

**HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2020**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairman John McIlhinney at 7:00 PM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Also, in attendance were Vice-Chairman James Groff, Supervisor Caleb Torrice, Township Manager Lorraine Leslie, Chief of Police Christopher Engelhart, Township Solicitor Steven Harris, and Finance Director Marianne Egan.

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman McIlhinney stated there was an executive session on December 2, 2020 to discuss real estate and personnel matters.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: None.
3. CONSENT AGENDA:
 - a) Minutes of the November 23, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meeting
 - b) Bills List – December 15, 2020
 - c) Financial Report – November 30, 2020
 - d) 2021 Fire Protection Agreement – Sellersville Fire Department Station 27
 - e) 2021 Fire Protection Agreement – Telford Volunteer Fire Company Station 75
 - f) 2021 Fire Protection Agreement – Souderton (Perseverance) Volunteer Fire Co.

Motion was made by Supervisor Torrice, seconded by Vice-Chairman Groff, and carried unanimously to accept and approve items 3(a) thru 3(f) on the Consent Agenda as written. There was no public comment.

4. CONFIRMED APPOINTMENT:
 - a) Diane Telly: Tax Collector – Diane Telly, Tax Collector for Hilltown Township, discussed an email sent to the Board of Supervisors. Comments from Diane Telly:
 - She is concerned with freezing her salary for the equivalent of five years.
 - Workload has increased significantly with the number of parcels that have been increased in the Township
 - No cost-of-living increase in five years
 - The average per bill rate in the municipalities in the area is well above Hilltown (\$5.60 per bill and the average is \$9.00).
 - The salary has been fine and would like to keep it that way.
 - Keeping the salary frozen is going backwards for five years.
 - The job is increasing, the parcel count has increase over five hundred over the past few years, the tax revenue has increased by \$167,000.00; the job itself is increasing.
 - Even with a pandemic, economists do not expect there is going to be a five-year stagnation. Perhaps for one year but five years seems extreme.
 - The job averages about (and not every week but throughout the year) 38 hours a week and she hires someone to help during the busy times and is paying him from her salary as well.

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- The hours worked are between home and in the office. She is not working in the office space because the building is closed. She worked in the building during March and April but moved her office to her home in June. She did not move it back because it was a lot of work and did not feel great because of surgery.
- She is waiting for the building to open because there is no need to be in the building if the public are not coming in.
- There is a lot being done behind the scenes that is done in the office when the public is not there.
- In regard to rent of the room, in 2005, the Board of Supervisors decided to waive the rent in lieu of reducing the interim bill pay from \$4.00 per bill to \$2.00 per bill to encourage the Tax Collector to stay in the building as a service to the community.
- The salary covers all the other expenses of the office which is the personnel, computer equipment, printer, scanner, and furniture.
- There is no medical, sick time, or disability benefits with the job.
- The school district is at \$4.25 per bill. The County is \$6.00 per bill in this upcoming term.
- The per bill fee covers collecting, liens, and return letters for duplicate or incorrect payments.
- The printing of the bills is contracted out at a printing site.
- Her goal is to not bring any problems to the Township.
- She calculates the interim bills every two months.
- Her concern for charging rent for the office is that to encourage the tax collector to be in the building because the community really appreciates that service.
- She can do the job from home, but it is a benefit for the community to have a place to come. There is approximately 38 million dollars collected from the office including Township, County, and School and people appreciate handing it to someone in person and see that it is being stamped paid.
- Instead of having people come to her house, she would have to ask if she could set up a table in the building for the times that she is required to collect. It would be limited times compared to what she has now, but she would respectfully ask if she could set up a table in the meeting room during those times of the year when she has public collections. It would be safer for everybody to do it that way.
- The job does not have benefits and if she takes out the \$20,000 for medical and the money she spends for equipment, it is a reasonable and fair salary for someone who is keeping track of 38 million dollars every year and running for an office. The salary is closer to \$90,000.00 and gets cut into pretty well.

Comments from the Board of Supervisors:

- The amount being paid to her per bill is already higher than most places and that is why there is a freeze.
- There is a pandemic and it certainly does not look good to all of the people who have lost their jobs and some of their homes, to be giving the tax collector a raise when she is already making more than the adjoining Townships.

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- There are smaller Townships around Hilltown Township, hence the greater per bill rate.
- Ms. Telly asked to keep the salary the same and have raises in addition to it.
- The Township pays more than they should right now.
- Alice Kachline paid \$175 per month for the office before 2006. No one was in the building prior to her.
- Kathy Watson paid \$250 per month for the office.
- Heat, electricity, air conditioning, trash, some supplies, printing and postage of the bills, and providing a box of 500 blank envelopes with postage already on them is supplied by the Township.
- It looks like the salary is over \$100,000.00 for the position and it is pretty generous especially when looking at other Townships. There are 5,866 bills going out which is a lot more than other Townships. The salary is not too shabby.
- In regard to spreading out the rent, \$150.00 in year 2022, \$200.00 in year 2023, \$250.00 in year 2024, and \$250.00 in year 2025 was discussed.

Motion was made by Vice-Chairman Groff, seconded by Supervisor Torrice and carried unanimously to authorize Solicitor Harris to prepare a resolution for the Board of Supervisors action in January 2021 for the flat rates of \$33,588.18 plus \$4.00 per interim billed twice per year for the Tax Collector for the years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, and to impose rent for the office in the Township Building in the amount of \$150.00/per month in 2022, \$200.00/per month in 2023, \$250.00/per month in 2024, and \$250.00/per month in 2025.

Public Comment: Diane Telly stated she encourages the Board of Supervisors to get community feedback before January and asked if they are okay with the tax collector using space for an hour or two at a time for public collections in the building. It was noted by the Board of Supervisors that it could be discussed at a later time and it will be looked into.

Ms. Telly continued to state that this is a personal attack. She sees paying rent is a 10% cut in pay and sees that it is ill will. The Board of Supervisors stated it is not a personal attack, but it is time to look at her salary again. It was stated again that the Board of Supervisors will look into a table to be used for tax collection in the lobby. It was noted the meeting room has not been reserved for any purpose. It was noted that it is the Tax Collector's job to collect the funds at his/her location. It is not written anywhere that the Tax Collector has the right to use the municipal building. Ms. Telly stated, as an elected official, she serves the community, and the building is there to serve the community. Solicitor Harris suggested Ms. Telly to send a proposal to the Board of Supervisors to then be discussed and considered. Ms. Telly stated she appreciates the fifteen years she has been here and does hope to continue on. She continued to state she appreciates the Board of Supervisor's listening and discussing it with her tonight. The Board of Supervisors thanked her.

5. LEGAL:

a) County Line Plaza Development and Stormwater Facilities Agreements – Solicitor Harris asked for a motion to sign plans for County Line Plaza along with executing the Development and Stormwater Facilities Agreements.

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Motion was made by Supervisor Torrice, seconded by Vice-Chairman Groff, and carried unanimously to execute the plans, the Development Agreement, and the Stormwater Facilities Agreement for County Line Plaza. There was no public comment.

b) Rosenberger Minor Subdivision – Solicitor Harris asked for a motion to execute the plans and Financial Security Agreement for the Rosenberger Minor Subdivision. Motion was made by Vice-Chairman Groff, seconded by Supervisor Torrice, and carried unanimously to execute the plans and the Financial Security Agreement for the Rosenberger Minor Subdivision. There was no public comment.

c) Equestrian Court Basin Fence Agreement – Solicitor Harris stated the adjacent property owners and the Homeowner's Association has executed an agreement, which will be recorded, which authorizes the removal of the fence around the Equestrian Court Basin and would provide a release and a hold harmless agreement so that future property owners would know the situation.

Motion was made by Supervisor Torrice, seconded by Vice-Chairman Groff, and carried unanimously for Chairman McIlhinney to execute the Equestrian Court Basin Fence Agreement and have it recorded on behalf of the Township. There was no public comment.

d) Zoning Hearing Board – Paul Stemler – Variance Request – Solicitor Harris reviewed the Stemler variance request that was filed to allow the operation of a machine shop in an existing building located at 205 Green Street. Mr. Stemler had previously received approval back in 2013 but the variance expired, and therefore, has refiled. There was a difference of opinion between Chairman McIlhinney and Supervisor Torrice as to whether or not he should attend the hearing to take a position and it was tabled until tonight's meeting. The hearing has been continued from January 7, 2021 to give the Township thirty days' notice of when to reschedule the hearing. Chairman McIlhinney stated Mr. Stemler also came in 2018 and did not receive a friendly approval and it was withdrawn. Now he is back again roughly seven years after it was approved and only had a one-year window to do it. Since that time, an entire development (Hilltown Walk) has been built around the property. He took the time today to see if any of the people in Hilltown Walk have been notified that he is coming back again through the zoning office and they have not yet been notified, so therefore, the twenty-seven people who live adjacent to him may or may not be aware that an industrial use machine shop and sales office of some sort is being proposed once again on the property adjacent to them. It was noted there is a list of people, but it did not include the people in the adjacent development. The list includes nobody that lives next door to it. Supervisor Torrice stated his contact in the development did not received notification. Chairman McIlhinney stated, right now, there are 27 property owners that live within 500 feet that do not know about this. Solicitor Harris stated the application states to list names and addresses of all property owners whose property adjoins or are across public roads from the property in question. There is a huge buffer and basin in the area. It was noted Continental Property Management manages the community and probably sent a notice to the Board of Directors and did not send a

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notice to the individual property owners but Solicitor Harris stated he has no way of verifying that. Vice-Chairman Groff suggested for Solicitor Harris to reach out to Ed Murphy and have him contact his client to contact the people who live adjacent to the property to notify them of this proposal, and to contact the Township if they have any objections. And then it will be brought back up by the Board of Supervisors for discussion at the first regular business meeting on January 25, 2021. Supervisor Torrice stated it was approved in 2013 and spoke to the closest resident in the development and he had no issues. The owner stated everything will be inside with automated machines, oil drive, and will be peaceful and quiet. It was decided by the Board of Supervisors to wait to hear from the adjacent residents and if they have no problem, then the Board of Supervisors have no problem.

e) Zoning Hearing Board – Caitlin Keller – Variance Request – Solicitor Harris stated Caitlin Keller requests a variance to install a fence greater than 48” on a corner lot located at 97 Tall Oaks Drive. Chairman McIlhinney stated the only problem with it is one of the documents that was submitted shows, what he believes, the location of the proposed fence but does not indicate that the red line is where they are talking about. Solicitor Harris stated it needs to be clarified that the red line that is shown on the document is where the fence is proposed to go. If that in fact is where the fence is to be located, then the Board of Supervisors have no objection.

6. PLANNING: None.
7. ENGINEERING: None.
8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.
9. NEW BUSINESS:

a) Scott Drumbore – H&K – Requesting for extension of hours for January for the Concrete and Asphalt Plant at the Skunkhollow Quarry: Ms. Leslie stated H&K has requested to operate the concrete batch plant, asphalt batch plant, and the crushing plant between the hours of 6:30 pm to 6:30 am, Monday through Saturday, between January 1, 2021 and January 31, 2021, excluding holidays, for the PennDOT projects per their letter dated December 3, 2020. Ms. Leslie stated H&K provided the daily reports off of the equipment that runs in excess hours. Motion was made by Vice-Chairman Groff, seconded by Supervisor Torrice, and carried unanimously to grant the extension of hours between January 1, 2021 and January 31, 2021 for the Concrete and Asphalt Plant at the Skunkhollow Quarry per their letter dated December 3, 2020 with the exception of striking the part in the letter in regard to "and/or private customers." There was no public comment

10. SUPERVISOR’S COMMENTS: Supervisor Torrice stated he knows the Township is not huge fans of traffic lights, but he witnessed his third accident at the intersection of Broad Street and Callowhill Road even though there are stop signs with flashing red lights. Vice-Chairman

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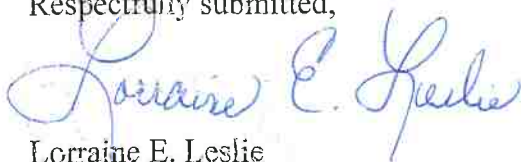
Groff wished everyone Happy Holidays and stated he hopes everything is better in 2021. Chairman McIlhinney wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Happy Hanukkah.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT: Wally Rosenthal, 530 Rosey Lane, asked the Board of Supervisors, in their general opinion, do they feel the #1 concern regarding the retirement village was traffic. Supervisor Torrice stated his #1 concern was the community feedback which included traffic, the bridge, intersection at Hilltown Pike, environmental concerns, and the number of houses. Mr. Rosenthal asked their opinion that if traffic were eliminated as a problem, would many of the issues go away. Solicitor Harris stated he cannot ask the Board of Supervisors that question at a public meeting. There has to be a plan on the table that the Board of Supervisors and the residents all get to weigh in on. Mr. Rosenthal stated the idea was to eliminate Swartley Road and everything would go out onto Route 309.

12. PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

13. ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion by Supervisor Torrice, seconded by Vice-Chairman Groff and carried unanimously, the December 14, 2020 Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Lorraine E. Leslie
Township Manager

(*NOTE: These minutes were transcribed from notes and recordings and should not be considered official until approved by the Board of Supervisors at a public meeting).