services to see if savings can be realized in 2021. Discussed the fee assessed to residents, it has not increased from \$20 annually since 2008 though costs have increased significantly. Explained that the Township is mandated by the state to recycle. Would like to bid multiple options separately in hopes of receiving the most options.

Ms. Kircher stated that she has seen recycling thrown right into the trash trucks. **Ms. Savage and Mr. Hamm** explained that we have single stream recycling, so they use a trash truck to pick up the recycling

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because it does not have to be separated. It is larger so holds more. The trash and the recyclables are not put together in the same truck.

Ms. Kircher suggested looking into grant funding for recycling cans. **Mr. Hamm** stated that we have an entire trailer of recycling bins available.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED authorized advertisement of recycling bid for collection and processing on a weekly and bi-weekly basis.

Consider Execution of Planning Module for 10 Santa Maria Drive Subdivision

Mr. Brugger explained that this plan has been recommended by our Sewage Enforcement Officer.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED execution of planning module for 10 Santa Maria Drive Subdivision.

Consider Approval of 10 Santa Maria Subdivision Final Plan

Mr. Rogosky explained that they produced a review letter outlining issues that must be completed as part of the final plan approval. Planning Commission reviewed and they have recommended approval subject to the outstanding issues in their August 31st, 2020 letter.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the 10 Santa Maria Subdivision Final Plan.

Zoning Variance Application – 891 Schoffers Road

Mr. Brugger explained that this owner is seeking to construct a detached garage that exceeds our maximum guidelines. Planning Commission has recommended the variance application be approved.

The Board declined to take a position.

Approve Resolution Accepting Deeds of Dedication for Roadways to be Dedicated to the Township by Exeter Associates

Mr. Rogosky explained that the Township owns and maintains these roads, but Exeter Associates was paying taxes on these roads because they were never formally recorded in the courthouse. The paperwork has been completed to rectify this issue.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED resolution accepting dedication of four roads.

Mr. Speece amended his motion.

MOTION of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Resolution 2020-27 Accepting Deed of Dedication of Exeter Associates for a Portion of Sunset Manor Drive, a Portion of Claire Drive, and the Entirety of Dauphin Place.

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MOTION of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Resolution No. 2020-28 Accepting Deed of Dedication of Exeter Associates for a Portion of Philadelphia Avenue.

Authorize Bid Advertisement for 2021 Bituminous Seal Coat and MicroSurface Projects

Mr. Hamm explained that he would like to put this out to bid so he can prepare an accurate 2021 budget number.

MOTION of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED authorizing bid advertisement for 2021 bituminous seal coat and micro surface projects.

Discuss Purchase of Kubota Tractor for the Reading Country Club in the Amount of \$30,890.13

Mr. Piersol explained that the current tractor is beyond repair, so a replacement is being requested. **Mr. Cusatis** asked if it can be used for other things. **Mr. Piersol** responded yes.

Ms. Kircher asked where this is budgeted? **Ms. Savage** stated that it was budgeted to be financed. **Mr. Speece** suggested that we get the rates and discuss financing versus purchasing. **Mr. Piersol** stated we can order it because it will take some time to receive it, and then discuss at the next meeting.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED purchasing the Kubota Tractor for the Reading Country Club in the Amount of \$30,890.13.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED selling the old model on Municibid.

Mr. Cusatis stated this should come back to the next meeting to discuss the payment options.

Authorization to Proceed with HVAC Repairs to the Reading Country Club

Mr. Bartlett explained that the price of this project has gone up, the original quote was from four years ago. The current price of repairs is \$299,975.95. Cost of materials has gone up, and this is a prevailing wage job. Those rates have also gone up over time. This is a difficult project based on the challenging location of the unit. The initial phase of this project will be paid with the budgeted amount of \$250,000. The remainder of the work will be budgeted for and paid out in 2021. This project will not be completed until the end of the year.

MOTION of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED Landis Mechanical to proceed with HVAC repairs to the Reading Country Club in the amount of \$299,975.95.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Elizabeth Magovern, Solicitor; Nothing to report.

Chief Morris; Police Department: Department has seen an increase in fraud-related cases in the township. Residents have reported receiving emails stating that their Amazon or Netflix accounts have been suspended, and account information needs to be updated and when following the links ransom is

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demanded. Urged residents to contact these services through proper channels, and not follow email links.

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

Clarence Hamm; Highway Department: Have been working to replace sidewalk and curbing at Farming Ridge park. Have also been working on creating a trailhead at Trout Run for access to the Scenic River Trail.

Jeff Bartlett, Township Manager: PennDOT is currently bidding out part of the Perkiomen Avenue streetscape project, when construction begins the work will be conducted overnight.

PUBLIC COMMENT – General Comments

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

John Carmello; Commented on virtual meetings. Would like to see in-person meetings resumed. Would like to see status reports on projects like the Promenade, Reading Country Club, Noise Ordinance, etc.

Mr. Speece and Mr. Bartlett discussed that these topics have been discussed at recent meetings. The Noise Ordinance has been enacted.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

Ms. Kircher: Thanked Ms. Getz for collecting meeting materials for her.

Mr. Cusatis: Nothing to report.

Mr. Galtere: Postcard went out to residents encouraging sign ups for the electronic newsletter. Communications Committee will be getting together to discuss next steps in the upcoming weeks.

Mr. Staub: Nothing to report.

Mr. Speece: Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION of Mr. Cusatis, seconded by Mr. Speece, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Getz
Township Secretary