

**MINUTES**  
**EXETER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**  
**MONDAY, MAY 11, 2020**

***Public Meeting***

A Regular Meeting of the Exeter Township Board of Supervisors held virtually was called to order on Monday, May 11, 2020 at 7:01 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:*** Clarence Hamm, Interim Township Manager  
Laurie Getz, Township Secretary  
Sam Cortes, Fox Rothschild, Solicitor  
Wendell Morris, Chief of Police  
Joseph Rogosky, Great Valley Consultants, Township Engineer

**REGULAR MEETING**

The Meeting was opened with the Pledge to the Flag.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mr. Speece** announced a Special Meeting for Selection of Architect for Promenade Shopping Center to be held virtually on Thursday May 14<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30PM.

**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;** Commented on the announcement of the special meeting for the selection of an architect for the Promenade Shopping Center. Does not think the issue is business-critical and should be postponed due to COVID-19.

**Mr. Speece** responded that this is the new norm for the foreseeable future. The Board will continue to evaluate business critical items, but they cannot postpone everything. They are trying to gather data on this project before spending money. **Mr. Cusatis** agreed with **Mr. Speece** that they have to move forward.

**Mr. Carmello** also commented on the proposed resolution to forgive May rent for Promenade tenants. Is not in support of based on the information currently available. Thinks more info is needed related to the

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businesses themselves.

**Terry and Dorothy Reilly;** Commented on the announcement of special meeting. Disagree with moving forward with plans for the Promenade Shopping Center. Should be delayed due to COVID-19. Upset that PA American has announced an application to PUC requesting to raise rates for sewer and water. Would like to see the Promenade Shopping Center fixed and sold without any township money spent. Taxpayers should receive rebates.

**Mr. Speece** stated that in his personal opinion the sale of the plant was a good decision. If we had kept it, the rates would have still increased. The rates will not increase before 2021, they cannot in Exeter. **Mr. Cusatis** stated that the township had mis-managed rates in the past. **Ms. Kircher** stated that she was personally involved with the sewer plant for 17-years, it was in good shape. There was a lack of maintenance.

**David Hughes;** Commented on the proposed resolution to forgive May rental payments of Promenade tenants due to COVID-19. Disagrees with the statement that rental income generated at the property is not taxpayer money. Thinks that because the Promenade is a township owned facility all rental income for that property is taxpayer money.

**Ms. Kircher** agrees with the comment. Thinks that all of the money that comes into the township is taxpayer money. Residents should be included in every decision made by the township.

**Mr. Staub** agreed that township assets are taxpayer assets. Does not advocate for spending money at this time, is his understanding that there is no plan to do anything at this time without a town hall.

### ***REGULAR APPROVALS***

#### ***Minutes – April 27, 2020***

**Mr. Speece** asked that on page 6 the motion needs to be adjusted to reflect that the payment is being made out of the equipment fund. Typo on page 8, the word ‘water’ appears twice after ‘Mt. Penn Water’. **Ms. Kircher** asked about the motion on page 8-9 related to the waiving of past and future fees for the Promenade. It was clarified that the motion was specific to the food pantry usage.

**MOTION** of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the April 27, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes subject to the listed corrections.

#### ***Disbursements – May 11, 2020***

**Mr. Staub** asked for clarification on Conrad Siegel and the Berks County payment. **Ms. Savage** explained that Conrad Siegel is the Township’s actuary. They prepare a necessary annual report for auditors. The County of Berks payment is for our annual 911 dispatch payment. That payment increases about 8% each year.

**MOTION** of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Speece, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED payment of the bills presented on the Disbursement List dated May 7, 2020 in the amounts of \$458,525.84 in the General Fund; \$566.08 in the Utility Fund; \$63,263.33 in the Fire Fund; \$497.00 in the Capital Expense Fund; \$1,585.96 in the K9 Fund; \$1,767.00 in the Developer’s Escrow Fund; \$6,415.68 in the Sewer

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Fund; \$17,478.09 in the Golf Fund; \$5,627.35 in the RCC F&B Fund; \$5,000.35 in the Promenade Fund; \$8,050.00 in the Capital Improvement Fund; \$50,336.14 in the Equipment Fund; \$176.00 in the Debt Service Fund; \$2,445.25 in the Park Fund; \$23,158.39 in the State Liquid Fuels Fund.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **Monthly Right to Know Report - April**

**Mr. Speece** explained that the report is available on the Township's website. Commented that the township has been addressing requests as best they can remotely. Some are able to be responded to immediately, others have to be extended.

**Mr. Galtere** thanked Ms. Stephens for continuing to respond promptly.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Authorize Advertisement of Traffic Signal Specification Public Hearing**

**Mr. Brugger** explained that the township's traffic engineer has created guidelines for new traffic specifications in the township. This is beyond PennDOT's signal requirements, and this will result in higher quality signals in Exeter as well as helpful guidance to engineers and contractors looking to perform work in the township. End-goal is to have all of the traffic signals in the township communicate with each other.

**Mr. Cusatis** asked if this is just related to Perkiomen Ave. **Mr. Brugger** clarified it's for the entirety of the township. **Ms. Kircher** asked if this will take control of the traffic if the Promenade project is completed. **Mr. Brugger** responded that these are just guidelines, not related specifically to certain projects.

**MOTION** of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Staub, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED authorization for advertisement of traffic signal specification public hearing with McMahon and Associates.

#### **Authorize Advertisement of Telecommunications Ordinance Public Hearing**

**Mr. Brugger** explained that this is related to 5G telecommunications devices. This has been an ongoing project over the last year and a half, we need to update our ordinance language to be up to date with FCC regulations.

**MOTION** of Mr. Galtere seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED advertise public hearing date for adoption of Zoning Amendment Chapter 390-71.8 regulation the use of Telecommunication facilities.

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***MOTION*** of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED advertisement public hearing date for repealing Chapter 344, Telecommunications.

***MOTION*** of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Speece, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED advertise public hearing related to amend of current zoning ordinance in relation to Telecommunications.

### **10 Santa Maria Subdivision Waiver Request**

**Mr. Rogosky** explained that the property owner is looking to sub-divide an existing lot into two lots. Planning Commission has reviewed, made comments, took no action. Applicant is seeking a waiver to not perform the wetlands study because there are no wetlands on the property. Township recommendation to Planning Commission is to consider a waiver with a plan note that requires the design professional certifies that there are no wetlands, and if it should be found they would then be required to acquire all necessary DEP permits.

***MOTION*** of Mr. Speece seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED recommending waiver with the plan note as described by the Township Engineer.

### **Approve Resolution Forgiving May, 2020 Rent for Promenade Shopping Center Tenants**

**Mr. Speece** explained that this was discussed last month. **Mr. Staub** stated that it would be his opinion that April was an act of good faith, going forward he feels that the tenants should make the payment or show that they are unable to. Maybe work out a payment plan going forward. Similar to what residential lenders are doing. **Ms. Kircher** and **Mr. Galtere** agreed. **Mr. Speece** suggested reaching out to tenants via letter.

**Ms. Savage** asked who will make the decision on who gets a forbearance if applied for. **Mr. Cortes** stated it would have to come before the Board for consideration.

***MOTION*** of Mr. Staub seconded by Mr. Galtere, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED the township administration to send notification to the tenants of the Promenade and allow application for a forbearance if needed and the Board will not take any negative action against their standing as tenants pending a decision on the request at the next available board meeting.

### **Discussion on Summer Playground Program**

**Ms. Getz** explained that considerations are needed related to the summer playground program amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the programs(s) are set to begin in June. Ms. Getz recommended that an amended program be offered including a delayed start date after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, capping registration at the number of those already registered, and considering limiting to two parks rather than three. A cutoff date for a decision would need to be established, suggested that in order for the program to be held Berks County must be in the 'Green' phase of Gov. Wolf's reopening plan by Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup> with no requirements for masks, or social distancing for the program to be held.

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Discussion surrounding the likelihood of Berks making it to the 'Green' phase by the cutoff date. **Mr. Galtere** expressed concern with the ability to do this safely given the current concerns. **Mr. Cusatis** and **Mr. Staub** agreed.

**Ms. Getz** explained that this proposed amended plan was made in the interest of attempting to offer a solution, but agreed that it seems unlikely that the contingencies will be met in time to hold the programs.

**Mr. Staub** suggested that a decision does not need to be officially made today. **Mr. Galtere** stated that even in the 'Green' zone he does not think it is a good idea to hold the program given the concerns.

**Mr. Speece** suggested making a call by June 1<sup>st</sup> would give people ample time to make alternate arrangements should the program not be held. **Mr. Staub** suggested a final decision be made at the next meeting on May 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Authorize Purchase of Trailer-Mounted Dynamic Message Board Sign in the Amount of \$15,086.00**

**Mr. Piersol** explained that this is a budgeted item to replace a very dated model currently owned by the township that is in disrepair. The price has decreased, we can obtain for \$14,885.00.

**MOTION** of Mr. Galtere seconded by Ms. Kircher, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED purchase of Trailer-Mounted Dynamic Message Board Sign in the Amount of \$14,885.00.

### **Update on Community Communications Committee**

**Mr. Galtere** explained that a test was sent out through the new electronic newsletter system and it went well. The committee is promoting sign-ups, and we are up to 229 mailing list members. Anticipate first electronic newsletter to go out in June.

Discussed electronic sign options. Prices range from \$30K-40K, vary based on quality and installation options. Discussed seeking potential sponsors for the sign, will be researching options for sponsorships and advertising.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Chief Wendell Morris; Police Department:** On May 7<sup>th</sup>, there were a several vehicles broken into near Lorane Hollow Park. They did catch the suspects and recovered property. Asking that anyone who was victim to that break-in to contact the Police Department.

Has been challenging to do community policing during this time, but when call volume permits the officers have been able to attend several socially distant children's birthday parties.

## **ENGINEER REPORT**

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**Joe Rogosky, Great Valley Consultants:** Butter Lane is substantially complete. Working with solicitor on the agreement for reimbursement by Mt. Penn Water Authority. Will need to acquire two easements near the construction area. Will need approval from the board in order to acquire the easements. On Trout Run, a property owner has indicated a potential interest in selling his property that borders Gibraltar Rd. to the township. Asking for approval to work with the solicitor's office to seek an appraisal of the property engage in conversations to potentially purchase the land.

Discussion surrounding the appraisal process. Administration to collect cost information for the next meeting so an appraisal can be authorized.

PennDOT submitted to the township a PennDOT Connect project initiation form for a maintenance project they will be conducting on 562. Requests that the Township acknowledge receipt of the notice.

**Clarence Hamm; Interim Manager/Highway Department/Public Works:** The Neversink culvert has been paved and is substantially complete. The Trout Run complex will remain closed through tomorrow, until the project can be completed. Anticipate final opening on Friday.

There was illegal dumping of yard waste on the silt basin property all weekend. The contractors had to have an employee designated to keep people from ignoring the closed signs and driving on the fresh blacktop.

The gate at Trout Run Brush Depository will be closed and operating as usual when the facility reopens. The gate had been left open but it is being overwhelmed. Residents can use the drop box at the Township to renew their card if needed.

Antietam School District has asked if they can hold a socially distant graduation for 67 students at the Giant parking lot at the Promenade Shopping Center on June 4<sup>th</sup> from 6-7PM.

**MOTION** of Mr. Galtere, seconded by Mr. Cusatis the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED allowing the Antietam School District to utilize the Giant Parking Lot on June 4<sup>th</sup> from 6-7pm for their graduation ceremony.

Highway Department has been working on mosquito spraying, highway mowing, Farming Ridge sidewalk work being done, repairs at the Reading Country Club.

Discussion on the tennis courts at Farming Ridge. Mr. Hamm suggested that we put in three pickleball courts on the tennis courts at Farming Ridge due to significant interest. Board agreed with this plan.

Mentioned inquiries received about the Township purchasing the silt basin, clarified that we are not buying it.

The Keystone Grant Application for the library is due this Friday, the total application will be about \$200K and it is a 50/50 match. Consensus to re-submit the application.

UGI doing a lot of milling/paving work replacing gas lines. Township begins milling and paving next week. There will be another give for the food pantry at the promenade shopping center.

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Township is continuing to assist with the Exeter Area Food Pantry distributions at the Promenade. It has not resulted in overtime for staff.

**Mr. Hamm** asked for authorization to increase the temporary pay increase for Ms. Savage due to additional responsibilities held by her.

**MOTION** of Mr. Cusatis seconded by Mr. Galtere the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED an additional \$200/month for expansion of her role.

### **SOLICITOR REPORT**

**Sam Cortes, Fox Rothchild:** Announced 5/4/20 executive session on personnel.

### **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;** Would like to know if the Supervisors all reside in Exeter Township and if the new Township Manager will live in the Township.

**Mr. Speece** responded that it is a requirement of supervisors to reside in the township. It is not a requirement that a Township Manager reside in the Township at this time.

**David Hughes;** Does not think that the township should be moving forward with plans for the Promenade Shopping Center during this time. Concerned about the cost, higher taxes, possible use of wastewater treatment sale proceeds. Would like to see a town hall meeting held and this matter on hold until after stay-at-home restrictions are lifted.

**Mr. Speece** stated that the township owns the facility, his main concern is to find out what needs to happen with the building.

### **SUPERVISOR REPORTS**

**Ms. Kircher:** Nothing.

**Mr. Cusatis:** Sending thoughts and prayers to Exeter Township residents affected by COVID-19. There are two ETFD firefighters who are suffering from the virus.

**Mr. Galtere:** Asked for a status on RFP's for the Solicitor and Engineer. **Mr. Speece** stated that the RFP's have been circulated to the Board, just need to decide when it should be on the agenda. Discussed social media comments made in reference to the food pantry targeting him personally and accusing him of using Township assets to support the food pantry as his personal project. Wants to make it clear that he has always disclosed his involvement with the food pantry, and also had no role in the relocation of the food pantry give being held at the Promenade. The food pantry went to Mr. Hamm directly and requested use of the Promenade. **Mr. Galtere** stated that he agrees with Mr. Hamm's decision to allow the food pantry use of the facility. We are in an emergency situation and he feels it's appropriate. **Mr.**

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**Galtre** clarified that even though he didn't think he did anything wrong, he apologized at the last meeting and a motion was made allowing use of the promenade. He reiterated that he has provided numerous updates on the food pantry at public meetings. The food pantry has helped hundreds of families during this difficult time.

**Mr. Cusatis** commented that **Mr. Galtre** went even further trying to do the right thing by abstaining from the vote to waive fees for use of the Promenade.

**Mr. Staub: Also** discussed the food pantry. Over 4000 people have received food over the several gives that have been held by the Exeter Area Food Pantry. He supports the food pantry and thinks they're doing a great job. Provided an update on the Reading Country Club, reopened on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Explained that the golf report is on the website. Didn't put it on the agenda because there isn't really anything on it. Looking to begin selling beer/soda out of the pro shop. Trying to open the snack shack and driving range the week of May 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Galtre** announced the Hack Away at Hunger Tournament, July 17<sup>th</sup> that benefits the Exeter Area Food Pantry. Mr. Galtre can be contacted directly for information.

**Mr. Speece:** Discussed the 2020 Census, reminded residents to make sure they respond. Provided an update on the Township Manager search. Going another direction, need another authorization for another background check.

**MOTION** of Mr. Galtre seconded by Mr. Cusatis, the Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED a background check for a cost not to exceed \$3,000.

***ADJOURNMENT***

**MOTION** of Mr. Cusatis, seconded by Mr. Speece, the meeting adjourned at 9:11PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Getz  
Township Secretary