

December 18, 2023

The East Lampeter Township Board of Supervisors met on Monday, December 18, 2023 at 7:30 pm at the East Lampeter Township Office: 2250 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602. The statement of recorded meetings was played for all in attendance. Chairman John Blowers called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. In addition to Mr. John Blowers, Supervisors present were Mr. Roger Rutt, Mr. Corey Meyer, Mr. Ethan Demme and Mr. Mike Thornton. Also present in the meeting room was Mr. Ralph M. Hutchison, Township Manager, Ms. Tara Hitchens, Assistant Township Manager and Ms. Stephanie Leakway, Administrative Assistant.

Public Present in Public Meeting Room:

Mike Lorelli – 2157 W. Ridge Drive, Lancaster, PA 17603 – High Properties

Ted Gallagher – 142 Witmer Road, Lancaster, PA 17602

Michael Itwaru – Lancaster Online

Steve Zerbe – Chief of the East Lampeter Police Department

Steve Gribble – 134 N. Ronks Road, Ronks, PA – Ronks Fire Company

Dave Gribble - 134 N. Ronks Road, Ronks, PA – Ronks Fire Company

Jansen Herr – 2505 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602

Gideon Swarey – 2761 N. Cherry Lane, Ronks, PA

Family members of Chairman Blowers

Family members of Officer Dykshoorn

Also, In attendance via Zoom:

None

Public Comment for Non-Agenda items:

Ted Gallagher of Witmer Road thanked Chairman John Blowers for his 12 years of service to East Lampeter Township as a Board member. He appreciates Chairman Blowers fiscal responsibility as a member of the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Blowers thanked Mr. Gallagher and stated that this is his final Board of Supervisor's meeting after serving for two terms. Mr. Gallagher will be joining the Board of Supervisors in January 2024.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Approval of the December 18, 2023 Board of Supervisors Meeting Agenda
- b. Approval of the Minutes of the Monday, December 4, 2023 Regular Meeting
- c. Approval of Financial Security Reduction – Hess: 834 Willow Road
Upon review, the Authority's Engineer recommends a reduction of \$23,740.00 from the balance of \$25,740.00 leaving a remaining balance of \$2,000.00. In addition, the Township Engineer recommended no site construction reduction leaving that balance at \$11,844.80
- d. Request for Time Extension to record conditionally approved Land Development Plan #23-17 – Fernmoor Homes: 2472 Lincoln Highway East
The applicant is requesting additional time to address outstanding conditions of approval. This is the first request for a time extension which will end on February 20, 2024.
- e. Approval to pay invoices from all funds: Total: \$331,468.49

Items of note:

- \$66,325.48 for 4th quarter contributions to Township Fire Companies (\$16,581.37 each)
- \$28,000.00 to LEMSA for 2nd half of the 2023 contribution

- \$13,915.90 to K&K Automotive for Police Vehicle Refurbishing

Motion made by Corey Meyer to approve the Consent Agenda which was seconded by Ethan Demme and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Swearing in of New Police Officers

Chief Zerbe introduced both Jhared Simmons and Jared Dykshoorn who after meeting all of the background and testing requirement will be joining the East Lampeter Township Police Department in January. Mr. Simmons served on the Spartanburg City, South Carolina Police Department. He was raised in Maryland where he graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and graduated from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Police Academy. Mr. Simmons will be attending portions of the Police Academy at HACC starting in January 2024. Mr. Dykshoorn was raised in Queensburg, New York and is a graduate of the State University of New York in Adirondack with an Associates Degree in Counseling and a graduate from Lancaster Bible College with a Bachelor's Degree in Bible and Criminal Justice. Mr. Dykshoorn was a public safety officer at Lancaster Bible College and is currently a carpenter/technician. He will also be attending the Police Academy at HACC starting in January 2024. Chairman John Blowers administered the Oath of Office.

Chief Zerbe also thanked Officer Misura who serves in the United States Air Force and was deployed from October of 2019 to June of 2020 in the United Arab Emirates. A plaque with an American Flag that was flown by Officer Misura on February 28, 2020, over Iraq and Syria aboard an F-35 Lightning II in support of Operation Inherit Resolve, was presented to the East Lampeter Police Department and will be displayed in the lobby. Chief Zerbe thanked Officer Misura and all of the officers that have served in the US Military.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

a. Request for Waiver of Land Development Planning – High Properties: 171 Greenfield Road
Mike Lorelli of High Associates was present. The Brown transmission building has been a single tenant building since 1990. A few years ago, the business was sold and the accounting and HR functions were consolidated and moved outside of the building which freed up 3000 square feet of space. An employment placement agency is now using the space as a sub-tenant. There are 31 total employees in the building and 61 parking spaces. Mr. Lorelli is asking to change the building from a single tenant building to a two-tenant building and is requesting a waiver of Land Development planning because there will be no construction or changes to the building. Mr. Hutchison stated that the Planning Commission has recommended unconditional approval.

Motion made by Corey Meyer to approve the request for Waiver of Land Development Planning – High Properties: 171 Greenfield Road which was seconded by Roger Rutt and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Mr. Lorelli thanked Chairman Blowers for his service.

b. Request for ECHO Agreement – Swarey: 2761 N. Cherry Lane

Mr. Gideon Swarey was present. His parents are going to be living in the ECHO unit if allowed to place such on the property. Mr. Blowers asked Mr. Swarey if he is aware that the Township Sewer Enforcement Officer (SEO) is going to need to inspect the on-lot sewer disposal system to make sure it can manage the additional flow. Mr. Swarey answered yes.

Motion made by Roger Rutt to approve the request for ECHO Agreement – Swarey: 2761 N. Cherry Lane with the condition that the Township SEO approves the on-lot sewer disposal system which was seconded by Mike Thornton and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Action Items:

a. Appointment to the Township Planning Commission Term Ending 11/19/27 – Mr. Jansen Herr

Mr. Jansen Herr was present and expressed his interest and willingness to serve the Township in this role. Mr. Blowers thanked him for stepping up and responding to the call. Mr. Herr introduced himself to the Board.

Motion made by Mike Thornton to appoint Jansen Herr to the East Lampeter Township Planning Commission Term Ending 11/19/27 which was seconded by Roger Rutt and unanimously approved by voice vote.

b. Adoption of the 2024 Budgets for all funds

The draft budget has been advertised and open for public inspection for at least 20 days as required by Township code. The Township Staff was able to make suggested changes to a few budget items. The incentives for the Police Officer Fitness Program will not be paid out until 2025 which resulted in an expenditure reduction to the budget. Another small expenditure reduction is related to the decrease of dues for the County Zoning Building Association. The taxable assessment for the Nolt Mill property was reduced since it is no longer being utilized in a commercial nature. There was an increase in revenue based on a new assessed value in the amount of \$104,402.00 after applying the proposed rate for 2024. Mr. Hutchison stated that these are the only changes for the Board to consider and the rest of the budget is the same as advertised. Mr. Rutt asked how many times an assessment can be updated within a year. Mr. Hutchison answered that assessments are updated whenever there is construction on the property and can happen at any time and without limitation. The Township typically receives assessment reports monthly.

Motion made by Roger Rutt to adopt the 2024 Budgets for all funds with the noted changes that were not advertised which was seconded by Corey Meyer and unanimously approved by voice vote.

c. Approval of 2024 Pay Policy

Mr. Hutchison explained that a pay policy was established a number of years ago for Township non-uniform employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements. All of these values have been updated as per the pay policy. There has also been some modifications to employee salaries to get closer to the mean value for different positions as well as addressing changes in responsibilities. All of the values have been included in the adopted budget.

Motion made by Corey Meyer to approve the 2024 Pay Policy which was seconded by Mike Thornton and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Mr. Blowers stated that the Pay Policy was originally reviewed in 2013 and has been followed since.

d. Resolution re 2024 Real Estate Tax Rate

Mr. Hutchison explained that the Resolution would increase the real estate tax 3.5% from 1.9 mills to 1.957 mills. Real estate tax is not a main revenue source for the Township but it is the only rate the Board of Supervisors has the ability to change. The rate has not been changed since 2019. Mr. Blowers stated that the real estate tax is 27% of the general fund and the Board did not raise the tax during and after the pandemic.

Motion made by Mike Thornton to adopt the Resolution re 2024 Real Estate Tax Rate which was seconded by Ethan Demme and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Mr. Thornton stated that he would recommended when there is a tax increase that Township staff should start the year trying to match the tax increase with a decrease in spending in all the departments of the same magnitude throughout the year. The savings would double the effort to reduce deficit spending in the future.

e. Resolution re Collection Policy

Township staff has been working with the Solicitor's office regarding accounts that have been outstanding for quite some time. The Solicitor felt it would be helpful to have a policy addressing how the Township and the Solicitor's office will approach collections. The Resolution states that collection on overdue residential accounts would move to the Solicitor's office when unpaid for four quarters or for non-residential accounts when unpaid for two quarters. Mr. Blowers asked if this is an ongoing issue in East Lampeter Township. Mr. Hutchison answered yes, it is an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed. Mr. Rutt asked what percentage of the accounts are past due. Ms. Hitchens answered approximately 10%. Mr. Blowers stated that the City of Lancaster needs to be paid for treatment from the Township in order to keep the services running so these outstanding bills need to be collected. Everyone needs to pay their fair share.

Motion made by Corey Meyer to adopt the Resolution re Collection Policy which was seconded by Ethan Demme and unanimously approved by voice vote.

f. Amendment to Police Association Agreement 2023-2026

The Police Association approached the Township staff with a proposal to modify the current agreement to address a concern they had with the sick leave provision. Mr. Hutchison and Ms. Hitchens worked with the Association to slightly modify the language to make it easier to administer should the Board of Supervisors agree. It was also discovered that a provision that had been in the agreement prior to the 2023-2026 version had inadvertently been left out of the current version. This provision was added back to the agreement with language that will make Court on Call Pay available although it was noted that the Township continued to follow the prior provision. The Police Association agreed with the changes and the Board is asked to do the same.

Motion made by Corey Meyer to approve the Amendment to Police Association Agreement 2023-2026 for Paid Sick Leave and Court on Call Pay which was seconded by Mike Thornton and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Manager's Report:

a. Mr. Hutchison reported that there is a Plans Display in the Township lobby for the Trail Project from Strasburg Pike through Flory Park to Oakview Road will be set up for some time for individuals to comment on as required by the Federal Funding process. Mr. Blowers asked if the project and questionnaire are on the Township's website. Ms. Hitchens stated that it is not currently but will be.

b. Pollution Reduction Plan Update

Ms. Hitchens reported that the Township has been waiting for guidance from the PA DEP for the Township's Pollution Reduction Plan since June 2023. The Township finally met with PA DEP representatives last week who informed Township staff that the agricultural projects they have in partnership with I2 Capital need a little more work before they will approve them. I2 Capital is working on the information needed and will present it to the PA DEP.

c. Housing Plan

Ms. Hitchens reported that the Steering Committee met earlier in the day and looked over the draft plan document generated by the Consultant, 4ward Planning. As soon as the changes the Steering Committee offered today are made, the draft plan document will be presented to the Board. Some good implementation options have been provided as well as others that may not be accepted by the Board but are offered as alternatives. Mr. Meyer added that the report was approximately 120 pages with an abundance of good data. He feels the Township can use the information for a variety of projects moving forward. Ms. Hitchens noted that this plan is the first step in an update of a comprehensive plan process and that the data will be utilized moving forward.

d. Report on Nuisance Hotel Ordinance

Chief Zerbe reported that since the Nuisance Hotel Ordinance was adopted 12 weeks ago, there has been 24 violations of the Ordinance with 15 different hotel establishments. The Police Department has issued two letters. The Ordinance requires there to be three or more offenses within 60 days prior to action. The first letter issued has been resolved and the second letter was sent out today. There were seven different call types that were responded to for the 24 violations. 70% of the calls were for domestic violence. There were 2 weapon offenses. The rest were for a dangerous animal, an overdose, a combination false ID/drug related offense, a harassment call and a sex offense call. There has been a noticeable increase in the amount of calls coming from hotel employees which are being noted in the officer reports. Chief Zerbe noted that if an employee calls, the call does not count toward the hotel's tabulation. Mr. Blowers stated the Ordinance is proving to be successful.

Mr. Corey Meyer presented Mr. John Blowers with a plaque honoring his 22+ years of service to East Lampeter Township. He also presented Mr. Blowers with a Certificate of Service from the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors for 12 years of service as a Board of Supervisor. Mr. Meyer personally thanked Mr. Blowers for all he has done for East Lampeter Township. Mr. Blowers introduced his family members in the audience. He thanked each of the other Supervisors, Mr. Hutchison, Ms. Hitchens, Ms. Leakway and Chief Zerbe for their service. Mr. Blowers stated that it has been an honor serving East Lampeter Township.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Corey Meyer and a second by Mr. Ethan Demme with all voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm. The next Board of Supervisors meetings will be held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 7:00 pm for a Regular Meeting, including reorganization, in the East Lampeter Township Office, 2250 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA, 17602 and via ZOOM, check the Township website at www.eastlampetertownship.org for more information.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph M. Hutchison
Township Manager