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# **MINUTES**

## **JANUARY 8, 2024 Regular Public Meeting**

**Board of Commissioners**

**Township of Whitehall**

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### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1) The Regular Public Meeting of the Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 8, 2024 held at the Whitehall Township Public Meeting Room, with the following in attendance:

#### **COMMISSIONERS**

Thomas Slonaker, President  
Jeffrey J. Warren, Vice President  
Randy Atiyeh, Secretary  
Alberta Scarfaro  
Ken Snyder  
Elizabeth N. Fox

#### **TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL**

Joseph J. Marx, Jr., Mayor  
John D. Meyers, Deputy Mayor  
Jack Gross, Esq., Township Solicitor  
David Nelson, Fire Chief  
Michael Marks, Police Chief  
Frank Clark, Engineer, KCE  
Lee Rackus, PZ&D (Absent)  
Tina J. Koren, Tax Collector  
Larissa Bruder, Executive Secretary

The meeting was formally opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a moment of silence will follow for reflection of our troops stationed overseas and that may be in harms way.

President SLONAKER read the statement on fair housing as required.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner WARREN moved, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO to approve the Minutes of the following meeting:

Regular Public Meeting – December 11, 2023

SIX Commissioners were present and four voted “yes” and two abstentions (SNYDER & FOX). Motion carried.

Commissioner SNYDER moved, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO to approve the Minutes of the following meeting:

Reorganizational Meeting – January 2, 2024

SIX Commissioners were present and voted “yes”. Motion carried.

**B. EAC PRESENTATION**

Deb Rosen presented the EAC's 2023 Accomplishments and their 2024 Outlook.

Accomplishments included 5 litter cleanups, Recycling Event, Expanded Social Media, Working on Shade Tree Ordinance and Strengthen Partnership with School District. Whitehall becoming a Bird Towne and Monarch Pledge Grant. Partnering with the Scouts for Eagle Scout Projects.

2024 Outlook – Develop new programs in conjunction with the Library for children & adults  
New community programs with Park & Recreation. Continue litter cleanups and encouraging new members and working on a 10 year Strategic Plan.

President SLONAKER thanked Ms. Rosene for the presentation and noted his appreciation for what the EAC does.

At this time, Philips ARMSTRONG, Lehigh County Executive was present to give an update on County issues as well as take questions. He noted the following items:

- Hired a Community Liaison to have a better relationship with all the communities which has been working out well.
- Pleased that the farmland preservation was able to be approved.
- Working with the Township Police Chief regarding regionalization and has also talked with the Fire Chief.
- Announcing something big on Wednesday at 2:00pm regarding 911 system.
- Proud of \$22 million grant to extend trail.
- Working on new wing for Cedarbrook
- Treatment center in Slatington
- State of the County Address in February

President SLONAKER questioned if the County is working on a food safety inspector. Executive ARMSTRONG noted that the county did a study whether it was cost effective for a county health dept. It was found it would cost approximately \$8 million a year and that is a huge burden to put on the tax payers.

Commissioner WARREN thanked the County for their support with farmland preservation.

President SLONAKER thanked Executive ARMSTRONG for his service as Teacher, Commissioner and County Executive.

**C. COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

President SLONAKER announced that there is a 3 minute time limit for comments and it will be strictly adhered to.

Fady SALLOUM of 303 Sumner Avenue has been corresponding with administration regarding the holiday banner that used to hang across MacArthur Road. In doing research with PennDOT to get the

banner approved for return, a resolution needs to be passed by the Township. Mr. Salloum stated that banner will be donated to the Township, but if purchased by the end of February, the donors can purchase it at a generous discount.

Andrew Kopeck of 3763 Dogwood Drive noted the following:

- Front of the Township Building decorated nicely for the holidays
- Suggested that a survey go out to the residents to see what services the residents want before next waste contract.
- Reconsider the income limit for tax exoneration
- Homeless camp along Range Road – Mayor MARX advised that the camps have been abandoned.

Andrea Hoagland of 51 Kimmert Avenue commented on the following:

- Verifying residents need to utilize trash hauler
- Riverside Drive funding
- Park and Recreation Permit Fees
- Concern with content of newsletter

Paul Sajnani of 3525 Limstone Drive stated his concern on a disabled vehicle that has not moved in two years which has garbage and graffiti on it. Chief MARKS advised he will have an officer take care of it.

**D. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON ORDINANCES**

1. **BILL NO. 1-2024**

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE OF ONE 2024 FORD SMALL DUMP TRUCK FOR THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (FIRE)

President SLONAKER read Bill No. 1-2024 to the Board

Commissioner SNYDER moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner WARREN

SIX Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 1-2024 was approved.

2. **BILL NO. 2-2024**

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE OF TWO (2) 2025 MACK DUMP TRUCKS FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (FIRE)

President SLONAKER read Bill No. 2-2024 to the Board.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO

SIX Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 2-2024 was approved.

3. BILL NO. 3-2024

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE OF THREE (3) 2024 FORD F350 4X4 TRUCKS FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (FIRE)

President SLONAKER read Bill No. 3-2024 to the Board.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner FOX

SIX Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 3-2024 was approved.

4. BILL NO. 4-2024

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE OF FIVE (5) DODGE DURANGO VEHICLES FOR THE POLICE PATROL DIVISION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (POLICE)

President SLONAKER read Bill No. 4-2024 to the Board.

Commissioner SCARFARO moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner SNYDER

SIX Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 4-2024 was approved.

**E. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON RESOLUTIONS**

1. RESOLUTION NO. 3293

TITLE: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSAL OF SPECIFIC TOWNSHIP RECORDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TOWNSHIP’S RECORD RETENTION AND DISPOSAL SCHEDULE. (ADMINISTRATION)

President SLONAKER read Resolution No. 3293 to the Board.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FOX

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3293 was approved.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 3294

TITLE: A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING STEPHEN BURDA TO SERVE AS A REGULAR MEMBER ON THE WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP ZONING HEARING BOARD. (BOC)

President SLONAKER read Resolution No. 3294 to the Board.

Commissioner SCARFARO moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner SNYDER

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3294 was approved.

**F. OTHER**

1. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Deb Rosene to serve on the Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council, term expiring December 31, 2026.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FOX

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

2. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Shawn McHugh to serve on the Whitehall Township Police Pension Board, term expiring December 31, 2027.

Commissioner FOX moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner ATIYEH

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

3. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Gary Schlaffer to serve on the Whitehall Township Authority, term expiring December 31, 2028.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

4. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Kent Newhart to serve on the Whitehall Township Industrial Commercial Development Authority, term expiring December 31, 2028.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

5. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Cheryl Huckabee to serve on the Whitehall Township Industrial Commercial Development Authority, term expiring December 31, 2028.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner ATIYEH

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

6. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Robert Piligian to serve on the Whitehall Township Planning Commission, term expiring December 31, 2027.

Commissioner SLONAKER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner SNYDER  
SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

7. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Paul Geissinger to serve on the Whitehall Township Planning Commission, term expiring December 31, 2027.

Commissioner SNYDER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner WARREN  
SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

8. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Paul Geissinger to serve on the Coplay Whitehall Sewer Authority, term expiring December 31, 2028.

Commissioner SCARFARO moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner ATIYEH  
SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

9. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of John Kostick Jr. to serve on the Whitehall Township Civil Service Commission, term expiring December 31, 2029.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FOX  
SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

10. MOTION - to approve the reappointment of Robin Ruhmel to serve on the Whitehall Township Planning Commission, term expiring December 31, 2027.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner  
SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

11. MOTION - to approve the appointment of Carson Richel from an Alternate Member to a regular member on the Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council, term expiring December 31, 2026.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FOX  
SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

12. MOTION - to approve the appointment of Phyllis Ward from an Alternate Member to a Regular Member on the Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council, term expiring December 31, 2026.

Commissioner FOX moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner WARREN

SIX Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

13. **MOTION** - to approve the appointment of John Delserro from a Regular Member to an Alternate Member on the Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council, term expiring December 31, 2025.

No vote taken as this item was removed.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1. Department of Operations – Commissioner SNYDER explained that although this department is mandated to exist in the Charter, it has not been funded for a number of years. He would like to see it reinstated and if not the whole department at least a person who could oversee township projects. Another factor that needs to be considered, is the upcoming retirement of the Township Surveyor. President SLONAKER suggested that the Bureau Chiefs involved should meet with the Deputy Mayor and Mayor and come up with a plan and bring it back to the Board.
2. Establish 2024 Goals – Commissioner SNYDER feels this is necessary to do in order to keep on top of things and to make sure issues are handled throughout the year. He noted the following items that are on his list: Operations Dept, West Catasauqua Building Upgrade, Speed Control in Fullerton & Decorations for MacArthur Road. President SLONAKER noted that typically a Commissioner would discuss items they felt necessary during the Reports of Public Officials.
3. Opening the Budget – Commissioner SNYDER is interested in doing this as to find funds to refurbish the West Catasauqua Building as it is used daily by area seniors. Commissioner WARREN noted that a grant has been applied for to renovate the kitchen to the extent that is needed there. Commissioner SNYDER asked for a scope of work to be done for this building.
4. Investigation of Fire Department will be discussed during an executive session.
5. Business License for Rental Properties – was discussed during Treasurer KOREN’s Report

### **G. REPORTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

Commissioner FOX thanked everyone for voting her into office and will work hard for the residents of the Township.

Commissioner SCARFARO wished everyone happy new year and welcomed the new Commissioners and is looking forward to the coming year.

Commissioner ATIYEH thanked all the volunteers in the community and also Public Works for their diligence on the recent snow storm.

Commissioner WARREN noted their Attorney is working on a possible resolution for the Mickley Prydun Farm and would like to get that information to the Board as soon as possible.

Commissioner SNYDER commented on a meeting held last week discussing a special needs playground with the Cindy Miles Foundation which will be donating over \$1 million dollars for the cause. He noted that he would welcome the opportunity to building that flagship in the Township.

President SLONAKER commended Public Works on the recent snow event and hopes everyone fairs well through the deluge of rain that is coming.

Mayor MARX thanked everyone who has helped him in his first week of office. Even though he has been involved in different aspects in the Township, there is still a learning curve for him to overcome as Mayor. He commended the Public Works Director – Sheldon Christman on handling his first large snow event, as did his second in command – Jeff Greenzweig. Mayor MARX also commended the Police Dept, Fire Dept, Fire Police and EMS. He is grateful for the phenomenal job that was done by all.

Treasurer KOREN discussed number 5 discussion item – Business License for Rental Properties. She feels the ordinance needs clarification as it has been past practice that if a landlord rents to someone in their family and that person does not pay the taxes, the landlord is not made to get a license. When she researched it on Berkheimer it was stated that a license should be required as it is considered a non-owner occupied residence. Secondly, Treasurer KOREN has concerns with the form required for garbage exonerations. She noted that the income levels need to be addressed and clearly defined. The Attorney’s office will work on that.

President SLONAKER announced that the Board will be going into an Executive Session for personnel matters.

***H. ADJOURNMENT***

MOTION – Commissioner SCARFARO moved, seconded by Commissioner FOX to adjourn the meeting at 10:00p.m.