

**FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

3-4-2021

**Work Session Minutes
March 4, 2021**

A work session of the Forks Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at the Forks Township Municipal Building, Easton, PA, and was also held virtually through ZOOM. Chairman O'Neil opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members:

John O'Neil, Chairman
Dan Martyak, Vice Chairman
Tim Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer
Kelly Keegan, Member
Ty Corallo, Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Donna M. Asure, Township Manager
Lisa Pereira, Twp. Solicitor
Sean Policelli, Engineer
Greg Dorney, Chief of Police - virtual
Steve Kramer, Public Works Director - virtual
Rachel Sulzbach, Parks & Recreation Director - virtual
Tim Weis, Building & Zoning Officer - virtual

Public Comment: none

Supervisors Comments:

John O'Neil –

- Rec Paths – the rec paths were discussed with residents at a prior meeting. To follow up the supervisors researched further the ownership and maintenance of these paths. Unless called out as a sidewalk they are owned and maintained by the township.
- Pheasant Ridge Development – there have been several meetings with the developer to resolve the paving issue. Progress is being made and a resolution will be reported by next month.

Dan Martyak –

- Braden Airpark – the airpark has asked for a work session to go over the agreement currently in place and their requested changes. It is being suggested that two supervisors meet with the airpark and report back to the board. John O'Neil and Dan Martyak will meet with Ty Corallo available to step in. The best times will be Monday, Tuesday or Thursday mornings at 7am. D. Asure will contact the airport representatives and report back on a date.

Kelly Keegan –

- Hemp Farming and preserving open space – After the LVPC recent article on warehouses, K. Keegan presented the board with some information on hemp farming. Hemp is biodegradable and can replace plastic. She would like the board to consider creative ways to protect our agriculture and preserve open space such as setting money aside in each budget to buy land and rent to farmers. Solar farms provide tax benefits. D. Turner, Chairman of the planning commission stated he believes we need to promote what we would like to see and offer incentives such as tax breaks and revenue sharing to farmers for their product. J. O'Neil would

**FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

3-4-2021

like to continue this discussion and asked that this remain on the agenda under Supervisor Keegan's report.

Announcements – An executive session was held, prior to tonight's meeting, March 4, 2021 to discuss personnel issues. No decisions were made in executive session.

Hearings

Ordinance 368 – refinancing of debt

Jamie Schlesinger of PFM and Jens Damgaard of Eckert Seamans, Bond Council, spoke to the refinancing. PFM sent the proposal to 25 to 30 banks. Eleven proposals were received from all size banks from all locations. Due to the bond market is it financially better that the township does a loan for the existing debt and not another bond issuance. J. Damgaard stated that banks find this type of loan very favorable as they do not have to pay tax on it. Under the PA Local Government Unit Debt Act the collateral is the full faith, credit and taxing power of the township. We must advertise twice for this borrowing, once before tonight's hearing and once after. J. Schlesinger stated that the township will be saving \$502,000.00 which will be realized mostly in 2021. There are a few other savings such as no longer needing to pay for a paying agent and DAC (Digital Assurance Certification) agent. Closing, at this time is scheduled for April 8, 2021.

K. Keegan made a motion, seconded by T. Hughes to approve the loan proposal of Jim Thorpe Neighborhood Bank in the principal amount of \$5,257,000.00 at a rate of 0.89% maturing May 15, 2027. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to approve Ordinance 368 of the Township of Forks, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, authorizing and securing the issuance of one or more general obligation bonds, in the aggregate principal amount of \$5,257,000.00, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Local Government Unit Debt Act, to refund the township's general obligation bonds, Series of 2010, and pay related expenses; accepting a proposal to purchase the bonds; setting forth the terms and containing the substantial form of the bonds; creating a sinking fund and appointing a sinking fund depository for the bonds; pledging the full faith, credit and taxing power of this township to secure the bonds; and authorizing related actions and documents. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Presentations - none

Action Items –

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to ratify vouchers payable received through February 17, 2021 in the amounts of General Fund \$ 299,176.86; Utility Fund - \$ 22,412.28; and State Liquid Fuel Fund - \$ 6,455.96. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to ratify vouchers payable received through February 22, 2021 in the amounts of General Fund \$ 15,100.07 and Utility Fund - \$ 27.25. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to approve vouchers payable received through March 3, 2021 in the amounts of General Fund \$ 143,501.51; Real Estate Tax Fund – \$ 421,299.00; Utility Fund - \$ 72,155.57; and State Liquid Fuel Fund - \$ 58,568.23. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

**FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

3-4-2021

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to ratify the gross payroll for pay period ending February 14, 2021 in the amount of \$165,378.34 and gross payroll ending February 28, 2021 in the amount of \$154,267.84. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Purchase Orders

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to ratify the purchase order in the amount of \$9,555.00 to Season After Season, Inc for snow removal services. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

J. O'Neil added that Forks Township is very lucky to have such a great team during the recent snow-storms and thanked Public Works, the police, the parks department, and fire company.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to ratify the purchase order in the amount of \$8,250.00 to Alfero Company for snow removal services. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to approve the purchase order in the amount of \$39,413.00 to EM Kutz, co-stars pricing for the service body to the 2021 Ford F-350. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to ratify the purchase order in the amount of \$9,935.00 to Fisher & Son Company, Inc, co-stars pricing for 130-50-pound bags of rye seed for township fields. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to approve the purchase order in the amount of \$7,981.25 to Fisher & Son, Inc, to lock in price for fertilizer as part of the parks Turf Management Plan to be delivered in November. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Old Business –

Minutes

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by T. Hughes to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2021 work session of the Board of Supervisors. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by T. Hughes to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2021 work session of the Board of Supervisors. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Hauling, disposal and recycling contracts

Cindy Oatis was asked to review the current contracts in place and recommend a one-year extension as allowed by the contract or going out to bid. Her recommendation was to extend by one year. The

**FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

3-4-2021

contracts will need to be reviewed again early in 2022 so a decision can be made to extend one last time or go out to bid.

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by K. Keegan to authorize the solicitor to draft the necessary documents to extend the hauling, disposal and recycling contracts for one additional year. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

New Business

Purchase of snow blower

S. Kramer discussed the condition of one of the township's current snow blowers and the cost to repair. Several options have been looked at over the past few years and this snow blower will attach to current township equipment and will double the blower capacity of the township which is important when clearing the streets curb to curb. The life span is 20 to 25 years. A member of the public asked what piece of equipment would the blower attached to. S. Kramer stated that it would be the 938M CAT Wheel Loader. The board discussed where the funds should come from. It makes sense to purchase from the capital fund and replace some of the money in the capital fund with the savings from the refinancing.

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to purchase the blower as described for \$107,707.00 from the capital fund. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Fort James LOC reduction -

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by T. Hughes to approve the request for a reduction in the letter of credit for the Fort James, III, Lot 8, land development project from the current value of \$1,269,122.75 to \$165,537.75 a reduction of \$1,103,585.00 as recommended by Gilmore & Associates. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Fort James III, Lot 8 Maintenance Period –

D. Martyak made a motion, seconded by T. Hughes to approve the request for the Fort James III, Lot 8 land development project to enter the 18-month maintenance period as recommended by Gilmore & Associates. Roll Call Vote: T. Corallo, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

Personnel –

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to ratify the hiring of Heather Horvath as part-time receptionist/administrative assistant effective February 8, 2021 at a rate of \$18.50 per hour for up to 25 hours per week and paid time off equal to two weeks of regular schedule. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

T. Hughes made a motion, seconded by T. Corallo to approve the hiring of William Donavon as Fiscal Manager effective March 22, 2021 at an annual salary of \$80,000.00 plus three weeks-vacation with all other benefits to follow the non-uniformed CBA. Roll Call Vote: T. Corolla, yes; D. Martyak, yes; J. O'Neil, yes; T. Hughes, yes; K. Keegan, yes. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT HEADS ROUND TABLE

Township Manager- D. Asure reported that the township received the State Liquid fuels funding today in the amount of \$462,277.24 which is approximately 10% below last year.

**FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

3-4-2021

Police- report on drive

Parks & Recreation- R. Sulzbach reported that under the former restrictions imposed for COVID 100 people have signed up for the March 27th easter egg hunt at 11am. Community Days is starting the planning phase.

Public Works- S. Kramer thanked everyone for their support during the storms. T. Corallo asked about parking and snow emergency routes. The ordinance will need to be updated. A draft will be prepared. S. Kramer stated that winter feedback is being gathered from staff and one idea is to find places to offer residents to park their vehicles when they have no off-street parking. Public Works and Recreation are working on a maintenance plan for the rec paths. This would entail a plan to get them back to new and then a preventative maintenance program going forward.

Zoning – T. Weis stated that the information was on the drive. T. Corallo asked if street intersections and the year the project was started could be added to the list. T. Weis reported that this information is on the drive.

Solicitor- L. Pereira reported that the Noise Ordinance, Fireworks Ordinance and tax collector ordinance will be on the March 18th agenda. There is also a conditional use hearing for the Park Plaza property which is looking to put in a drive through restaurant and expanding the shopping center.

Engineer – S. Policelli gave an Act 209 update for the transportation impact fee. The resolution was passed which implements the \$1000 interim fee and starts the 18-month clock.

Comp Plan – there is an update that was posted to the drive. The process is moving forward and with the comp plan and the traffic study going on at the same time there is an opportunity for some cost savings since both projects require some of the same information.

Gilmore has provided a list of grant opportunities to the township. If there are any specific projects we could dive in deeper to see what we could apply for. K. Keegan mentioned that perhaps money should be budgeted each year to be a match for grants when they become available.

MS-4 Grant – S. Policelli reported that they are just waiting to get started but the township has not yet received any paperwork for the grant and the project. K. Keegan spoke to the flooding on Zucksville Road and how we can move forward. Work needs to be done downstream. S. Kramer stated that FEMA offers mitigation grants which would need the support of our federal legislators. K. Keegan offered to send a letter explaining our flooding issues and garner support from the elected officials at the federal level.

Fire- J. Russo reported there were 62 calls so far this year. The ladder truck has returned. J. O’Neil asked where we stand concerning the meeting that was requested to talk about the budget and the handling of paying the bills. N. Shurgot stated that the fire company wants it to remain as it.

N. Shurgot spoke to the need to put long flags on fire hydrants so they can be found during a heavy snowstorm. The flags are from Easton Water Authority and with the number of hydrants could be approximately \$6000.00. The fire company is waiting for a quote from the water company. It was discussed that the 2021 fire department budget should be used and if they are short at the end of the year the board will discuss an additional allocation.

Public Comment –

D. Martyak asked about the turning lanes and the ARLE grant. This grant is for the improvements at the Park Plaza and municipal complex area.

**FORKS TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

3-4-2021

D. Turner stated the planning commission is making progress with a very busy meeting on March 11th. T. Hughes asked if the planning commission was receiving the documentation they required in a timely manner as he believes the same issues he has heard about since 2019 are still happening. D. Turner stated that they are working together on issues and making progress.

Adjournment -

Upon a motion by K. Keegan, seconded by T. Corallo, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59pm. All in favor. Motion carried.