

The stated Organization meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Monday, January 6, 2020 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA.

Oath of Office: Township Manager Manfredi introduced Honorable Gail Weilheimer, Montgomery County 38th Judicial District Judge of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Magisterial District Judge Juanita A. Price to administer Oaths of Office to the following incoming Commissioners:

The Honorable District Judge Gail Weilheimer administered to the Oath of Office to Commissioners Thomas Hecker Ward 1; Drew Rothman Ward 3; Wayne C. Luker Ward 5 and Stuart Winegrad Ward 7 on this 6th day of January, 2020.

The Honorable District Judge Juanita A. Price administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Zappone Ward 9 on this 6th day of January, 2020.

The Honorable District Judge Gail Weilheimer administered the Oath of Office to Commissioners Jessica Carswell Ward 10; John Spiegelman Ward 11; Bill Bole Ward 13 and Thomas Bowman Ward 15 on this 6th day of January, 2020.

CALL TO ORDER: Township Manager Manfredi called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners HECKER, BRODSKY, ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, LUKER, THOMPSON, WINEGRAD, MYERS, ZAPPONE, CARSWELL, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN
 Excused: VAHEY

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE WAS FOLLOWED BY A MOMENT OF SILENCE TO HONOR THE PASSING OF CONGRESSMAN MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, congratulated the incoming Commissioners and she “hopes for great new things” and she asked the Board “to bring in a new Solicitor.”

Election of Officers -

Nominations for the Office of President:

Manager Manfredi opened the floor for nominations for the Office of President.

Commissioner Rothman nominated Commissioner John Spiegelman as President, seconded by Commissioner Luker.

Commissioner Myers made a MOTION to close nominations, seconded by Commissioner Hecker. Nominations were closed by a vote of 14-0.

MOTION to appoint Commissioner John Spiegelman as President of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington – PASSED 14-0.

Nominations for the Office of Vice President:

President Spiegelman opened nominations for the Office of Vice President.

Commissioner Zappone nominated Commissioner Tom Hecker as Vice President, seconded by Commissioner Bowman.

President Spiegelman asked for any other nominations. There were none.

Commissioner Thompson made a MOTION to close nominations, seconded by Commissioner Bowman. Nominations were closed by a vote of 14-0.

MOTION to appoint Commissioner Thomas Hecker as Vice President of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington – PASSED 14-0.

Vice President Hecker said he never imagined that there would be another opportunity to be engaged in public service for Abington Township. He previously served as Ward 10 Commissioner, and in August 2018, moved from where we lived for 15 years into Meadowbrook for family reasons. When this opportunity arose to get back involved with stellar people serving on this Board and to be involved in shaping the future of this community, he is delighted to be here. He is humbled by the opportunity to serve in leadership and appreciates the trust that all of you have demonstrated in electing him to this role and he promises to not let you down. Thank you.

President Spiegelman said every time we take a step up here and take our seats we truly stand on the shoulders of giants of both political parties. He thanked our President Emeritus, one of the most decent gentleman he has ever known, his mentor and friend, Commissioner Wayne Luker for everything.

In the audience tonight is his wife Ester Eichler, a 25-year Teacher with the Abington School District and sitting next to her are his parents, Doctors Joyce and Morton Spiegelman and his father-in-law, Herbert Eichler, the German Engineer. Having them here tonight means more to him than he could ever articulate and they have among them 276 years and counting of life experience and they are joined in representation by the spirit of his late mother-in-law Gert Eichler who is always with him as a guiding spirit.

Over the course of the past two years or so, Ester and he moved their parents from out-of-state to Abington Township doubling the footprint of our little family, and we brought them here because we love this community as it is a remarkable and very special place.

It is a profound honor to sit here and be able to represent the different wards in the various neighborhoods of this community. When he first ran, he wanted to give back to the community, but there was another mission. As he began going door-to-door and meeting people, there was so much cynicism, mistrust and the idea of public service had been degraded in people's mind, and he wanted people to know that there was at least one person that cared about them personally and their family personally and he worked very hard towards that goal.

We, on this Board, cannot control what happens in Washington D.C. or in Harrisburg, but we can and we are, especially moving forward, an example of how to do things the right way, the respectful way, the open way, the transparent way, the accessible way and the truthful way and that is a commitment he makes to everyone here and everyone watching.

He likes it when people ask questions of the Board and challenge us and it is important to speak truth to power and that begins with truth. We owe it to each other to be open, honest and engaged. Part of the oath means we are under obligation to be truthful, honest and open with all of you and he hopes that everyone who engages with the Board will do the same. We are all neighbors and part of the Abington Township family and we owe it to each other to be honest, respectful and try to be kind and set an example for the crazy world we see around us every single day in the news.

Every person up here is dedicated to the wards and the neighborhoods that they represent and this Board is an incredibly diverse panel of all different backgrounds and it is important for all of us from this day forward to go out of our way to be good listeners and to reach out to every neighbor in the community and listen respectfully to everyone's hopes, fears, thoughts, concerns and aspirations. It is his deep honor to be here and he is grateful to our amazing community. Thank you.

Motion to approve renewing employment agreement by and between Richard J. Manfredi, and the Township of Abington, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to approve renewing employment agreement by and between Richard J. Manfredi, and the Township of Abington, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Township Secretary:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Hecker to adopt Resolution No. 20-001 appointing Richard J. Manfredi, Township Manager to the Office of Township Secretary.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Assistant Township Secretary:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Thompson to adopt Resolution No. 20-002 Tara Wehmeyer, Assistant Township Manager to the Office of Assistant Township Secretary.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Township Solicitor:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to appoint Rudolph Clarke as Township Solicitor through and until the January 2022 organizational meeting of the Township Board of Commissioners at the fee structure and scope of services included in the Rudolph Clarke scope of services letter submission.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Township Treasurer:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Myers to appoint Jay W. Blumenthal to the position of Township Treasurer for a period of two-years commencing January 1, 2020 through and until the January 2022 organizational meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Township Engineer:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Hecker to appoint Amy Riddle Montgomery as Township Engineer.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Traffic Engineer and General Engineering Firms:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Hecker to appoint McMahon Associates, Pennoni and TPD to perform traffic engineering services and accept the proposed rate schedule as submitted; and to appoint BCM, Pennoni and Boucher & James to perform general engineering services and accept the proposed rate schedule as submitted.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Labor Counsel:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Hecker to appoint Campbell Durrant as Township Labor Counsel.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Appoint Chair of the Township Vacancy Board:

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Myers to adopt Resolution No. 20-003 appointing Gregory Holt to the position of Chairman of the Vacancy Board.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

REMARKS OF COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Winegrad said it is an honor and privilege to be Commissioner of Ward 7 and he promised to do his best and be open and transparent, which is important for resident engagement. He looks forward to working with everyone on the Board and hoping for great things in the Township.

Commissioner Brodsky congratulated and wished “Good Luck” to the newly elected leaders. He wished everyone a “Happy New Year!”

Commissioner Rothman congratulated the President and Vice President of the Board and he looks forward to working with them and having them as our leaders is a great honor. He thanked residents of Ward 3 for giving him the opportunity of serving a second term and it is one of the greatest honors and privileges of his life, second to his family, who he could not do this without and he is there for them and because of them. He thanked his wife for holding the family together.

Commissioner DiPlacido wished everyone a “Happy New Year!” Congratulations to Commissioner Bole and he is looking forward to working with him. Also, he welcomed Vice President Hecker back and he looks forward to working with him as well.

Commissioner Luker thanked residents of Ward 5 for reelecting him as their Commissioner and he wished newly elected Vice President Hecker and President Spiegelman much success. Thank you very much for your service and he wished both of them “Good Luck!”

Commissioner Thompson wished everyone a “Happy New Year!” He thanked Commissioner Luker for serving on this Board for the past four years as President and Wayne has been a real hero and someone to look up to and he appreciates his service as do the rest of us. He looks forward to working with President Spiegelman and Vice President Hecker over the next two years and beyond and congratulated both of them.

Commissioner Bowman congratulated President Spiegelman and Vice President Hecker on their new roles. He thanked Commissioner Luker for the years he has served as President and also to Steven who helped as Vice President to carry the ball. Let’s do good things in the future.

Commissioner Schreiber congratulated everyone who was sworn in tonight. We will do great things and she looks forward to working with many of her fellow Board members again as well as for the first time with Commissioner Bole. She congratulated our new leadership and wished them “Good Luck” in their new roles. She said to her good friend, Commissioner Wayne Luker that it has always been a pleasure working with him as President.

Commissioner Bole said he likes the imagery of standing on someone's shoulders because the shoulders he stands on personally are his parents who are here tonight and who taught him grit and hard work and to stick with it whenever things get tough. He stands on the shoulders of his late in-laws who taught him to be honest and unapologetic about pursuing electoral pursuits and advocacy for those who have less than us. He stands on the shoulders of his wife who has a keen sense of people and social justice. He stands on the shoulders of his 12-year old daughter whose unabashed optimism about the human condition always allows us to see the good in people. He stands on the shoulders of his son whose 15 years old and has a keen sense of public policy, social justice and an interest in public service.

He gave a "tip of the hat" to those who came before him such as Ray Kline and family and Bud who still lives in Ward 13 and a family whose shoulders he is proud and humbled to stand upon, the late Mike Gillespie and former Commissioner Carol Gillespie as 28 years of Board service is something to admire and cherish. Anything he is able to do and any relationships he is able to forge within Abington Township and Ward 13 are due in large part because of the incredible commitment of a singular family to this ward that he lives in. It is an absolute honor to serve in this role and he represents everyone in the Township and Ward 13 and he will do his best to make those who came before him proud. Thank you very much and he looks forward to working together.

Commissioner Myers welcomed Commissioner Bole to the Board and she looks forward to working with him. Congratulations to all who have returned and she is so happy and excited to be working with all of her fellow Board members for the next two years. Thank you.

Commissioner Carswell said she is excited to be official not just by this group, but by the people of Ward 10, and we are a happy ward and a good group of people including her two young children who she is honored to be their mom and honored to spend most mornings dropping them off at school and hearing about issues happening in Roychester Park. There is so much good to come of us and the next generation and she is happy to be here to hopefully to inspire some of that. We need to get some work done and she is excited about some of the conversations that have been sparking. Thanks everyone and congratulations to our new leaders.

Commissioner Zappone thanked his family, friends and the residents of Ardsley, a working class community. He thanked them for their support and to be able to represent them as their Commissioner. Together, over the past 20 years, we accomplished a lot in Ardsley, and right now together as a team, we are working on the Edge Hill/Tyson project in which hopefully within another year or two it will be completed, and there is a lot more work to be done. Congratulations to President Spiegelman and Vice President Hecker and he welcomed Commissioner Bole. Also, Commissioner Luker was his mentor when he first came on the Board 20 years ago and he cannot thank Wayne enough for being there to support him when he needed him. Thank you.

Vice President Hecker said he was delighted tonight to be joined by his family who has been an incredible rock of support through all of the difficult circumstances that we have endured. It was an honor to have his mom here this evening to hold the bible, and he thanked her for it.

President Spiegelman announced that Board meetings will now begin at 7 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary

Resolution No. 20-001; Resolution No. 20-002 and Resolution No. 20-003 were adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington on January 6, 2020.

APPROVED

2/13/2020