

MINUTES
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORK-SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021
7:30 PM

(Location Changed to Online Application: Zoom - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85740704502>)

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Koury at 7:31 pm. Mayor Koury read the OPMA Statement and led the flag salute.

Roll Call: Mayor Philip Koury (present) Deputy Mayor Diane Burgess (present)
Sebastian Donaruma (present) Mike Homulak (present)
Craig Repmann (present)

Also present: Katrina L. Campbell, Municipal Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)
Igor V. Bykov, Attorney (Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen)
Christine Burke, Municipal Clerk
Cameron Keng, Chief Finance Officer
Captain Timothy Snyder, Police Department
George Reichert, Office of Emergency Management
Virginia Evans, Board of Education
Rob Geib, President, Quakertown Fire Company

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items Only:

No one from the public spoke regarding Agenda Items.

Proclamations & Presentations:

1. Rural Awareness – Daffodil Bulb Planting Day – October 2, 2021 (Clarification Statement)
After a brief explanation by Mayor Koury, Township Clerk read the following statement:
“Rural Awareness has requested that it be clarified that participants of their Daffodil Planting Day, held on October 2nd, 2021, were given 22 bulbs per bag to plant at various locations throughout the Township, hoping that 2022 daffodils would bloom in the spring of 2022.”

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the September 23, 2021, minutes Work-Session/Regular Meeting & Executive

Session: Burgess

Second: Repmann

Roll call: Burgess (Aye) Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

Payment of Bills

Motion to approve the Bills List: Repmann Second: Homulak

Roll call: Burgess (Aye) Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

The CFO explained that the items on the Bills List included standard payments, shared services for Municipal Court, and for the school.

Ordinances: None.

Resolutions: None.

Staff Administrative Reports:

Administrative: The Township Clerk informed the Committee that the Clerk's Office staff was looking forward to the move into the new building and were excited to utilize the opportunity to advance some of the long-term projects associated with their efforts to better organize the Township's records.

CFO: The CFO reported on the financial status of the Township and informed those present that the Township's Tax Sale would take place the following month. He further reported on the status of installation of utilities at the new Municipal Building, focusing on installation of high-speed Internet and phone services from Comcast, and efforts to install an effective HVAC system before temperatures drop and risk freezing pipes in the building. Deputy Mayor Burgess offered advice on available grants and where to acquire cost reduction programs. Mayor Koury advised those present that further discussion would take place later in the meeting during the "Old Business" discussion item regarding the property and explained the need to move further discussion to that time for clarity in the minutes.

OEM: George Reichert updated the Committee on the status of recovery from Tropical Storm Ida, advising that the FEMA reporting center in Lambertville was closed and that residents that still needed to file reports could do so by contacting FEMA. He provided a brief update on the status of the repairs to the storm-damaged Township bridges.

Police: Captain Snyder reported on the September monthly activities of the Police Department, specifying background investigations, other investigations, domestic violence incidents, arrests, motor vehicle warnings, tickets, accidents, radio calls, animal complaints, property checks, and others. Captain Snyder further reported on his attendance of a seminar regarding the implementation of cannabis legislation in the state and indicated that the seminar was focused on law enforcement goals. He explained the dangers of edible cannabis products and the need for officer training to identify individuals driving under the influence of cannabis products. He reported on a meeting he attended with the Department of Corrections regarding moving the Police Department to the new Municipal Building. Mayor Koury advised those present that further discussion would take place later in the meeting during the "Old Business" discussion item regarding the property. Upon Mayor Koury's questioning, Captain Snyder advised the Committee of the Police Department's efforts to maintain public safety while the bridges on Sidney Road and Landsdown Road were closed.

BOE: Virginia Evans indicated that the school was always in need of substitute teachers and bus drivers. She further indicated that a Certified School Nurse position may be open. She advised those present that the next Board of Education meeting would take place at the school with a Zoom option to listen in.

Mayor Koury advised the Committee of a notice received from Town of Clinton's Superintendent of Water regarding a policy change regarding hydrant usage. He explained that the Town of Clinton will no longer permit Fire Departments to train on any hydrant located in their service area. Rob Geib, President of Quakertown Fire Company, explained that the notice had been received earlier in the day

and that the fire company would be discussing it further. Committeeman Homulak explained that the Town of Clinton water supply was at capacity and that the hydrants would be opened during a fire emergency.

Board of Health: None.

Old Business:

1. Alcohol Anonymous Request to Re-Open Municipal Building to Meeting and Large Gatherings.

The Township Clerk reported on her efforts to reach out to Alcoholics Anonymous, the Township staff and the Township's insurance provider. She further reported that the Facilities Use Permit Application had been updated to the insurance provider's specifications.

Motion to allow Alcoholics Anonymous to have meetings on Saturdays: Repmann

Second: Donaruma

Roll call: Burgess (Aye) Donaruma (Aye) Homulak (Aye) Koury (Aye) Repmann (Aye)

The Town Committee briefly discussed procedures that could be taken to inform staff in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak. George Reichert, OEM, advised the Committee on forms to confirm vaccination and exposure status. Upon questioning by the Committee, Captain Snyder explained that the Police Department opens the door for the meeting and relocks the building once the participants leave. Mayor Koury instructed the Clerk to contact Alcoholics Anonymous.

2. Doe Run Drainage Project – Status Update

Mayor Koury explained that he had received a memorandum from the Township's Engineer with a status update regarding the Doe Run Drainage Project. He explained that the drainage system should have been installed in the 1970s and described the system that had been installed one week before the tropical storm. He further explained that the Engineer had inspected that system after the tropical storm and reported that the system had worked as intended. He indicated that the Township Engineer had advised the Township that there was nothing further the Township could do to assist Ms. Figler of Sidney Road with the drainage problems on her property, explaining that any additional runoff problems were a result of topography and soil type.

3. Property Purchase – 43 Lower Landsdown Road (New Municipal Building) – Status Update

Mayor Koury continued the discussion begun during the CFO staff report regarding the need to install HVAC in the new Municipal Building, explaining that the CFO was meeting with Donnelly, an HVAC company, regarding the system. He explained that Committeemen Homulak and Repmann were the new subcommittee for the project and that he had attended a meeting with the Township Engineer regarding the project because the Engineer had not been aware of the change in the subcommittee members.

Committeeman Homulak reported on the subcommittee's efforts to ensure continued progress on the move into the new Municipal Building. He explained that the subcommittee had walked through the new building, met with one potential project manager, and will schedule meetings with others. He further explained that Captain Snyder and Committeeman Donaruma had met with the Department of Corrections regarding moving the Police Department. He updated the Committee on the Department of Public Work's concerns regarding freezing pipes during the colder months and efforts to outline professional specifications to advertise for a professional project manager.

Captain Snyder reported on his meeting with Department of Corrections (DOC) officials to inspect the new building. He explained the Police Department's dynamics and some of the DOC's requirements for holding cells, a DOC approved bathroom and sally port. He further explained some of the DOC's suggestions regarding space utilization. He indicated that once the Committee had determined the utilization of the space in the new building, he would forward a Letter of Intent to the DOC and set up a meeting to coordinate. The Committee discussed the DOC requirements and the need to define the Police Department space in anticipation of moving the administrative staff before the Police Department. The Township Attorney recommended seeking out the architect that did the recent renovations to the Warren County Courthouse. Deputy Mayor Burgess indicated that she would forward a Project Manager job description to the subcommittee.

- a. Lot Consolidation and Variance Plan Preparation, Lots 41 and 42, Block 16 – 204 and 206 Sidney Road, Lot 12, Block 36 – 326 Quakertown Road
 - i. Proposal – Rich Tree Service (State Contract #18-DPP-00645) – Tree Removal from 326 Quakertown Road (Block 36, Lot 12) - \$12,000.00

Mayor Koury explained the Lot Consolidation and Variance Plan Preparation efforts connection to the plan to alleviate costs incurred by the purchase of the new Municipal Building. He further explained that the request to remove trees from the 326 Quakertown Road lot was in response to the need perform a permeability soil (PERC) test for the septic system. The Township Attorney explained that the quote was from a tree service on State Contract and could be approved without seeking additional quotes for the scope of the work. She informed the Committee that she could not advise them if the quote was reasonable and indicated that they could seek additional quotes. She advised that the proposal would clear-cut the whole lot. Upon questioning by Deputy Mayor Burgess, the Township Attorney described the process required for soil permeability testing and explained the need for the test to know where to place a septic system. The Committee discussed options to provide the PERC witness access to the lot without clear-cutting. The Township Attorney indicated that she would contact professionals for other options that did not include clear-cutting the trees. Upon questioning by Deputy Mayor Burgess, Mayor Koury and the Township Attorney advised the Committee of the progress being made upon the 204 and 206 Sidney Road lot consolidation efforts. Committeeman Homulak questioned if the Committee would be interested in offering 326 Quakertown Road to Hunterdon Land Trust to include in their nearby land preservation. The Committee indicated that it was a good alternative option.

New Business:

1. Department of Public Works – Maintenance of Nixon Cemetery

Mayor Koury advised the Committee of a question raised by Mike Chabra, a member of the public, regarding the maintenance of Nixon Cemetery, Block 37, Lot 37. He indicated that Mr. Chabra had stated that the Department of Public Works had been maintaining the cemetery. The Township Attorney indicated that the cemetery was owned by the Nixon Cemetery Association, care of August Knispel, and that the Township was not responsible for maintaining the cemetery unless under an agreement to do so. George Reichert, OEM, indicated that the Quakertown Fire Company had been mowing the cemetery every Friday for years before someone else indicated that they would do it. Mayor Koury indicated that he would contact the Department of Public Works regarding the matter.

2. Resident Concerns – Speeding on Pittstown Road

Mayor Koury advised the Committee of residents' concern regarding speeding on Pittstown Road near the Grow-A-Row property. He indicated that he would also contact Union Township and had advised the resident that he would bring the matter to the Committee's attention.

3. Cannabis Application

Mayor Koury explained that he and Committeeman Repmann were the subcommittee established for Cannabis business implementation in the Township and had attended a meeting with a cannabis business applicant. The Township Attorney explained that the Township had opted out of cannabis business implementation but was planning to opt in and was researching what was needed. Mayor Koury reiterated the Township's intention to opt into Cannabis business implementation.

Committee Member Reports:

Committeeman Repmann reported on the Recreation Commission's efforts to coordinate the Halloween Tailgate event, specifying the event's date, time, and advertising.

Committeeman Homulak reported on the Finance Subcommittee's efforts regarding the quarterly review and thanked Deputy Mayor Burgess for her advice.

Deputy Mayor Burgess reported that the PennEast pipeline project had been cancelled by PennEast. She further reported that COVID-19 cases are averaging about two per week, drive-through vaccination clinics and Pfizer booster vaccines were available at the County complex.

Mayor Koury informed those present that the medical center was in critical need of O blood type donors and that participating donors would be provided with COVID-19 and cholesterol testing. He reported that the Land Use Board had met on October 13th and that the public hearing had been continued to November or December. He further reported that the Land Use Board was contemplating resuming in-person meetings and that the Board would be reaching out to the attorneys, Clerk and Land Use Board Clerk.

Comments from the Public:

George Reichert, OEM, requested to see the layout of the new Municipal Building and offered to assist with the Township's efforts to prepare the building. Committeeman Homulak indicated that he would reach out to Mr. Reichert.

<Redacted per P.L.2021, c.371 "Daniel's Law">, Landsdown Road, spoke regarding the disruption bridge detour traffic had been causing on Landsdown Road and expressed safety concerns. He questioned if the Township could do anything to assist in advancing the bridge repair efforts. Mayor Koury explained that he had reached out to the County regarding the bridge repairs and read the County's response. Mr. Culley thanked the mayor for the update and expressed his appreciation for the County's anticipated timeframe for the repairs. Mayor Koury and Captain Snyder explained that the Police Department had increased their traffic enforcement efforts in the Township in response to similar complaints.

Executive Session:

The Township Attorney explained the need to enter Executive Session, that action could be taken, and that all attendees of the meeting could wait in the Zoom application's Waiting Room except for the Committee, the CFO, the Township Clerk, and the Township Attorney. Igor B. Vikov, Attorney from Lavery, Selvaggi, Ambromitis & Cohen, the Township Attorney's office, was also permitted to observe.

Upon confirmation of the absence of all but the required attendees, the Township Clerk stopped audio-visual recording of the meeting.

Motion to enter executive session: Burgess Second: Donaruma
All in favor. Motion carried.

Committee entered Executive Session at 9:06 pm.

Topics discussed:

1. Personnel – Department of Public Works
2. Contractual & Attorney/Client Privilege – Quakertown Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (QVEMS) Lease

The Township Clerk resumed audio-visual recording of the meeting.

Committee exited Executive Session at 10:35 pm.

Motion to exit executive session and resume regular meeting: Donaruma
Second: Burgess All in favor. Motion carried.

Action by the Committee:

Motion to extend job offer to the person discussed in Executive Session for the salary discussed in Executive Session for a Laborer in the Department of Public Works (DPW): Donaruma
Second: Burgess All in favor. Motion carried.

The Township Attorney explained that a roll call vote would be required for the appointing resolution.

Motion to extend job offer as discussed in Executive Session for Foreman/Supervisor and Assistant Foreman/Equipment Operator in the Department of Public Works (DPW): Burgess

Second: Donaruma

All in favor. Motion carried.

Mayor Koury acknowledged the presence of Igor V. Bykov, an attorney from the Township Attorney's office.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Repmann Second: Unrecorded

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:39 pm.

Prepared by Christine Burke, Township Clerk



Adopted: 10/28/2021