

**CUMRU TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING                      JANUARY 16, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the Cumru Township Board of Commissioners was called to order by President Lisha Rowe at 7:00 p.m. Other Commissioners in attendance were Vice President Greg Miller, David J. Batdorf, Andy Donnell, and William B. Miller. Also attending were Solicitor Kelsey Frankowski, Chief of Police Madison Winchester, Fire Chief James Beane, Superintendent of Public Works Robert McNichols, Jr., Asst. Superintendent of Public Works Michael Yost, Jr., Manager/Secretary Jeanne E. Johnston, Business/Personnel Administrator Peggy A. Carpenter, Special Projects/Asst. Secretary Patricia A. Wylezik-Pfeiffer, Joseph P. Rogosky of Great Valley Consultants, Jeff Skinner of Atlas Engineering and Building Code Official William Frymoyer, Sr.

**NOTICE:**

Public comment will be accepted in person. Please include your first name, last name and address for all comments. Any comments without a name or address will not be considered. To accommodate as many people as possible, we request that each person's comments be limited to 3 minutes. The meeting comment period is limited to a total of 60 minutes. This time period may be extended at the discretion of the Commissioners. While public comments will be given due consideration, immediate responses will be done at the discretion of the Commissioners.

Pledge to the Flag.

**PUBLIC**

Attendance: Bill Dorward of Kutztown, Steve Loch of Breinigsville, James Atti of Zionsville, Ruth O'Leary, Billy Montegari, Bev Leonti, Glenn Emery, Marlene Brady, Blake Brady, Joe Schroeder, Stefany Dusman, Paige Horrigan, Declan Dusman-Horrigan, Ryan Hills, Caitlin Hills, Kathy Hills, Donald Spitler of Wernersville, Kristi Bonanno, Daniel DeCarlo, Susan McCoy, David McCoy, Sam Kalbach, Perry Haas, and Mark Buniski.

A.) Bev Leonti, a resident of Crestview Ave. for over 50 years, thanked Public Works for doing a great job plowing the streets. Mrs. Leonti stated that she was mortified at the conduct of the new Commissioners at the reorganization meeting. She noted that they nominated a president who then nominated a brand new Commissioner without any experience as vice-president. "While you say you want everything in the public's eye, this was obviously planned behind the scenes and is a demonstration of politics at its worst." Mrs. Leonti complained that, at the December Planning Commission meeting, one of the Commissioners-elect talked about vacant warehouses in other townships that have no bearing on the taxes or businesses in Cumru Township. She stated that Flying Hills is only 60 acres, while the Township encompasses over 13,000 acres. She opined that all residents should be kept in mind, not just those affected by the warehouse(s).

B.) Residents of 407, 409, and 411 Mt. View Rd. re: sewer line

Marlene Brady, a resident of 407 Mt. View Rd., said that she and her late husband bought the farmhouse property over 50 years ago. She is concerned about the sewer pumping station planned near her home. She stated that one of the suggested options was to buy her property.

Mrs. Brady said that she never received an appraisal and felt that the offer of \$350,000 was too low. She retained a lawyer. She insisted on a resolution in a timely fashion.

Caitlin Hills, a resident of 409 Mt. View Rd., said that she has had mounting concern and sleepless nights since she received the letter from the Township manager in September 2022 about the planned sewer pumping station near her home. She has 4 little boys that play in the driveway where trucks would drive twice a day. While she understands this is in the planning stage, she would like some firm answers. Mrs. Hills would like the sewer pumping station to be located on Mt. View Rd. Ryan Hills of 409 Mt. View Rd. agreed with his wife and Marlene Brady. He thinks his children will suffer and that this pump station in his yard would ruin his property. Mr. Hills stated that this area is prone to flooding. He is concerned with access to his property. He would like the pump station to be located near the main road and not his home.

Paige Horrigan, a resident of 411 Mt. View Rd., said that she has lived at this address at the top of the driveway for 6 ½ years. She said that she received a letter about the sewage line needing to be replaced but this project is more than just replacing the sewage line. Ms. Horrigan stated that her child has special needs and any utility disruptions would necessitate prior knowledge to prevent interfering with his services. She requested specific information such as a timeline and completion date. She is concerned about road closure or driveway closure because her family's property needs accessibility by emergency vehicles at all times.

Mr. Batdorf stated that no decision has been made at this time and that projects take time. He referenced the SR222 project which took 30 years.

Atty. Frankowski informed everyone that Ms. Johnston will explain the history of this project.

#### **AMBULANCE SERVICE**

A.) Monthly Report – December 2023

#### **APPROVE MINUTES**

**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A MAJORITY VOTE APPROVING THE MINUTES OF 12/19/23 – REGULAR MEETING AND 1/02/24 AS SUBMITTED. MR. GREG MILLER AND MR. DONNELL ABSTAINED FROM APPROVING THE MINUTES OF 12/19/23 BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT ON THE BOARD AT THAT TIME.**

#### **TREASURER**

A.) Monthly Report – December 2023

Mrs. Carpenter informed the Board that the 2024 Refuse and SMP bills were mailed today. The delinquent 2023 Refuse and SMP bills were sent to collections.

#### **TAX COLLECTOR**

A) December 2023 Report

1) Year 2023 Real Estate

Balance collectable beginning of month – \$140,991.85

- Cash collected – \$65,187.42
- Balance collectable end of month – \$75,804.43
- 2) Year 2023 Interim Real Estate
  - Balance collectable beginning of month – \$1,677.12
  - Cash collected – \$1,677.12
  - Balance collectable end of month - \$0
- 3) Year 2022 Interim Real Estate
  - Balance collectable beginning of month – \$48.04
  - Cash collected - \$7.72
  - Balance collectable end of month - \$40.32
- 4) Year 2023 Per Capita
  - Balance collectable beginning of month – \$13,675.00
  - Cash collected – \$3,330.00
  - Exonerations - \$60.00
  - Balance collectable end of month - \$10,285.00

B) Tax Claim

- 1) Regular 2023 Real Estate – 102 bills turned over for \$83,385.07
- 2) Interim 2023 Real Estate – 1 bill turned over for \$44.36

Ms. Johnston reported that the Tax Collector turns over the unpaid bills to Tax Claim during the first 2 weeks of January. These amounts are similar to previous years.

## DEPARTMENTS

Police Department

A.) Monthly Report – December 2023

B.) Annual Report

- 1) performance measures

Chief Winchester stated that this is a good snapshot of what the Police Department is doing. An increase in officers generates more reports. Some calls generate a number but not a report. This year there was a difference of approximately 1,000 between the two.

Mr. Donnell asked if there were opportunities for efficiency. All the vehicles have MCTs so they are essentially rolling offices. Officers are not sitting in chairs in an office building. The reports are generated electronically, although certain calls require paper files.

C.) Hiring Process

Chief Winchester reported that the top two applicants on the Civil Service list started at the academy. They are expected to be released from the academy in July. Field training will follow and takes 2-3 months to complete. It takes 8-10 months of training before an officer can be added into the shift rotation.

## Fire Department

### A.) Monthly Report – December 2023

The Fire Department responded to 1,015 calls in 2023. This is the highest number of calls recorded for one year by over 100 calls.

### B.) Fire Station Phase 1 – dedication of utility

- 1) dedication agreement between Cumru Township and Shillington Municipal Authority for water line

**ON MOTION OF MR. BATDORF, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO APPROVE THE DEDICATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN CUMRU TOWNSHIP AND SHILLINGTON MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY FOR THE REED STREET WATER LINE.**

## Administration

### A) Joint Angelica Interceptor and Sewer Treatment Costs

Ms. Johnston provided background information about the sewer system and the Joint Angelica Interceptor. The City of Reading's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) at Fritz Island processes approximately 98% of Cumru sewer effluent. The other 2 % is processed by the Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley WWTP near West Reading. The WWTP on Fritz Island discharges the processed sewer effluent into the Schuylkill River.

There are over 30 intermunicipal sewer agreements between Cumru Township, the City of Reading and other municipalities. The agreements involving Cumru Township and the City of Reading provide for payment to Reading for treatment of wastewater generated by connected properties as well as infiltration and inflow (I&I) of non-wastewater into the system.

I&I is water that seeps or leaks into the sewer system from other sources. There is no way to completely eliminate I&I, but I&I mitigation programs reduce the possibility untreated sewage discharges and reduce treatment costs.

The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program encourages the separation of stormwater pipes from wastewater pipes, which helps reduce I&I. Repairing cracks in sewer pipes, replacing old sewer mains, and removing invasive tree roots are other ways to reduce I&I in the sewer system.

The Joint Angelica Interceptor is named because it parallels the Angelica Creek for a significant portion of its length. It was constructed under an agreement currently in effect between Cumru, Kenhorst, and Reading. The Joint Angelica Interceptor receives sewer effluent from about 1/3 of Cumru Township's sanitary sewer system with almost 1400 connections, known as "Point of Connection #8" (POC-8). The Joint Angelica Interceptor was the subject of a connection moratorium for several years for repeated sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) due to excessive I&I. After replacement of old sewer pipes in POC-8 and other measures, costing over \$2 million to Cumru Township, the moratorium was lifted in October of 2023.

Prior to 2012, there was a meter in place that helped to register the flows from all of Kenhorst and POC-8 in Cumru. Based on the readings, calculations were provided by Cumru Township to Kenhorst, so that Kenhorst could pay its share of the quarterly treatment costs to Reading. Since the meter was moved in 2012, approximately half of the effluent from Kenhorst is no longer registered by the meter. Cumru and Reading officials met with Kenhorst officials prior to the meter switch over and have sent correspondence afterward to request information for accurate payment. Kenhorst has never responded with that information.

Because of the way payment is calculated for sewer treatment, Cumru has been paying for all the I&I for approximately half of Kenhorst Borough since 2012. A constant has been used to represent the theoretical number of EDUs for half of Kenhorst. Using the constant and the I&I factor generated in the payment calculation, the cost of I&I that Kenhorst has not paid since 2012 is estimated to be \$976,759.52.

In addition, there have been indications that a large sump pump was directing water into the Joint Angelica Interceptor somewhere on High Blvd. since 2018. In 2023, Cumru was given access to the Ken-Grill pool property. Dye testing was able to prove that the pool sump pumps were sending spring water to the sewer lateral and ultimately into the Joint Angelica Interceptor. This would translate into an additional cost of \$219,437.84 from 2018 to 2023 based on a 90 day pool season. When added to the previous estimate of \$976,759.52, the total I&I cost estimate since 2012 is at least \$1,196,197.36.

In 2019, after the sump pump issue was detected, the Municipal Authority endorsed a plan to begin engineering for the separation of Cumru Township's effluent from Kenhorst Borough's effluent. This plan involves gathering effluent from areas in POC-8 via 3 pump stations and redirecting it up Mt. View Rd. to the Fritz Island WWTP in a new force main. This plan will reduce I&I costs and significantly reduce the possibility of SSOs into the Angelica Creek. The City of Reading is receptive to this plan and requests that grit removing equipment be installed along the new force main.

Property for two of the pump stations has been acquired, one off of Harding Ave. and one at 800 High Blvd. In order to completely disconnect Cumru from Kenhorst, it is necessary to install a third pump station in the Mt. View Rd. area. The preferred location would be mostly underground in the back of 407 Mt. View Rd. The depth required would be approximately 18 ft. and the laterals of 407, 409, and 411 Mt. View Rd. would still function by gravity. A 3-phase electrical pole is already on the property.

Letters were sent to the property owners to introduce the project. A meeting was held with the property owners of 407 and 409 Mt. View Rd. After the owners declined to discuss options, a letter was sent to 407 Mt. View Rd. from the Solicitor, authorized by the Board of Commissioners, about property acquisition. The response from 407 Mt. View Rd. was to retain legal counsel. Dialogue has occurred between the attorneys.

The attorney for 407 Mt. View Rd. suggested putting the pump station in the front of the property. This option would require a depth of over 30 ft. and a pit just as wide. Placement in front would also require 407, 409, and 411 to have grinder pumps installed. A fourth home at 393 Mt. View Rd. would also be affected.

The Township sewer engineer has produced 3 sketches of potential pump station locations. In order to evaluate the options and provide the property owners more information, detailed surveys of 393, 407, 409, and 411 Mt. View Rd. are necessary.

Jeff Skinner of Atlas Engineering used a slide presentation to explain how underground pumping stations work. There would be back-up generators connected to the system. The wet well would have two pumps, one in use and one as back up, so sewage is always pumped. The facility would be fenced with a gate for security.

Mr. Donnell asked about vents, odor and impact to neighbors' day to day life. Mr. Skinner explained that odor is controlled by filters and fresh air is pumped in. Mr. Greg Miller also asked about the smell. Mr. Skinner said there should be no smell if the system is working correctly.

Mr. Donnell asked how often a vehicle would be at the site. Mr. Skinner said that a SCADA system would monitor the system and Public Works would need to perform any maintenance. Mr. McNichols said that Public Works visits the Flying Hills pumping station twice a day.

Mr. Skinner reported that approximately 46 homes from the Mt. View Rd./Grill area would go through the proposed pump station near Mt. View Rd. to 800 High Blvd. A larger pump station at 800 High Blvd. would send flow to Fritz Island by a force main.

Mr. Skinner showed 2 proposed options for locating a pump station behind the house at 407 Mt. View Rd. These options would require a 50 ft. by 100 ft. area including fences and landscape screening. The existing driveway easement would be used and the driveway would be extended to the pump station. The wet well would need to be 15-20 ft. deep. The houses would continue to use the gravity fed systems that are in place now.

The third option proposed by the residents' attorney was to locate the pump station in front of the house at 407 Mt. View Rd. Costs would be increased by approximately \$200,000-250,000. The wet well would need to be 30-35 ft. deep and the pit would be as wide. The three houses along the driveway would need to have grinder pumps installed, which would become the responsibility of the homeowners. The pump station would be located next to 393 Mt. View Rd.

Atty. Frankowski said that without a full survey, it is difficult to form a complete plan. There was discussion about the survey and if the stormwater structure across the street could be used for the pumping station. The answer is that a stormwater facility cannot be used for the pumping station. The timeframe would depend on when/if the property owners give permission for the survey. Access to all the properties, ideally at the same time, would be needed to do a complete survey. Mr. Skinner stated that the floodplain elevation would need to be addressed also. Mr. Skinner said that the survey could be done within 1-2 months and options could be sent to the Board within 3 months.

Ms. Johnston recommended that Mr. McNichols be the contact person for this project. The residents of 411 Mt. View Rd. gave their contact information.

#### B.) Codes Department – December 2023

Building Permits Issued – 13

Use Permits Issued – 1

Zoning Permits Issued – 6

Notices of Violations – 10

Citations issued – 0

Violations complied – 8

Phone calls from contractors, realtors & public approximately – 115

Properties condemned – 0

Permit Inspections Done – 23

Inspections with the Fire Department – 2

Training Seminars attended – 0

#### C.) Codes Department – Yearly Report 2023

Building Permits Issued – 179 (+27% from 2022)

Use Permits Issued – 24

Zoning Permits Issued – 123

Notices of Violations – 224

Citations issued – 4

Court Hearings – 5  
Violations complied – 219  
Phone calls from contractors, realtors & public approximately – 2,110 (+5% from 2022)  
Properties condemned – 3  
Permit Inspections Done – 369  
Inspections with the Fire Department – 9  
Training Seminars attended – 1

**D.) 2024 Uniform Construction Code (UCC) Board of Appeals**

- 1) Intergovernmental Agreement between Cumru Township and Berks County, as amended
- 2) Memo from Berks County Planning Commission re: continued membership requires updated agreement - due before 01/20/2024, dated 12/20/2023

The Township already participates in this program which costs \$300 per year. The recommendation is to continue.

**ON MOTION OF MR. BATDORF, SECOND OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO APPROVE THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT, AS AMENDED, BETWEEN CUMRU TOWNSHIP AND BERKS COUNTY FOR THE 2024 UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE (UCC) BOARD OF APPEALS.**

**E.) 711-717 Philadelphia Ave.**

- 1) Request from Codes Dept. to initiate procedures under Dangerous Structures Ordinance, dated 1/8/2024

The Codes Department requested to initiate procedures under the Dangerous Structures Ordinance. A few days after the request, the Township was notified of a possible Federal investigation.

**F.) Montrose Blvd. Storm Sewer - PA Small Water and Sewer Projects Grant award**

- 1) adopt updated resolution (required)

An updated resolution was needed to update the signer information for the grant.

**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MR. DONNELL, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO ADOPT AN UPDATED RESOLUTION ON SIGNATORIES FOR THE PA SMALL WATER AND SEWER PROJECTS GRANT AWARD FOR THE MONTROSE BLVD. STORM SEWER PROJECT.**

**G.) Diamond Credit Union – escrow release no. 1**

- 1) Letter from Systems Design Engineering re: request for escrow release no. 1 for site improvements, dated 1/3/2024

The recommendation is to authorize release #1 with the exact monetary amount to be determined by the engineers because a large portion of the construction is complete.

**ON MOTION OF MS. ROWE, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO AUTHORIZE ESCROW RELEASE #1 FOR DIAMOND CREDIT UNION SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF A FINAL AMOUNT BY THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEERS.**

**H.) Planning**

**2023-12 BERKS NATURE/JAWD ENTERPRISES ANNEXATION/SUBDIVISION**

(Final Minor Subdivision) Owner: Berks Nature; Applicant: JAWD Enterprises, Inc.; Agent: John W. Hoffert P.L.S., Ltd., Location: New Holland Rd.; Parcel ID#39-530510361086, Plan # D-23-90-1; Proposal Summary: annex a 0.039 acre parcel from one property (Berks Nature property) to an adjoining property (JAWD Enterprises property).

**1) Waivers recommended by Planning Commission**

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**APPROVE THE SALDO WAIVERS FOR THE BERKS NATURE/JAWD ENTERPRISES ANNEXATION/SUBDIVISION PLAN AS STATED IN THE REVIEW LETTER FROM GVC, DATED 1/03/24, AND THE WAIVER REQUEST LETTER FROM JOHN W. HOFFERT P.L.S., DATED 1/08/24 AS FOLLOWS:**

- a. Relief from Section 405(A), not to perform an Environmental Impact Assessment;
- b. Relief from Section 406(A), not to perform a Community Facilities Impact Assessment;
- c. Relief from Section 408(A), not to perform a Utility Impact Assessment;
- d. Relief from Section 507(A), not to require curbing along the portions of the parcel that abut new holland Rd.;
- e. Relief from Section 507(B), not to require sidewalks along the portions of the parcel that abut New Holland Rd. and/or Philadelphia Ave;

**ON MOTION OF MS. ROWE, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO APPROVE SALDO WAIVERS FOR THE BERKS NATURE/JAWD ENTERPRISES ANNEXATION/SUBDIVISION PLAN AS STATED IN THE REVIEW LETTER FROM GVC, DATED 1/03/24, AND THE WAIVER REQUEST LETTER FROM JOHN W. HOFFERT P.L.S., DATED 1/08/24.**

**2) Approval recommended by Planning Commission**

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**GRANT FINAL PLAN APPROVAL FOR THE BERKS NATURE/JAWD ENTERPRISES ANNEXATION/SUBDIVISION PLAN CONDITIONED ON PAYMENT OF ALL FEES, OBTAINING SIGNATURES, AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMMENTS AS STATED IN THE GVC REVIEW LETTER DATED 1/03/24.**

**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO GRANT FINAL PLAN APPROVAL FOR THE BERKS NATURE/JAWD ENTERPRISES ANNEXATION/SUBDIVISION PLAN CONDITIONED ON PAYMENT OF ALL FEES, OBTAINING SIGNATURES, AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMMENTS AS STATED IN THE GVC REVIEW LETTER DATED 1/03/24.**

**2022-05 POSCH ACQUISITIONS LLC SUBDIVISION PLAN**

(Preliminary/Final) Owner: Posch Acquisitions LLC-Christopher Posch; Agent: Hoffert Surveyors, John W. Hoffert; Location: 201 Pershing Blvd, Reading, PA 19607 (parcels #39-530617018469 & #39-530617018523); plan no. D-22-60; Proposal summary: Create 2 residential lots for future construction of 2 single family semi-detached dwellings.



1) Plan approved on 9/20/2022

**2) Sewage Planning Module Resolution**

**ON MOTION OF MS. ROWE, SECOND OF MR. DONNELL, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION FOR THE SEWAGE PLANNING MODULES FOR THE POSCH ACQUISITIONS LLC SUBDIVISION PLAN.**

**I.) Comcast Cable Franchise Agreement – renewal**

1) draft agreement

The agreement is for the entity to operate within the municipality. Mr. Greg Miller voiced concern about Section 12 of the agreement dealing with streaming services. This will be put on the agenda for the Board of Commissioners meeting on 1/30/24.

Public Works

A.) Winter Storms 1/6/2024, 1/9/2024, and 1/16/2024

Mr. Yost reported that the storm on 1/9/24 produced 2 inches of rain and the storm on 1/16/24 produced 5 inches of snow in the Township. More snow is projected for Friday.

B.) Sanitary Sewer Replacement Projects 2024 – bids due 2/16/2024

1) bids advertised for Cedar Top Road sewer replacement 1/2/2024

2) bids advertised for Flying Hills Drive sewer replacement 1/2/2024

Mr. Yost reported that the sanitary sewer replacement projects for 2024 were advertised for bids on PennBid on 1/2/24. The Cedar Top Rd. project would be to replace approximately 2500 ft. of pipe and 16 manholes. The Flying Hills project would be to replace 164 ft. and 2 manholes near Tanglewood.

C.) Vactor Truck and Municibid

Mr. Yost reported that the vactor truck that was ordered in December of 2022 should be arriving next week. Once the truck is here, the old truck and equipment can be placed on Municibid, which has already been authorized.

D.) Flying Hills Obstructions in the Rights of Way

Mr. Yost requested that one or two Commissioners attend a site meeting with Public Works and a Flying Hills representative. Mr. William Miller recommended Mr. Greg Miller and Mr. Donnell since they live in Flying Hills. They accepted.

**E.) Evidence Building Electrical and HVAC Work – authorize updated quotes**

Public Works is requesting permission to continue with this project and have the Board authorize the updated quotes. The scope of work remains the same.

Mr. Greg Miller asked if the Township could quantify the savings. Ms. Johnston replied that it is a liability issue. Mr. McNichols said that the old system with fluorescent bulbs will be replaced with LED and new panels. The old baseboard heat and heat pump will be replaced.

Mr. Greg Miller asked about tax credits. Mr. McNichols stated that the Township will apply but they are difficult to deal with. He has reached out to Met-Ed but hasn't received a response.

**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO AUTHORIZE THE UPDATED QUOTES FOR THE ELECTRICAL AND HVAC WORK FOR THE EVIDENCE BUILDING.**

**F.) Traffic Signal SR 724 and Cedar Top Road – timing**

The timing of the light at SR625/724 needs to be coordinated with the light at SR724/Cedar Top Rd. Kenhorst Borough might complain but this is needed to bring these lights into compliance.

**ON MOTION OF MS. ROWE, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO NOTIFY KENHORST BOROUGH ABOUT THE CORRECTION OF THE TIMING OF THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT SR625/724 AND SR724/CEDAR TOP RD.**

Engineer

**A) Traffic Signal Asset Management System (TSAMS) Resolution Update**

Mr. Rogosky reported that under TSAMS all the parts are cataloged and entered into a maintenance agreement to expedite projects in the future. He recommends that the Board adopt the updated resolution for TSAMS and authorize the manager to be the signer on the agreement.

**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO AUTHORIZE THE MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT AND TO ADOPT THE TRAFFIC SYSTEM ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TSAMS) RESOLUTION UPDATE.**

Solicitor

Ms. Frankowski's items were discussed in executive session.

**PAYMENTS OF BILLS**

**ON MOTION OF MR. BATDORF, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE APPROVING PAYMENTS OF BILLS DATED 12/21/23, 12/21/23 - ADDITIONAL, 12/27/23 - ACH, 12/28/23 – ACH, 12/28/23 – PLGIT, 12/28/23, 1/09/24, AND 1/16/24.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- A.) Broadband grant applications open from 1.11.24 to 4.9.24., dated 12/13/23
- B.) PA DEP press release re: National Radon Month and Free Radon Test Kits, dated 1/03/24
- C.) PA Dept of Ag press release re: Fertilizer Law
- D.) Monthly meeting scheduled advertised in the Reading Eagle 1/11/2024

**COMMISSIONERS**

A.) Vacancies

- 1) Vacancy Board – letter to Gary W. Yost re: thank you for service, dated 1/3/2024

B.) Liaison System – President Commissioner Rowe

Ms. Rowe announced that the Board will continue to use the Liaison System with the Commissioners assigned to the departments as follows:

- Mr. William Miller – Police and Fire
- Ms. Rowe and Mr. Batdorf – Public Works
- Mr. Greg Miller – Police
- Mr. Donnell – Administration

C.) Internship Program with Governor Mifflin High School Proposed – Commissioner G. Miller

1) Kristi Bonanno, Internship Coordinator for GM

Mr. Greg Miller introduced the internship program for high school students.

Krist Bonanno, a resident of Hampshire Rd., said that she is the Internship and School to Work Coordinator for Governor Mifflin School District. Students in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade can participate in this hands-on program which includes trips, job shadowing, internships and school to work. Internships can be for ¼, ½, or 1 year but most are usually 9 weeks long. There are currently 96 students in the program and her goal is to exceed 100 by the end of the year. She handed out a list of the current assignments. The participating students can replace one class with an internship to allow for different time frames. Most students are college bound, but not all. They receive credit for the experience and are not paid.

Mr. William Miller said that while this program sounds like a good idea, the Township has no positions available. The Police Department is part of a union and there are confidentiality concerns. The Office is part of Teamsters. Public Works is also Teamsters and requires CDL training.

Ms. Bonanno asked the Board to keep the program in mind if anything opens up. She said that the Internship to Work program is beneficial for students who have difficulty with school and is good for trades.

Ms. Johnston offered an alternative suggestion. She said to talk to Mr. Frymoyer about an apprentice program for Codes Officials in Berks County.

D.) “Responsible Contractor” Ordinance Proposed – Commissioner G. Miller

- 1) City of Reading ordinance
- 2) Bill Dorward, President of Berks County Trades
- 3) Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, PA House Rep District 129

Since she could not attend due to the weather, Mr. Greg Miller read a statement from Rep. Cepeda-Freytiz about the “Responsible Contractor” Ordinance that was adopted by the City of Reading.

Bill Dorward explained the ordinance. He said that the purpose is to assure the use of quality contractors. The ordinance is a union initiative that emphasizes safety, professionalism, and knowledge of codes in order to cultivate a skilled workforce.

Mr. Greg Miller said that there are many layers to this. He does not pick the lowest bidder for his own projects.

Atty. Frankowski asked if the City of Reading was the only municipality in Berks County that adopted this ordinance. The answer was yes.

Mr. Donnell stated that he wanted to read the ordinance.

Ms. Johnston said that the Township would need to consider the practical concerns and asked who verifies the information for the contractors. She would like to get the perspective of the Codes Department.

Mr. William Miller stated that he does not support this ordinance.

William Frymoyer, the Building Code Official (BCO) for Cumru Township, said that he worked for the City of Reading for 14 years. He had to take years of testing in order to be an inspector. He said that contractors must be licensed in the City. He highly recommends that this ordinance not be adopted.

Ms. Johnston asked additional questions about who/how to administer, how to determine disputes, and how to handle state contracts.

E.) Zoning Ordinance Amendment Proposed – Commissioner G. Miller

1) proposed change to MUGC district permitted uses to language prior to 5/17/2023

Mr. Greg Miller wants to start the process. Ms. Johnston explained the process. The Solicitor would need to draft an amendment.

**ON MOTION OF MR. GREG MILLER, SECOND OF MR. DONNELL, A MAJORITY VOTE TO AUTHORIZE THE SOLICITOR TO DRAFT AN ORDINANCE TO CHANGE THE PERMITTED USES IN THE MUGC DISTRICT TO LANGUAGE PRIOR TO 5/17/2023. MR. GREG MILLER – YES, MS. ROWE – YES, MR. BATDORF – NO, MR. DONNELL – YES, AND MR. WILLIAM MILLER – NO.**

F.) Policies – proposed amendments/drafts – Commissioner Donnell

1) community engagement:

- Document publishing timelines
- Public comment
- Digital engagement strategy

Mr. Donnell requested the codification of ordinances. Ms. Johnston stated that this had been cut from previous budgets. It was budgeted for 2024 for approximately \$25,000. Atty. Frankowski said that this was already being explored with General Code, the vendor with which the project was started before it was cut.

Public comment is reserved for a Township resident, property owner or a stakeholder which is defined as a “person affected”. Atty. Frankowski asked if people who are not residents or taxpayers have standing, what are the boundaries? The rules must be consistent.

Ms. Johnston said she could understand the dissatisfaction with the website. She asked what the Board would like for the website and requested that they be specific. Sending a link would be helpful. Mr. Greg Miller said metrics and dashboarding. Mr. Batdorf asked about the costs for changing the website.

- 2) transparency in township affairs and
- 3) public access to information

Mr. Donnell said there is a lot of institutional mistrust. Difficulty getting information leads to mistrust. Mr. Greg Miller wants to share information with the public. Ms. Johnston asked how much time there should be between the Board of Commissioners seeing the information and sending the information to the public. It has been policy for the Commissioners to see the information first.

G.) Recognition of Former Commissioners O’Leary and Kalbach – Commissioner Donnell  
Mr. Donnell acknowledged that there was acrimony between the previous Board and himself. As an Army Veteran, he would like to put politics aside and recognize people who take the time to make a commitment to the Township. He would like to recognize Ruth O’Leary and Sam Kalbach and other Commissioners when they leave service.

**ON MOTION OF MR. DONNELL, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO RECOGNIZE COMMISSIONERS WITH A LETTER OF APPRECIATION AND INDIVIDUAL PLAQUES.**

H.) Executive Session

- 1) 407 Mountain View Road – property acquisition
- 2) Zoning Hearing Board Case No. 794, Penske et al. – litigation

10:17 p.m. – The Board met in executive session to discuss: 407 Mountain View Road – property acquisition and Zoning Hearing Board Case No. 794 – litigation.

11:07 p.m. – The executive session ended. The Board had discussed: 407 Mountain View Road – property acquisition and Zoning Hearing Board Case No. 794 – litigation.

**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO AUTHORIZE THE SOLICITOR TO DRAFT AND SEND LETTERS TO THE PROPERTY OWNERS OF 393, 407, 409 AND 411 MOUNTAIN VIEW ROAD TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO SURVEY THE PROPERTIES.**

I.) Reminders:

- 1) Zoning Hearing Board – January 23, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Township Building  
Application No. 811 – Marvin M. Zimmerman- requesting a variance in order to construct an accessory structure on an empty lot prior to building a home.
- 2) Board of Commissioners meetings for January and February 2024  
- 1/30/2024 at 7:00 p.m. – 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday meeting  
- 2/20/2024 at 7:00 p.m. – Regular Meeting
- 3) Planning Commission 2/05/2024 at 6:00 p.m.
- 4) Municipal Authority 1/25/2024 at 8:30 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ON MOTION OF MR. BATDORF, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:10 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,



Jeanne E. Johnston  
Manager/Secretary