

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

APRIL 9, 2020

The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 5:00 PM, a virtual ZOOM meeting, due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Supervisors Present: Laura Boyle Nester, Chair; Fran McCusker, Vice-Chair; Michael Drossner; Vincent Manuele and Jacy Toll.

Also Present: Richard L. Mellor, Jr., Township Manager; Sean Kilkenny, Township Solicitor; James Hersh, P.E. Township Engineer and Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitemarsh Township - COVID 19 Operational Update

Chair Nester thanked all first responders and all residents who are following the government orders and staying home and protecting yourselves and family. Township has information regarding the state information, mental health, unemployment and various other information available for the residents. She thanked all of Township Staff. She stated Mr. Mellor and all of the department heads have been working closely to have essential services continue to run. She stated the Park and Recreation Department has been phenomenal and she acknowledged the Director Tom Blomstrom and his staff.

Mr. Kilkenny stated the Township is able to have a meeting over ZOOM due to the Township, County and State Emergency Declarations. He stated under the Emergency Management Act the requirements of a physical quorum are relaxed. He stated several organizations were consulted that deal with municipalities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Mellor stated the Township is continuing to operate during this extraordinary time. He stated the Township is working with federal, state and local partners. Additionally all the department heads are parts of vast networks who are providing information. He said it is imperative to provide information to both Township Staff and residents as quickly as it can be done through the Township website and social media.

Mr. Mellor stated the Township was closed to the public on March 18 and will continue to remain closed through April 30. He stated non-essential personnel are working remotely, which took effect on March 24. He said non-legislative Boards and Commissions have been chanced through April. He stated all Township personnel are available through email and phone. He stated Department Heads have emails and phone calls going to their phones. He said all Department Heads and middle staff have VPN capabilities. Individuals come into the office periodically to handle to pick up files and mail. Mr. Mellor stated Department Heads are participating in Staff ZOOM meetings two times per week.

Mr. Mellor thanked each of the Department Heads for their work. He thanked Nate Crittendon, Director of Finance and his staff of Gwen Pace and Connie Caniff who are coming in on a modified schedule

daily to process tax payments, pay bills and process payroll. He thanked Tom Blomstrom, Director of Parks and Recreation and his team for the creative activities and the exceptional job they are doing. He said some of their innovative on-line activities have been recognized on a state level. He thanked Jack Fields, the Director of Public Works and his team who are working on a modified schedule on a daily basis – servicing township vehicles and the township infrastructure. He thanked Sean Halbom, the Assistant Township Manager, who has been instrumental in helping with the communications and getting information out to the residents. Bob Sztubinski, Director of Building and Codes, and his team have had a challenge because of the governor’s order. Charlie Guttenplan, Director of Planning and Zoning and his assistant are still answering phones calls regarding permits and questions residents have. Fire Marshal, Nick Weaver has been in constant communication with Emergency Service Personnel and working very closely with Chief Ward and with Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association, and the chiefs of both Fire Companies. Chief Ward, Police Chief and his team of essential employees have been working with the public and answering calls. He is also working with Nick Weaver to make sure our staff has personal protective equipment. He thanked the Board of Supervisors for their support and trying to get information out.

Chief Ward gave an operational report from the Police Department’s perspective. He stated all emergency services are operating at 100%. Officers are doing social distancing but they are handling all calls. He thanked Chief Warner of Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association for her help in understanding the medical side of the pandemic and helping the police stay safe with their personal protective equipment.

Supervisor McCusker announced:

A reminder to all residents, please complete your 2020 census if you haven’t already. So far, roughly 56% of Montgomery County residents have replied. If you have questions about the census, their call center is open from 7am-2am daily: 844-330-2020

The contractors working at the intersection of Joshua Road and Stenton Avenue have been issued a waiver by the state to continue working. Work will resume on or about April 20th.

Residents can drop off tax payments at the Township Building in our main lobby (Police Entrance Side). A secure drop box has been installed and is actively monitored by Whitemarsh Police.

Finally, we would like to thank our dedicated first responders for their ongoing service during this pandemic, as well as our local businesses and residents who have found numerous ways to help those less fortunate during these past weeks. Please reach out to your loved ones and continue to stay calm, stay home, and stay safe

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. February 27, 2020

On a motion by Supervisor McCusker, seconded by Supervisor Manuele (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors approved the February 27, 2020 meeting minutes.

BOARD PUBLIC DISCUSSION ITEMS

ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

1. Ratification and Extension of Resolution - Local Emergency Disaster Declaration

Please be advised the Board's approval is needed to ratify the Local Emergency Disaster Declaration and extend the date to May 31, 2020.

Mr. Mellor explained in accordance with the Township's Emergency Operation Plan, the Township Manager is responsible to declare a local emergency which took place on March 17th which lasted for seven days. On March 24th that emergency declaration was extended for 30 days or until April 23rd.

The Local Emergency Disaster Declaration allows for the performance of public work as may be required to meet the public emergency (COVID 19 Pandemic) all without regard to those time consuming procedures and formalities normally prescribed by law. They include such items as:

- Entering into contracts
- The occurring of obligations
- Employment of temporary workers
- Rental of equipment
- Purchase of supplies and materials
- The levying of taxes
- Appropriation and expenditure of public funds

As of the date of this memo, the Township has not had to forgo any bidding requirements to purchase material or equipment. This declaration does give the Township that ability if needed while the declaration is in effect.

It is recommended the two declarations declared by the Board on March 17th and 24th be ratified and a new declaration extending the local emergency to May 31, 2020 be considered.

On a motion by Supervisor Toll, seconded by Supervisor McCusker (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors adopted **Resolution #2020-09** ratifying the Local Declaration of Disaster pursuant to the provisions of Section 7501 of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, as amended, due to the COVID 19 pandemic in Whitmarsh Township on March 7, 2020 for a period of 7 days.

On a motion by Supervisor Drossner, seconded by Supervisor McCusker (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors adopted **Resolution #2020-10** ratifying the Local Declaration of Disaster pursuant to the provisions of Section 7501 of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, as amended, due to the COVID 19 pandemic in Whitemarsh Township on March 14, 2020 for a period of 30 days.

On a motion by Supervisor Toll, seconded by Supervisor Drossner (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors adopted **Resolution #2020-11** approving the Local Declaration of Disaster pursuant to the provisions of Section 7501 of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, as amended, due to the COVID 19 pandemic in Whitemarsh Township on April 9, 2020 for an indefinite period

2. Whitemarsh Township Real Estate Tax Discount Extension

Mr. Mellor explained the Board's approval is needed to extend the Whitemarsh Township real estate 2% tax discount period from May 1st to May 31st and face period from June 30th to August 31st which will also coincide with Montgomery County's real estate tax discount period deadline. Also, to extend the filing date for Business Privilege Tax from May 1st to July 15th.

He stated Whitemarsh Township typically collects an estimated 85% of the Township's budgeted \$3.6 million in real estate tax revenue during the discount period. This is due to the fact that most real estate taxes are escrowed as part of mortgage payments. Based on the collections received to date it is anticipated that to be the case again this year.

Additionally, he said, it is requested to extend filing date for business privilege tax to July 15th to be consistent with Berkheimer's extension of Earned Income filing and the Federal Government's new Tax day. This will help those in the business community to provide more time in providing their filing. It is anticipated due to the shutdown of many businesses and unemployment caused by the COVID 19 Pandemic will have a negative impact on the Township Act 511 tax revenue in particular Earned Income Tax, Local Services Tax and Business Privilege Tax. He stated there is no way of knowing those impacts at this time but will closely monitor revenues and consequently expenditures in the months ahead.

On a motion by Supervisor Manuele, seconded by Supervisor McCusker (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors adopted **Resolution #2020-12** extending, pursuant to the provisions of Section 7501(d) of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, the deadline to pay Township Real Estate Taxes eligible to receive the 2% discount from April 30, 2020 to May 31, 2020 and the deadline to pay Township Real Estate Taxes at face value from June 30, 2020 to August 31, 2020 as a result of the COVID -19 pandemic

3. Whitemarsh Township Business Privilege and Mercantile Tax Filing Extension

On a motion by Supervisor McCusker, seconded by Supervisor Manuele (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors adopted **Resolution #2020-13** extending, pursuant to the provisions of Section 7501(d) of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, the deadline for payment of Township Business Privilege Taxes from May 1, 2020 to July 15, 2020 as a result of the COVID -19 pandemic

MOTIONS

1. Shredding Day Donation

Mr. Mellor explained the Annual Spring Shredding Day was held on Saturday, March 7th, 2020 at the Miles Park Lower Parking Lot, from 8am to 12pm. The event was a great success with an estimated 400+ vehicles helping the environment through recycling and protecting their security by shredding personal documents. The Parks and Recreation Department partnered with the Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association to accomplish a great day. Per Proshred Security, 32,100 pounds, or 16.05 tons, of paper was shredding during the 4 hour event. The environmental impact of this community event equates to saving 273 trees, 64,200 kilowatts of energy, 48.15 cubic yards of landfill space and 112,350 gallons of water. In addition the residents of Whitemarsh were once again very generous with the local organizations, donating \$3,466.00 of in day-of donations. We express our gratitude to Treasure Sign for once again being the event sponsor. Also, thanks go out to Jim and Sandy Singrella for their volunteer efforts. After deducting the event expenses, the organizational split of donations comes out to be \$990.26 for the Parks and Recreation Department and \$990.27 for the Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association. Historically the Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation Department have forwarded a portion of the funds to the volunteer organization that have assisted with the event. Per our agreement with the volunteer organization, it is recommended that a donation be made to the Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association, in the amount of \$990.27. The Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association already received \$90.00 worth of personal check donations that were made payable directly to their organization during the event.

On a motion by Supervisor Toll, seconded by Supervisor Manuele (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors allocated \$990.27 in donations received from the Spring Shredding Day to Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association for volunteering their services in coordinating activities on the day of the event.

2. Escrow Release No. 1; The Hill at Whitemarsh - Phase 2/4000 Fox Hound Drive

On a motion by Supervisor Drossner, seconded by Supervisor McCusker (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors authorized escrow release #1 for The Hill at Whitemarsh – Phase 2/4000 Fox Hound Drive in the amount of \$1,173,926.56

3. February 2020 Expenditures and Payroll and Pension Plan Paid Costs

On a motion by Supervisor Toll, seconded by Supervisor Drossner (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors approved expenditures totaling \$2,025,710.40; and payroll totaling \$622,124.24 and pension paid costs totaling \$3,440.95 for February 2020.

4. March 2020 Expenditures and Payroll and Pension Plan Paid Costs

On a motion by Supervisor McCusker, seconded by Supervisor Drossner (Vote 5-0) the Board of Supervisors approved expenditures totaling \$687,509.55; and payroll totaling \$621,909.32 and pension paid costs totaling \$10,458.24 for March 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Supervisor Toll thanked Staff and First Responders. She also thanked Lisa Clancy, Director of the Library and her staff for their ongoing programs.

Supervisor McCusker thanked everyone. He also wished everyone Happy Holidays. He thanked local businesses and sanitation workers who are keeping the Township going. He asked people to support local businesses. He introduced his daughter Abby, who thanked teachers and first responders.

Supervisor Manuele asked that people keep in their thoughts and prayers those who are personally affected and separated from loved ones and those who lost loved ones.

Supervisors Drossner stated as President of Whitemarsh Little League it's been hard not having kids outside. He suggested people get outside as a family. Thanked everyone for keeping the Township running.

Chair Nester stated these are unprecedented times. She stated even just staying home matters.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Nester announced the Board of Supervisors held an Executive Session on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 to discuss litigation and to practice using Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

On a Motion by Supervisor Manuele, seconded by Supervisor Drossner the meeting for April 9, 2020 was adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard L. Mellor, Jr.
Township Manager