

August 2, 2022

*Mr. Smock, President of the Board, convened the work session at 7:00 PM on the above date. Also, present were Commissioners Milazzo, Pavone and Miller (Commissioner Eckles was absent), as well as: Jason M. Bobst; John Walko, Esquire; Michael Kelly; Stephen Morris; Donna Horn; Michael Valyo; Allan Booz; and Jon Dzedzy. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the meeting proceeded.*

**Discussion/  
Status Update**

- A. *Regarding the FY 2023 Budget, Mr. Bobst stated that the department heads are preparing their budgets and have until 8/31 to present them to Ms. Horn for inclusion in the 2023 budget. Negotiations with the Police and AFSCME contracts, which both expire in December of 2022, have transpired and tentative agreements are in place. The Board will receive an update on same at the Executive Session next week. Per Mr. Bobst, the biggest hurdle to the budget will be the healthcare renewal rates which we expect to receive from Independence Blue Cross in the next month. Mr. Bobst added that obviously inflation is going to be a factor in the budget, but our goal is to present you with a budget that meets the needs of our residents, but keeps our taxes as low as possible. A request was made by Mr. Bobst for the Board to present to him any items that they would like incorporated into the budget or projects that they would like included therein.*
  
- B. *A draft of the proposed plastic bag ban Ordinance was presented to Mr. Walko who reviewed and amended same and feedback is now sought from the Board. Mr. Walko mentioned that a couple of conditions need to be clarified, including exemptions, effective date, fees, and enforcement. Regarding exemptions, it was mentioned by Mr. Walko that all other similar ordinances have exemptions, for example, newspaper delivery bags, dry-cleaning bags, grocery store bags for individual items, i.e., fruit, nuts, fish, etc. and food storage bags and trash bags sold in boxes. Also, according to Mr. Walko, Narberth made an exemption for plastic bags used by the PLCB so as not to deal with sovereignty issues with the State and those used by Wawa for soup handling so as not to scald or burn customers. With regard to the effective date of the ordinance, it was noted by Mr. Walko that most municipalities provide a significant leeway to prepare, notify and adopt the ordinance. As regards fees, the fee contained in the proposed ordinance is \$.15 for recyclable bags which consist of cloth or washable fabric bags with handles or polypropylene bags with stitched handles, but, per Mr. Walko, he has seen most between \$.10 and \$.15. and the non-taxable fee goes back to the business. Regarding enforcement, Mr. Walko suggests a warning first and then proceed with a second, third, and final notice from the Township Manager or Code Enforcement personnel. It was*

suggested by Mr. Miller that we include the PLCB bags and the handled soup bags that Waws utilizes on our list of exempted bags as well as the others mentioned, and he added that he believes that \$.10 is a nominal fee for recyclable bags. Ms. Pavone added that she suggests we not place a minimum ply requirement on the bags and that she would like to hear from the EAC on this issue. Mr. Smock stated that he believes that the fines are excessive. Mr. Walko noted that the ordinance does provide for a failure to enforce so the administration would have discretion to not impose the fine. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Pavone as to reporting violators of the ban, Mr. Bobst mentioned that he spoke with Managers of both West Goshen and Haverford Townships and they self-report and have an on-line reporting option. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Milazzo, Mr. Walko stated that the level of bag ban, exemptions, etc. can be amended at any time. Per Mr. Miller, the EAC will discuss the proposed ordinance at its next meeting. In conclusion, Mr. Bobst noted that the timeline of the ordinance would include a 30-day advertising period prior to adoption.

- C. Mr. Bobst updated the Board on the grants that it made available from the Township's American Rescue Plan Funds. According to Mr. Bobst, 24 of the 30 small business grants were awarded (with 22 being paid out) and 9 of the 10 non-profit grants were awarded to date. The application of The Pathway School for the last non-profit grant was reviewed and approved and Ms. Milazzo commented that the Pathway School "qualifies for the grant in every way."
- D. With regard to the American Rescue Plan Funds, Mr. Bobst mentioned that he is looking for input from the Board on what projects it wishes to fund with the \$200,000.00 remaining of the original allocation and the \$817,000.00 which is coming in a second allocation. Mr. Bobst mentioned that approximately \$100,000.00 could be used for the stormwater issues at Stonybrook, and he mentioned possible streambank work on the VanLandeghem property. According to Mr. Bobst, we have put \$360,000.00 of the original funds back into the community and as far as future use it was suggested by Mr. Miller to allocate funds for low-income housing renovations and/or an additional sewer credit as suggested by Mr. Smock. Regarding a possible grant for low-income housing renovations, Mr. Bobst mentioned that Habitat for Humanity could be a partner in this by Habitat doing the work and them being a conduit for distribution of grant funds. It was noted by Mr. Bobst that one of the criteria of the funding for this type of grant is that the recipient be under the Federal poverty level of \$65,880.00 for a family of 3 or be under

*the County poverty level of \$60,000.00. All other criteria can be established by the Township. Also, Ms. Pavone mentioned possible use of funds for storm drain work in the Township.*

- E. Chief Kelly announced that Sergeant Balch is retiring in March of 2023 and that it is his desire to hire an officer to start in January and that the hiring process takes 3 months. Per Mr. Bobst, since the newly hired officer would be at a lower pay grade than Sergeant Balch, having both on the payroll for the first quarter of 2023 would be budget neutral. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Smock, Chief Kelly noted that we do not always hire “new” officers, but that even experienced officers hired always begin at the Township’s starting pay grade.*
- F. Mr. Walko provided an update on the PUC Commission hearings on both the rate increase requests by PECO and PA American Water Company. Per Mr. Walko, we are the only municipality that filed a complaint against PECO so the Office of Business and Consumer Advocates and other advocacy groups are “fighting our fight” for us to minimize costs to the Township, but our Solicitor’s office is monitoring their work and will have the opportunity to question witnesses. Regarding PA American Water Company, several advocacy groups, businesses and municipalities have filed complaints objecting to the requested rate increase and public hearings were held. According to Mr. Walko, the PUC suspended filings by PA American Water Company until at least 1/28/2023.*

**Manager**

*Mr. Bobst stated that the following items would be considered for adoption and/or action thereon at the next Board meeting:*

- A. Consider awarding of the bid for janitorial services for the Township building and Jeffersonville Golf Club. According to Mr. Bobst 3 bids were received and will be reviewed for recommendation on Tuesday evening.*
- B. Notice of intent to award bids for Jeffersonville Golf Club Banquet Facilities Project. Per Mr. Bobst, the bids were opened yesterday and we received the following: 5 bids for General Contractor; 2 bids for Mechanical Contractor; 1 bid for Electrical Contractor; and 3 bids for Plumbing Contractor. The total of the bids after the low General Contractor bidder withdrew its bid due to issues with quantity pricing is \$12,188,407. According to Mr. Bobst, taking inflation into account, these numbers are in-line with engineers estimates.*
- C. Now that the numbers are in for the bids for the Jeffersonville*

*Golf Club Banquet Facility Project, due diligence is being done to come back with recommendations for financing by our bond counsel, Concord Public Finance.*

**Liaison  
Committee  
Reports**

*No liaison report was given by Mr. Smock; however, he inquired about the status of the “flooding” issues at the Centre Avenue complex. According to Mr. Bobst, Township Engineer Brown and Mr. Valyo went out and viewed the property and it was determined that the swales at both adjoining properties, Northridge and Whitehall Elementary School, need to be maintained and that we will follow up on maintenance. In addition, the playground work being done at Whitehall Elementary was described by the NASD’s personnel as replacement of the mulch and playground equipment only and not grading. Also, it was mentioned by Mr. Bobst that Sergeant Palermo is working on some Coffee with a Cop event with the residents of that development.*

*Ms. Milazzo mentioned that the Recreation Committee is scheduled to meet tonight to discuss upcoming events.*

*Per Ms. Pavone, the HRC met jointly with East Norriton Township’s HRC for a service dog presentation in conjunction with the Americans with Disabilities Act and that there will be no meeting of the HRC this month.*

*Mr. Miller reported that the EAC met to discuss the proposed plastic bag ban and the pollinator garden to be established on Township grounds. Mr. Smock suggested that the EAC reach out to residents with larger properties that may want to put a pollinator garden in their yard. Mr. Miller recommended that we wait to get one garden installed to show proof of the concept.*

**Public  
Comment**

*Leroy James Watters, III submitted his comment in writing as follows:*

*“D.O. is what the mussels and fish need to live. The River Report will be a periodic summary of the Water Quality in the Norristown Dam Pool, the Source of our Drinking Water. The object is to understand the USGS Charts, Tables, Graphs and how it relates to the Health of our Drinking Water.*

*July 28, 2022: about 1 inch of Rain Fell overnight. The River level was at 7.9 ft. before Rainfall and at 8.7 ft. after; this means 1 inch of Rain raised the River almost a foot. The Ida Flood Crest was 26.8 feet, with 9.8 inches of Rain. The Temp went from 82.5° to 84.5° at noon. And then to 80.5° at night. Dissolved Oxygen went from 8.25 m/l to 6.0 m/l. The reason for the swing in the D.O. is Algae, because it is a Plant that*

*produces Oxygen with Sunlight and uses the Oxygen at night. Good D.O. according to the DRBC would be above 7.0 m/l. Their Rule is no withdrawal of water by the Limerick Nuclear Plant if D.O. is below 7.0 m/l. Limerick Power Plant Boils our Drinking Water to Make Power...Therefore; the more Algae, the Greater the Swing, that is what is a danger to Mussels, Snails, Crayfish, and other Invertebrates; they are the Foundation of the Health of the Norristown Dam Pool. Whereas; The Temp is related to the River Depth, Just as you understand the Temp Drop when walking into a Cave, Spring House, or Basement, The Norristown Dam Pool is over 50% full of Storm water Pollution, Reducing the Water Quality, because the Quantity has been reduced by 50% making it shallower. With this lack of Depth the Magic of Hydraulic Cooling does not reduce the Temp; and the Nature Begins to DIE. I look forward to all your Feedback to help better explain how the River Works. Life is too short to Drink Bad Water.”*

*Donna Suevo of 522 Canterbury Road noted that she is a member of EAC, expressed her support of the plastic bag ban and suggested that we learn from the other municipalities and exempt PLCB and Wawa bags as previously mentioned, as well as newspaper and dry-cleaning bags.*

*MaryEllen Moran, 714 Port Indian Road requested that we add to the plastic bag ban the “doggy doo” bags as it is hard enough to get people to clean up after their dogs. Ms. Moran expressed her support of helping the less fortunate citizens in the Township with home improvement grants and inquired about the poverty level for households of 1. Mr. Bobst replied that he would look into that issue. In response to Ms. Morgan’s inquiry about a broken bridge culver at Westover Crossing, Mr. Valyo stated that he would investigate same. Ms. Moran concluded by inquiring why the Township is going into the banquet business.*

*Shari Donath, 1615 Sheridan Lane, commented that she prepared landscape design sketches and did research on the location of the pollinator garden. Ms. Donath suggested that this garden be educational with signage and QR codes, etc. It was added by Ms. Donath that she is a member of the Valley Forge Audubon Advocacy Committee and that it has grant money available to fund this project and that this is a good alliance for educational programs as well. Ms. Milazzo thanked Ms. Donath and suggested that the Helpers Garden Club is a good resource for information on local gardens.*

*Upon motion of Mr. Miller, seconded by Ms. Milazzo and unanimously agreed, the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.*

**Upcoming  
Meeting Dates**

*According to Mr. Bobst, the following meetings are scheduled: Environmental Advisory Council on August 3rd @ 7:00 PM; West Norriton Academy on August 10th @ 6:30 PM; Recreation Committee on August 10<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM; Planning Commission on August 15<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM; Zoning Hearing Board - None; and Human Relations Commission – None.*

**Adjournment**

*There being no further items on the agenda, upon motion of Ms. Eckles, seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously approved, the work session was adjourned at 8:05 PM.*

*Kathy K. Frederick  
Assistant Secretary*