

September 5, 2023

Mr. Smock, President of the Board, convened the work session at 7:00 PM on the above date. Also present were Commissioners Milazzo, Eckles and Miller (Commissioner Pavone was absent), as well as: Jason M. Bobst; Sean Kilkenny, Esquire; Kailie Melchoir, 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**

Discussion/Status update was given by Mr. Bobst as follows:

- A. Regarding the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program, it was noted by Mr. Bobst that the application process is open for a total allocation of \$300,000.00 (30 allocations of \$10,000.00 each), but no applications have been received to date. According to Mr. Bobst, it is his hope that with the Program's mention in the Township newsletter being distributed next week that applications will be coming in. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Eckles about using media coverage to announce the Program, Mr. Bobst mentioned that he contacted the "Times Herald" but to no avail, and that he is working with a contact at WHYI for broadcasting of the Program.*
- B. The proposed Hookah Lounge Ordinance was discussed last month and Mr. Bobst inquired if the Board had any feedback or questions. The Board members indicated that they wanted to place this on the agenda next month for advertising.*
- C. Per Mr. Bobst, we currently use Cedarville Engineering for MS-4 Program and GIS consulting and our previous project manager, Beth Uhler, who has spoken to the Board many times in the past, moved on from Cedarville about 6-8 months ago to the Center for Watershed Protection (CWP). CWP is a Maryland-based, non-profit organization which can perform the same services at a cheaper cost due to its non-profit status. Ms. Uhler is the Pennsylvania Director of CWP and is well-versed in this area and it is the suggestion of Mr. Bobst to bring CWP on as our consultant to replace Cedarville. In addition, it is the suggestion of Ms. Uhler that we join the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy which makes its function and process more resident-friendly. Two proposals were received from CWP for its services which were enumerated by Mr. Bobst for a total of \$31,200.00 vs. the \$60,000.00 paid to Cedarville, with an additional \$1,000.00 to join Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy. Mr. Bobst asked if the Board would be amenable to moving forward with CWP as opposed to Cedarville and the Board concurred.*
- D. Also, Ms. Milazzo inquired of Mr. Kilkenny if our Responsible*

Contractor Ordinance (RCO) needs revision. Mr. Kilkenny provided a version of the RCO that Municipality of Norristown is using and he indicated that it definitely tightens up the language. According to Mr. Kilkenny, our current RCO is not out of date, but some language could be updated.

- E. Regarding the Commissioners' quarterly donation, Mr. Miller forwarded an email to the Board members suggesting a donation to an organization known as "Recycle, Read Repeat". According to Mr. Miller, Recycle, Read, Repeat is a used bookstore that would provide books to lend out in our Township building lobby for residents' use and would be a good resource for our residents and a closer alternative to a library since one does not exist in the Township. The Board agreed to make Recycle, Read, Repeat at the 3rd quarter donation recipient. Mr. Bobst added that many residents, particularly older residents, come into the lobby to pay their sewer bills and may enjoy the availability of the books.*

Manager

According to Mr. Bobst, the following items would be considered for adoption and/or action thereon at the next Board meeting:

- A. Authorizing execution of Settlement Stipulation of Assessment Appeal for 400 Egypt Road. According to Mr. Bobst, this is a 40+ acre property occupied by Quest Diagnostics Clinical Lab, Inc, which is owned by Quest Diagnostics. The appeal was filed from its \$11, 340,000.00 2022 and 2023 tax assessment and showed evidence supporting the reduction to \$9,403,230.00 for a total refund of \$10,321.41. Mr. Bobst pointed out that the NASD is the driving force in these assessment appeals, as its' take is 85% of the taxes, and it signed off on this appeal.*
- B. Authorizing execution of Settlement Stipulation of Assessment Appeal for 2505 Boulevard of the Generals. According to Mr. Bobst, this 3+ acre parcel is owned by Alliance 2505 Generals, LLC. The appeal was filed from its tax assessment of \$1,346,400.00 to a new assessment of \$1,422,130.00 which would result in an underpayment of \$338.39 to be refunded back to the Township. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Miller, Mr. Bobst noted that an appeal of tax assessment was filed by Alliance 2505 Generals, but that they lost the appeal and the assessment was actually increased. Per Mr. Bobst, credit it due to the NASD as they fight every one of these tax assessment appeals.*
- C. Adoption of FY 2024 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for Township Pension Plans as follows: Police - \$1,710,222.00; and Non-Uniform Employees - \$634,496.00. Per Mr. Bobst, this is a yearly process required by the State of Pennsylvania*

which sets aside our minimum obligation to keep the pension plans solvent. As he previously mentioned, Mr. Bobst reiterated that given the losses that we sustained due to the economy and inflation, and that this year is a pension evaluation year (every odd-numbered year) we were not sure how these numbers would go. Per Mr. Bobst, compared to last year when our MMO was \$1,611,310.00, this year's MMO is \$1,935,463.00 for an increase of \$324,163.00 for the year 2023. The MMO numbers tend to fluctuate not only with economic factors, but with retirements and DROPs; however, this is a budgetary impact that we have to take into account per Mr. Bobst. After a better understanding from our accountants is obtained, Mr. Bobst will recommend action to the Board.; however, this MMO is required by law to be adopted by September 30th. This number, while it may look large on paper now, it may get smoothed out with cost reductions other places and revenue per Mr. Bobst.

**Liaison
Committee
Reports**

Per Mr. Smock, the Planning Commission is holding an Open House on September 18th from 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM to discuss with, and receive input from, the residents on the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Milazzo advised that the Parks & Recreation committee met to discuss movie night and the Fall Festival. Also, Ms. Milazzo mentioned that the Senior Circle will hold its first meeting of the new season on September 21st from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM at the Jefferson Fire Co. with a mini-information session and bingo.

Ms. Eckles stated that the Civil Service Commission is holding a special meeting on September 9th to certify the Sergeant testing results, and that the Arts & Culture Commission met and are still looking for two (2) new members.

It was noted by Mr. Miller that the EAC met last month and its focus was to get our Township recognized as a “Bird Town” and it will discuss this again at the next EAC meeting tomorrow night.

**Public
Comment**

Mary Ellen Moran of Port Indian Road expressed her concern over the amount of financial disclosure information required on the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehab Program application. Ms. Moran stated that “it was a real turnoff and invasive”. Mr. Bobst indicated that the document follows the same disclosure guidelines as does HUD funding, but that he would look into the matter. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Smock about having someone at the Township to assist residents with the application, Mr. Miller volunteered to work with Mr. Bobst in that regard. Also, Ms. Moran stated that the \$2M school tax appeal reduction is concerning and should be questioned. Finally, it was mentioned by Ms. Moran that she no longer uses the

Schuylkill River Trail because she was previously run over by a biker and sustained serious bodily injuries as a result thereof. According to Ms. Moran, bikers speed along the trail in large numbers and have little or no regard for others utilizing the Trail. According to Ms. Moran, it is a “pack mentality”. Ms. Moran requested speed limit signage on the on the Trail. Mr. Bobst indicated that he would reach out to the County that maintains the Trail and to the Schuylkill River Greenway for ideas to curtail speeding and traffic calming. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Miller as to demarcation or lineage on the Trail, Chief Kelly stated that there are no markings on the Trail except at crosswalks. Finally, Ms. Moran inquired as to the Westover - VRJ litigation about which she attended a meeting. Mr. Bobst explained that Judge Branco mandated the meeting between the parties, the residents are not open to a settlement, and that the Township’s position has always been in support of the residents not to lift the covenant. Mr. Kilkenney replied that the Court Docket No. of the VRJ litigation is 2019-00756.

Lynn Watters of 1 E. Indian Lane concurred with Ms. Moran that the Schuylkill River Trail (bike path) is dangerous due to “crazy”, speeding bikers.

Leroy James Watters, III. of 1 E. Indian Lane mentioned that he would be “putting out” a bridge story to try to get PennDOT to pay for damage to the Whitehall Pump Station. A comment was made by Mr. Watters that motorized scooters are also a problem on the Trail. In addition, Mr. Watters suggested putting a security camera at the Commercial Club to help with security in that area. Mr. Bobst commented that we have cameras at the Rittenhouse Pump Station that overlooks the Trail. It was mentioned by Mr. Watters that he has a problem with the County regarding the prison since it is not allowing Norristown to take over the prison and possibly generate income therefrom, thereby having an effect on school taxes, which he stated trickles down to effecting West Norriton residents.

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

**Upcoming
Meeting Dates**

According to Mr. Bobst, the following is the upcoming schedule of meetings: Environmental Advisory Council – September 6th @ 7:00 PM; Recreation Committee – September 13th @ 7:00 PM; Arts & Culture Commission – September 20th @ 7:00 PM; Planning Commission – Open House – September 18th from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM; Zoning Hearing Board – None; and Human Relations Commission – September 28th @ 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

There being no further items on the agenda, upon motion of Mr. Miller, seconded by Ms. Milazzo and unanimously approved, the work session was adjourned at 7:41PM.

*Kathy K. Frederick
Assistant Secretary*