

FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
Board of Supervisors

4-06-2023

Work Session Minutes

A work session of the Forks Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, April 6, 2023, at the Forks Township Municipal Building, Easton, PA. Chairman O'Neil opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD MEMBERS:

John O'Neil, Chairman
Ty Corallo, Vice Chairman - absent
Tim Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer
Kelly Keegan, Member
Dean Turner, Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Donna M. Asure, Township Manager

Supervisors Comments:

Chairman O'Neil –

J. O'Neil commended R. Sulzbach and her staff for the successful Easter egg hunt held Saturday, April 1st. Even though the weather did not cooperate there was a good turnout and the kids had a great time.

T. Corallo – absent

T. Hughes – none

K. Keegan –

K. Keegan gave remarks on the open space initiative in the township. She spoke on misconceptions concerning the program and the EIT tax.

D. Turner –

D. Turner thanked the fire company for responding to the large warehouse fire in Easton a few days ago.

Announcements:

J. O'Neil announced the following –

- There will be a hearing for an ordinance on April 20th which has been properly advertised
- There was an executive session, held this evening, April 6th at 6pm concerning personnel issues. No decisions were made in executive session

Public Comment: none

Treasurer's Report –

The township total debt is \$4,091,000.00

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to ratify payment of vouchers received through March 22, 2023, in the amount of General Fund - \$ 21,481.77; General Capital Fund - \$ 17,860.26; Utility Fund - \$ 77,181.83; Escrow Fund - \$ 37,262.38. All in favor. Motion carried.

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T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by D. Turner to approve payment of vouchers received through March 31, 2023, in the amount of General Fund - \$ 117,271.80; Utility Fund - \$ 6,405.52; Utility Capital - \$ 5,659.16; Escrow Fund - \$ 1,366.16. All in favor. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by D. Turner to ratify the gross payroll for pay period ending March 26, 2023, in the amount of \$ 158,095.04. All in favor. Motion carried.

Old Business

Approval of Minutes

D. Turner made a motion, seconded by T. Hughes to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2023, regular meeting of the board of supervisors with the following corrections – under fire company report the word should be stated; under open space discussion, the vote was taken and the motion failed. All in favor. Motion carried.

Action Items –

Resolution 2023-04-06 –

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by D. Turner, to adopt resolution to allow signing of the amendment to the ARLE Grant providing for an extension through December 13, 2023. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, absent; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes; D. Turner, yes; J. O'Neil, yes. Motion carried.

MOU with EASD –

K. Keegan made a motion, seconded by D. Turner to authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to execute the Memorandum of Understanding with the Easton Area School District for enforcement of the PA Vehicle code by Forks Township police department. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, absent; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes; D. Turner, yes; J. O'Neil, yes. Motion carried.

Discussion Items –

Industrial Appraisal company – fixed asset valuation –

The board discussed the proposal from Industrial Appraisal Company for the valuation of the township's fixed assets. This was a finding in the most recent audit. The valuation is for insurance purposes as well as to provide an updated listing of all capital assets so fiscal may use the new capital asset module in the finance software to track additions and subtractions to this listing. The cost is \$13,900 with a \$1000 per year recurring fee to update the values for insurance purposes.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by D. Turner, for purposes of discussion, to enter into the agreement with Industrial Appraisal Company for a fixed asset valuation in the amount of \$13,900.00 and an ongoing cost of \$1000.00 per year for annual updating of insurable values. Under discussion, D. Turner asked if this would be ongoing or is there a way to cancel the annual. D. Asure reported there is an out clause in the contract which allows termination with ten days notice. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, absent; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes; D. Turner, yes; J. O'Neil, yes. Motion carried.

Trash/Recycling disposal site bids and hauler discussion -

D. Turner stated that he had asked to table this item from the last agenda to do a little more research on the options that might be available to the township for trash and recycling programs. He stated that it was revealed that the board had been provided with many of the options that were available and with the most current information from surrounding townships and vendors. It also was reported that having a township wide hauler provides benefits to the public works departments to be able to schedule work to be done in areas that are not receiving trash services on a specific day.

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Authorization to bid trash hauler –

D. Turner made a motion, seconded by T. Hughes to authorize the solicitor, working with the Director of Public Works and Township Manger to advertise for sealed bid for Forks Township trash hauler services. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, absent; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes; D. Turner, yes; J. O’Neil, yes. Motion carried.

The board then discussed the solid waste and recycling disposal bids that were opened on March 10, 2023. The overall cost has increased by approximately \$165,000 if the tonnage remains the same as 2022. This is just the disposal costs. There were three bids received for the disposal of solid waste and two bids received for the disposal of recyclables. All met the requirements of the bid.

Solid Waste disposal bids

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by D. Turner to award the solid waste disposal bid to Waste Management as the lowest responsible bidder in the amount of \$70.04/ton, contingent upon review by the solicitor. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, absent; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes; D. Turner, yes; J. O’Neil, yes. Motion carried.

Recyclable disposal bids

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by D. Turner to award the recycling disposal bid to Waste Management as the lowest responsible bidder in the amount of \$129.39/ton, contingent upon review by the solicitor. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, absent; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes; D. Turner, yes; J. O’Neil, yes. Motion carried.

Matthew Menkowski, township resident asked when this change will take place. It was explained that our current contract ends September 1, 2023. We now must bid the hauler to complete the process.

Managing Growth discussion –

Shawn McGlynn of SFM Consulting, the township’s zoning officer and building codes official was present with two staff members to present to the board a power point presentation on possible ways to manage growth.

He stated that Forks Township has done a good job in managing growth as is apparent by looking at an ariel shot of Forks Township. You can see where growth has occurred in the lower part of the township while the upper part remains open. Residential growth follows corridors and existing development. This is exactly what you want to see. The township has good ordinances in place that protect steep slopes, woodlands, flood plains and natural resources. The township also has a healthy industrial base which is what you need to support the tax base. Mr. McGlynn offered suggestions to manage growth as follows –

- Cluster Development – the township currently has an ordinance for cluster development, but many developers have not taken advantage of this option. It is easier to build a house every three acres rather than the need for a community system, etc. This ordinance could be tightened up to protect the farmland preservation zone. May control sprawl but may not control growth.
- Natural Resource Protection Restrictions – the township has some good protections in place but the ordinance could be amended to protect prime agricultural soil. There are townships with very successful ordinances in place that protect this valuable asset. Some people consider this a taking of the land but it has been upheld all the way to the state’s supreme court.
- Transferable Development rights – a very difficult program to manage but it allows the township to buy development rights from a sending zone and bank them to sell to a developer who wants to use them in the receiving zone.

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- Farmland Preservation Easement Purchase program – keeps the farms on the tax roles and keeps them an agriculturally producing property. The township has very valuable agricultural soils which makes Forks Township attractive to the organizers of this program. Many farmers are not interested in participating in this program and some of this is due to the need for education. The township may still be required to come up with a match to the county and state grants for this program. Ed Reagan, township resident asked questions of the minimum lot sizes to participate in the program. He thought the slide showing the acreage may need to be updated.
- Build out analysis – the SFM staff is working on this analysis but it may take a few months for a rough draft.

S. McGlynn stated it is also very important that the township enforces the ordinances currently on the books. This was not done in the past but certainly is now. There are opportunities to tighten up the ordinances to assist in managing growth such as the heavy industrial zone text amendment to the ordinance that is currently being drafted. He and his staff will continue to work with the boards to provide information to attain the goals of the township.

Public Comment-

Ed Reagan – 1364 Fox Ridge – stated he was late arriving and asked if the MOU with the school district had been acted upon. He was told yes. He stated he is concerned about the reasons behind involving the police department with the school district.

Cathie Fly – Chestnut Commons – introduced herself to the board as the new president of the Forks Township Arts Society. She stated she looks forward to working together. The board welcomed her.

K. Keegan made a motion, seconded by D. Turner to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm. Motion carried.