

**PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2020**

The second regular monthly meeting of the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, September 24, 2020 via Telephone Conference Zoom Meeting Call-In Number: (888) 788-0099 (US Toll Free)

Conference ID: 391 592 5613 (Press # when prompted)

In accordance with Governor Wolf's ongoing COVID-19 pandemic emergency declaration by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Plainfield Township officials are holding this regular meeting utilizing the Zoom authorized telecommunication device platform only. Remote meetings are permitted under the provisions of Act 15 of 2020 (Health Care Cost Containment Act). The Board of Supervisors will not be physically present at this meeting. This public meeting will be recorded. We kindly ask that all interested parties participating via the dedicated conference call line to only speak during the sections of the meeting that are specifically reserved for public comment or when prompted by the Chairman and to also state your name each time you are speaking. Members of the public and all interested parties will have the opportunity to comment via the telephone conference call prior to any official action taking place and during the Citizen's Agenda/Non-Agenda portion of the meeting. Anyone intentionally disrupting the meeting will be promptly muted and/or ejected from the call.

Chairman, Randy Heard, called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

ROLL CALL:

The following Supervisors answered roll call: Chairman, Randy Heard, Vice Chairman, Glenn Borger, Jane Mellert, Stephen Hurni and Joyce Lambert.

Also present were Administrative Assistant, Paige Stefanelli and Township Manager, Thomas Petrucci. Treasurer, Katelyn Kopach, Township Engineer, Michael Kukles, and Solicitor, David Backenstoe were excused from the meeting.

- *Now that the roll call of the Board of Supervisors is completed, we will proceed with a roll call of all members of the public who are participating on this call. Please state your name(s) one at a time so the Township can make sure that your participation is recognized.*

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

Terry Kleintop, Resident
Paul Rinaldi, Jr., Resident
Brienne Kemmerer, Resident
Kate Ebel, Wildlands Conservancy

I. TOWNSHIP MANAGER – THOMAS PETRUCCI:

1. Executive Session Announcement: September 10, 2020 (2:00 PM to 2:27 PM) - Readily Identifiable Litigation:

Mr. Petrucci stated the Board of Supervisors held an executive session on September 10, 2020 from 2:00 PM to 2:27 PM to discuss readily identifiable litigation. No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

2. Approval of the September 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes (DRAFT):

ACTION: Motion was made by Stephen Hurni and seconded by Joyce Lambert to approve the September 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Prior to the vote, Chairman, Randy Heard, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public. Motion approved. Vote 5-0.

3. Review of Little Bushkill Creek Stream Restoration Project Proposals (Recommendation to be provided by Wildlands Conservancy); MS4 Pollutant Reduction Plan; 2019 DCNR C2P2 Grant Project:

Mr. Petrucci stated the Township currently has a \$100,000.00 grant with DCNR C2P2 grant which the Wildlands Conservancy is administering for the Little Bushkill Creek Stream Restoration Project. The project is currently underway, and a Request for Proposal (RFP) was uploaded to the PennBid system to secure the services of a professional engineering firm to prepare the required design for the construction phase of the project, including all permits that are required by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (and to be reviewed by DCNR).

A total of eight (8) proposals were received, and these were reviewed by Wildlands Conservancy Senior Scientist Kate Ebel and Township Manager Petrucci. Ms. Ebel and Mr. Petrucci recommended to award the contract to ARM Group, LLC in the amount of \$54,389.00. This bid was not the lowest total price received; however, it was the highest ranked proposal based on price, serviceability, location of the firm, similar experience, understanding of the project scope of work, clarity, timeline, partner qualifications, and proposal presentation. The contract for the consultant will

be between the Wildlands Conservancy and ARM Group, LLC. This is authorized under the terms of the DCNR grant and was previously confirmed as a viable approach with the DCNR grant manager assigned to the DCNR grant.

Mr. Hurni questioned whether some of the funds will be held back for the construction phase of the project. Mr. Petrucci stated that this is indeed correct. Due to the time constraints of the project, there is some level of concern with providing as much funding as possible towards the construction phase of the project. Currently, the Township has a \$100,000.00 grant award and a \$100,000.00 matching funds requirement. There may be an instance where some funds may need to be allocated for the project above and beyond the total project cost of \$200,000.00; however, such amount will likely be minimal. This project must be completed by September 30th, 2023 as per the terms of the Township's current MS4 program.

Mr. Kleintop questioned where the firm is located. Mr. Petrucci indicated that they are located in State College, PA. The main portion of this project is within Grand Central Woods as well as the Township Recreation Trail. Mr. Kleintop questioned when construction would likely begin. Ms. Kate Ebel from Wildlands Conservancy stated that the intent is to begin the project next year; however, due to COVID-19, the construction may not begin until the following year (2022).

ACTION: Motion was made by Chairman, Randy Heard, and seconded by Joyce Lambert to commence the design phase of the Little Bushkill Creek Stream Restoration MS4 Pollutant Project between the Wildlands Conservancy and ARM Group, LLC in which ARM Group, LLC will conduct the project work with Wildlands Conservancy acting as the agent on behalf of Plainfield Township. Prior to the vote, Chairman, Randy Heard, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public. Motion approved. Vote 5-0.

Mr. Kleintop questioned whether there is a possibility for a grant or reimbursement from the DEP for this project. Mr. Petrucci cannot confirm whether this will be a possibility. Ms. Ebel added that she may have information for other financial opportunities including a pending Growing Greener grant application with the DEP. Currently, they are waiting for a response regarding their application.

4. FirstNET Wireless Phone Service Provider Recommendation:

The Township currently utilizes Verizon Wireless for cell phones. Recently, Mr. Petrucci has learned of FirstNET Wireless which is a phone provider through AT&T. FirstNET is a separate network to allow first responders, professionals and volunteers to use a separate network for guaranteed service. The company currently has a 25 year contract with the Federal Government. The company also offers additional applications on the phone for public safety including applications for weather.

Mr. Petrucci's main concern is that in the event of a natural disaster, such as a hurricane or tropical storm, the area will not have wireless coverage. The savings for switching to FirstNET will be approximately \$30 a month. Additionally, the Plainfield Township Fire Department currently utilizes the FirstNET services. Fire Chief Alex Cortezzo previously mentioned to Mr. Petrucci that it is an excellent service. Ms. Mellert questioned if the coverage is well provided for in this area. Mr. Petrucci stated there is good coverage as this company is not utilizing the same network used by the public. Additionally, FirstNET is contractually required to supplement coverage and in the event that they do not, necessary changes and upgrades will be made in order to provide service. Mr. Hurni questioned whether the Township would be required to sign a contract with FirstNET. Mr. Petrucci indicated that the Township is not obligated to sign a contract with the servicer.

ACTION: Motion was made by Jane Mellert and seconded by Stephen Hurni to authorize Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, to execute all required paperwork in order to switch from Verizon Wireless to FirstNET Wireless Service Provider for cellular service. Prior to the vote, Chairman, Randy Heard, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public. Motion approved. Vote 5-0.

5. Slate Belt Regional Police Department: Municipal Building 2021 Lease Agreement Freeze Request:

Mr. Petrucci stated upon learning that the Board of Supervisors were not inclined to freeze the 2020 lease agreement amount for 2021 and to forego the 2% increase, the representatives of Wind Gap Borough and Pen Argyl Borough expressed a desire to notify Plainfield Township that they intend to initiate proceedings to terminate the Lease Agreement for the Municipal Building/Police Station in accordance with the below "Option to Renew" provision of the Agreement. The increase would be \$1,174.99 for the 2021 fiscal year. The current rate for the lease agreement is \$58,749.60 (\$15.60 per square foot).

Mr. Petrucci noted that if the lease is not renewed, it would not be the best timing from an administration perspective. Ms. Mellert added that the Police Commission is reviewing options for a secure area for storing impounded vehicles in. The proposal for a lease agreement with Pen Argyl Borough is no longer an option as the cost was too high to rent a secure area. The approximate cost of renting a secure space would be around \$1,500.00 for the police. Ms. Mellert is not in favor of renting from Pen Argyl Borough.

Ms. Mellert questioned whether other options could be discussed for the police. Chairman, Randy Heard, stressed that the increase in rent is minimal at approximately \$25.00 a month. Currently, the Township charges a flat rate for each square foot of

the rented space. Ms. Mellert mentioned the possibility of charging less per square foot for the basement as well as the garage. She added that the police requested to discuss the issue prior to the lease discussion itself. Mr. Hurni added that this coming year will be a tough budget year for the police. The option of installing a secure storage building was also discussed. Chairman, Randy Heard, requested that the Board postpone this discussion until the following Board meeting in order for the Police Commission to discuss options they may be interested in.

Mr. Hurni questioned that since this is a real estate matter, whether the Board of Supervisors would need to have a unanimous vote. Mr. Petrucci indicated that this is the case because the lease itself needs to be unanimously voted upon. Mr. Hurni stressed that this freeze request is for one year only. He also suggested the police purchase a building for impounded vehicles and to install the structure on Township property rather than paying additional rent.

Ms. Mellert added the police commission does not have definitive answer on health care and arbitration is not completed to date. She added that there are a lot of different factors right now. The police are looking for something more permanent in terms of a secure storage area rather than renting out a structure. The police are currently storing evidence within their secure base currently provided within the Township Building, however, this area is not secure enough. The police need a secure base for accreditation. Mr. Petrucci recommended that the Board of Supervisors work out a solution with the police commission and discuss options for a secure bay.

Mr. Hurni added that during the pandemic, officers were not present at the school district for several months. As a result of this, the school district did not compensate the police for that time frame. Chairman, Randy Heard, stated that there are not enough details at the moment to discuss this matter at great length. Ms. Mellert added that the budget will be provided to the Township in the near future and understands Chairman Heard's concern for more information.

ACTION: Motion was made by Chairman, Randy Heard, and seconded by Glenn Borger to request additional time from the Slate Belt Regional Police Commission in order to discuss additional options with the rent and storage area. Prior to the vote, Chairman, Randy Heard, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public. Motion approved. Vote 5-0.

Ms. Mellert thanked the Board of Supervisors for allowing more time to discuss the matter.

6. Scheduling of 2021 Proposed Budget Special Meeting(s):

Mr. Petrucci stated that the 2021 proposed budget will be discussed at the October 22nd, 2020 regular Board meeting. Members of the Board will be provided with the proposed budget prior to that meeting.

7. Waste Management pH Adjustment Building- Extension of Time:

Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, stated that the current extension of time expires September 30, 2020 for this Land Development; the Land Development is slated to be recorded within the next few weeks.

ACTION: Motion was made by Chairman, Randy Heard, and seconded by Joyce Lambert to approve the Extension of Time for the Waste Management pH Adjustment Building Project through December 31, 2020 and to authorize Township Manager, Tom Petrucci, to execute the Extension of Time. *Prior to the vote, Chairman, Randy Heard, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public.* Motion approved. Vote 4-0-1 with Stephen Hurni abstaining.

CITIZEN'S AGENDA/NON-AGENDA:

Paul Rinaldi- Mr. Rinaldi questioned whether any in-person meetings will be held in the foreseeable future. Mr. Petrucci stated there is currently a 25 person capacity restriction in place. The current policy, which is permitted in accordance with Act 15 of 2020, will stay in place until further notice.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REPORTS:

1. ***Randy Heard, Chairman-*** No Report
2. ***Glenn Borger, Vice Chairman-*** No Report
3. ***Joyce Lambert-*** Ms. Lambert questioned whether Trick or Treat will be held this year. Mr. Petrucci stated that the Township had previously expressed the sentiment to proceed with Trick or Treat provided all CDC guidelines are followed. Trick or Treat will be held on Saturday, October 31, 2020 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, as per a vote which took place during the 2020 Reorganization meeting. This information will also be communicated to Wind Gap Borough and Pen Argyl Borough
4. ***Jane Mellert-*** Ms. Mellert stated that Heitzman Road has a few trees that lean over toward the roadway. She questioned whether it is possible to notify the property owner to

identify whether they would be willing to remove them. Mr. Petrucci indicated that the Township has an ordinance which allows the Township to notify the residents of issues such as this. Mr. Petrucci noted that they will likely not be readily willing to remove the trees. Mr. Petrucci will send the property owner a letter regarding this issue.

5. *Stephen Hurni*- Mr. Hurni stated that the COG has taken delivery of the new sewer jetter which will be available for use by COG members throughout the Slate Belt. Additionally, the tar buggy will be delivered in the near future. The street sweeper is the next item to be ordered.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT- DAVID BACKENSTOE, ESQUIRE:

Solicitor Backenstoe was not present during this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, motion was made by Glenn Borger and seconded by Joyce Lambert to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved. Vote 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Petrucci, Township Manager/Secretary
Plainfield Township
Board of Supervisors

These minutes were prepared with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant of the Township, Paige Stefanelli, under the direction of the Township Manager/Secretary.