
MINUTES

NOVEMBER 9, 2020

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, November 9, 2020 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
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 – October 12, 2020

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

B. PRESENTATION – a video in honor of Veteran’s Day was presented by Lee RACKUS.

C. COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

No one present to address the Board.

President GINDER noted that an Executive Session was held on October 14 and November 4, 2020 regarding litigation and employment matters.

D. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON ORDINANCES

1. BILL NO. 31-2020 (SECOND HEARING)

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OR A GENERAL OBLIGATION NOTE IN THE MAXIMUM AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$8,280,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING CAPITAL PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW POLICE STATION AND OTHER CAPITAL PROJECTS OF THE TOWNSHIP INCLUDING ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, IMPROVEMENTS TO AND FIXTURING AND EQUIPPING OF CERTAIN TOWNSHIP FACILITIES AND GROUNDS. (ADMIN)

President GINDER read Bill No. 31-2020 to the Board.

Commissioner MARX moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner SLONAKER.

Christopher Gibbons of Concord Public Finance explained the bidding process for the Bond.

Seven Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Bill No. 31-2020 was approved.

E. OTHER

1. MOTION - to approve the release of escrow for completed and withdrawn projects, per Deputy Mayor MEYERS memo dated October 30, 2020.

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

2. MOTION - to direct the Treasurer to immediately follow procedures set forth in the Charter and make all deposits not later than the first business day following the day in which the funds are received as required by Article 7 Sec 7A of the Township Charter and further direct the Township Solicitor to send a letter to Treasurer instructing her to comply with this motion.

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

E. REPORTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Commissioner DEE thanked President GINDER and Vice President MARX, Township Staff and all Veterans for their service and requested that everyone needs to put political differences aside and pull together to make a better community and country.

Commissioner FISHER also thanked President GINDER and Vice President MARX, Township Staff and all Veterans for their service. He also thanked Lee RACKUS for putting together the Veterans presentation. Commissioner FISHER noted that with the increase in COVID cases, he is urging citizens to be diligent in following the guidelines put in place.

Commissioner ATIYEH thanked Lee RACKUS for putting together the Veterans Day presentation and wished everyone a Happy Veterans Day. He also wanted to thank the volunteers who worked the election polls. Commissioner ATIYEH wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and to stay safe and healthy.

Commissioner WARREN also thanked President GINDER and Vice President MARX, Township Staff and all Veterans for their service. He suggested that Frank CLARK to take another look at Egypt Park Field 5. Mr. CLARK noted that a NPDES Permit is needed to accept fill for site.

Commissioner SLONAKER also thanked President GINDER and Vice President MARX, Township Staff and all Veterans for their service. He questioned Frank CLARK if the Developer has been notified about mud issues on N. Church Street. Mr. CLARK advised that they have been and it is monitored daily. Commissioner SLONAKER questioned if anything can be done regarding the LANTA shelter that has been destroyed in front of Home Depot. Lee RACKUS advised that there has been discussion with LANTA and they are going to clean up the site and it may take some time to have it replaced.

Commissioner MARX thanked Lee RACKUS for the Veterans Day presentation. He questioned Jack MEYERS if the proposed gym in the Public Service Building has been eliminated. Mr. MEYERS explained that it was removed from the plan in the early stages due to not having room for growth for Administration. He notified the Mayor that he received letters from 4 members of Station 40 and also from members of Fire Police. He believes there needs to be a meeting with the Fire Chief to address their issues.

President GINDER noted that he will forward the letters given to him by Vice President MARX. He asked Frank CLARK what the status is of Lehigh Avenue. Mr. CLARK advised that the area in question has been barricaded off. It appears that a lot of runoff from recent storms which ran over the curb has undermined part of the road and the remaining section of the road is holding up well. The repairing issue is that there is nothing to anchor to. What is being proposed is a long concrete log to be formed up with heavy steel to bridge the void. PennDOT has been contacted regarding detour route. UGI was also contacted regarding gas main that was located in that immediate area and will be onsite in a day or two. He also noted that they are looking into earth anchors to better locate utilities. President GINDER also asked about Bridge Street. Frank CLARK advised that a sinkhole opened up on private property. Homeowner has sinkhole insurance through Erie and have contracted with Butz to do the repair. Unfortunately, the sinkhole has migrated and more area caved in, and since Bridge Street is a PennDOT road, the Township has no involvement with repairing it. President GINDER also asked the status of the collapsed pipe in the Apartment Complex. Frank CLARK stated that Dave HARLEMAN from CWSA is in conversations with their previous and current engineers. Mayor advised that Dave HARLEMAN is working on trying to get records from their Engineering firm that was contracted with them at the time. We are still waiting on information to understand who is responsible for repairs.

Mayor HAKAKAL advised that on Veterans Day the Fullerton Memorial will be rededicated. He gave kudos to the Public Works Dept. for the work they did to refurbish it. The Mayor noted that he spoke with Lafarge regarding a notice that the Township received that indicated they may be trying to burn trash from New York. Lafarge was adamant that they would not be doing that as it would be a violation to their DEP license. He also found out that Lafarge has reduced CO2 output by 35% since 1990. President GINDER advised the Board members Lafarge offered a tour of the facility once COVID has dissipated. He met with Chris Blechschmidt to perform a structural report for the Prydun house. The Mayor noted that he will be giving a license to the Hunger Initiative to farm a 1 acre parcel on the Prydun property.

Treasurer GOBER advised that the October report will be mailed out to the Board this week.

F. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION – Commissioner FISHER moved, seconded by Commissioner DEE to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.