

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

REGULAR MEETING

September 10, 2018

Plymouth Township Council held its Regular Meeting at the Plymouth Township Building. The following officials were in attendance:

Council: Marty Higgins ----- Chairman
Chris Manero ----- Vice-Chairman
Karen Bramblett
Lenore Bruno
David Gannon

Staff: Karen Weiss ----- Manager
Michael Clarke ----- Solicitor
Joe Lawrence ----- Chief of Police
Lonnie Manai ----- Woodrow & Associates

Pledge of Allegiance - The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and Mr. Higgins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Higgins asked the audience for a moment of silence in memory of Officer Brad Fox as the sixth anniversary of his death approaches on September 13th.

6:30 p.m. - Intergovernmental Transfer of Liquor License Hearing - Mr. Higgins announced that this hearing was postponed until the Workshop Meeting that Council will hold on October 2nd.

Swearing in of Police Officer - Jeffrey McMahon - Chief Lawrence spoke about Officer Jeffrey McMahon and highlighted his many accomplishments. Officer McMahon has completed all of the Civil Service requirements in order to be hired. Chief Lawrence is asking for Council's permission to have Judge Francis Bernhardt swear him in as a Police Officer for Plymouth Township. Mr. Gannon made a motion to approve the appointment and was seconded by Mr. Manero. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

The Honorable Judge Francis Bernhardt presided over the swearing in of Police Officer Jeffrey McMahon.

Swearing in of Harmonville Fire Police - Albert J. Cinelli, Jr. - Mr. Higgins swore in Albert J. Cinelli, Jr. to the position of

Harmonville Fire Police.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Mr. Higgins asked if there was any public comment pertaining to any of the items advertised on the agenda and there was none.

20 Years of Service Resolutions - ACTION

1) Rocco Wack - Mr. Gannon read the resolution recognizing Rocco Wack for his generous and outstanding service and contributions rendered while serving in the Police Department beginning on August 3, 1998, thereby completing 20 years of service. Council extends its appreciation to Rocco Wack who served with commitment and dedication. Plymouth Township Council desires to recognize the diligent and valuable services rendered by Rocco Wack. Mr. Gannon made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Ms. Bramblett. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

Mr. Higgins thanked all four Police Officers for their long and dedicated service to the Township.

Ms. Bruno thanked Officer Wack for his service and for his work in protecting the residents of the Township and the community.

2) Andrew Adams - Ms. Bramblett read the resolution recognizing Andrew Adams for his generous and outstanding service and contributions rendered while serving in the Police Department beginning on August 18, 1998, thereby completing 20 years of service. Council extends its appreciation to Andrew Adams who served with commitment and dedication. Plymouth Township Council desires to recognize the diligent and valuable services rendered by Andrew Adams. Ms. Bramblett made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Ms. Bruno. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

3) Joseph LaPenta - Ms. Bruno read the resolution recognizing Joseph LaPenta for his generous and outstanding service and contributions rendered while serving in the Police Department beginning on September 15, 1998, thereby completing 20 years of service. Council extends its appreciation to Joseph LaPenta who served with commitment and dedication. Plymouth Township Council desires to recognize the diligent and valuable services rendered by Joseph LaPenta. Ms. Bruno made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Mr. Manero. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

4) Mark Solorio - Mr. Manero read the resolution recognizing Mark Solorio for his generous and outstanding service and contributions rendered while serving in the Police Department beginning on September 15, 1998, thereby completing 20 years of service. Council

extends its appreciation to Mark Solorio who served with commitment and dedication. Plymouth Township Council desires to recognize the diligent and valuable services rendered by Mark Solorio. Mr. Manero made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Mr. Gannon. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENT - Executive Session held September 5, 2018

Mr. Higgins announced that an Executive Session was held on September 5th, 2018 in order to discuss litigation and personnel matters.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Higgins called for the approval of the minutes.

- a. Workshop Meeting ----- August 6, 2018
- b. Regular Meeting ----- August 13, 2018

Mr. Manero made a motion to approve the minutes without the necessity of reading. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bruno; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

APPROVAL OF DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS AND BILLS: Chairman Higgins called for the approval of the departmental reports and bills.

Ms. Bruno made a motion to approve the departmental reports and bills. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bramblett. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

ADMINISTRATION

a. Budget Meeting Dates Announcement - Mr. Manero announced the Budget Meeting dates as follows: October 15th at 6:00 p.m., October 22nd at 6:00 p.m. and November 19th at 6:00 p.m. The Council meeting dates for October will be on October 2nd and October 8th. The meetings for November will take place on November 5th and November 12th. General Election will be held on November 6th.

b. Fireworks Ordinance Amendment - First Consideration - Mr. Clarke read the ordinance which brings the current fireworks ordinance in line with recent changes that were made to the State law. The change is primarily in regulating the use of consumer fireworks. Fireworks are not permitted to be ignited within 150 feet of an occupied structure. An occupied structure is defined as a structure, vehicle or place adapted for overnight accommodations of persons or for conducting business whether or not a person is actually present. Ms. Bramblett made a motion to approve the fireworks ordinance amendment for first consideration and was seconded by Mr. Gannon.

Rick Schickling - 111 Boulder Road stated that the fireworks ordinance basically rules out the use of fireworks other than in open space such as a park.

Ms. Bramblett stated that fireworks could be used if they are further than 150 feet from structures. In addition, fireworks can't be used on public or on private property without receiving permission from the owner.

Mr. Clarke advised that the State Representative from Bucks County is already offering amendments to the State law so the Township may be changing the ordinance in the upcoming months.

Mike Troilo, 3014 Runnymede Drive mentioned the fireworks ordinance that was passed in 2017. The noise from the fireworks was primarily due to the use of illegal fireworks and M80's. Mr. Troilo is in favor of the use of fireworks as long as those using them follow what is proposed in the ordinance under the State law.

Benjamin Gibbons - 3018 Sheffield Drive echoed the sentiments of Mr. Troilo. He asked if there would be additional fines for violation in the amended ordinance. Mr. Clarke stated that the fine would be no more than \$100.

Mr. Gibbons asked if those using fireworks incorrectly were overwhelming the police force. Chief Lawrence advised that while it is not overwhelming the police department, it is being enforced.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

c. Change October Workshop to October 2, 2018 Announcement - Mr. Higgins stated that the Police are holding the Brad Fox Golf Outing on October 1st. In order to allow Council and others to participate, Council is changing the date of its Workshop Meeting in October.

Ms. Bramblett announced that the October Workshop Meeting for Council will be changed to October 2, 2018 to honor Brad Fox's memory so that all of those wanting to attend the golf outing are able to do so.

POLICE/PUBLIC SAFETY

PUBLIC/WORKS/SEWER

a. Sale of System - Next Steps - Mr. Higgins stated that Council has been discussing selling the Township sewer system and no decision has been made at this time. The next step is to engage PFM to

assist the Township in sending out a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) to determine if there are qualified bidders. The Township would then put the sewer system out to bid and see what the market bears. Mr. Higgins asked for a motion to approve this. Mr. Manero made a motion to approve this next step. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bramblett.

Mr. Manero stated that Council has been exploring the sale of the sewer system for a few years as being part of the financial future for the Township. The Township Capital Fund is projected to dwindle within the next few years and the sewer system doesn't increase in value. Council is looking into selling the sewer system to increase revenue. The Township building is in need of repairs and upgrades. Taxes in the Township have not been raised during the last twenty-five years. Council is looking into options and will not make a decision until all the pieces are completed. Council needs to look at offers on selling the sewer system before any decision will be made.

Mr. Gannon advised that Council is under no obligation at this time and that they are just looking into options.

Mr. Higgins stated that upgrading the Township building isn't a matter of if, but when. Council needs to look into selling the sewer system or possibly raising taxes.

Ms. Bramblett advised that for anyone who may not have been able to attend the Town Hall meetings, the information is on the Township website. It is called "Reaching Out, Planning Ahead". The Township building has an aging HVAC system and it is breaking down. The roof is also in need of repair. Council needs to make these changes.

Mr. Higgins asked if there were any comments from the audience.

Robert Stevens - 204 Valley Road stated that he has not seen the presentation from Council about the building renovations and the possible need to sell the sewer system. He believes that the Township employees deserve a high end facility and asked what is in the scope of work. Mr. Higgins stated that the bidders will complete an extensive investigation. Mr. Clarke advised that the RFQ tells who is interested in bidding and that PFM has already determined the value of the system.

Mr. Stevens asked if Council has looked into what other Townships have learned from selling their sewer systems. Mr. Higgins stated that he believes this could be a good idea and that perhaps Plymouth could learn from their mistakes.

Mr. Manero stated that the reality is that if the Township does not sell its sewer system that sewer rates will need to be increased.

Ms. Bramblett advised that the Township does not have sewer employees to do repair work to its sewer system and the work is contracted out. Council wants to do what is best for the residents

of the Township and they are proceeding cautiously. Council wants to hear from the residents.

Mr. Stevens stated that he really does not have an opinion one way or the other about selling the sewer system.

Mr. Higgins advised that the Township Capital Fund is decreasing and that more funds need to be put in it to protect capital projects.

Mr. Stevens also mentioned the property across the street from his that is in need of work. He asked if the Code Enforcement Department could step up the fines for this. Mr. Manero stated that there are several legal steps that the Township takes in a situation like this. The Code Enforcement Department does look into these issues.

Ben Gibbons - 3018 Sheffield Drive stated that he has not heard anything about what will happen if the Township keeps the sewer system. What would be the timeline in which to fix it? In addition, Mr. Gibbons asked what the standard sewer rate increase would be. Mr. Gibbons encouraged Council to look into other alternatives with the Township building such as possibly leasing a new building.

Mr. Higgins stated that Council had numerous meetings with an architect and four alternatives were outlined for the Township building. He stated that perhaps Council could look into the possibility of leasing a building. Council is attempting to keep an open mind.

Kevin Bisch - 1010 Plymouth Road stated that Council needs to look at the needs versus the wants for the Township building. He believes that selling the sewer system should be a last resort and there shouldn't be a quick fix. Mr. Bisch does not want to raise taxes. He suggested holding things over for a few years.

Mr. Manero stated that there are a lot of deficiencies in the Township building and that it is a difficult situation.

Mr. Higgins advised that if Council were to decide to upgrade the building that it wouldn't happen until approximately eighteen months to two years. Council simply can't wait on some issues.

Ms. Bramblett stated that perhaps Mr. Bisch should look at the presentation on the website. Council can't afford to wait on some issues, particularly in the police department. Also the roof repairs and the boiler are top priorities. The Township Capital Fund will be depleted by 2022. Council is looking to make the building safe in the most economical way.

Sheldon Simpson - 722 Clover Lane asked where the Township stands with respect to the sewer authority and the funds collected for the sewer from developers. Mr. Simpson stated that the average taxes paid by a homeowner in the Township is approximately \$280. The

services that the residents receive are excellent. Mr. Simpson believes that there should be a tax increase in the Township on a regular basis. He is opposed to selling the sewer system.

Mr. Higgins stated that the Township sewer rates are lower than other municipalities.

Robert Stevens - 204 Valley Road asked what type of a tax increase is anticipated. He prefers having a tax increase than higher sewer bills. Mr. Higgins stated that Council could raise the earned income tax or the real estate tax. In the event of a real estate tax increase, the average homeowner would pay an additional \$92 per year, to pay debt service on a \$15 million loan.

Mr. Gannon stated that this tax increase would only address what needs to be completed for the Township building. It does not address the sewer upgrades and does nothing for the Capital Fund.

Ms. Bruno stated that this is a very difficult decision to make. Council is trying to consider the residents and staff, and are looking at the best possible options.

Dan Kerper - 202 Valley Road asked why Council waited until things got so bad.

Mr. Higgins advised that the Township roof has been in bad shape for some time.

Ms. Bruno stated that this is the second roof that was put on the Township building.

Ms. Weiss advised that the first roof that was installed lasted twenty years. The second roof was then put on top of that. The Township building has been maintained. It is just time to repair things again, because some of the systems have reached the end of their useful lives.

Following the audience participation, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

ENGINEERING

a. Geo-tech Consultant Appointment - Ms. Bramblett stated that the Township proposes to hire its own engineering consultant to review a proposed development of a hotel on Plymouth Road. The Township wants to make sure that the sinkhole remediation can be done without affecting the well water of the adjacent homes. The Township would like to hire a Geo-tech Consultant, Earth Engineers. Ms. Bramblett made a motion to approve the appointment and was seconded by Ms. Bruno. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins

and Mr. Manero in favor.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

a.L.D. 17-2 Conicelli Auto Group/906 Ridge Pike

1)Expiration date October 20, 2018

b.L.D. 18-2 Lilvin Enterprise, LLC/800-820 Brook Road

1)Expiration date December 31, 2018

c.L.D. 18-3 Paone Assoc./2418 Butler Pike

1)Expiration date October 15, 2018

d.S.D. 18-1 Paone Assoc./2424 Butler Pike

1)Expiration date October 15, 2018

e.L.D. 18-4 SMG Hotels/201 Plymouth Road

1)Expiration date October 18, 2018

f.Extension Requests - ACTION

1)Driscoll Tract to November 30, 2018 - Mr. Gannon made a motion to approve the extension request and was seconded by Mr. Manero. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

2)Commerce Pursuit Capital to November 30, 2018 - Mr. Gannon made a motion to approve the extension request and was seconded by Ms. Bruno. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

3)Holiday Inn Express to November 30, 2018 - Ms. Bruno made a motion to approve the extension request and was seconded by Mr. Manero. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

g.Escrow Release - ACTION - The Township is in receipt of correspondence from Woodrow and Associates recommending the following escrow release.

1.Brierdale Builders - Ms. Bruno made a motion to approve the final escrow release for Brierdale Builders. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bramblett; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Bramblett, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Higgins and Mr. Manero in favor.

CODE ENFORCEMENT/HEALTH

ZONING

a.Zoning Hearings - Ms. Bruno announced that the Zoning Hearing Board of Plymouth Township will hold a public hearing on Monday, September 17, 2018, commencing at 7:00 p.m., in the Plymouth Township Building, 700 Belvoir Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA on the following applications: 1)ROBERT CORNELIUS - 2926 JOLLY ROAD AND 2) JAMES M. KWARTNIK, JR. - 411 BEACON HILL LANE. Any citizen of

Plymouth Township or interested party may attend the public hearing and have an opportunity to be heard.

PARKS AND RECREATION

a. SDM Bricks and Pavers Announcement - Mr. Manero announced that there are currently bricks and pavers available for purchase for those who want to honor a loved one who has served in the armed forces or emergency services. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department is still seeking monetary donations from businesses.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MISCELLANEOUS/OLD BUSINESS

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Ben Gibbons - 3018 Sheffield Drive asked if there were any updates following the traffic calming study that was done on Jolly Road.

Chief Lawrence stated that follow up studies were done.

Mr. Higgins suggested that perhaps the Township Traffic Engineer could revisit this issue.

Mr. Gibbons stated that there are still concerns with traffic and the street being used as a cut-through.

Mr. Gibbons also asked about aging sidewalks in neighborhoods. He asked if there were grants that homeowners could apply for to help in keeping up with sidewalk replacement.

Mr. Higgins stated that if a homeowner is planning on selling his house a Certificate of Adequacy must be applied for. The Township inspects the sidewalks to see if they need to be replaced. If so, it is the homeowner's responsibility to fix them. Other than that, Mr. Higgins does not believe that there is any kind of grant funding.

Mr. Higgins mentioned that the Township did receive a grant to install sidewalks on Germantown Pike.

Rob Stevens mentioned that there is a problem with vehicles speeding on Valley Road and suggested that perhaps additional stop signs could be installed. Mr. Higgins stated that Council will put this item on the agenda for discussion at its Council meeting next month.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Beth Jamison
Mary Beth Jamison
Recording Secretary