

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

Wednesday April 12, 2023

A meeting of the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building located at 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Chairman, Glenn Borger called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

ROLL CALL: The following board members answered roll call; Glenn Borger, Don Moore, Ken Fairchild, Paul Levits, & Jane Mellert. Also present were David Backenstoe, Township Solicitor, Jeff Ott, Township Engineer, & Jeff Bartlett, Interim Township Manager.

Jeff Bartlett, Interim Township Manager, presented the B.O.S. Meeting Minutes from January 11, 2023. **The motion was made by Jane Mellert and seconded by Don Moore to table the meeting minutes from January until further revisions can be made. There were no comments from the audience or board. Vote 5-0**

Jeff Bartlett, Interim Township Manager, presented the treasury report. **A motion was made by Chairman Borger and seconded by Don Moore to accept the treasure report as presented regarding the General Fund and the accounts listed with zero transactions as there was no activity in said accounts for the past month. Comments from the board were by Supervisor Mellert stating that she is unable to approve of something she has never seen. Vote 4-1**

Jeff Ott, Township Engineer, gave his report regarding the following.

JERC LLC, 550 Male Road is requesting release of their escrow. Engineer Ott recommended the release of \$ 96,004.95, in lieu of the entire escrow amount. This would be 15% of the total project, taking the escrow account from \$ 602, 440.59 to \$506, 435.62. Engineer Ott advised the balance of \$ 506, 435.62 remain in the applicant's account for a maintenance period. A motion was made by Supervisor Mellert and seconded by Supervisor Moore. There were no questions or comments from the board or audience. Vote 5-0.

A motion was made by Supervisor Moore and seconded by Supervisor Fairchild to allow the JERC LLC project to enter the maintenance period of the project per the recommendation of Engineer Ott. There were no questions or comments from the board or the audience. Vote: 5-0

OLD BUSINESS:

SBRPD Lease Agreement: Interim Township Manager, Jeff Bartlett reported that the SBRP Commission had not submitted a revised lease back to Plainfield Township. We are waiting to hear if they are going to accept the terms which the township has presented to them or return with requested changes.

Township Website: The current website is now back to being functional and online. The board requested Jeff obtain other quotes on redesigning our website in addition to the quote he received from NA Studios. Since this expense was not budgeted into the 2023 budget, this project is going to be put on hold until the Board can budget for the expense.

Hower Farm Project: There was a recent pre-submission Zoom call meeting between Nazareth Boro, Plainfield Township, and the Conservation District, to apply for the NPEDS Permit that will be needed to move this project forward. The application was not formally submitted at this time. Plainfield Township will be notified once the application has been submitted.

Jeff Bartlett, Interim Township Manager, gave his report regarding the following.

Little Bushkill Creek Stream Restoration: Project began in 2022. Bids were accepted last year. The township only received one, which Mr. Bartlett stated was quite high. The township requested bids again this year. The township is working with the Wildland's Conservancy, who put the bid specs together. A listing was placed on Muni-bid, which produced two bids. Flyway Excavating Inc. \$249,175 was the lowest of the two received. \$359,826 was the highest of the two bids.

Mr. Bartlett recommended that the township accept the lower of the two bids. While this would put the township over the financial allotment of \$ 300,000 for the project, there may be additional funding available from the DEP & DCNR. Jeff Bartlett worked with Kay from the Wildland's Conservancy to compile a request letter which was sent to DEP & DCNR to see if any additional funds are available for Plainfield Township for this project. Mr. Bartlett stated that receiving a decision from these two organizations could take up to one month. He also suggested that the township look at our funds to determine if there are funds within our accounts that can be reallocated for this project. A motion was made by Supervisor Fairchild to accept the bid from Flyaway Excavating Inc in the amount of \$249,175 and seconded by Supervisor Moore. Comment from the audience asked the board if they had the total amount of money spent on Engineering fees thus far for this project. This information was not available at this time. Having no further questions or comments from the audience or board, the board voted on approval to except the bid from Flyaway Excavating Inc and begin moving this project forward. Vote 5-0.

Appointment to Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC): Supervisor Donald Moore has submitted an application to be on the EAC. **The board agreed to accept Mr. Moore's application and appointed him to the EAC. A motion was made by Chairman Borger and seconded by Supervisor Fairchild. A comment from the audience asked why other applicants to be members of the EAC were either never called to interview or if they were interviewed, they weren't selected. Audience members stated that members of the community are willing to be on the committee as volunteer members of their community and they are not being considered. Chairman Borger stated he only received one application, which was Mr.**

Moore's. Having no further questions or comments from the panel or audience, vote was taken. Vote: 4-1

Open Space Fund Ordinance Update:

Interim Township Manager gave a brief history of the Pennsylvania Open Space Act and how it was amended in April of 2022. In April of 2022 the state of Pennsylvania amended the act to state that funds reserved initially only for the purchase of vacant land, farmland, farmland preservation, or purchase of development rights, can now be used toward the maintenance or improvement of Open Space areas. IE: Parks, trails, ponds that the township or municipality may own. Mr. Bartlett stated that currently, as Plainfield Township's ordinance stands, these funds can only be used to preserve current farmland, attorney, or engineering fees, or to purchase new farmland or open space. Once a property is owned by the township, unless it is farmland, there is no allowance for the improvement of that land. Currently, funds for the improvements of parks, trails, ponds, or any open space that is not farmland, it taken from the township's general fund. Mr. Bartlett recommended that a small portion of the open space fund be separated into a maintenance fund for the care and upkeep of the open space Plainfield Township owns that is not farmland. Currently, the township owns two parks, a trail, and some trail heads. The state's amended statute states that up 25% of a township or municipality's open space fund can be separated and allocated for maintenance of open spaces owned. Interim Manager Bartlett would like to know if the board would be interested in amending the township's current ordinance to allow for this change in our open space fund as well. Mr. Bartlett stated that he is not suggesting Plainfield Twsp uses 25% each year. Perhaps for a year or two to establish an account, and then lower the percentage afterward. Currently, our open space fund brings in approximately \$500,000 annually. 25% of this would be \$125,000 a year, which would significantly allow for park and, or trail improvements. This would allow the township to keep this amount of money in the general fund to be available for other things, such as road improvements, equipment, etc. Supervisor Moore and Mr. Bartlett both stated that Solicitor Backenstoe has helped other municipalities compile and amend their open space ordinance in the past. Supervisor Mellert stated that she recalled changes and suggestion discussions taking place in May of 2022 at both EAC and BOS meetings regarding this ordinance, so there may be some documentation of this process being in progress.

Fire, EMS, and Police Reports: Reports submitted by all three organizations and accepted by the board. Reports can be posted to the public if there is interest. A motion was made by Chairman Borger and seconded by Supervisor Mellert to accept the PTVFD, PT EMS, and SBRPD reports. There were no questions or comments from the board or audience. Vote 5-0

Citizen Comment: (Agenda/Non-Agenda Items)

Kelli Grimm – Questioned where the information came from for her RTK on the township's electric bills. Supervisor Moore answered, as he compiled this information for her RTK, that he went back into the township records from November of 2021 to February of 2023. She asked if

Nazareth has submitted any demolition applications regarding the Nazareth Sewage Authority. Interim Township Manager Bartlett stated no there have not been any submitted. She asked if NA Studios specifically designs websites for other municipalities. Mr. Bartlett replied that most of their clients are towns and municipalities, and that designing websites for municipalities is their specialty. Ms. Grimm stated that she hopes to see past and future minutes including financial reports posted to the township website. Mr. Bartlett stated that agendas and minutes will be posted as approved.

Millie Beahn – commented regarding signs placed on properties.

Unknown audience member asked what the benefit is placing land under farm preservation space and what is the benefit for a landowner. Chairman Borger answered that the land cannot be developed in any way and must remain farmland.

Board of Supervisors Reports:

Glenn Borger – No report.

Paul Levitz – No report.

Don Moore – Feels township office staff are doing great jobs and coming along nicely.

Ken Fairchild – No report.

David Backenstoe – He will be meeting with Brian Cope from Northampton County and Adrienne Fors from Waste Management to discuss the transfer station to hear more of their thoughts. He will report back to the board with the outcome of that meeting.

Jane Mellert – Would like to reserve her report to be given after an Executive Session.

A motion was made by Supervisor Moore to begin an Executive Session and seconded by Supervisor Fairchild. Vote 5-0. The Board of Supervisors proceeded to the conference room to conduct and Executive Session at 8:45 PM. The Board reconvened the meeting at approximately 10:15 pm. At this time Jane Mellert read a prepared statement. **Taking no further action, Motion by Don Moore, second by Paul Levits to adjourn. Vote: 5-0.** The April 12, 2023 Board2023,Supervisors Meeting adjourned at 10:28 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Roth Unangst

Township Secretary