
MINUTES

May 14, 2018
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, May 14, 2018, in the Public Meeting Room of the Whitehall Township Municipal Building, 3219 MacArthur Road, Whitehall, PA, with the following in attendance:

COMMISSIONERS

Dennis C. Hower, President - Absent
Philip J. Ginder, Vice President
Thomas Slonaker, Secretary
Shawn E. Clary
Jeffrey L. Dutt
Joseph J. Marx Jr.
Jeffrey J. Warren

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Michael P. Harakal, Jr., Mayor
John D. Meyers, Deputy Mayor
J. Jackson Eaton, 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 moment of silence for our troops serving home and abroad and thanks and respect to veterans who have given their all for our freedoms and it is also Police Appreciation Week let's think about the job our officers do for us.

Vice President GINDER read the statement on fair housing as required.

2) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner MARX moved, seconded by Commissioner DUTT to approve the minutes of the following meeting:

Regular Public Meeting – April 9, 2018

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

B. OATH OF OFFICE

Chief MARKS announced that earlier in the evening a Commendation Ceremony was held for the Whitehall Police Dept and would like to publicly recognize the following:

Meritorious Service: James Lucas, Jeffrey Bruchak, Raymond Seiling, Shawn McHugh
Michael Arnold, Michael Godfrey, and Joseph Rimmel

Life Saving: Raymond Seiling

Medal of Honor: Raymond Seiling and Ronald Kester, Jr.

Purple Heart: Jason Mertz

Chief MARKS then formally introduced a young man who will serve this community for years to come with distinction. On January 29, 2018 Alexander DOELP started his career with the Whitehall Township Police Dept. Office DOELP comes from a law enforcement family. He's been assigned to the field training officer program where he continues to learn until he is released to a full duty officer. Office DOELP will conduct himself with integrity, accountability and character to further the trust established with this community through the generations of Whitehall Township. We welcome his family into the Whitehall Police Family. This is not always easy for family members but know you always have someone here to lean on during tough times. The oath that Officer DOELP is about to take is a solemn oath and one that is a foundation behind the badge and also the duties that he is going to swear to protect and serve the community. At this time, Chief MARKS requests that Debi HILL perform the oath of office and asks Mayor HARAKAL to present the badge of office to Alexander DOELP. Police Officer DOELP was sworn in by Notary Public Debi HILL. Mayor HARAKAL handed the badge to Officer DOELP's mom to pin on him.

Chief MARKS also has the honor of recognizing two officers that have been promoted to Sergeant. Ronald KESTER Jr is an 8 year police veteran. Sergeant KESTER served in the United States Army prior to joining the Whitehall Police Dept. He began his law enforcement career with the Bureau on June 28, 2010. He was assigned to the patrol division for his career thus far. He was recently assigned to the Dept's first traffic unit and was recently made night shift permanent supervisor. He is also certified in accident reconstruction as well as commercial vehicle enforcement. On April 22, 2018 Ron was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

Jeffrey D. APGAR is a 15 yr. police veteran. Sergeant APGAR began his career with the Whitehall Township Police Dept. on August 4, 2003. Sergeant APGAR was assigned to the patrol division and has been so for his entire career. He is also serves on the Lehigh County Municipal Emergency Response Team where he serves as team leader. Sergeant APGAR was assigned as a K9 Officer on September 2, 2014 and continues to serve with his partner Mex. On April 23, 2018 Jeff was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. At this time, Chief MARKS requests that Debi HILL perform the oaths of office.

C. **COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

Lori FEHNEL of 3107 N. 3rd Street asked the status of the Code Inspector's position because she was told some time ago that the department was behind in complaints since they were shorthanded. Mayor HARAKAL advised that the situation has been corrected and believes that zoning department is handling complaints in a timely fashion.

Mark BILDER of 223 Wood Street, Catsauqua is the Assistant Chief at Whitehall's Station #38 for the last 2 years. Prior to that he was a Lieutenant and Captain for a total of 29 years of service. He would like to make a statement on the training hours required. In October of 2016 it was voted on by all assistant chiefs that we would mandate for 2017 that all personnel would meet the 80 hours of training. Under Chief BENNER the average training hours were 65 so Chief NELSON is only requiring 15 more hours. In 2016 we had 9 firefighters that were certified in the National Standard Firefighting 1. In 2017 we now have 29 firefighters certified with the new training hours. With the help of Chief NELSON the Whitehall Fire Dept will be hosting a Firefighting 1 Challenge Class which is for the senior firefighters to obtain a Firefighter 1 certificate. In August the department will be hosting an academy class for the new members so they can obtain the Firefighter 1 standard with the hopes of bringing a total of 50 certified members by the end of 2018. Chief NELSON is trying to bring the department to the next level of firefighting. Mr. BILDER is proud to be a Whitehall Township Firefighter under the leadership of Chief NELSON.

Joseph SHAMBO of 131 6th Street, Whitehall is Deputy Chief and has been a member of the fire department for the past 36 years. Recently, at a Commissioners meeting you heard some complaints with regards to Chief NELSON and he wanted to step up and let you know some of the advancements that we have obtained since the time he has been Chief. All of the members in attendance tonight are here to show their support for the Chief. One of the things that has been accomplished already as reported in the Township newsletter is the ISO (Insurance Service Office) accreditation and the reduction of the PPC (Public Protection Classification). To briefly explain, the ISO's PPC rating is based on a numerical scale from 1 to 10, one representing a superior property fire protection and 10 representing an area which does not meet ISO's minimum fire suppression standards. These numbers are used by insurance companies as part of their assessment for property and home insurance policies. The previous ISO/PPC that our fire department had obtained was a 4. We have improved our score to a 3 with 1 being the best. This puts the department in the top 3% of Fire Departments nationwide. Another area of improvement has been to upgrade equipment. Computers have been upgraded to iPads which allows to better track and document the calls that are responding to and training being participated in. Replacement plan for hydraulic rescue tools has been put into place due to the advances in automotive industries. We are now able to operate more effectively. I believe many more improvements are yet to come.

Justin BENNER of 4134 Main Street is the Assistant Chief of the Egypt Station and has been with the fire department for 13 years. As change is never easy, there have been nothing but positive changes and would like to highlight a few improvements that Chief NELSON has brought to the department. Organization and efficiency is one of the improvements that has been implemented to the department. An example of this, is the development of a "Rookie Book". The purpose of this book is to basically guide the new members from their very first day through the their first day they can operate at an incident. More organization, more defined procedures and more structure which has increased the accountability of our organization. Also, with the increase in training requirements we have secured additional training resources. Not only have we built

and/or purchased additional props for our training facility we have given our members the ability to attend sanctioned training events. For the first time, the department will be sending 3 members to a training seminar in Virginia and last year 4 members were sent to the nations largest firefighting training conference (FDIC) Fire Dept Instructors Conference. The training requirements and the availability of numerous training resources will only increase the level of service provided to the residents. Lastly, the department has also increased the community engagement. Something new the department initiated last year is the Smoke Detector Blitz program. Assisted by the American Red Cross, we were able to make an impact on numerous residences with smoke detector installations. This event is scheduled in June of this year. The Fire Dept is definitely heading in the right direction and its leadership has received praise from other surrounding progressive departments. I am proud to be a member and hold a chief officer's position and am even more proud of the members who continue to improve the department every single day.

Donald KELLY of 2722 Halleck Drive is the Assistant Fire Chief of the W. Catasauqua Station. I have been involved for over 30 years in firefighting and 22 have been with Whitehall. In November 2017 the West Catasauqua Station witnessed a turnover when 5 members resigned from the department. Some of these members have come before to speak and some have commented on social media on how the moral at our station is at an all-time low. Since these members left we are averaging an 8.8% increase in firefighters per call, 27.4% attending weekly trainings and 11.9% more at our fundraising events. These statistics clearly show how well things are going at our station. The large majority of the members have accepted the change and that speaks volumes in the leadership of Chief NELSON.

Mayor HAKAL commented that he attended the Assistant Chief's meeting 2 weeks ago and these guys are amazing people and glad that they came out in support of the department and after this they will go and spend another few hours making sure we are safer tomorrow. Everyone he spoke with at that meeting talked about the chief very highly and we can put to rest the concerns that were raised at the last meeting.

Commissioner GINDER passed along from all the members of the Board, Mayor, Staff and residents how much the members of the fire department are appreciated and we sleep better knowing they are there when called.

D. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON ORDINANCES

1. BILL NO. 13-2018

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING RIGHT AND AUTHORITY FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL AND THE WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP BUREAU OF FIRE TO SEEK REIMBURSEMENT FOR ACTUAL AND REASONABLE RESPONSE COSTS RELATED TO EMERGENCY SERVICES PROVIDED AND EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT UTILIZED IN AN EMERGENCY; PROVIDING FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL AND THE WHITEHALL

TOWNSHIP BUREAU OF FIRE TO UTILIZE THIRD PARTY BILLING SERVICES IN SEEKING REIMBURSEMENT FOR SAID COSTS; PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY OF PARTS OF THIS ORDINANCE DEEMED TO BE INVALID; REPEALING ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, OR PARTS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (FIRE)

Vice President GINDER read Bill No. 13-2018 to the Board.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Clary.

Six Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill 13-2018 was approved.

2. BILL NO. 14-2018

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR PERFORMANCE OF MICROSURFACING TYPE A SINGLE APPLICATION FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS BUREAU OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL, BID 2018-14 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 OF THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (PUBLIC WORKS)

Vice President GINDER read Bill No. 14-2018 to the Board.

Commissioner DUTT moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner MARX.

Six Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 14-2018 was approved.

E. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON RESOLUTIONS

1. RESOLUTION NO. 3012

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

Vice President GINDER read Resolution No. 3012 to the Board.

Commissioner MARX moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner CLARY. There were no questions or comments.

Six Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3012 was approved.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 3013

TITLE: A RESOLUTION ALLOWING FOR PRICE ADJUSTMENT OF BITUMINOUS MATERIALS FOR SMALL QUANTITIES. (PUBLIC WORKS)

Vice President GINDER read Resolution No. 3013 to the Board.

Commissioner DUTT moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner MARX. There were no questions or comments.

Six Commissioners were present and voted “yes”. Resolution No. 3013 was approved.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 3014

TITLE: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPLICATION TO THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GREENWAYS TRAILS AND RECREATION PROGRAM TO ENHANCE THE NEW SECTION OF THE JORDAN CREEK GREENWAY AND TRAIL.

Vice President GINDER read Resolution No. 3014 to the Board.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner CLARY. There were no questions or comments.

Six Commissioners were present and voted “yes”. Resolution No. 3014 was approved.

F. OTHER

1. Commissioner SLONAKER moved, seconded by Commissioner CLARY to approve the release of escrow for completed and withdrawn projects, per Deputy Mayor MEYERS memo dated April 16, 2018.

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

G. REPORTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

1. Commissioner WARREN commented on the Township’s police and fire departments on how impressed with the quality of personnel that we have protecting us.
2. Commissioner CLARY noted that Student Government Day was held on May 7th which is great opportunity for the students of the High School and how interested and inter-active they were.
3. Commissioner SLONAKER re-iterated how lucky the Township is to have such a great fire and police department. Also the Commendation Ceremony is a great way to show the appreciation everyone has for the people who serve and protect. Commissioner SLONAKER asked for any veteran in the room to stand to be recognized.
4. Commissioner DUTT commented on the recycling event being a success and stated that the One Year Celebration for the Senior Center was held on May 2nd and thanked everyone that attended. Commissioner DUTT thanked Chief MARKS for invitation to

the Commendation Ceremony and was glad to have attended. Commissioner DUTT also asked that if you have a neighbor in need instead of calling and complaining about them, reach out to them and try to help the situation.

5. Commissioner MARX thanked Mayor HAKAKAL for his open communication with the Board. He also noted that there will be a Memorial Day Ceremony and the Township Memorial on the 28th at 10:30 AM. Student government was a great success and was so impressed with the students that participated.
6. Commissioner GINDER commented that his fellow Commissioners have said everything that needs to be said and that we have a bright future and we have so much to be thankful for.
7. Mayor HAKAKAL stated that he was glad to see that Student Government Day is still being held. He was impressed with the students and their enthusiasm. Mayor HAKAKAL also noted that the Bureau Chiefs and staff should be thanked – they are a great group of dedicated people.
8. Treasurer GOBER noted that the first phase of taxes are complete and the Board will be happy with the amount that will be deposited from that collection.
9. Mario SPAGNOLETTI noted that the Lehigh County Soil Conservation district program was a great success but was poorly attended by the Middle School. Apparently, the teacher who was bringing those students was not able to do so that day.

H. ADJOURNMENT

1. MOTION – Commissioner CLARY moved, seconded by Commissioner DUTT to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.