

SWATARA TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING I  
JUNE 3, 2020

1. The Regular Meeting I of the Swatara Board of Commissioners was called to order by President Connolly at 7:08 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, Township Administration Building, 599 Eisenhower Blvd., Swatara, PA 17111.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Moment of Silence
4. Roll Call: Commissioners Zubeck, Varner, Ellis, Vice President Boudier and President Connolly were present. Also present: Township Manager Jim Fosselman, Assistant Township Manager Kim Kaufman, Solicitor Scott Wyland, Chief of Fire Service Mike Ibberson, and Secretary Mary Kepp.
5. Announce Executive Session: There was not an Executive Session prior to the meeting.
6. Visitors Request and Comments: none
7. Motion to Approve Agenda: Vice President Boudier made a motion to approve the Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. Unanimously approved.
8. Consideration of Minutes:  
Regular Meeting II - March 13, 2020. Commissioner Ellis made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Vice President Boudier. Unanimously approved.
9. Financing Presentation: Proposed Capital Projects for Financing presented by Kim Kaufman, Assistant Township Manager. He also discussed current interest rates and the advantages of borrowing money for future projects listed in the handout. The Township is no longer looking to move the Township Building to another location, instead make improvements or additions to the current property. President Connolly invited residents with questions to address them during Visitors Requests and Comments. President Connolly is also Chairman of the Finance Committee and noted the projects being talked about are not new. There is money remaining from refinancing previous borrowings to put towards the projects and refinancing new money. Unfortunately, money was borrowed in the past but wasn't tied to specific projects. Land for Bishop Park was voted on in 2010. It was originally planned for a park on one side and a Township Complex on the other. All projects could be scaled down or changed. Bishop Park has now been scaled down to a 25 acre park from 60 acres. During these unprecedented times with low interest rates, it's a good time to borrow for future projects.

While there is no voting tonight, this is an overview of projects and it may be voted on next week. It's been well thought out and spanned many officials from various boards but all for the same township. He then addressed the Commissioners to see if they had any comments.

Commissioner Zubeck inquired when there is a vote what would be voted on? President Connolly stated we have been presented with a high priority project list and would vote on borrowing money to complete projects. Once the Township decides which projects to proceed with we would draft an ordinance. It would be reviewed by the Township Solicitor and when ready, go through the process including publishing of public notice. Next, the Township would move forward to obtain finance and file debt proceedings which need state approval and work with an underwriter if selling bonds to finance projects.

Commissioner Zubeck again asked how much money would be borrowed? Would the money borrowed complete all the projects listed? How can we vote if there isn't a plan and we don't know how much money is needed? How can we move forward? President Connolly explained it would be a vote to move forward with the process for the projects. Each project has a price. Interest rates are low. The projects have been in the pipeline for years. Borrowing would be 2/3 of the cost of the projects estimated up to \$30 million. This amount lines up with the previous money borrow. There is \$2 million remaining from the previous borrowings and additional money would come from grants. The previous board borrowed \$20 million and didn't complete projects. Commissioner Zubeck computed a \$20 million bond at 2% interest for 20 years would be a monthly payment of \$100,176 which is \$1.2 million annually. Is this within our budget? Township Manager Fosselman noted we are currently paying \$700,000 monthly debt service of which \$370,000 a month will be paid off in 2024. Revenue we bring in would go towards the projects. Commissioner Zubeck had questions and may have more once she reads the information. She has a concern with loss revenue last year, and so far this year has been rough with COVID 19. She thinks we are almost guaranteed to lose revenue this year. She's not just looking at our one-year budget but also into the future. The Township passed a one-year budget even with having 12% projected contractual obligations with the unions and a 5% health care increase that could change with Covid 19. She is concerned with next year's budget and the following year. Mr. Tim Horstmann of McNees Wallace & Nurick LLC, stated bond deals are at a fixed interest rate. Commissioner Zubeck stated that if there isn't money in the general fund it will pass on to the residents with an increase in taxes. He agreed if you don't have enough in general fund it would go back to the taxpayers in the form of a tax increase.

President Connolly noted that the next step is an ordinance which isn't binding to issue the bond or incur debt. Commissioner Zubeck stated the same 2% interest was used several years ago on a \$30 million proposal. The current rate would be half of that. President Connolly inquired when was there a \$30 million proposal. Commissioner Zubeck didn't know because this was before she became a Commissioner. She stated President Connolly voted for it. It was a proposal of \$30 million at 2% interest which she possessed a spreadsheet with the figures. President Connolly stated the same spreadsheet had been dropped off on door steps by her husband during her campaigning. She responded that this isn't about politics. She was just asking about a \$30

million proposal and this is getting out of control. President Connolly told her she is speaking at a public meeting and talking about a \$30 million bond that was never voted on. Commissioner Zubeck is asking questions so she has information to vote. Commissioner Zubeck again expressed concerns about how much budget should be looked at. We should look at more than a year budget. President Connolly told her only a one-year is required by law. Commissioner Zubeck stated she didn't insinuate anything and was just asking about a project proposed at 2% on \$20 million for 20 years. Financial questions are very important. Commissioner Zubeck addressed President Connolly that she thinks it is very unprofessional bringing personal lives to a public meeting. She would prefer he bring his personal comments to her.

President Connolly questioned Tim Horstmann of McNeese Wallace & Nurick LLC how long they have worked with the Township in handling bonds. He answered that it has at least been since 2015. President Connolly inquired if during that time a bond for \$30 million had been issued. He was not aware of any but could check. President Connolly would be interested in knowing if a bond was issued and what year. The Board at that time would of had to approve it. Commissioner Zubeck believes it was a proposal. She was not on the Board at that time, but President Connolly was. President Connolly asked Commissioner Varner if he was aware of a proposal to borrow money for other projects. He thought there may have been previous projects but doesn't remember action that was taken. Township Manager Fosselman was not aware of a \$30 million bond proposal since being hired in 2012. Vice President Boudier also stated that there was no note on a \$30 million bond since he was there. Commissioner Varner also inquired about interest rates and how often they fluctuate. Mr. Horstmann confirmed that they fluctuate daily.

10. Consideration of Bids: Improvements to Derry Street. Commissioner Ellis made a motion to recommend the Township enter into an agreement with JVI Group Inc. in the amount of \$1,796,764.74 and proceed with the project from 63<sup>rd</sup> and Derry Street to Milroy Road. Seconded by Vice President Boudier. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Zubeck - Yes

Commissioner Varner - Yes

Commissioner Ellis - Yes

Vice President Boudier - Yes

President Connolly - Yes

11. Visitors Requests and Comments:

Michael Tuckey, 5875 Gensemer Lane: He requested an update on the petition to have the zoning changed where the warehouse project was scheduled. Solicitor Wyland stated the request was sent to the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee met last night but he didn't know if it was on their agenda. If not, it would be on for the next meeting. He inquired about the listed projects and how they would be funded. President Connolly explained about the monies remaining from the refinancing, grant money and stormwater fees. He also inquired about Bishop Park. He's concerned about things currently not being secured and doesn't want an increase in his taxes. How much would it cost each household to pay \$4 million on a park. He's in agreement that there's nothing wrong with having a more than one-year budget. Commissioner Varner stated

that tax increases were passed during terrible economic times. He was not in favor of doing a tax decrease this year and then maybe have to increase taxes next year.

Shane Steele, 613 Barbara Drive: He questioned how much the Township is making on investments. Township Manager Fosselman stated about 1% which is the same rate we would borrow. Mr. Steele wants the public to understand current conditions in the Police and Fire Departments. The Police Station is inadequate in size to handle the number of officers. Some of the fire houses need renovations. Public safety is in jeopardy. The project has to be done.

Karl Singletary, address unavailable: He was here on behalf of PADC to make sure the Township has a minority inclusion program. He's looking for equity inclusion when projects are done. He knows the Township has been committed to diversity. He also wants the Township to accept the lowest responsible bid and not necessarily the lowest bid.

Tom Garlic, 6050 Hocker Drive: He has a problem with the numbers. Questioned about the leftover monies and grants. Most grants require matching funds. Why would the Township borrow more money than needed. He doesn't think the Township should move quickly. Commissioner Ellis responded that the projects listed have been talked about since 2012 but never got completed. While we never know what money is guaranteed the Township has other sources of income.

Michael Tuckey, 5875 Gensemer Lane: With businesses closing what is the tax revenue going to look like in the future because of COVID 19. Even with a low interest rate how much would each resident have to pay if the Township doesn't make enough money.

Shane Steele, 613 Barbara Drive: Talked about the lack of volunteers and the wave of the future will be paid firefighters. Whether revenues decrease or increase the project needs completed. It was asked if volunteers from other stations in the Township be assigned to a firehouse with less volunteers. President Connolly explained they are volunteers and can't be assigned. They want to volunteer at their local fire station. Each firehouse is responsible to staff volunteers.

Karl Singletary, address unavailable: He was one of Shane Steele's teachers at CD East. He is so proud of him and how committed he is to being a firefighter and the community.

12. Any Possible Stormwater Violations We Need to Investigate: Commissioner Varner reported an issue on Cherry Alley behind 628 High Street and runs parallel with the tennis courts. The Township will send someone out to investigate.

13. Commissioners Requests and Comments, Additional Business and Correspondence:

Commissioner Varner: Nothing at this time

Commissioner Zubeck: Nothing at this time

Vice President Boudier: The Chambers Hill Fire Company recently held a chicken BBQ. It was very well organized and attended. They served over 480 meals. The next one is scheduled for June 13, 2020. He thanked all the volunteers.

Commissioner Ellis: Thanked Township staff for all they do. She has been volunteering with the Central Dauphin School District Grab and Go Program. The program will continue throughout the summer. Pick up places are CD East and Swatara Middle School. Effective next week the days will change to Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. till 12:00 noon. Any child that lives in the school district is eligible for this program. Also, Nutripacks will be distributed on Thursdays. She recently volunteered to do trash pickup on North Harrisburg Street near the Greenbelt area and trash removal on Eisenhower Boulevard in front of the Township building. She thanked Safety Director Reider and our Police Department for their statement of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement in regards to the murder of George Floyd.

President Connolly: Hopefully the regulations will start to relax and people can come together as a community. He has seen a steady decline in volunteer firefighters. In the past he did fundraising for 2 firehouses that no longer exist. He's very concerned when a local fire station in the Township fails to respond to a fire in their neighborhood. However, our firefighters response time is still low. He appreciates all the visitors tonight. He knows residents are passionate about their community and he is too. He wants to work together. We have to respect different opinions. Nobody is looking to raise taxes. While the Township is on a one-year budget, Township Manager Fosselman has a 5-year plan and Chief Ibberson has a 10-year plan. We will have more conversations and debates. His recommendation is to first move forward with the municipal building, public safety and public works. Next would be infrastructure. Finally, would be Bishop Park. Reminder that the Grab and Go program will change next week to Monday through Thursday. We are hiring another officer to fill a position that became available due to a resignation. He's very proud of our Police Department and the diversity we have. He offered prayers to everyone.

14. Adjournment: Commissioner Varner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Zubeck. Motion carried unanimously. The Regular Meeting I adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

  
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Mary Kepp, Township Secretary