

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024**

SUPERVISORS:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair
Janine Martin
Tessie McNeely
Jimmy Chong

STAFF:

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Michelle Farzetta, Office Manager – Absent (minutes taken through zoom recording)
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Paul Kenny, Police Chief
Jim Hersh, Township Engineer, Gilmore
Chad Dixson, Traffic Engineer, Bowman Company - via zoom
Melinda Haldeman – Finance Director
John Farrell – Project Manager/Emergency Management Coordinator

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:00pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building and virtually on Zoom and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) met at an executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of litigation and personnel.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eric Rudolph, 537 Montgomery Road, asked for an update regarding the installation of the blankets on the chiller at the Wissahickon Middle School (WMS). Ms. Worman stated the blanket was installed and Kelli Scarlett was present when the chiller was fired up today. Ms. Scarlett said the sound appeared to be better, but more testing was going to be completed. Mr. Rudolph reviewed the timeline of events in trying to come up with a solution to the sound issue. He stated that there needs to be a solution before next summer to mitigate any further issues. The loud sound prevents residents from sitting outside and is hurting property values. Ms. Gleason said she will follow up with Ms. Scarlett for any additional updates.

Nick Militello, 613 Montgomery Road, thanked the BOS for their help addressing the chiller at WMS. He pointed out that even with a lower noise, the chiller produces a constant sound like that of a leaf

blower. He wanted to try and paint a picture to help the BOS understand how frustrating the ongoing sound can be.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Continued public hearing for a Conditional Use application for Ambler Yards, 300 Brookside Avenue, to modify the master plan to add two accessory storage structures behind Building #35.

During the September 24, 2024, BOS meeting, a Conditional Use Hearing was held for the addition of two accessory structures (storage containers) behind Building #35 for Entegris, who occupies this building. Mr. Stein is reopening the hearing tonight to allow additional testimony and exhibits to the record. The information and testimony provided was transcribed by a court reporter and will be available upon request. Mr. Stein stated that the BOS will render a decision at the November 12, 2024, BOS meeting.

Please note: Mr. Chong left the meeting at 8:15pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Resolution #2024-30 authorizing the process to pursue bond funding and advertisement of a pre-enactment notice for a bond issuance for the acquisition and design of real property for use as the Township's future Public Works Facility

In June, PFM was hired as a financial advisor to assist with the financing needed to construct a new Public Works facility. An initial \$5 million bond issuance is proposed to pay for land acquisition and design. Jamie Schlesinger from PFM explained the process to pursue the funding for the bonds. Mr. Schlesinger explained that the goal is to settle on the bonds before the end of 2024, as there are tax advantages if we do so. The actual parameters would need to be finalized during the November 12, 2024, BOS meeting. Tonight, we would start the process with Resolution #2024-30 to initiate the process and advertisement of the parameters ordinance to issue a bond. There was an active conversation between the BOS and Mr. Schlesinger about possible scenarios and timelines. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve Resolution #2024-30 authorizing the process to pursue bond funding and advertisement of a pre-enactment notice for a bond issuance for the Public Works Facility. Motion passed 4-0.

Review of draft 2025 budget for capital projects and purchases

The BOS was presented with a draft of the Capital Project Plan for 2025-2029. Ms. Gleason stated that the new Public Works Facility will be the biggest project on this plan. There is also a long-term plan for other capital projects. There was an active discussion regarding an Access Control System for the Penllyn Woods Community Building with a projected cost of \$40,000. The BOS feels that it is a lot of money and there must be other alternatives. Currently we need to have someone at the building to physically open the building for residents and/or groups who rent the building. A system would make the building more accessible, reliable and secure. Ms. Haldeman said we need to look at the total cost of having a Park Attendant present to let people in and lock up versus the cost of the Access System. It was decided to revisit this topic at a later date.

There was a conversation about the Brights Lane Trail crossing being included with the road paving project in 2025. Ms. Haldeman mentioned that there are funds in the liquid fuels account that can be used to help fund the road projects. A ten-year plan has been created to plan for proper maintenance and repair of the roads.

The Sumneytown Pike Corridor was mentioned. Planning for this project is currently projected to start in 2026. The Township would work with Montgomery County, as they are the owners of the road. Significant grants would be necessary to pay for improvements that would alleviate congestion on the road. This would be a very large project to complete even from the planning side. Ms. Gleason mentioned that we received an LSA grant for the Traffic Signal project at Trewellyn and Penllyn Pike.

There was discussion about planned improvements at Oxford Park, in particular the GaGa Ball Pit. Ms. Gleason explained the GaGa Pit was included in a grant application, so we are not able to start until we know if the grant is awarded. If we do not receive the grant, then the Board can decide whether to move forward with the GaGa Pit and have the township fund it or continue to wait and include it in a future grant application.

The Texaco Gateway has been discussed with the Park and Recreation Board and Gilmore and could include landscaping, a walking path and benches. There was some conversation regarding ideas for possible nonprofit funding.

Mr. Hersh mentioned that money has been included for the Houston Creek Flood Study and the Penllyn Flood Study. Also, in conjunction with the Wissahickon School District's crosswalk project from Knight Road to Brookside Ave, the Township is budgeted to install new ADA ramps that also help with drainage.

Ms. Gleason also provided a status report on capital project grants. This report included all awarded grants, applications submitted and proposed applications. Overall, the township has been awarded almost \$8 million dollars in grants. This was great news to hear. The full budget will be presented during the November 12, 2024 BOS meeting.

Consider approval of updated Fund Balance Policy

The Townships current fund balance was adopted in 2011 and requires updating to reflect our funds, requirements and practices. The draft policy provided follows the guidance in the Government Accounting Standards Board Statement Number 54. This statement recommends the minimum amounts of cash balance to be maintained in the general fund and sewer operating fund. This policy is meant to set a true floor below which remedial steps would be needed. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the updated Fund Balance Policy. Motion passed 4-0.

Consider approval of Investment Policy

Currently, the Township does not have a written investment policy. The proposed policy will address goals, standards and procedures for investing Township cash balances, as well as future bond proceeds. These permitted investments follow the requirements of Section 3204 of the Second-Class Township Code. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the proposed Investment policy. Motion passed 4-0.

Consider approval of Ordinance #549 deleting Sections 244.01 (police hiring) and 244.03 (background investigations) in Chapter 244 of the Lower Gwynedd Township Code

At the October 8, 2024, BOS meeting the BOS authorized advertisement of Ordinance #549 deleting section 244.01 and section 244.03 in the Township Code. Those topics are now addressed in the Police Department's hiring general order. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve Ordinance #549. Motion passed 4-0.

Consider authorizing initiation of selection process for Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor

Resolution #2023-20 required a review and selection process every five years for professional service consultants that are utilized on a regular basis by the Township. Staff are asking for authorization to start the selection process for the Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor. The Request for Proposal (RFP) was provided in the meeting packet and previously reviewed by the members of the Zoning Hearing Board. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to initiate the selection process for the Township's Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor. Motion passed 4-0.

Consider authorizing initiation of selection process for Labor Attorney

Resolution #2023-20 required a review and selection process every five years for professional service consultants that are utilized on a regular basis by the Township. Staff are asking for authorization to start the selection process for the Township's Labor Attorney. The Request for Proposal (RFP) was provided in the meeting packet. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to initiate the selection process for the Township's Labor Attorney. Motion passed 4-0.

Township Engineer Report

The BOS received the October 2024 Township Engineer Report from Gilmore and Associates. There were no questions or comments.

Traffic Engineer Report

The BOS received the October 2024 Traffic Engineer Report from Bowman. There were no questions or comments.

Finance Report - September 2024

The BOS received the Financial Report for September 2024. There were no questions or comments.

Approval of invoice report

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated October 22, 2024, totaling \$326,470.73. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the invoice report dated October 22, 2024. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of minutes - October 8, 2024

The BOS received the minutes from October 8, 2024, BOS meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the meeting minutes of October 8, 2024. Motion passed 4-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

The BOS received the Liaison Reports for the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), the Parks and Recreation Board and the Planning Commission. There were no questions or comments.

STAFF UPDATES

Chief Kenny gave an update regarding the new Bus Patrol system. He stated that they are averaging 60 violations a week, or about 12 a day, for vehicles that do not stop when a school bus stops. Citations are sent to violators. A link is provided on the citation where they're able to view the video of the violation. Chief Kenny also stated that the new police hiring policy is posted on the website.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. McNeely mentioned that Melinda Wolfe organized a tour of the recycling facility at Republic Services for the members of the EAC. She shared that all plastics numbered 1-7 can be recycled. However, single use plastic bags are not able to be recycled at that facility or in curb side recycling. Ms. McNeely also thanked the staff for all their work on a daily basis.

Ms. Martin also thanked the staff.

Mr. Twersky congratulated the staff on their hard work that resulted in \$8 million in grant funding.

Ms. Duckett echoed those comments. She also asked everyone to be careful when driving, as she has been made aware of several car accidents recently.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to adjourn the meeting at 9:55pm. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manager