

**Board of Supervisors**

**MINUTES**

**May 9, 2023**

**BOS WORK SESSION: IN-PERSON - VIRTUAL OPTION AVAILABLE**

**Supervisors Present:** Pete Kade, Jim Nilsen, James Hopkins, Bill Ryker.

**Also present:** Scott MacNair, Esq. (Township Solicitor) and Rich Pursell (Township Manager/Public Works Director).

Mr. Kade, Vice - Chair, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Frank Hollenbach, 600 Rocky Valley Road, stated Passer Community center is having a plant sale this Saturday. The following weekend is civil war reenactment weekend at Passer. Mr. Hollenbach said this year his road has lost power 5 times for usually 3-5 hours and lost internet for another half day. He said it impacts certain sections of the township. PPL Electric came out and drove the road and had concerns with the Ash tree problem and that the line is overgrown. Mr. Hollenbach asked about the joint efforts between townships to deal with the Ash trees. Mr. Hopkins said it was discussed at BCATO meeting and it will be discussed the BCATO meeting tomorrow. Mr. Hopkins said he reached out to Craig Staats' office and Senator Coleman's office. Mr. Nilsen stated he has been talking to other townships as well. It continues to be a work in progress. Mr. Ryker stated he knows how important the internet is for production and work for the residents. Mr. Hollenbach suggested putting an update about the work in progress on the website or the residents may not think anything is being done. He also said if the Board needs the citizens to do anything, letters or lobbying, they will.

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**PSATS Recap** – Mr. Hopkins advised the Board and staff attended as many workshops as possible that was applicable to Springfield Township. There were many relatable topics - Comprehensive plan, solar, revenue ideas, police, EMS, Etc. There was a lot of interaction with other municipalities as well. Mr. Kade stated it was his first time and was impressed with the number of classes they had available.

**Manager/Assistant Treasurer Bonding** - Currently Ms. Veni, the Treasurer, is bonded for \$750,000.00 which costs \$625.00/yr. Mr. Pursell is recommending that the Board also bond himself as the Assistant Treasurer. Mr. Hopkins stated it's important to have a backup. Mr. Ryker asked about what goes into the bonding. Mr. Pursell said it isn't a hard process that happens through the bank. A motion was made by Mr. Nilsen, seconded by Mr. Hopkins and unanimously carried authorizing Mr. Pursell to get bonded for \$750,000.

**UBREMS Letter** - Mr. Pursell said he received a letter from Ms. Deacon with UBREMS. UBREMS has asked us to post the letter in our newsletter. Mr. Pursell would also like to post it on Facebook and the website. Mr. Hopkins stated the letter described the subscription process and how it relates to the dedicated tax very well. It would be beneficial for the Fire Departments to follow UBREMS lead with the letter. No vote is

necessary regarding this agenda item. Mr. Kade stated he thinks they are all in favor of dispersing this letter.

**Approval of Cleaning Service** – Manager Pursell stated the cleaner previously was an employee, the Township will be saving money by going to an outside company. Chief McDonald did a background on the new company and all clearances are up to date. Motion made by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Mr. Kade and unanimously carried to appoint Kelsey Carney DBA “Hurt the Dirt” as our Township cleaning service.

**Follow Up Allison Road Concern** - This concern was discussed at our April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting in correspondence. Mr. Pursell suggested the Township place a catch basin at the inlet of the pipe which would alleviate damage to the pipe and would also allow the farmer to place his equipment further off the roadway. Mr. Nilsen was going to go out to look at the area of concern. Mr. Nilsen stated he went out there last night to talk to the property owners. He stated the pipe is in a bad place. He stated a catch basin would be a good idea. Mr. Pursell said as long as they can get a pitch on it, it will work. Motion made by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Mr. Nilsen and unanimously approved allowing the Public Works Department to put in a catch basin not to exceed \$1,500.

**Trolley Bridge Road Discussion** – Manager Pursell was asked to have the Chief do a traffic study on Trolley Bridge Road due to this roadway not having a speed limit posted, and due to the high volume of traffic that uses Trolley Bridge Road along with the high number of pedestrians that walk along the roadway. The section of Trolley Bridge Road that is in Milford Township is posted at 40 mph. By the time the vehicles enter Springfield Township they are most likely going faster than the posted 40 mph because of the decline in the roadway coming into Springfield. Due to open sight and lack of curves it seemed the traffic study recommended no change. Mr. Hopkins stated there is hump with a blind spot. Springfield Township only owns .1 mile of this road, and it is obstructed. Mr. Hopkins stated the sun provides a blind spot as well in the evening. He said there is no reason not to change the speed limit to 25 mph. Manager Pursell stated there would need to be a resolution to do so. Frank Hollenbach, Rocky Valley Rd, stated that may become a future pedestrian calming area as it may be part of a future trail link for Liberty Bell trail to the Rail Trail. Motion to prepare the resolution to post the road with 25 mph by Mr. Ryker, seconded by Mr. Nilsen, and unanimously approved.

**Sterling Act Resolution 2023-10** – There has been a lot of discussion recently about the effects the Sterling Act is having on local government. This Act requires that all non-residents working in the City of Philadelphia pay an earned income tax to the city for the privilege of working there. The current rate is 3.448%.

The Bucks County Tax Collection Committee is requesting that municipalities pass the attached Resolution. This Resolution is requesting an amendment to the Sterling Act to require that up to 1.25% of earned income by non-residents to the City of Philadelphia and collected under the requirements of the Philadelphia Wage Tax be remitted to the municipality in which the taxpayers reside. In 2021 there were 28 residents in Springfield Township effected by this Act and the loss of revenue for Springfield was \$6,685.

The TCC will be collecting the signed Resolutions and sending them together as a collective unit. Motion made by Mr. Nilsen, to adopt **Resolution 2023 – 10** requesting an amendment to the Sterling Act, seconded by Mr. Hopkins and unanimously carried.

**RFP Soils/Sewage System Design Consultant** – Manager Pursell said he has been working with Mr. Fulmer, township engineer about new septic system for the Township building which is failing. If approved by the

Board, Mr. Tim Fulmer will send the RFP out to several area firms that do this type of work. Motion made by Mr. Nilsen, to authorize the RFP for the Soils/Sewage System Design Consultant, seconded by Mr. Hopkins and unanimously carried.

**Follow Up Discussion on Establishing a Finance Committee** – This topic is carried over from the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was discussed and tabled until the May meeting. Mr. Kade doesn't think we need it. Mr. Ryker said it would be nice to look at this more than just budget season. Mr. Kade said it can be monitored at any time. Mr. Hopkins said the previous manager, Mr. Wager, can help Mr. Pursell with the budget and format. Mr. Nilsen said we should look harder at the numbers more often. Mr. Kade said a formal committee isn't needed but the board can sit down more and make a conscious effort to look at it. Manager Pusell said he welcomes the board at any time to sit down and look over things. Mr. Matzura came to the end of the meeting. He didn't make the meeting due to sickness. Mr. Hollenbach, 600 Rocky Valley Road, said he hopes the Board looks into alternate energy in the future. He also asked if collaboration with the school with where the new septic will be located can happen. Mr. Nilsen said everything is always a work in progress. The Township just updated our stormwater.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Frank Hollenbach, 600 Rocky Valley Road, stated Parks and Land Preservation Board continuing to work with Fuller Preserve and increased communication on all levels would be beneficial.

Dave Bretz, 2035 Peppermint Rd, read a statement. He stated his comment is on recent events in the Township regarding Kirkland Farm on 2510 Old Bethlehem Rd, is advertising themselves as an event venue for weddings of up to 250. He stated that is alarming and concerns regarding what everyone just said about the Pieri farm regarding their approval to be wedding venue. He said he feels the Township is at a crossroads. He said we need concrete regulations as the Township is operating in a gray area with "loose" ordinances. He said what is permitted for one may not be for another. He feels this will lead to lawsuits and litigations the Township cannot afford. Mr. Bretz stated the BOS is not supporting residents in high profile matters - Peppermint Park, Hoddle Road construction, and Pieri farm. Mr. Bretz stated the Lack of support from the supervisors is raising eyes of residents. He said the Board needs to take a look and support those who supported them. He said there is an election coming up. Mr. Bretz feels there needs to be sensible straightforward ordinances. He said noise, traffic and safety are paramount. Mr. Bretz again stated the Board needs to look after the residents who voted them in.

Mr. Hopkins responded to Mr. Bretz with a few points regarding conditional use, special exceptions and variances which are in the municipal planning code and not just Springfield Township. It is more of a dynamic process and not black and white. Not everything goes in front of the BOS. That takes the decision out of their hands and to the Zoning hearing Board. Mr. Hopkins said it is always a good thing to take the decision to others and have more people included in the decision-making process. Conditional uses, special exceptions and variances are happening right now. Sometimes there are many at time or other times can go a whole year without any. He said the economy leads progress too. Regarding the Kirkland Farm application, Manager Pursell said their zoning application for the wedding venue was denied today. There are steps and processes that is happening that the public would not see happening. Mr. Pursell advised they have a right to take it to the Zoning Hearing Board if they choose. Mr. Nilsen said that landowner is looking to preserve some of the farm and explained the owner should come to the township to discuss the steps to make her wishes happen.

Mike Clime, High Meadow Road, said we saw the writing on the wall when he went up against Pieri farm. HE said they are trying to protect the Township. He said, now Kirkland Farm is doing it without permission. He questioned who says enough is enough. Mr. Clime said we are not a wedding venue township. He wondered if any weddings had happened yet on Kirland Farm. Mr. Clime said weddings are loud, noisy, drunken parties. He said between Pieri and Kirkland farm however, the Kirkland farm, on 180 acres, would be better place for it. Mr. Nilsen advised there is a process and different levels handle different situations, including the state and county, not just local government. People are aware of the process and whether they choose to follow it or not is another story. Then the township needs to react. Mr. Nilsen stated Pieri Farm did work with the Township about their plans for over a year plus. Mr. Clime said Mr. Nilsen was involved with the Church across from Pieri. He asked if that was appropriate. Mr. Clime said to Mr. Nilsen that he represents this township and you shouldn't have any involvement with Pieri application. Mr. Nilsen said he was representing Church council. Mr. Clime said it doesn't look good. Mr. Nilsen said the supervisors don't have a say about it as it was in front of the zoning hearing board. Mr. Nilsen said as a church member he was trying to be a good neighbor. Mr. Kade terminated the comments as 3 minute public comment section was up.

#### **OTHER BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Kade said about taking the work sessions off for the summer. Manager Pursell said July and August can be a possibility of one monthly meeting depending on agenda items.

Mr. Nilsen reminded everyone Tuesday is election day. There are supervisor and school board openings. He said there will be more activity on the road with farmers and to be careful in the next few weeks.

Mr. Matzura asked Solicitor MacNair about the written decision about the Conditional Use hearing decision. Solicitor MacNair said the finding of fact is being worked on and will include all the conditions they put on the Quarry. The decision will be posted on the website. The recording is posted already but the published decision will be posted as well.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

An executive session will be held after the public meeting to discuss personnel matters and real estate matters. An executive session was also held after the last BOS meeting on 4/18/23 to discuss personnel and real estate matters as well.

Motion by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Mr. Nilsen, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Gerhart  
Secretary