

September 1, 2020

Mr. Miller, President of the Board, convened the work session at 7:00 p.m. on the above date. Present were Commissioners Eckles, Milazzo, Pavone and Smock. Also, present were: Jason M. Bobst; Dan Grieser, Esquire; Kathy K. Frederick; Michael Kelly; Stephen Morris; Donna Horn; Michael Valyo; and Jonathan Dzedzy. Due to COVID restrictions, no public was present.

After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the meeting proceeded

Announcement *Mr. Miller announced that the live-streaming of the meeting was being impaired by technical difficulties.*

Presentation *John Larson of the Norristown Municipal Waste Authority addressed the Board to provide them with information on what Norristown is doing at the waste treatment plant. A power point presentation was shown depicting the capital improvement project of \$10M, including slides of project components and building renderings. According to Mr. Larson, the completion date for the project is estimated to be May of 2021.*

Mr. Bobst noted that, from a staff perspective, Mr. Larson has been “a breath of fresh air” and that, along with Barry Thompson of the Authority, they enjoy a good working relationship as we are a partner in this. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Milazzo as to how he would be affected by the potential sale of the plant to Aqua, Mr. Larson said that Aqua stated that all staff will be retained, but that “long-term, only time will tell”.

Mr. Miller inquired about how all of this would affect the residents. According to Mr. Larson, deferred capital was an issue and would eventually result in a rate increase; however, no rate increase is projected for 2020 or 2021. Mr. Smock asked about a possible tour of the plant, while Ms. Pavone inquired about a timeline for the sale. Although Mr. Larson was unsure of the timing of the sale, due to the lack of information sharing on the part of the Municipality of Norristown, he did reiterate the timing of the improvements and noted that the improvement project was already awarded so it will be completed either way.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Bobst as to the Township’s ability to object to the sale since we are under agreement with Norristown, Mr. Larson again stated that he has no answers on that, but “they are pressing forward”.

**Discussion/
Update**

A. The bids for the Jefferson Fire Company Project will be opened tomorrow for repaving of the parking lots and walking trails. Ms. Milazzo asked about a completion date of the Project, and Mr. Bobst replied “it is intended to be done prior to election day.”

B. A proposed ordinance for the decriminalization of marijuana was presented. According to Mr. Miller, Police Chief Kelly is aware of what is done in other communities and was consulted on this issue. Norristown and East Norriton have similar draft ordinances, although East Norriton's more closely resembles our intentions, noted Mr. Bobst. The intention is to make it an easier, cleaner and more fair process as to criminal charges and enforcement by imposing a \$100.00 flat fee fine per offense. According to Chief Kelly, the D.A. had a lot of input on this issue and it does not legalize marijuana, it just makes it a lesser offense. Mr. Grieser added that this is a policy decision which takes the discretionary element away from the police. Mr. Smock said that he believes that \$100.00 is too high of a fine and suggested \$25.00, to which suggestion Mr. Miller agreed, stating that it is less onerous and more reasonable; however, Ms. Milazzo opined that \$25.00 was too low and maybe not enough of a deterrent, and she suggested \$40.00. According to Deputy Chief Morris, approximately thirty-six (36) citations are written by the police department annually for marijuana offenses. Ms. Eckles inquired if edibles would be included in this ordinance. Mr. Grieser replied that it doesn't matter how the marijuana is structured, it is still marijuana. After discussion, Mr. Miller stated that \$40.00 seems to be the consensus for the fine.

C. Ms. Pavone proposed investigating potential alternative sources of revenue for the Township for businesses, i.e., Wal Mart, etc. It was suggested by Mr. Bobst to put together options to expand revenue and/or amend fees.

D. Per Mr. Bobst, he was approached by Verizon to add cell tower /antennae system to cure a transmission dead spot from Mile Hill to Trooper Road/Main Street Corridor. A potential location for a tower is the vacant area behind the 15th green on the golf course noted Mr. Bobst. Mr. Smock inquired if we would have an input on how the tower looks, and Mr. Grieser replied that we could require that as part of the contract. In response to a question by Ms. Pavone regarding environmental issues, Mr. Bobst stated that Verizon would have to get an environmental impact study.

Manager

Mr. Grieser enumerated and explained the Manager's action items as follows:

A. Consider approval of the FY 2021 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for Police and Non-Uniformed Pension Plans.

B. Consider accepting the consortium bid for sodium chloride (rock salt) for the 2020-2021 winter season at an increase of \$.39 ton from last year's price. Mr. Smock inquired if that includes brine, and Mr. Valyo stated that we make our own brine from the salt and that 75 tons of salt makes 3 tons of brine.

C. Consider awarding bid for the Juniata and Brandon Road Paving Project to the low bidder, Glasgow, Inc., in the amount of \$123,480.00.

D. Consider adopting a "housekeeping" resolution authorizing Jason Bobst and Donna Horn as liaison between the Township and Berkheimer (taxing authority) to receive tax information.

E. Consider accepting the resignation of David Bennett from the Planning Commission due to his moving from the Township.

F. Consider appointing a replacement for David Bennett to the Commission. One application has been received to date from Ed Montoute for this position

G. Consider authorizing staff to advertise Ordinance No. 2020-744 re: expiration date for conditional use, special exceptions and variances. This was an item that went to the County and Township Planning Commissions, both of which have approved the ordinance stated Mr. Bobst.

H. Consider authorizing staff to advertise Ordinance No. 2020-743 deleting unified developments from the I-Industry District. According to Mr. Bobst, both the Montgomery County and Township Planning Commissions have reviewed the Ordinance and approved same.

Public Comment *There were no public comments offered.*

Upcoming Meeting Dates *According to Mr. Bobst, a ZOOM meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board is scheduled for September 16th @ 7:00 PM re: variances for generator @ 19 Oxford Circle and for home construction @ Block 32, Unit 12 Williams Way.*

Adjournment *There being no further items on the Agenda, upon motion of Ms. Eckles seconded by Mr. Smock and unanimously approved, the work session was adjourned at 8:09 P.M.*

*Kathy K. Frederick
Assistant Secretary*

