



## **HATFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES February 14, 2024**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Tom Zipfel called the February 14, 2024 Workshop Meeting of the Hatfield Township Board of Commissioners to order at 7:30 pm.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken by Aaron Bibro, Township Manager. Present at the meeting were President Tom Zipfel, Vice President Bob Rodgers, Commissioner Jerry Andris, Commissioner Jennifer LoStracco and Commissioner Shahidul Partha and. In addition to Township Manager Aaron Bibro, also in attendance were Solicitor John Iannozzi, Assistant Township Manager Scott Hutt, Township Engineer Bryan McAdam and Chief of Police William Tierney.

### **III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Hatfield residents, Brian and Kim Michael.

President Zipfel announced that the Board met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss real estate.

### **IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Andris motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Vice President Rodgers. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

### **V. CITIZENS' COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

There were no citizens comments.

### **VI. CONSENT ITEMS**

*Motion to Enter Items A-E into the Record*

- A. Police Report – *January*
- B. VMSC Ambulance Report – *January*
- C. HTMA Meeting Minutes – *December 12, 2023*
- D. NPWA Meeting Minutes – *December 19, 2023*
- E. Colmar Volunteer Fire Company Monthly Report – *January*

Vice President Rodgers motioned to move the consent items into record, seconded by Commissioner LoStracco. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

## **VII. SPECIAL ITEMS**

### **A. Michaels Family Christmas Lights & Colmar Fire Police - Recognition** *Winner of the ABC show, "The Great Christmas Light Fight"*

President Zipfel announced the Michael Family won Season 11 of the Great Christmas Light Fight on ABC. They have been doing their Christmas display for the past 25 years and is a must see for local families. Their display features more than 100,000 lights and 700 vintage blow molds as well as Santa and Mrs. Claus interacting with visitors. Members of the Colmar Fire Company volunteered their time to provide traffic control. Lieutenant Scott Sovocool and Fire Police Captain Bill Hodson were present. Mr. Michael was quoted, "we are preserving Christmas past so that future generations can enjoy the magic of Christmas." The Michael's have also raised awareness of Ataxia and accept donations for research at their display. They were given a wall frame thanking them for bringing joy to the community.

Mr. Michael thanked the Board for this recognition. He added that the family is motivated to continue their Christmas display to see all the smiling faces of all ages that visit. He thanked his wife Kimberly, children Joseph and Elyce, the Hatfield community, their neighbors, the Colmar Fire Company, Zack and Chris Depew, Towamencin Township, Hatfield Township and the Board of Commissioners.

### **B. Black History Month Promotion** *Shaykh Anwar Muhammad, President, Ambler Branch NAACP*

Mr. Muhammad spoke about Black History Month as we take a moment to acknowledge the beauty within black culture and to explore and understand the significant contributions in black history. He said this month serves as an open invitation to learn more and to step out of our comfort zones to embrace the wealth of black history. This mutual exchange of knowledge fosters a better today and tomorrow through understanding and appreciation. He wished everyone an enlightening Black History Month filled with exploration and appreciation. He invited everyone to the Ambler Movie Theater on Thursday, February 22 for a Black History Month program featuring the movie Red Tails about the Tuskegee Airmen. He noted the NAACP is the oldest civil rights organization in America.

### **C. HTMA Budget Overview** *Pete Dorney, Executive Director*

Mr. Dorney presented the Hatfield Township Municipal Authority's 2024 budget overview. The sewer rates are increasing because of maintenance to the facility specifically the electrical grid replacement which is estimated at \$12M - \$15M. We are looking at some grants and have received support from our state politicians for the grant submissions. The lead time on some of the electrical equipment needed is up to two years. He is requesting a 4% increase in sewer rates this year which computes to approximately \$1.30 per month increase or \$15.60 annually. The HTMA will wait to see if additional increases are needed based on grant approvals. Three grant applications have been submitted totaling \$12,875,000.

President Zipfel asked if this upgrade is an unfunded mandate or based on wear and tear. Mr. Dorney replied it is based on the age of the transformers that are 35 – 50 years old but there is an unfunded mandate coming in five years that we will have to plan for. A Commissioner asked if there is a backup plan should a transformer fail between now and when the equipment is replaced. Mr. Dorney said there are two parallel transformers so if one is down, the other is operational, but if both fail, then there are backup generators. Mr. Bibro noted that the HTMA works on a fiscal calendar that runs April 1 – March 30 and added the HTMA rates with the increase are still in the bottom 15% of area municipality sewer rates. The HTMA produces the budget but the Board of Commissioners ultimately approves the HTMA budget. The HTMA budget will be on the agenda in two weeks for approval by the Board.

## **VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Planning and Zoning Committee – Vice President Rodgers**

#### **1. Maintenance Bond Discussion – Completed Land Development Projects**

Mr. McAdam explained what it means for a land development project to enter into its maintenance period. Once a land development is approved, the developer posts escrow money that funds the construction of public improvements. Developers draw down on the escrow money during the course of construction. The Engineer inspects the project throughout the process and once a final inspection is complete, the developer enters into an 18-month maintenance period. During this maintenance period, developers are required to post funds equal to 15% of the construction cost. There is a final maintenance period inspection that is made by the Engineer who will then address any issues or sign off on the project. There are currently three projects that have been completed and resolutions will be presented at the next meeting for them to enter into the maintenance period.

### **B. Public Works Committee**

#### **1. Authorize Bids – Road Paving, Heating Fuel, Vehicle Fuel, Pool Chemicals, ADA Ramps, and Leaf Pickup Program** *Motion for Approval*

Mr. Bibro said we bid all of these projects throughout the year with the Road Paving Project being the biggest.

Commissioner Andris motioned to authorize the bidding process for the projects listed, seconded by Vice President Rodgers. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

### **C. Parks and Recreation Committee – Commissioner LoStracco**

Commissioner LoStracco reported on the upcoming Parks and Recreation programs and events.

#### **1. Clemens Park Redevelopment – Authorize Bids** *Motion for Approval*

Mr. Bibro said we have been working on the Clemens Park Redevelopment Project for over eight years including a Master Plan to make the park better for the community. We partnered with the Garden of Health who grow vegetables on a portion of the land and distribute them to low-income families. The existing basin will have a road removed and will function as a naturalized basin and a second basin will be added at the entrance. There will be landscaping, a trail connection near the entrance, additional parking, a public bathroom, an inclusive playground and the addition of another paved trail that connects a neighborhood to the park. We expect construction to start this summer and be completed in the fall. We received a grant for this project and are using some additional developer money to fund this project.

Commissioner Andris motioned to authorize the bidding process for the Clemens Park Redevelopment, seconded by Commissioner LoStracco. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

#### **D. Public Safety Committee**

President Zipfel announced there will be a swearing in and badge presentation for several officers at the next meeting.

#### **E. Finance Committee – Commissioner Andris**

Commissioner Andris reported the Township audit process has begun for the 2023 budget with expenses coming in under budget for the year and revenue coming in over budget expectations. The Township's bond rating was recently upgraded to AA from AA-.

### **IX. TOWNSHIP STAFF REPORTS**

#### **A. Township Manager's Report**

Mr. Bibro announced they are in the process of purchasing new microphones and they should be upgraded in the next few months.

##### **1. 2023 Annual Report – Building, Zoning, and Code Department**

Mr. Bibro gave a recap of the Building, Zoning and Code Department which is headed by Don Delamater who reports to Assistant Township Manager Scott Hutt. There is a third-party Building Code Official, a Fire Marshal, Code Enforcement Officer, 2 Full time and 1 Part time Administrative Employees, and a Part time Fire Inspector. It is an extremely busy department with over 2200 permits issued in 2023, over 2000 apartments were inspected as well as additional inspections for construction, use and occupancy, and life safety, totaling over 1700.

##### **2. Re-bid Results – Electric Contract, New Police Station (\$460k savings) *Motion to award bid to AJM Electrical, Inc. in the amount of \$1,882,415 as recommended by the Construction Manager, Boyle Construction, Inc.***

We rejected the last bids we received for electrical and rebid the project recognizing a \$460,000 savings to the cost of the project.

Vice President Rodgers motioned to award the Police Station Electric Contract to AJM Electrical, Inc. seconded by Commissioner Andris. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

3. New Police Station – Soil Testing Contract, Range Fit Out Items

These two items are costs associated with the Police Station Project and will be on the next agenda for approval.

**X. SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

There was no report.

**XI. CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

There were no citizens comments,

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Andris motioned for adjournment, seconded by Vice President Rodgers. The motion carried 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm