
MINUTES

DECEMBER 11, 2023

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, December 11, 2023 held at the Whitehall Township Public Meeting Room, with the following in attendance:

COMMISSIONERS

Joseph J. Marx, Jr., President
Philip J. Ginder, Vice President
Thomas Slonaker, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Warren
Charles G. Fisher
Randy Atiyeh
Alberta Scarfaro

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Michael P. Harakal, Jr., Mayor
John D. Meyers, Deputy Mayor
Jack Gross, Esq., Township Solicitor
David Nelson, Fire Chief
Michael Marks, Police Chief
Frank Clark, Engineer, KCE
Lee Rackus, PZ&D
Tina J. Koren, Tax Collector
Larissa Bruder, Executive Secretary

President MARX read the statement on fair housing as required.

The meeting was formally opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a moment of silence will follow for our men and woman in uniform and our first responders.

President MARX announced that an Executive Session was held on Monday, December 4, 2023 for legal purposes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner FISHER moved, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO to approve the Minutes of the following meeting:

Regular Public Meeting – November 13, 2023

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

Commissioner GINDER noted that Troop 32 from Faith Lutheran were attending the meeting as they are working on obtaining their Citizenship Merit Badge.

B. COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

President Marx announced that there is a 3 minute time limit for comments and it will be strictly adhered to.

Joni Todesco of 424 4th Street raised a concern with accidents that have been occurring on Fullerton

Avenue and feels that there needs to be better signage especially heading north at Park Street. Frank Clark noted that he will contact PennDOT as see if that area can be evaluated in conjunction with the 5th Street Bridge Replacement.

Anthony Kopack of 3763 Dogwood Drive noted the following:

- wished the best to all the outgoing Commissioners
- his appreciation of the Veterans Video at November's meeting honoring all the local veterans
- concern that the Hometown Heros banners were removed before Veterans Day
- dismay over the tree on Mechanicsville Road that is leaning and should be removed

Susan Barthol of 3046 S. Birch Street stated she's been seeing the street sweeper around the last few months and asked if this is going to be commonplace as there were not signs posted like there is in spring. President Marx noted that as availability permits, the truck is sent out. Commissioner WARREN added that it is also done to help keep the storm drains clear. Ms. Barthol then gave kudos to Police Chief Marks and staff for keeping our community safe.

Joan Garber of 3045 Birch Street noted that since she abuts the old police station, she as well as other neighbors in that area are concerned with what the property could be utilized for and if there are any restrictions in place. Deputy Mayor Meyers explained that the property is being sold as is and no changes to zoning have taken place. It is a non-conforming use in residential district and if a new owner wants to use it for something that does not comply they would need to seek approvals from the Zoning Hearing Board. Ms. Garber also requested that the streets in her development are in desperate need of paving and hopes that they can be put on list in the next year or two.

Andrea Hoagland of 51 Kimmet Avenue noted that her concerns from months ago regarding the Mayor and Tony Cocca still have not been addressed and she hopes that with a new Board and Mayor in January there will be more honesty and transparency.

C. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON ORDINANCES

1. BILL NO. 37-2023 (SECOND HEARING)

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MAYOR TO ACCEPT A PERMANENT TRAFFIC SIGNAL EASEMENT FROM LEHIGH VALLEY MALL, LLC FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING TRAFFIC SIGNAL CONTROL OF THE INTERSECTION LOCATED AT GRAPE STREET (GRAPE STREET/250 LEHIGH VALLEY MALL)

President MARX read Bill No. 37-2023 to the Board

Commissioner FISHER moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting "yes". Bill No. 37-2023 was approved.

2. BILL NO. 38-2023

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING THE 2024 ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATING SPECIFIC SUMS ESTIMATED TO BE REQUIRED FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF THE TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT,

HEREINAFTER SET FORTH, DURING THE 2024 FISCAL YEAR. (ADMIN)

President MARX read Bill No. 38-2023 to the Board.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner WARREN.

Commissioner FISHER thanked the Department Heads for being diligent with their budgets. Andrea Hoagland of 51 Kimmett Avenue asked if salaries were paid out of this and if performance evaluations were performed to determine if the Township is appropriately staffed. Commissioner GINDER stated that the Township staff is efficient in their jobs and some departments are understaffed.

Deb Rosene of 4408 N. Church Street asked what is planned for the Prydun farm. Commissioner WARREN advised we are waiting for the fourth and final grant and can update her further at a later time.

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 38-2023 was approved.

3. BILL NO. 39-2023

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ESTABLISHING A FEE SCHEDULE FOR THE COLLECTION OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE BY THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL (ADMIN).

President MARX read Bill No. 39-2023 to the Board.

Commissioner GINDER moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner WARREN

It was noted that this is setting the rate for the year 2024. There will be a new contract starting in 2025.

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 39-2023 was approved.

4. BILL NO. 40-2023

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING THE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE FOR THE YEAR 2024. (ADMIN)

President MARX read Bill No. 40-2023 to the Board.

Commissioner GINDER moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner FISHER

President MARX thanked Deputy Mayor MEYERS for his hard work on the budget.

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 40-2023 was approved.

5. BILL NO. 41-2023

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE DEFERRING THE REQUIRED INSTALLATION OF CURBING AND SIDEWALKS FOR 365 & 500 FEET ALONG THE COLUMBIA STREET AND

MACARTHUR ROAD FRONTAGE OF 3561 MACARTHUR ROAD AS REQUIRED
IN CHAPTER 21, SECTION 21-16 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF
WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP. (DEVELOP)

President MARX read Bill No. 41-2023 to the Board.

Commissioner FISHER moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner SCARFARO

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 41-2023 was approved.

6. BILL NO. 42-2023

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE TO INITIATE A REFERENDUM, ASKING WHETHER THE
ELECTORS FAVOR THE IMPOSITION OF AN ADDITIONAL 0.05 MILLS OF REAL
ESTATE TAX TO BE USED AS AUTHORIZED BY THE OPEN SPACE LANDS
ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION ACT

President MARX read Bill No. 42-2023 to the Board.

Commissioner FISHER moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner SLONAKER

Ken Snyder of 4272 Abigail Lane suggested that this referendum be tabled until the Rec Comp Plan is completed as it was explained the monies generated from this can only be used for funding farmland preservation and maintenance of existing recreation and open space. He also noted another reason for tabling is there will most likely be another referendum that will need to be put before the residents regarding a paid fire department.

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 42-2023 was approved.

7. BILL NO. 43-2023

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR
PURCHASE OF TWO (2) 2023 OR 2024 BMW RT-P 1250 MOTORCYCLES FOR THE
POLICE PATROL DIVISION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE
HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS
IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (POLICE)

President MARX read Bill No. 43-2023 to the Board.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner FISHER

Commissioner WARREN verified with Chief MARKS on purchasing BMW was cost efficient. Chief MARKS noted that BMW lasts the longest (approximately 15 yrs.) and is what is used by most Police Depts.

Andrea Hoagland of 51 Kimmitt Avenue asked what the motorcycles will be used for. President MARX explained that having these will enable the police a better chance of apprehending the illegal ATV's and street bikes.

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 43-2023 was approved.

8. BILL NO. 44-2023

TITLE: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL FOR AUDITING SERVICES FOR WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3.20 IN THE HOME RULE CHARTER WHICH REQUIRES AUTHORIZATION OF ACQUISITIONS IN EXCESS OF \$25,000 BY ORDINANCE. (ADMINISTRATION)

President MARX read Bill No. 44-2023 to the Board.

Commissioner GINDER moved to approve the motion, seconded by Commissioner WARREN

SEVEN Commissioners were present voting “yes”. Bill No. 44-2023 was approved.

D. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTING ON RESOLUTIONS

1. RESOLUTION NO. 3287

TITLE: A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL REAFFIRMING AND REENACTING THE REALTY TRANSFER TAX, THE EARNED INCOME TAX, THE PER CAPITA TAX, THE LOCAL SERVICES TAX, AND THE BUSINESS PRIVILEGE TAX (ADMIN)

President MARX read Resolution No. 3287 to the Board.

Commissioner GINDER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner SLONAKER

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3287 was approved.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 3288

TITLE: A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHALL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (2024-2028), SPECIFICALLY FOR THE 2024 FISCAL YEAR. (ADMIN)

President MARX read Resolution No. 3288 to the Board.

Commissioner WARREN moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner ATIYEH

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3288 was approved.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 3289

TITLE: A RESOLUTION REQUESTING A PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMONWEALTH FINANCE AUTHORITY STATEWIDE LOCAL SHARE ASSESSMENT GRANT FOR THE PURCHASE OF A UTILITY TRACTOR AND MOWING ATTACHMENTS FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

President MARX read Resolution No. 3289 to the Board.

Commissioner SCARFARO moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner ATIYEH

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3289 was approved.

4. RESOLUTION NO. 3290

TITLE: A RESOLUTION FOR SEWAGE FACILITIES PLAN REVISION FOR NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT 3048 WASHINGTON STREET, WHITEHALL PA. (DEVELOP)

President MARX read Resolution No. 3290 to the Board.

Commissioner GINDER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FISHER

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No.3290 was approved.

5. RESOLUTION NO. 3291

TITLE: A RESOLUTION CONDITIONALLY APPROVING THE MAJOR SUBDIVISION PLAN OF 3561 W. COLUMBIA STREET PROPOSED TRACTOR SUPPLY, LOCATED AT 3561 W. COLUMBIA STREET, INDEX NO. 2026-23A

President MARX read Resolution No. 3291 to the Board.

Commissioner SCARFARO moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FISHER

Representative from PennTerra Engineering stated that this plan involves taking the existing 2.65 acres and combining it with the adjacent land of 1.927 acres. Tractor Supply sells items farm related.

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3291 was approved.

6. RESOLUTION NO. 3292

TITLE: A RESOLUTION APPOINTING ROGER REICHARD TO SERVE AS A REGULAR MEMBER ON THE WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP ZONING HEARING BOARD. (BOC)

President MARX read Resolution No. 3292 to the Board.

Commissioner SCARFARO moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FISHER

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Resolution No. 3292 was approved.

E. OTHER

1. MOTION - to approve the ratification of the new Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Township and Teamsters Local 733 for the term beginning January 1, 2024 and expiring

December 31, 2028.

Commissioner ATIYEH moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner GINDER

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

2. MOTION - to appoint Gregory Cleaton to serve as a member of the Whitehall Township Fire Police

Commissioner GINDER moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner FISHER

SEVEN Commissioners were present and voting “yes”. Motion passed.

F. REPORTS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Commissioner SCARFARO wished everyone Happy Holidays. She thanked Commissioner FISHER for his dedicated service to the Township and wished him the best. She also thanked Commissioner GINDER for his many years his of committed service and for being a great leader.

Commissioner ATIYEH thanked Mayor Harakal for all he has done for this township and personally thanks him for giving me the confidence to run for office. At the time I was young and doubting myself attempting to run for office and he gave me the confidence to do so and I am forever grateful for that. I wish you all the best. He also thanked Commissioner Fisher. "Chuck and I went into this together and I couldn't have asked for a better person to start this journey with. We were able to always call each other and bounce ideas off of each other and talk through things. Chuck was always asking all the questions which made my life easier! I wish him and his family all the best and know that he will continue to be around and help Whitehall Township"

Before we move on I just want to tell both Tom and Phil how much their relationship has taught me. I’ve watched them disagree on big things up here and make tough decisions and then get in the car and drive home together. That is something I think we all can learn from and I know I have.

I work at a school with great legacy and with that means almost everything there is named after someone. I always joke and say the only thing left for me some day will be a urinal in the bathroom. If I could name anything after Phil, it would have been when they rebuilt the township building, we might as well dedicated one of those structural beams after Phil Ginder. In just my short time on the board, I have seen him hold this board and township together through some of its most difficult times. Phil - I can’t thank you enough for all you’ve done for me and this township. Now before we go, I’d like to read a little poem:

In Whitehall we live, and choose to reside, Two commissioners, side by side,
Tom and Phil, a friendship so true, Teaching us what's right to pursue

They drove to meetings in a shared ride, Neighbors close, their friendship tied,
Disagreements arose, votes weren't the same, Yet their bond remained, untouched by blame

Now, as Phil bids farewell tonight, We gather to honor him and all his light,
Grateful for the stories he’s told, Lessons learned - worth more than gold

Our paths may diverge, but memories remain, A legacy of what's right, and never in vain,
With gratitude Phil, we bid you adieu, And wish you the best in all that you do.

Commissioner FISHER read the following farewell statement:

Four years ago, when I first ran for this position, I was told that being a commissioner wasn't that much work. You have two meetings a month and vote on stuff. I joked to friends and family that if I got on the board, I'd just be approving park benches and stop signs. Well...if the subsequent four years taught me anything, it's that I was clearly mistaken and it involved a little bit more than that...

I'm not originally from Whitehall. I wound up here because I fell in love with a beautiful girl from this little township, married her, and started my life with her in a village with the weird name of Hokendauqua. In marrying her, she invited me to join her family and within a few years I learned that her family extended beyond what I'd originally thought and encompassed this whole community. If being on this board has taught me anything, it's that we here in Whitehall are one family.

And I believe nothing best sums up what it means to be a part of the Whitehall family, than serving on this board and serving with the mayor and the professional staff in this room.

When I was first elected in 2019, I think there was a little trepidation, not just from me, but also from board, the mayor, and the staff. Who the heck is this...let's be honest... awkward guy who we're going to have to work with? Believe me...the feeling was mutual.

Despite that shared trepidation, I felt that I was quickly taken into the fold of this team, this family and I truly felt welcomed. In the last four years, as the saying goes it has been an honor, a pleasure, and a privilege to serve with this board and this administration.

It wasn't an easy four years! Let's be honest, all things considered, the terrifying, deadly, global, apocalyptic pandemic turned out to be the least of our problems! We faced more than our fair share of municipal challenges and crises, and although we didn't always agree on the best way forward, we always managed to find one.

My trademarked catchphrase to everyone on this Board whenever we faced a challenge has always been a quote from Ben Franklin, "We hang together, or we hang separately." And I believe we did.

In my last statement from this dais, I want to take the opportunity to specifically thank a few people who have been a part of the Whitehall family with me on this journey.

I want to start with Mayor Harakal. Thank you, Mike for your leadership and example. I appreciate the advice you've given me over the years and I value how active you were with community events and volunteering. I have a few pics of your Subaru being stuffed with bags full of trash from the side of 22. Thank you. You will be missed.

I also want to thank Deputy Mayor Meyers. Jack, you know this township inside and out and have always been such an incredible resource. Your professionalism and competence in times of

extreme Whitehall/mess/duress have been commendable. It's been an honor to serve with another good Catholic Boy.

Larissa, Thank you for being our liaison and go-to person for us up here. You kept us in-line, informed, and organized. I appreciate what you've done for us and want to say Thank you.

Frank and Lee, I am not an expert in engineering and planning, but you two are. I've heavily relied on your guidance these last four years with how Whitehall is literally put together and have been grateful for how patient you've been with me. You taught me a lot and I hope that while serving on this Board I put that knowledge to good use. Thank you both and your staffs.

During my term, I have gained the utmost respect for Atty. Gross as both an attorney and as a person. I believe that Jack sits right at the top as the best solicitor we could have asked for. Faced with difficult choices, I was always advised to trust the attorney, and in the end I always did and I have no regrets. Jack did NOT advise me tonight to not make any lawyer jokes...I decided I would not on my own. Thank you, Jack.

I'd like to thank a few of the other staffs who I didn't get to work with as closely as I would have liked due to the nature of being a Commissioner. Although I didn't get to work with you first hand, I always knew you were there and respected how critical you were, and are, to Whitehall.

I'd like to thank the Treasurer and her staff for her timely updates and reports and for all the efforts put in, in the tax office.

Thank you to the Police and Fire Departments, Chief Marks and Chief Nelson, the staffs, and volunteers. I have the utmost respect for what you do and wish we could have worked more closely together.

Thank you to Public Works, I frequently drive my car on the streets in Whitehall and can say that they are well taken care of.

Thank you Recreation. The parks are looking great. Thank you to Brandon and the Staff.

I want to turn my attention specifically to this Board. These last four years, I have been closer to all of you than anyone else in the township...and sometimes that even included my wife. Some weeks I saw Ginder's face more than hers!

I want to start with the only other millennial up here, Randy. We were the new comers up here, the next generation. We had to stick together and I will always be grateful for your support and letting me bounce ideas off you. Although I won't be on this board for the next term, I am glad that there will still be such a good man up still up here. Thank you.

Tom, personality wise, I always thought I was the most similar to you. I have always respected your competence, integrity, sense of right/wrong, and your sense of humor. I've liked your ties, and Christmas hats, and your politeness. In terms of temperament and personality, if there was anyone on this board who I wanted to most be like, it was you. Thank you.

Phil, if there is anyone on this board who personified the traits of mentorship to a junior commissioner, it was you. Throughout my time up here, I felt that you took me and Randy under your wing and guided us through this crazy, convoluted, and complicated process. But not only that, I always believed that you did your best to be respectful of my opinions. We did not agree on everything, but I appreciated how you still respected my opinions and let me have my voice. That meant a lot to me. I hope that even when I am off this board, I can still emulate your ability to mentor those less experienced than me in that same way. Thank you.

(Also, every month Phil used to give me these PA Game Commission News Magazines. I still read them and enjoy them. Not sure where I am going to get them from now on!)

Alberta, I regret that we will only have had two months to work together. I was liaison to the Zoning Board, where Alberta served for 12-years, during which time I came to respect her abilities. I think you have a lot of potential up here on this dais, and I know the community is in good hands since you've joined this Board. Thank you.

Jeff, is the main reason I am here tonight. We're both members of Blessed Virgin Mary Church and after I finished my Ph.D. at Lehigh in 2019, he suggested I run for the open seat up here. "Sure, why not?!" I thought at the time, "How bad can it be?!" Regardless of that...

Jeff, you are probably one of the most competent people I know. You have been hard working and dedicated Whitehall and I know that you have taken so much of your personal time to write grants and attend special meetings. You're a wellspring of knowledge and I've been thankful for that. This township can't thank you enough for what you've done and I can't thank you enough for helping get me active in public life. Thank you.

Joe, Mr. Mayor-Elect, it has been one heck of a ride and I am going to miss working with you up here. I'm appreciative for how you always kept us well informed of what was happening, and I am always grateful for how you were always just a phone call away. When things got crazy here, I used to reach out to you because I knew you would walk me off ledge. That meant a lot to me. I definitely looked up to you and still do. You are going to be a good mayor and you have my support. I wish you all the luck, because your success will be Whitehall's success.

The last group I want to thank is the volunteers. When I first moved here and first got the township newsletter, I was amazed by all of the different committees, councils, and boards and couldn't wait to join one. Though, that being said, I assumed that most of them were filled up and that I'd never be able to get on one. Once I finally got active in Whitehall I was amazed in the other direction...we desperately needed volunteers. Over these last four years, I made it one of my main focuses to encourage people to step up, to volunteer in Whitehall.

My opinion is that those who do step, exemplify what it means to be a citizen and member of the Whitehall family. I spent my four years here as liaison to the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), whose members selflessly pickup litter, staff the recycling drives, sponsor educational events...just for the good of Whitehall. As I have frequently emphasized at Commissioner meetings, it has been a joy to work with them.

However, they are not the only volunteers I want to thank. Our planning commission, our Zoning Hearing Board, the Ironton Rail-Trail Committee, the Rec Commission, and our volunteer firefighters, just to name a few. These are all individuals who selflessly give, and if this pool of volunteers were to dry up... Whitehall would literally not be able to function...and not just literally because of all of the **litter** that wouldn't get picked up!

Paraphrasing John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what Whitehall can do for you, but what you can do for Whitehall."

Though I chose not to run for re-election and will be off this board, I intend to stay engaged in Whitehall. My career and personal circumstances have made it difficult for me to continue serving on the Board of Commissioners, which is why I chose not to re-run. I work down in Limerick, and spend two hours a day commuting. People tell me I have a very wonderful wife, and I'd really like to get to know her again.

With that in mind, I've told everyone up here, the Commissioners-elect, the new administration, and residents of this township, I am always just a phone call away. Please reach out to me if you need advice, want to talk, or need to vent. My tenure on this board has given me such a wealth of knowledge and experience and I hope that what I have gained up here can yet be of service to Whitehall.

And with that, this is Chuck Fisher Signing off.

Good night, good luck, and God Bless.

Commissioner GINDER first of all, Frank Clark, my last question to you, did you get the clock repaired in your conference room? He then proceeded to read his farewell statement: 2023 has been a successful year for Whitehall township. We have remained on budget financially and have gotten streets resurfaced and necessary repairs made, equipment replaced, facilities upgraded and new employees hired to replace those whom have retired or left township employment. Naturally, not all wants and needs are ever fully accomplished. The new board of commissioners and new mayor along with our dedicated employees and staff will continue to achieve the goals for the residents of Whitehall Township.

It is because of the dedication and devotion of our staff and employees to getting the job done that we have had a good year. Department heads please pass on a sincere thank you to all employees. Our volunteer fire fighters and fire police have performed well, especially with the shortage of personnel. The volunteer firefighters and fire police deserve a special thanks to keep things running smoothly. Our police department continues to perform exceptionally well above all standards, thanks to chief marks, all officers and personnel of the department. I want to thank Larissa for her dedication in keeping the BOC organized with paperwork and information. Lee, thank you for being my teacher, starting with my time on planning; I learned so much from you. Frank Clark our township engineer from keystone consulting engineers, and all department heads for all their help during the year. Never a question goes unanswered. Special thanks to Deputy Mayor Jack Meyers and Atty Jack Gross. You have kept me sane thru some of the issues we have gone thru. Always there with good advice and help to deal with the constant problems and issues. Lastly thank you to all the volunteers and members of Whitehall's boards, commissions,

authorities playgrounds, sports leagues, Ironton Rail Trail, historical organizations and service organizations . These dedicated volunteers are what make Whitehall work, as a great place to live and call home. I hope i have not forgotten any body, if i did it is not intentional. My thanks to my fellow Commissioners. Working together , not always in full agreement, but always with the best for Whitehall in mind. Joe, thank you for dedication as BOC President, you went thru a lot, more than most. You made it!!! Lastly thank you to the residents of Whitehall for having the faith and trust in all of us to do the right and honorable things for Whitehall township. Merry Christmas, happy holidays and good health to all the residents and employees of Whitehall township.

On a personal note, after 30 years of serving Whitehall, 6 years on planning and 24 years as a commissioner, it is my time to move on. It has been one of the most heartfelt and humbling experiences afforded to me. I thank the residents for their faith in me to do the best for Whitehall. Also, I want to thank my son Jason and daughter Janet when they were growing up and of course Vicky for allowing me the time over the years to put into this honorable work.

Commissioner SLONAKER wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New year to everyone. He commented to Commissioner FISHER, Commissioner GINDER and Mayor HARAKAL that he's appreciative of how much they gave in their respective positions, as holding these type of positions is not easy.

Commissioner WARREN I want to thank Mayor Harakal for dedicating 13 years of service to Whitehall Township starting with two terms as Township Executive (1984 to 1992) and leaving retirement to serve as Township Mayor from 2018 to 2023. Mayor Harakal always had vision with an eye towards the Township's future and environmental sustainability. He left office in 1992 with an ambitious plan to build a new police station to accommodate 25 officers and meet our growing demands. Fast forward to the mid 2000's the need for a new police station became ever apparent and multiple sites were being considered and a strong effort paydown the Township's debt service. Mayor Harakal came back to office to follow through with those plans and today we have a fully functional police station with budget for 50 officers and building capacity for 70 officers. Whitehall Township will be well-positioned when Regionalized Police becomes a necessary reality. In addition to that effort, public works facilities were updated including a new fueling station and multi-bay garage and renovation and modernization of the administration building. For all intents and purpose, or municipal campus has renewed and extended life for 30 years. This was a significant undertaking for the Township, and occurred at the time when the Township had enough cash on hand to pay off the entire debt service, Township had an excellent bond rating, interest rates were at historic lows and contractors were eager to competitively bid the project. The bids came in under budget allowing for more work to be performed. It was the right decision at the right time as these efforts would cost many more millions of dollars if performed today.

Mayor Harakal also presided over the acquisition of the Ironton Rail Trail, the 112 Acre Whitehall Parkway preventing it from becoming a landfill, the saving of the Grist Mill and acquiring the Grim Home and Lehnart barn, the first curb-side recycling program in the Commonwealth receiving the Governor's Award from Gov Bob Casey. He also supported the grant efforts to restore the 12-acre Mickley-Prydun farm and supported the preservation efforts of 155 acres Weinhoffer Farm as Whitehall's first active farm preservation effort partnering with Lehigh County Farmland Preservation Board. With the Mayor Harakal's support, the Township secured awards totaling \$1,073,000 for recreational projects including the IRT, Mickley-Prydun Farm, and Whitehall Parkway Pavilion. Additionally, \$1.5M RCAP award towards campus renovations.

Mayor Harakal, I encourage you to stay active with our Civic organization and volunteer boards and wish you and your wife Judy all the best in your second retirement. The Township will benefit from your service for many decades to come.

Next, he thanked Charles “Chuck” Fisher for his dedicated service the last 4 years. Chuck was the Commissioner liaison and driving force behind the rebirth and expansion of the Township’s Environmental Advisory Council working with the Mayor and other volunteers to host many litter cleanup initiatives and for always being a strong advocate for volunteerism. Chuck was also an active liaison with the Scouts encouraging membership helping foster several Eagle Scout projects that benefit Whitehall recreation and environmental sustainability. He has always appreciated Charles taking the time discussing projects, township initiatives or propose new concepts to the board such as EV charging stations. The support of farmland preservation and environmental projects are a great benefit to the community. He encourages Chuck to stay active in the Township and maybe someday come back. Congratulations and best of luck with your future endeavors.

Lastly, he thanked Mr. Ginder for his many years of service. We cannot thank you enough for your dedication to the IRT and all the positive work that has been done. You always had a keen eye on budgets that helped positioned the Township well over the years to perform some heavy lifts including the new police station. You always strived for integrity and I valued our phone calls as a sounding board. You always provided sound advice and had favorable impact on this board and keeping this board on a straight path. Thank you for all you have done.

President MARX stated that he has known Phil 25 years, as business associates, friends, fellow commissioners, fellow veterans and he has never met a more honorable person and hopes that he can emulate and be like Phil as he is just an awesome person. It’s been a pleasure.

He wished Commissioner Fisher and his family the best and thank you for your service to the Board. He also thanked the Mayor for his service and he had a lot of accomplishments and will be remembered for the parkway and trail and so many other legacies. Lastly, he wished everyone a safe and happy holiday.

Mayor HAKAKAL stated that he has lived in this township all his life and did the best he could in helping the township move forward. All that has gotten done could not have happened without the entire community working together. He appreciates the residents that come out to the meetings and to the staff that has helped him succeed including Jack Meyers, Jack Gross, Frank Clark and Lee Rackus. He also thanked the members of the Board and his wife Judy.

Treasurer KOREN noted that she has submitted her report to the board and to please call with any questions. She wanted to also note that 6782 garbage bills have gone out and 1129 seniors have taken advantage of the discount period, 4390 collected in discount with a total of 82% collected so far. Real Estate taxes are at 67% collected. She also is excited to hear that the Township is possibly moving forward with online bill payments.

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION – Commissioner GINDER moved, seconded by Commissioner FISHER to adjourn the meeting at 9:03p.m.