
REGULAR SEMI-MONTHLY MEETING

September 8, 2020

The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Hanover Township, Northampton County, was called to order by Chairman John Diacogiannis at the Hanover Township Municipal Building, 3630 Jacksonville Road, Bethlehem, PA, 18017 at 7:00 P.M.

Present via virtual Zoom meeting were Supervisors Nagle, Lawless, Warren, Prendeville, Diacogiannis, Engineer Brien Kocher, and Solicitor Jim Broughal.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

Upon motion of Ms. Lawless, seconded by Mr. Warren the Board approved the Agenda.

Mr. Nagle aye, Ms. Lawless aye, Mr. Warren aye, Mr. Prendeville aye, Mr. Diacogiannis aye

Upon motion of Mr. Nagle seconded by Mr. Warren, the Board approved the minutes from the meeting of the Board of Supervisors dated August 25, 2020.

Mr. Nagle aye, Ms. Lawless abstain, Mr. Warren aye, Mr. Prendeville aye, Mr. Diacogiannis aye

Upon motion of Mr. Nagle seconded by Ms. Lawless, the Board approved the list of bills and transfers dated September 8, 2020.

Mr. Nagle aye, Ms. Lawless aye, Mr. Warren aye, Mr. Prendeville aye, Mr. Diacogiannis aye

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Erick Peterson, Armour Lane, stated this year coming up will be three years of not having a pool, and the Township needs to do what it takes to fix the pool.

Joan Steinberg, Tracy Lane, stated the Township should be using the funds allocated to have the pool investigation completed.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Diacogiannis had nothing to report.

REPORT OF THE VICE CHAIR

Mr. Prendeville had nothing to report.

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Nagle – Road District #1, had nothing to report.

Mr. Diacogiannis – Road District #2, had nothing to report.

Mr. Warren – Road District #3, Mr. Warren requested the board introduce a Resolution at the next board meeting showing support for Bill 607, which allows for the use of radar by the local police departments. The bill was voted on and passed by the Pennsylvania Senate in 2019 and is now before the House of Transportation Committee.

Mr. Nagle stated that PSATS has shown their support for this bill in the past and has no objection to introducing a Resolution showing support.

Mr. Warren requested obtaining information about the training and continuing education the CRPD officers are required to go through.

Ms. Lawless – Road District #4, Ms. Lawless advised she had spoken with one of the informal citizens groups regarding increasing truck traffic. This group had met with one of the State Representatives, who advised that the state representative would support getting funding in 20201 for a traffic study if Hanover Township, Lower Nazareth, and Bethlehem Township would publicly support the study. Ms. Lawless invited discussion on how to gain support from the other Townships.

Mr. Diacogiannis advised that part of the solution would require Bethlehem Township to buy into the study. Mr. Diacogiannis stated that until there is support from both other municipalities, Hanover will not be able to get the study.

Mr. Finnigan stated that previously there were conversations with then Congressmen Dent to acquire funds and at that time Bethlehem Township opposed. Mr. Finnigan advised that the Township has tried to obtain funds for road improvements on the 512 corridor and over a four hundred sixty-nine million dollars has been removed from the Pennsylvania budget by the Federal Highway Administration.

Mr. Warren volunteered his assistance to Ms. Lawless to assist with any contacts, meetings, etc.

Mr. Prendeville – Road District #5 – had nothing to report.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS – BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

PLANNING & ZONING

4646 Susan Drive

Attorney Holzinger was present on behalf of the property owner, 4646 Susan Drive.

Mr. Mark Franzyshe, 4640 Susan Drive, was present.

There was discussion regarding the pool installation at 4646 Susan Drive. The apron of the pool extends over the side yard setback, into the easement area. Attorney Holzinger inquired if with a hold harmless, could this pool apron stay. There is stone on site that could be used to build a side wall. Attorney Holzinger proposed to level the easement area by 5 ft. and place the stones that would be 5 ft inside of the 4640 Susan Property, which would then allow room for a fence. Attorney Holzinger suggested asking the Zoning Officer for a conditional permit, allowing the resident to have the project finished, and then present the finished project to Zoning to ensure the project was completed as presented.

Mr. Mark Franzyshe presented photos and concerns for his property at 4640 Susan Drive. The construction of the pool has crossed over onto his property. Materials and equipment were continually left on his property. Mr. Franzyshe stated he is concerned for future water issues and wants the repair of his yard to be priority. He wants assurance that the retaining wall will be safe.

Mr. Warren stated that getting the property at 4640 Susan cleaned up and repaired should happen before anything else.

Mr. Evan Kocon spoke on behalf of the property owners at 4640 Susan Drive.

Ms. Lawless stated that the pool should be completed to the standards of the approved permit.

Ms. Yvonne Kutz spoke on the pool permitting process.

Mr. Finnigan advised that if issues happen down the road, it is a civil issue between neighbors. The Township can not get involved in those matters.

ADMINISTRATION

Bethlehem Public Library – Anne Felker

Ms. Anne Felker and Mr. Josh Berk were present.

Mr. Josh Berk, executive director of the Bethlehem Area Public Library, updated on the library. The library was able to complete the summer reading program by running it on the porch of the library. The staff has been working creatively to allow for the use of the library services. There has been increase in electronic borrowing. Mr. Berk advised the library has been reducing costs by shortening branch hours, not filling employment positions, as fundraisers have not been able to happen, there has been the loss of income from meeting room rentals.

Ms. Anne Felker inquired on what the library can do to improve the satisfaction of the Township.

Mr. Prendeville stated there was a passed increase in the library budget that the Hanover Township Board was against. Mr. Prendeville asked if there were any projects put on hold due to the pandemic? Mr. Prendeville asked if the library had thought about a satellite sight in Hanover Township?

Ms. Felker advised the libraries goal is to provide the best service possible. She stated there was an increase last year, but there had not been an increase in several years. Ms. Felker stated Hanover Township has the highest usage numbers.

Ms. Lawless proposed that the Board come up with very specific questions for the library during the budgeting process.

Ms. Beth Bucko questioned if the library budget could be submitted at an earlier time to the Township. Mr. Berk explained the budgeting process on their end and advised a close number will be available at the library meetings, and the library will keep in close touch regarding the budget numbers.

Mr. Nagle stated that one of the issues is that the library never requests input from the Township on the budget number.

Mr. Prendeville stated he would like to see more of a focus on finances from the library board.

Ms. Felker invited anyone to attend the library board meetings, and to reach out with any questions.

Community Center & Pool

Mr. Warren recapped that since the pandemic happened the Township developed a plan of action for employees, rolled out safeguards, and did what they could to maintain the safety of the residents and employees. One of these decisions included closing the Hanover Township Community Center temporarily. Mr. Warren stated the Board needs a plan of action and exploring options to reopen the Community Center. Mr. Warren invited discussion.

Mr. Prendeville stated this should be a rolling agenda item, to revisit each meeting to monitor progress with the pandemic.

Ms. Lawless requested that this be in front of the Board until the Community Center is reopened. She stated the Board needs to have a plan including benchmarks that the Board needs to consider reopening.

Mr. Warren suggested looking at how things are going within the school system.

Mr. Prendeville stated his opinion is to error on the side of caution at least for the next few weeks.

Mr. Nagle stated he agrees with Mr. Prendeville and spoke on several companies who are having their employees to work at home, to keep them safe. Pandemics usually last around two years, and he wants to keep the residents safe, and does not feel the Township should be any less concerned than Corporations about the safety of the residents.

Mrs. Joan Steinberg questioned why the Board is comparing the community center to corporations and not other organizations like community centers or fitness centers.

Mr. Nagle advised that many of the community centers have questioned their reopening.

Mr. Prendeville stated that there are several other centers around the country that are also closed.

Mrs. Steinberg requested there be metrics from other local community centers used to make the decision.

Mr. Warren stated he wants to make sure that the elementary schools around Hanover Township are open and the school board is making the correct decision.

Ms. Lawless stated the past can not be changed. She wants to ensure the Board comes up with the metrics. She invited input on what metrics should be used.

Mr. Diacogiannis reiterated that each Board member made their decision on closing the Community Center on their own opinions and inputs, and the decision to close is not debatable. What to do to reopen is still up for discussion. Mr. Diacogiannis advised that he reached out to some of the centers that are open, and most have significant restrictions. Mr. Diacogiannis would like to see the Community Center reopen but is not sure what the metric is to make that happen.

Ms. Lawless restated that she will be working with the Township Manager to prepare metric information on reopening.

Mr. Warren stated the Township froze all capital expenditure due to the pandemic. Mr. Warren said the geotechnical study should happen to allow for further discussion amongst the Board on how to move forward with the pool.

Mr. Prendeville asked if Mr. Warren was advocating to use the funds this year to complete the study. Ms. Lawless and Mr. Warren both stated they were. Mr. Prendeville spoke about the auditor's report. He stated he does not have enough information regarding what the finances will be next year.

Ms. Lawless stated she is recommending the Township release and spend approximately \$38,000 to complete the Terrecon study that was slated to begin before the pandemic happened. The longer the Board waits the higher the price will be, and this study must be done.

Mr. Warren agreed with Ms. Lawless that the price will only continue to go up. Mr. Warren stated this is an important issue to many residents and the Township needs to find a balance to figure out how to get the study done.

Mr. Nagle spoke about the unknowns of future revenues due to the pandemic. Mr. Nagle expressed concern about having the study performed and then having to wait to put a new pool in, and then having to have the study performed again because the data would be outdated.

Ms. Lawless stated the study is to confirm the current problem with the pool as well as the surrounding land. Ms. Lawless said she does not feel the data would be outdated by the time a decision could be made.

Mr. Diacogiannis said his understanding with geotechnical studies is the land does not change underneath, it changes with what is done on the top layer. He does not feel the information would be outdated. Mr. Diacogiannis stated his concern is due to future budgets the pool may take longer than expected. He stated he does not have an objection to use the funds but cautioned opening capital expenditures for only one item. He wants a clear understanding from the Treasurer on if we can spend the funds with no issues.

Ms. Lawless clarified that she is only suggesting that this study be completed, so the Board can decide how to move forward.

Mr. Warren stated the Board needs to take action to figure out what is wrong with the current pool.

Mr. Prendeville said he wants more information before releasing funds for the study.

Mr. Diacogiannis stated that the funds would have to be released this year, because the funds will not be in next years budget.

Erick Peterson, Harmour Lane, questioned if the Board reached out to commercial pool installers and where is Terrecon located.

Ms. Lawless advised the Terrecon location is in New Jersey.

Mr. Warren advised that the issue with the pool absolutely requires a geotechnical study.

Michael Fina stated that he has listened to residents discuss the need for a pool in the Township, but his fear is a new pool being put in will result in a tax increase. One of the most attractive things about Hanover Township is the low tax rate.

Jacqui Fortsch, Claire Street, stated bringing people into the Township is having a community center and a community pool which keeps the Township stable and attractive to new residents, while increasing property values. She expressed her frustration that the pool was an issue before the pandemic, and there has been no action for two summers, and Covid is now becoming an excuse.

Evan Kocon advised he was on the pool advisory group before the pandemic but is speaking as a resident. The frustrations from the swim community are very high that there has been no action. He understands there may not be visible work as most of it is under the ground, however there is no work being done. Mr. Kocon also spoke on the increase of construction costs.

Mr. Prendeville recapped that in 2019 the pool failed, and the money for the discovery was not in the budget. In 2020 there was over \$200,000 allocated for the pool discovery, and then the pandemic hit, and capital expenditures were frozen. Mr. Prendeville stated he does not have enough information to feel comfortable releasing funds.

Ms. Lawless moved the Board of Supervisors authorize the release of up to \$50,000 from the 2020 budget previously allocated to resume negotiations with Terrecon and finalize the contract, in order to get the geotechnical study completed as soon as possible.

Mr. Warren questioned if the Township Treasurer needs to weigh in regarding Capital Expenses.

Mr. Warren seconded the motion.

Mr. Diacogiannis stated that before they release any frozen funds, he wants input from the Treasurer.

Mr. Prendeville moved to table the previous motion.

Mr. Nagle seconded the motion.

Mr. Nagle aye, Ms. Lawless no, Mr. Warren no, Mr. Prendeville aye, Mr. Diacogiannis aye

Mr. Diacogiannis requested Ms. Lawless confirm with Terrecon if the agreement amount is still valid.

Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement Amendment– Sanitary Sewer

Mr. Warren moved the Board authorize the Chairman to sign the amendment of intermunicipal cooperation agreement for transportation of sanitary sewage between Township of Hanover and Township of Lower Nazareth.

Ms. Lawless seconded the motion.

Mr. Nagle aye, Ms. Lawless aye, Mr. Warren aye, Mr. Prendeville aye, Mr. Diacogiannis aye

Trick or Treat 2020

Mr. Diacogiannis noted for the record Trick or Treat will be held Friday, October 30, 2020 from 6 pm – 8 pm. Should homes not want to participate they can choose to not illuminate their front porch lights and hopes that people will take the proper precautions with the pandemic.

Waste & Recycling Bid Award

Mr. Warren moved the Board approve to award the Municipal Waste and Recycling Bid using Option 2 – 4 day pick up – to Republic Services of NJ, LLC d/b/a Raritan Valley Disposal, 1200 North Irving Street, Allentown, PA 18109 at a total price of \$4,903,463.00 for the period of 2021 – 2025 and to notify Republic Services of NJ of the Board’s action and to authorize the Township Secretary to notify the unsuccessful bidders.

Ms. Lawless seconded the motion.

Mr. Nagle aye, Ms. Lawless aye, Mr. Warren aye, Mr. Prendeville aye, Mr. Diacogiannis aye

DEVELOPMENTS

PUBLIC WORKS

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Kocher – Engineer – nothing to report.

Mr. Broughal – Solicitor – nothing to report.

Mr. Finnigan – Township Manager – Mr. Finnigan advised there are updates to review on the handbook and township policies.

The Township received communication from the County that FEMA and PEMA are doing their assessment virtually. The damage assessment was submitted.

Mr. Finnigan advised he shared the storm drain study that was previously done in 1987. Hanover Engineering is working on a cost estimate to update the study. The study would present possible installations of new storm drains.

Mr. Finnigan advised the Township has scheduled harassment training for the Township employees, staff, and Supervisors.

Mr. Finnigan stated that Mr. Diacogiannis and himself met with the fire company and the engine that was budgeted for this year will not be purchased, and the ambulance that was scheduled to be replaced should be reallocated to the 2022 budget.

Mr. Finnigan stated that there were multiple resident requests for a pickle ball court, one was installed on the municipal tract. One will also go in at Pharo Park. The pickle ball courts are being installed at no additional cost to the township, as the paint used is paint the Township has in stock.

Upon motion of Mr. Prendeville the Board adjourned at 10:31 pm.

Elizabeth D. Ritter
Township Secretary