
MINUTES

MARCH 08, 2021
Regular Public Meeting

Board of Commissioners

Township of Whitehall

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, March 8, 2021 held virtually via WEBEX, with the following in attendance:

COMMISSIONERS

Philip J. Ginder, President
Joseph J. Marx, Jr., Vice President
Thomas Slonaker, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Warren
Charles G. Fisher
Randy Atiyeh (Absent)
Michael D. Dee

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Michael P. Harakal, Jr., Mayor
John D. Meyers, Deputy Mayor
John F. Gross, Esq.,
Township Solicitor
Michael Marks, Police Chief
Frank Clark Engineer
Lee Rackus, PZ&D
Colleen L. Gober, Tax Collector
Larissa Bruder, Executive Secretary

The meeting was formally opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a note of thanks given to all serving in the Armed Forces, First Responders, Healthcare Workers, Grocery Store Workers, and Municipal Staff who are all seeing the community through this hard time.

President GINDER read the statement on fair housing as required.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

Regular Public Meeting – February 8, 2021

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

President GINDER stated that the Board held an Executive Session on February 25, 2021 at 6pm at CWSA meeting room for personnel and legal issues.

B. COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

No public comment.

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

1 **BILL NO. 2-2021**

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE SALARY OF THE TOWNSHIP TREASURER FOR THE YEARS, 2022, 2023, 2024, AND 2025 (BOC)

President GINDER read Bill No. 2-2021 to the Board.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by FISHER Commissioner

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Bill No. 2-2021 was approved.

2. **BILL NO. 3-2021**

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PROVIDING OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR STREET LIGHTS FOR WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, BID NO. 2021-01, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (PUBLIC WORKS)

President GINDER read Bill No. 3-2021 to the Board.

Commissioner MARX moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner WARREN.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Bill No. 3-2021 was approved.

3. **BILL NO. 4-2021**

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE OF A NEW SKID STEER LOADER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (PUBLIC WORKS)

President GINDER read Bill No. 4-2021 to the Board.

Commissioner FISHER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner DEE.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Bill No. 4-2021 was approved.

4. **BILL NO. 5-2021**

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE DEFERRING THE REQUIRED INSTALLATION OF SIDEWALKS ALONG THE SCHEIDY’S ROAD FRONTAGE OF 4505 AND 4507 SCHEIDY’S ROAD AS REQUIRED IN CHAPTER 21, SECTION 21-16 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP. (DEVELOP)

President GINDER read Bill No. 5-2021 to the Board.

Commissioner SLONAKER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner MARX.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Bill No. 5-2021 was approved.

5. BILL NO. 6-2021

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE REQUIRED INSTALLATION OF SIDEWALKS AT 3030 S. THIRD STREET, WHITEHALL, PENNSYLVANIA REQUIRED IN CHAPTER 21, SECTION 21-16 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP AND ACCEPTING AN ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT REQUIRING THE DEVELOPER, CASTLE BUILDERS, INC. AND THEIR SUCCESSORS IN INTEREST, TO MAINTAIN SAID EASEMENT. (DEVELOP)

President GINDER read Bill No. 6-2021 to the Board.

Commissioner FISHER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner WARREN.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Bill No. 6-2021 was approved.

6. BILL NO. 7-2021

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PURCHASE OF IN CAR CAMERAS FOR THE WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT, 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 GINDER read Bill No. 7-2021 to the Board.

Commissioner MARX moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner DEE.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Bill No. 7-2021 was approved.

D. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON RESOLUTIONS

1. RESOLUTION NO. 3152

TITLE: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT FOR ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS OF THE POLICE PENSION FUND. (ADMIN)

President GINDER read Resolution No. 3152 to the Board.

Commissioner SLONAER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner DEE.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3152 was approved.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 3153

TITLE: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AMOUNT OF INTEREST RETURN TO BE CREDITED TO POLICE PENSION FUND MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020. (ADMIN)

President GINDER read Resolution No. 3153 to the Board.

Commissioner MARX moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FISHER.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3153 was approved.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 3154

TITLE: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE RETIREMENT AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF MONTHLY PENSION BENEFITS TO FORMER POLICE OFFICER JASON MERTZ. (ADMIN)

President GINDER read Resolution No. 3154 to the Board.

Commissioner DEE moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FISHER. Commissioners gave their well wishes to Officer MERTZ.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3154 was approved.

4. RESOLUTION NO. 3155

TITLE: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE CHANGE OF INDIRECT CONTROL OF A PARENT COMPANY OF RCN TELECOM SERVICES (LEHIGH) LLC.

President GINDER read Resolution No. 3155 to the Board.

Commissioner DEE moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner SLONAKER.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3155 was approved

E. OTHER

1. MOTION - to approve the release of escrow for completed and withdrawn projects, per Deputy Mayor MEYERS memo dated February 15, 2021.

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

2. MOTION – to approve the use of the Lafarge Fund for the purposes of funding repairs to South Lehigh Avenue and to purchase a snow blower attachment for an F/E Loader with those funds being replenished within two years.

Commissioner MARX stated that in John RACKUS’s information on the skid Steer, which was from the 2021 Capital equipment replacement, John noted that a snow blower was budgeted for 2020 but not bought. In the meantime, the price of the blower has dramatically dropped. Commissioner MARX is requesting that the Board include this piece of equipment into the motion, which will help Public Work greatly in further snow removal, especially at the new Public Service Building.

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

** At this time, President GINDER asked Frank CLARK to read correspondence to the Coplay Whitehall Sewer Authority regarding the extension of a grant for the Summit & Prospect Streets Sewer Project. It read as follows:

At this past Monday's Board of Commissioners Workshop Meeting (March 1, 2021), the Board discussed the status of the Summit & Prospect Streets Sewer Project. One of the reasons that prompted the discussion was the need for your office to request an extension of the County grant you were able to secure. President Ginder asked me to highlight the information the CWSA has compiled over the past two years researching the project, and determining its feasibility and projected costs. My sincere thanks to you, Dave, for sending me all of that information, and also discussing the finer points of the project with me. The combination of those elements allowed me to provide the Board with an accurate assessment of the projects desire by the residents, design and construction timing, scope, and costs. The Board was made aware that the great majority of responses from the residents were not in favor of the installation of public sanitary sewer. In fact, most said that their existing on-lot systems were functioning well. The Board was also told that although considerable work regarding the feasibility was done by CWSA, a final design had not been ordered yet, and could take close to a year to design. Once completed, it would still require approvals. With only a one-year extension available on the County grant, they realized there was no way it could be utilized for construction. In addition, they were also informed of the preliminary cost figures from your estimates, and even with the grant and other potential funding sources, they felt the cost per home would still be prohibitive. Some members added that during this past year of economic uncertainty, and that we may still be facing tough times ahead, they did not want to add such an economic hardship on the residents of Summit and Prospect Streets. After considerable discussion, the Board ultimately decided to postpone the entire project at this time.

Thank you again for all of your help and guidance, and if you need anything, please let me know, Frank

F. REPORTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Commissioner MARX honored Officer Jason MERTZ by acknowledging his 13 years of service and his unfortunate career ending injury taking place in the line of duty. Commissioner MARX thanked him for his dedication, service and sacrifice he made and wished Jason all the best and god speed. Commissioner MARX also thanked Chief NELSON for his recommendation of switching Station 40 brush truck to EMA.

Commissioner DEE commended Whitehall PD for their quick action on an arrest for the WalMart

shooting. He asks that anyone utilizing the Trail to understand the rules of pedestrians and bicyclists. Also, if you see litter please pick it up. Commissioner DEE also put out a reminder that this coming Thursday, March 11th, the Food Pantry will be operating and donations are always appreciated.

Commissioner FISHER reflected on the COVID situation coming up on a year and that we have come along way and that we are almost there and to please keep up with CDC requirements, especially with the new variants of the virus ramping up. Commissioner FISHER also noted that the EAC committee has a Facebook page up and running.

Commissioner WARREN asked that anyone who is computer savy to help out family/friends who may not be able to get on-line to schedule a COVID vaccine.

Commissioner SLONAKER reiterated statements/sentiments made on COVID, the Food Pantry and Commissioner MARX's tribute to Officer MERTZ.

President GINDER questioned if Recreation Committee had meetings of their minutes and he would also like to see financial statements for the Commission. President GINDER also questioned the status of the Reliance Street Agreement. Attorney GROSS noted that he has not received any comments so he will be forwarding to Dave Scheuermann . President GINDER asked Frank CLARK the status of the sidewalk issue on Mechanicsville Road and also of the stormwater pipe issue with CWSA. Frank CLARK advised that he is still waiting for the signoff to transfer the property. He noted that if he does not hear anything in the coming few days, he himself will physically go to the Attorney and hopefully to get this settled. Lastly, the status on the 72' stormwater pipe south of Route 22. Frank CLARK has a call into the contractor to find out the status of the estimate.

Mayor HARAKAL stated that he is putting together info on WHPS endeavors and their work on the Grist Mill. Chick Fil A conversation continues on traffic issues. Litter control Ad Hoc Committee has started working on a campaign. Hunger Initiative is in conversation with the School District and getting snack pack pals back up and running. The Mayor thanked Officer MERTZ for his time served with Whitehall PD and wished him well.

Treasurer GOBER noted that the garbage fee and real estate tax bills are out to residents and payments are coming in. The office has been receiving complaints about building being closed, but once explained the residents are understanding.

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION – Commissioner FISHER moved, seconded by Commissioner DEE to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.