

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, October 10, 2019 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with President Luker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners MYERS, BRODSKY, ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, WINEGRAD, THOMPSON, SCHREIBER, CARSWELL, SPIEGELMAN, VAHEY, GILLESPIE, ZAPPONE, BOWMAN, KLINE, LUKER

Township Manager MANFREDI
Assistant Township Manager WEHMEYER
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Finance Director HERMANN
Director of Engineering/Code MONTGOMERY
Township Treasurer BLUMENTHAL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Luker called on Vice President Kline for presentation.

Vice President Kline said it is his honor to introduce someone very special to Abington Township, Ms. Leslie Montz, who is a former Abington Township Commissioner from back in the 70's. Leslie was born in New York City in 1921, raised in Rutherford, New Jersey, attended Penn State University and graduated in 1941 with a degree in journalism. During her life as a wife and mom of two children, she became involved in the community of Abington Township where she and her family made their home.

They first began living in Glenside, then Roslyn, then to Abington on Jericho Road and finally in Meadowbrook on Jody Road. She served as President of the AAUW (American Association University Women), the PTA, Vice President of the Suburban PR Club and President of the Republican Women of Abington Township. Her work and career were in public relations and advertising and then in public information/public relations at the Ogontz Campus of Penn State, now called, Abington Campus. She worked at the university from 1959 until 1979, although not always fulltime.

If you ask Leslie what she is most proud of besides raising her family, it would be her election to the Board of Commissioners representing Ward 1. She was the first woman to be elected to the Board of Commissioners of Abington Township and served from 1976 until 1982. She took on responsibilities in public health, public works and school board relations. She was Vice President of the Board during her last two and half years before she and her husband retired and moved to State College PA to enjoy a life that a wonderful college town has to offer.

She continued her public service in Happy Valley as a member of the Planning Commission in Ferguson Township. She also enjoyed her time as an advisor to the Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority at Penn State and her membership at the State College's Women's Club of AAUW.

She now resides in California, only a portion of the time with her daughter, and she still spends football season cheering on Nittany Lions of Penn State at their residence at State College. She returns to Abington from time to time to visit with old friends and the kids, now retired adults who hung out at the Montz residence in Abington in the 50's and 60's.

Ms. Montz was presented with a 1976 Abington Township calendar from the days when she was an Abington Township Commissioner in which she was listed as Ward 1 Commissioner.

Vice President Kline said we, the Board of Commissioners, appreciate Ms. Montz' service and for being a trailblazer as the first woman elected to the Board of Commissioners of Abington Township.

PRESENTATION:

Presentation of new Township website:

Manager Manfredi said more than two years ago, this Board set a priority to have better communication and more interaction with the community, so they made a commitment in the last two budgets to build infrastructure to assist with that.

We have been building that infrastructure and one of the key decisions was to engage a Communications Manager who focuses solely on that. The first task was to begin working on a new website, which has been completely redesigned, more user-friendly and an adaptable.

Ms. Ashley McIlvaine, Communications Manager, presented the new Township website to the Board of Commissioners. Website: www.abingtonpa.gov. Process began with vendor selection, research analysis and engagement and then actual design of the website. She began examining other local, county and state government websites to see how they were structured and prioritized information, and so by using best practices and forward-thinking, she created the redesign.

We decided to stay with the existing contractor who enabled a redesign credit making it the most affordable option and renegotiated annual contract resulting in a savings of approximately \$18,000.

It is a completely new website built from scratch not using a typical design; however, incorporating some of the features we have seen. Additionally, we want to be able to have the website grow by adding new pages, changing content and updating it immediately.

A survey was provided to all Township departments to get an understanding of what information and services each would like to provide in the future including frequently asked questions as well as the vision of their department.

Analysis of 2018 data was to understand who accesses the website, which pages are frequently visited and what content needs to be prioritized. We found there were a little over 200,000 sessions, 100,000 of them were by unique users, so the website wasn't only being accessed by a computer, but 50% of interactions were occurring on a smart-device, 45% from a cell phone, so we modernized the website to fit all various platforms and to insure that content remains consistent, design is working effectively and the website is responsive. Heat map was used to understand point of entry where someone is going to click to find the information they are looking for and a user survey was conducted to make sure what content is prioritized, and as a result, the redesigned website is user-friendly and service-oriented while being professional and modern.

Newly designed Township website was presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Joe Rooney, 740 Maple Road, stated that “at the last meeting, I watched when the Police Chief escorted one of residents from the podium because three minutes expired, and I didn’t like that. Also, it was mentioned that nothing had been decided about the EDC other than to advertise the meeting and that is wrong because they had decided to spend up to \$20,000 for a law firm. I had questions about it, so I wrote three one-line questions and followed it up making sure it was received and I didn’t get a reply, so after 10 days, I still had no reply and sent another email and did not receive a reply to that either and then made two phone calls and still didn’t receive a reply, not even an acknowledgement that a question was received. People have three minutes to make a comment and, if they spend 10 days trying to get an answer to a specific question and there is no acknowledgment and information is not forthcoming and then they are only given three minutes to speak with the threat of being escorted out by the Police Chief, there is something wrong with that process.”

CONSENT AGENDA:

Vice President Kline questioned whether there are any Board members who would like to pull items from Consent Agenda. There were none.

Vice President Kline made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve Items a. – f. of the Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes of the Board of Commissioners September 12, 2019 Regular Meeting.

To adopt Resolution No. 19-026 authorizing the execution of a 2018 Automated Red Light Enforcement Program Grant Project Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Transportation and authorize the Township Manager to execute all future documents related to this grant.

To authorize the Township Manager to execute the Inter-Municipal Crediting Agreement for the Conklin Recreation Center Pollution Reduction Plan.

To approve investments for the month of August 2019. It was noted that investments for the month totaled \$744,000. Interest rate yields ranged from 1.90% to 1.95%.

To approve the Clearing Fund, the Deferred Revenue/Expense activity and Petty Cash balances for the month of August 2019. Clearing fund receipts and disbursements for the month of August 2019 were \$8,820.50 and (\$1,579.38), respectively. Deferred Revenue/Expense receipts and disbursements for the month of August 2019 were \$0.00 and (\$19.00), respectively.

To approve the Advance and Travel Expense activity for August 2019. Advance and Travel Expense reports were \$0.00 and \$186.04, respectively. Eight-month expenses totaled \$37,054.59.

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Finance Committee –

Treasurer's Report:

Township Treasurer Jay W. Blumenthal stated that his report was included in the Board's packet.

Item FC-02-101019:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Winegrad to approve the August 2019 expenditures in the amount of \$2,179,422.11 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,954,804.40 and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of November 2019.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 15-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ron Holt, 2564 Rubicam Avenue, commented that on October 16th, there will be a special meeting about the EDC and he hopes all residents can come out. He thanked Commissioner Spiegelman for addressing some of the issues; however, he has more questions and he is not sure one meeting will be enough, but things are clearer.

Natalie Sherstyuk, 1165 Delene Road, thanked Commissioners Carswell and Spiegelman for replying to a couple of her emails regarding the Economic Development Corporation. She read an email thanking the Board for posting the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the EDC; however, there is not a lot of time to go over it and ask questions by the imposed deadline of October 11th, so please extend the deadline or schedule another session, so the bylaws can be adequately addressed by residents, and she did not receive a reply email. Also, the EDC is not in the best interest of residents.

Commissioner Spiegelman replied that he will send a reply-email to the resident. He clarified that we will attempt to have answers to all questions submitted prior to the information session at the actual meeting. We cannot guarantee that any questions submitted after October 11th will have answers by the information session date, but every question that is asked whenever it is sent will be answered. Public information session will be held on Wednesday, October 16th at 7 p.m. in this boardroom.

Vice President Kline clarified that there will be no Board action taken at the meeting on the 16th. It is an informational session and there will still be a public hearing scheduled in advance with notice provided to residents in regards to anything related to proposed Economic Development Corporation.

Paul E. Morse Jr., 755 Glen Road, expressed concern about questions not being answered.

Phil O'Brien, 221 Roslyn Avenue, questioned whether a schedule has been set for a public hearing/vote to be taken on the EDC.

Manager Manfredi replied there is no current schedule at this time.

Rich Flanagan, 323 Shady Lane, asked for police enforcement on Shady Lane and we need to work together to get a "Stop" sign or light installed due to the amount of traffic using it as a cut-thru street, and he is concerned about the safety of the kids.

Joe Rooney, 740 Maple Avenue, asked for the policy about whether it should be announced prior to a vote that a Board member has a family member who has a business tie to the matter and whether that is a conflict of interest, and if so, should there be a recusal.

Solicitor Clarke replied that if it is determined that there is no conflict of interest, than nothing needs to be disclosed, and there is no conflict of interest.

REMARKS OF COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Bowman said the Board follows the law, which is why the Township has a Solicitor, and he is a far better one than we had in the past.

Commissioner Zappone announced that our 9th Annual Ardsley Family Day will be held on October 19th from noon- 5 p.m. at the Ardsley Community Center. This event is open to all residents of the Township.

Commissioner Gillespie commented that it has been a fantastic Fire Prevention Week, and she cannot thank our volunteer men and women firefighters enough for all they do. We should all be very proud of them, and when they ask for support, send it to them. Also, Fall Fest in Keswick Village was fantastic last Saturday and she thanked everyone who came out and had fun.

Commissioner Vahey echoed Commissioner Gillespie's comments about the Fall Fest, which was a great day. Next will be Keswick Village's Annual Trick-or-Treating event to be held on Sunday, October 27th beginning at 5 p.m.

Also, Friends of Glenside/Weldon is a nonprofit group in his neighborhood that he is very proud to work with and who are raising money to replace the playground equipment from the old Glenside/Weldon property with the School District's permission. He is looking forward to seeing a much improved Glenside/Weldon park in the near future.

Commissioner Myers asked Commissioners Spiegelman and Vahey that, if it is determined at the conclusion of the informational session on October 16th that another session is needed, would they be willing to hold it.

Commissioner Vahey replied he would be open to it, if necessary.

Commissioner Spiegelman agreed.

Commissioner Myers thanked staff of Code Enforcement Department who has gone above and beyond for her, and if you ever need to know about bird mites, Jim is now a specialist.

Commissioner Brodsky wished those residents who celebrate, a "Happy, Healthy New Year."

Commissioner Rothman echoed sentiments in wishing everyone a "Happy New Year." The McKinley Fire Prevention event will be held on October 15th from 6-8 p.m. and he hopes to see the community there. October 26th is the Halloween Parade beginning at McKinley Market at 2 p.m.

Also, he applauded the resident who spoke about traffic issue on Shady Lane, and he, along with Chief Molloy will work with the residents on getting results.

Commissioner DiPlacido said, "When driving through Abington Township, please drive like your kids live here."

Commissioner Winegrad wished everyone a "Happy Halloween." And, he asked motorists to watch out for our kids.

Commissioner Thompson reminded everyone that Fire Prevention event will be held tomorrow night at the Edge Hill Fire Company on Limekiln Pike in North Hills from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., so please come out and express your appreciation to them.

Also, the Comp Plan Development Team's first public engagement session on the Township's Comprehensive Plan will be held on November 7th from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Edge Hill Fire Company to set goals for the Comp Plan and get feedback from residents on where they would like to see the Township going forward in the next 10-15 years.

Vice President Kline thanked Fire Marshal Rohrer and the Fire Companies for observing Yom Kippur in not scheduling their open house events during that period of time.

He welcomed Ms. Leslie Montz and thanked her for coming to the meeting tonight as it was an honor meeting her and he was glad we were able to provide her with a memento about her time serving on the Board.

Also, we keep hearing there is no process for the Economic Development Corporation, and the Board is being deliberate as well as the Township Manager and those involved in developing the information, which will be discussed on October 16th including other public meetings to be held, and *that is* the process. It is the process that gives the public the ability to make comments and suggestions on possible changes. Some of the speakers want the process to just stop because they do not want a process, and we do not operate that way.

There is an idea before the Board that has not been solidified, although not a preconceived idea, but it is being vetted and there will be meetings held at which time the Board will listen to the residents and then make decisions. It is counter-productive for certain residents who believe they speak for everyone and who want to just stop the process.

President Luker thanked staff of the Public Works Department for their assistance on special projects in his ward and other areas of the Township.

He thanked Ms. Leslie Montz for her presence this evening as she came from California, and acknowledged that she was the first woman on the Board of Commissioners as well as the first woman Vice President.

Ms. Leslie Montz took her final bow.

Board of Commissioners Meeting

October 10, 2019

ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard J. Manfredi, Township Manager/Secretary

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Note: Resolution No. 19-026 was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on October 10, 2019.

RESOLUTION NO. 19-026

A RESOLUTION, BY AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ABINGTON, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A 2018 AUTOMATED RED LIGHT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM GRANT PROJECT FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR TRAFFIC SIGNAL UPGRADES AT THE INTERSECTION OF MEETINGHOUSE ROAD AND FOX CHASE ROAD

Be it RESOLVED, by authority of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington, Montgomery County, and it is hereby resolved by authority of the same, that the Township Manager of said Municipality be authorized and directed to sign the attached Automated Red Light Enforcement Program Project Funding Agreement on its behalf.

ATTEST:

TOWNSHIP OF ABINGTON


Richard J. Manfredi,
Township Manager & Secretary

By 
Wayne C. Luker, President
Board of Commissioners

I, Wayne C. Luker, President of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners held this 10th day of October, 2019.

DATE: 10.16.19


Wayne C. Luker, President
Board of Commissioners