

**Finance & Administrative Committee Meeting**

**Finance & Administrative Committee Members:** Commissioner and Committee Chair R. Samuel Valenza, Commissioner Kevin Spearing, Commissioner Cheryl Lockard, Randall K. Schaible, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Finance

- I. **Moment of Silent Meditation**
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Commissioner and Committee Chair R. Samuel Valenza.
- IV. **Presentations & Announcements:**
  - A. **Presentation by The Rodgers Group, LLC for PLEAC Accreditation of the Upper Moreland Township Police Department:**
    - Madeline Lewis, Officer and Accreditation Manager, provided a brief overview of the program with advantages of using a consulting agency in accordance with Best Practices.
    - The Committee inquired on the fee schedule. Ms. Lewis explained that the initial fee is \$30,000, which is cost efficient compared to having a full-time Department Officer designated to the task. The continuation fee is \$12,500 annually, which includes department staff training.
    - Commissioner Scull inquired on the need for a consultant. Chief Block replied that prior to his employment, the accreditation was started but needed to be completed, and he recommended The Rodgers Group, LLC, to provide certification in a quick and efficient manner.
    - Commissioner Prousi inquired on subject matter experts, policies, State involvement, fee schedule, and transparency. Ms. Lewis explained that subject experts testify in court and consult, and apply their expertise to updating policies. The State reviews new statutes and votes on Best Practices. Cost savings are in manpower hours, because a Department Officer is not assigned to coordinate proofs of compliance for the assessors. Accreditation is currently a voluntary process in Pennsylvania, which provides transparency and increases public relations.
    - Commissioner Whiting thanked Chief Block for continuing the process of accreditation and asked about his confidence with the consultant. Chief Block responded that he recommends The Rodgers Group.
    - Mr. Kilkenny provided a recommendation from past experiences with The Rodgers Group and emphasized the importance of transparency and cost savings.
    - The Committee recommends the Board of Commissioners take action on the proposal at their April 5, 2021 Regular Meeting.
  - B. **Presentation by Joseph Marco regarding the creation of a Shade Tree Commission in Upper Moreland Township:**
    - Joe Marco, Township Arborist at Lower Merion Township, provided an overview of the Commission's origins, benefits and ordinance involvement.
    - Commissioner Lockard and Mr. Marco discussed overseeing trees in the right-of-way

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and policy writing.

- Commissioners McFatridge and Scull inquired about budget, in-house services, offering services to residents, and competition from private contractors. Mr. Marco confirmed a budget, some involvement in planning for developments, and their primary focus is on the prevention of unnecessary tree removal.
- Commissioner Prousi suggested that an ordinance could address homeowners' tree issues in the right-of-way, which is separate from having a Commission. Mr. Kilkenny provided an example of Whitmarsh Township's Shade Tree Commission that handles right-of-way issues but relies heavily on the engineer and arborist, and also offers some advisory opinions during land development processes.
- Commissioner Prousi commented on budget concerns, partnerships and associations that already provide this type of work, and favors an additional service that inventories parks, plans for communities and does planting.
- Commissioner Lockard inquired about a budget for homeowners and Mr. Marco confirmed a budget for those who apply.
- Commissioner Whiting inquired about involvement with the Parks and Recreation Department and Mr. Marco explained that he performs maintenance and handles trees specifically over 50 feet.
- Commissioner Spearing and Mr. Marco discussed advisory work, meetings, members, outreach for community education, heritage trees, private property disputes, replacement of sidewalks, a shade tree fund, and collaboration with other neighboring Commissions.
- Commissioner Valenza confirmed with Mr. Marco that the Commission handles Township roads, but not the right-of-way on private or State roads.
- Commissioner Prousi inquired about accreditation and Mr. Marco confirmed that the Township would require \$2 per capita and volunteering hours can be applied.
- Dr. Lynnette Saunders, Chair, Environmental Advisory Council, inquired about GIS and private property. Mr. Marco replied that he has software, Lower Merion has their own, and the Commission does not handle private property.
- The Committee will continue a discussion at a future Committee meeting.

V. **Roll Call:** Commissioner and Committee Chair Valenza; Commissioners Spearing and Lockard. Also present: Mr. Schaible, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Finance, Matthew H. Candland, Township Manager, and Sean Kilkenny, Township Solicitor.

VI. **Approval of Minutes** - February 22, 2021 - The meeting minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

VII. **Acceptance and approval of the following reports:**

- A. Director of Finance
- B. Tax Enforcement Officers
- C. Earned Income Tax Collector (Berkheimer)
- D. Investment Activity Report
- The Committee reviewed and unanimously approved the reports as submitted.

VIII. **Review of Financial Statements:**

- A. Current Bills Paid
- B. Revenue and Expense Summaries
  - The Committee reviewed and unanimously approved the reports as submitted.

**IX. Personnel - acceptance and approval of the following:**

- A. Appointments/Reappointments - the Committee recommends the Board of Commissioners take action at their April 5, 2021 Regular Meeting on the following:
  - 1. The reappointment of Mary Meister on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Council to serve a new two-year term that will expire on March 1, 2023.
- B. Vacancy(ies):
  - 1. On the Historical Commission to fill the vacancy left by Kazim Ali and complete the remainder of the current term that will expire on December 31, 2020.
  - 2. On the Historical Commission to fill the vacancy left by Henry Hedrick and complete the remainder of the current term that will expire on December 31, 2022.
  - 3. On the Historical Commission to fill the vacancy left by Paul Tkacs and complete the remainder of a current term that will expire on December 31, 2022.
  - 4. On the Zoning Hearing Board to fill the Alternate Member vacancy left by Peter O'Halloran and complete the remainder of the current term that will expire on December 31, 2023.
    - The Committee recommends the Board of Commissioners take action on Donald G. Warner.
  - 5. On the Zoning Hearing Board to fill the vacancy left by Anthony S. Prousi and complete the remainder of the current term that will expire on December 31, 2023.
    - The Committee recommends the Board of Commissioners take action on Louise D'Alessandro.
  - 6. On the Advisory Planning Agency to fill the vacancy left by Denis Hurley and complete the remainder of the current term that will expire on June 1, 2022.
    - The vacancies are advertised on the Township's website and resumes with cover letters can be sent to Matt Candland, Township Manager.

**X. Other Items:**

**A. Laptops and Digitizing Meeting Books:**

- Mr. Candland explained that materials would be uploaded to laptops, which would be provided to the Commissioners at each meeting, as well as uploaded to the website for public access. The cost for laptops is between \$12,000 to \$15,000.
- Commissioner Valenza commented concerns about hackers. Mr. Candland replied that most of the meeting materials are currently uploaded to the website and the computers would remain in security at the Township building.
- The Committee discussed preferences and concerns about working from digital documents.
- Commissioners Whiting and Scull commented in favor of working electronically.
- Commissioner Prousi suggested that the Township provide a small allowance to purchase software for each Commissioner's personal computer, or share the cost and use of laptops with the Library.
- The Committee will continue a discussion at a future meeting.

**B. Request by Equity Alliance of Upper Moreland:**

- Marianne Watson, Community Liaison, discussed the Alliance's mission and a request to fly the Pride Flag in recognition of June as Pride Month.
- Debbie Lynn, a member, explained that a petition was sent to residents for signatures to raise the Pride Flag during the month of June.
- Another representative read a testimony on behalf of Jennifer Angelina Petro describing her life experiences as a transgender resident of Montgomery County.
- A parent, who is a person of color, shared their children's experiences and requested that a clear message be sent upholding their rights, that all members of the community are valued, and that the Township is proud to have diverse residents.
- Commissioner Spearing thanked the Alliance for their presentation and discussed concerns regarding acceptance of all groups in the community.
- The Commissioners held a lengthy discussion in support of diverse groups, flying flags, and stressed the need for a policy.
- Mr. Kilkenny discussed examples from other municipalities that have dealt with these types of requests, which is governed by a general law written in those townships.
- Tiffany Weber, Communications Director at the EAUM, commented that the Alliance is a resource to inform government about diverse communities, and emphasized that they have drafted a policy for the Township's consideration.
- Ms. Lynn inquired about examples of inclusion. Commissioner Spearing stated that the Township has passed an ordinance, formed a Human Relations Commission, is receptive to all complaints, and support has been provided by the Police and Commissioners regarding use of parks and right-of-ways. Ms. Lynn replied that more leadership is needed in the community.
- Commissioner Whiting commented that the discussion is a "courageous conversation".
- The Committee directed the Township Solicitor to draft a policy and a discussion will continue at a future meeting.

XII. **New Business** - Nothing to report.

XIII. **Visitor Comments** - Nothing to report.

XIV. **Commissioners Comments** - Nothing to report.

XV. **Adjournment:** There being no further business for this Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Kristire.