

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC MEETING WORK SESSION MINUTES

November 14, 2022

This meeting was held in person at the Township and live streamed on our website at www.uppergwynedd.org

PLEASE NOTE: The Commissioners made decisions on items #13, #14, #23 and #24 and those decisions are included in these minutes.

1. Call to order

The November 14, 2022, Public Work Session of the Upper Gwynedd Township Board of Commissioners was called to order by President of the Board, Denise Hull at 7:05 PM. This meeting was recorded and visually taped.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by resident, Mark Connelly.

3. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Deanna Logan, Administrative Assistant to the Township Manager. The individuals in attendance were:

Denise M. Hull	President
Katherine D. Carter	Vice President
Liz K. McNaney	Commissioner
Martha A. Simelaro	Commissioner
Sandra Zadell	Township Manager
Megan Weaver	Assistant Township Manager
Lauren Gallagher	Township Solicitor
Nicholas Cross	Township Engineer
David Duffy	Chief of Police
Nathan Crittendon	Finance Director
E. Van Rieker	Zoning Officer

Commissioner Ruth Damsker was absent.

4. Announcement of Executive Sessions

Ms. Gallagher said the Board met in Executive Session prior to this meeting to discuss matters of potential litigation and labor relations.

5. Public comments and concerns (limit of five minutes per individual)

Fred Hencken, said a resident has a concern about a stop sign at Township Line Rd. and North Wales Rd. and said there are a lot of accidents at that intersection. Chief Duffy responded that there is a low number of accidents at this intersection. Mr. Hencken went on to say there was a Right to Know filed regarding a recent survey. Ms. Gallagher said the items that were denied in the Right to Know was because the results were pre-decisional. Mr. Hencken commented that there is a lack of consistency in how we survey our residents. He asked if there are any strings attached to the DCNR grant for open space. Mrs. Zadell said there are always strings attached to any grant and she will get an answer as to the specifics of the grant.

Mark Connelly said he is excited about the start of the Dickerson Road drainage project.

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William Jackson, member of Bike North Penn said he wants the Board to consider asking the developer to install bike racks and charging stations on the proposed Wawa site at Valley Forge Road. Extended sidewalk from Clearview Rd. to the intersection at Sumneytown and VF Road would be helpful also.

Sam Augustine of JP Mascaro & Sons, said a letter was sent regarding the residential leaf and yard waste bid. He said it is a very tumultuous time as prices have risen over 60% and labor has diminished. He assured the Board that Mascaro's bid is very competitive, and the material collected would be taken care of properly. He said the bid price is not an unrealistic cost. Mrs. McNaney said the Board will review the information provided prior to making a decision next week.

Departmental Reports

6. Manager's Report (Sandra Zadell)

- 2022 Survey Results (See full report at Township Building)

Mrs. Zadell said a professional phone survey was conducted to get resident's responses to various questions about the Township. She shared the results of the survey.

- 98% of respondents said Upper Gwynedd Township is an excellent or good place to live, work and raise a family.
- 80% of respondents said UGT is doing an excellent or good job of serving the residents and business owners
- The top 3 issues facing UGT today are
 - Roads/highways/infrastructure
 - Traffic/infrastructure
 - Crime/violence/public safety
- Respondents said these should be the top 3 priorities for the Township over the next decade
 - Maintaining low tax rate
 - Maintaining Township assets
 - Preserving/Maintaining open space
- Respondents were asked if they've seen, read or heard about the Martin Tract
 - 57% said no and 36% said yes
- They were also asked what the Martin Tract should be used for if purchased by the Township
 - 40% were not sure and 31% said it should be converted to open space
- Respondents were asked if about their preference for the Martin Tract
 - 43% said passive recreation
 - 33% said it should be left as is
 - 13% said active recreation
 - 6% were not sure
- Respondents were asked if they would support or oppose using grants or surplus funds to purchase the Martin Tract
 - 55% support and 37% oppose
- 31% of respondents get their information from the printed newsletter followed by 20% from family, friends and neighbors
- Only 4% of respondents use the website on a weekly/daily basis
- 14% of respondents use the Facebook page on a weekly/daily basis
- 88% of respondents hardly or never use the Township's Twitter
- 86% of respondents hardly or never use the Township's Instagram
- 61% of respondents have used the Township's walking & bike trails in the past 12 months and 24% have used playground equipment.

Mrs. Zadell explained the methodology of the survey. The sample size was 300 residents, 51% female and 49% male. The sample included residents from five age groups, five different resident statuses and six employment statuses. The methodology used was to try to get a wide range of answers.

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William Jackson asked how much was spent on the survey to which Mrs. Zadell replied \$7,635.

Fred Hencken, said 300 people surveyed is minimal and said the survey should have been more readily available. Mrs. McNaney said to Mr. Hencken, if it was available using the methods you discussed, then there may not have been an adequate sampling for the methodology used. Mrs. Zadell said the survey sample matched the demographics of our community and other methods would not have produced guaranteed results of a statistically significant survey. Mrs. Simelaro said the survey was statistically sound based on proven methodologies.

7. Planning and Zoning Report (E. Van Rieker)

As reported by Van Rieker, Zoning Officer

- **ZHB 22-17, 593 Dekalb Pike (Wawa).** Variances to permit up to four (4) EV chargers as accessory structures in the front yard and between the principal building and the street. This has been continued to November 22, 2022 at the request of the applicant.
- **ZHB 22-18, 1912 Stirling Drive.** Variance to permit addition to extend into the required yard of a corner lot. This was approved on October 25, 2022
- **Sketch Plan – Proposed Wawa Food Market with gas, Valley Forge Rd. & Sumneytown Pike.** This would be a demolition of the existing Wawa and adjacent building and redevelopment as a single Wawa store with gas. The sketch plan has been reviewed by staff. Next Step: file for special exception to Zoning Hearing Board. Date TBD
- **ZHB 22-19, 203 Oakland Place.** Variance to permit a breezeway to connect to an existing detached garage, thereby creating the requirement for a 25-foot side yard where 6 ft 2 inches exists. This is scheduled to be heard on November 22, 2022.

8. Engineering Report (Isaac Kessler)

As reported by Nicholas Cross, Township Engineer

- **Construction** – a few projects are in construction, and we strive to have the communication between the contractor and residents as clear as possible. Our site inspectors are on site as often as possible to ensure the construction activity is kept to the limits of the project and the areas are cleaned and kept tidy prior to opening up to the public at the end of the workday. If there are any access needs or special circumstances of local residents to these projects, please feel free to let us know and this is something we can coordinate with the contractor.

Current capital projects in progress include Dickerson Road Drainage Project, Newbury Basin, completion of the 2022 Roads Program and finishing the Villages Spray Lining Project.

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Denise M. Hull, PRESIDENT Finance/Personnel/Administration

9. Staff Department Reports

Parks & Rec	Public Works	Police	Zoning	Code Report
Eng. – G&A	Eng. – RVE	UGFD	NPFD	VMSC

This will be placed on the consent agenda

10. Public Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2022

This will be placed on the consent agenda

11. Proposed reading of the 2023 budget (November 21)

- Budget Presentation by Sandra Zadell

Mrs. Zadell announced there will be no tax increase for 2023. She said the budget will be decided on at the December 12th meeting. UGT has one of the lowest tax rates in Montgomery County. Earned Income Tax had the highest increase in revenue. She said we are trending for an end of year surplus of \$400,000.

Budget Appropriations by fund

General Fund	\$17,959,273
Sewer Fund	\$8,437,578
Liquid Fuels	\$600,000

Total 2023 revenue is \$18,765,915. She said there is not a lot of fluctuations within the major sources of General Fund spending. Most of the budget is spent on public safety and public works.

Operational Overview of 2023 budget

- Expanding Fire Marshal services
- Facilities upgrades for safety, compliance and workspace
- Increased costs associated with property insurance and cyber security coverage
- Increased Police costs
- New full time employee for IT
- Increased Gas and Heating oil across all departments
- Survey of Township complex for fire safety/sprinklers
- Continued investment in stormwater repairs and pipe lining
- Concession stand external maintenance
- Parks comprehensive Plan update
- Salary study results helped to reclassify employees and provide comparable wages

WWTP overview

- No proposed rate increase, although one may be proposed for 2024
- 2022 showed large increases in chemicals, electric, instrument maintenance, sludge hauling
- Most capital spending is consolidated into I/I work
- Payment to TMA increased to \$45K
- Added a contractor for grounds maintenance

Fire Fund

- 2022 brought sale of old FD equipment at \$15K higher than expected
- Increase in costs (audit, heating oil, phones)
- Return of FD Stipend program
- \$7,500 budgeted for the North Penn Fire Department for Fire Police Vehicle retrofit
- \$463,634 fund reserve for future vehicle and building maintenance

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Capital Projects

Mrs. Zadell said the five-year Capital Plan includes proposed spending of \$26,946,737 in over 143 projects across seven departments. The funds will be source from 11 different funding sources. We are still using funding from the American Recovery Act that we need to use by the end of 2024. She said much of it was put into the WWTP.

Upcoming 2023 projects

- Sumneytown Pike Bridge replacement – estimated at \$2.5M
- Haines Run Streambank Restoration Project

Other capital projects

- Security Improvements for Township Building
- Car camera upgrades for PD
- Pole Barn construction
- Open Space management plan
- Focus on I/I
- DVRPC streetlight procurement
- Drop down flood gates for high flood roadways
- Drainage improvement projects on West Prospect and Meadowbrook
- Pet/Person water fountain
- Updated marquis board at Parkside Place
- Replacement of Clarifier 3 at the WWTP
- Several vehicle replacements
- 2023 Roads program to include Mill and Overlay, Microsurfacing and ADA ramps

Mrs. Zadell said we have allocated a transfer of \$360,000 to our general fund. Reserves are in place to help fund the gap during hard times. It is recommended that the reserve cover 3 months of expenses, the UGT reserve can fund 9.5 – 12.9 months.

The WWTP continues to operate at a deficit even after a 2017 rate increase. Sewer rates are statistically low. We are spending \$1.1M on I/I and may have to do a rate increase for 2024. She explained the WIP allows us to invest in our own system and keep costs reasonable for our residents and rate payers.

Fred Hencken asked if the Board can consider raising the Homestead exemption.

Mark Connelly asked if the TMA price increase could potentially cost the Township more money. Mrs. Zadell said yes, but it only affects 215 residents who still flow to TMA. Mrs. Hull said any price increase on those 215 residents will be absorbed by the Township. Mr. Connelly also asked if the drainage improvement projects help with I and I? Mrs. Zadell said I and I has to do with keeping our sewer lines separate from our water lines.

12. Authorization to advertise the 2023 Holiday & Meeting Calendar

Ms. Weaver said the Township is required to advertise these meetings and this will be added to the consent agenda.

13. **DECISION:** Motion to authorize the advertisement of Ordinance 2022-06, Tax Rate for 2023

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved

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14. **DECISION:** Motion to authorize the advertisement of Ordinance 2022-07, 2023 Budget Appropriations

This will allocate our three (3) primary funds.

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved.

15. Resolution 30-2022 authorizing the auditors to conduct an audit for 2022

This is required by the First-Class Township Code

16. Resolution 31-2022, the Homestead exemption for 2023

17. Resolution 34-2022, Act 57 – waiver of tax penalty fees for new property owners

Ms. Gallagher said this requires the Township to pass a resolution allowing new property owners that did not receive a tax bill to waive any penalty fees.

18. Approval of the sale of the Township's old phone system on Municibid

Ms. Weaver said we received seven (7) bids for the old phone system. This will be placed on the consent agenda

Katherine D. Carter, Vice President Public Safety

19. Approval of the release of the Fire Escrow #2 (final) for 408 Carmichael Drive in the amount of \$25,000

Ms. Weaver said this is the final escrow for a house that was destroyed by fire. The updated amount is \$25,081.19

This will be placed on the consent agenda

Ruth S. Damsker Zoning/Planning/Code Enforcement

20. Approval of the escrow release #2 to Wheatley Walk in the amount of \$508,156.00

All public improvements that were required have been completed.

This will be placed on the consent agenda

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Liz K. McNaney

Public Works/Parks/Recreation

21. Merck & Co. waiver request from Chapter 113-1 & 124-5 for Extended Daily Hours including weekends from December 5, 2022 – July 31, 2023, for WP63A Area Site Work.

This will be placed on the consent agenda

22. Merck & Co. waiver request from Chapter 113-1 & 124-5 for Sunday work from November 27, 2022 – April 30, 2023, for WP50 LVV DPM.

This will be placed on the consent agenda

23. **DECISION:** Merck & Co. waiver request from Chapter 113-1 & 124-5 for Sunday crane work on Building 81 Steam Rack Project. Sunday, November 20, 2022 from 8 am – 5 pm.

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved

William Jackson said there is a lot of traffic early in the morning on Park Rd. because of Merck construction. He asked if Merck can move through the interior instead of using Township Roads?

24. **DECISION:** Motion to approve the Trail License Agreement with PECO for the Powerline Trail in Upper Gwynedd Township

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved

25. Bid Rejection for Residential Leaf & Yard Waste from JP Mascaro

The Township requires that trash haulers have a spring and fall pick up day, but the Township wanted to add additional services. This bid was over budget. We may possibly bid again when prices are less volatile.

26. Authorization to advertise the 2023 Roads Program

The list of roads was in the 2023 proposed budget.

27. Approval of Payment #2 to James Morrissey for the 2022 Roads Program in the amount of \$16,478.65

Mr. Cross pointed out that the payment amount is \$70,062.65 with \$16,478.65 in retainage.

This will be placed on the consent agenda

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Martha A. Simelaro Wastewater Treatment

28. Approval of the 2023 Dense Soda Ash Bid award to Paragon Integrated Services Group in the amount of \$22.85 per 50 lb. bag and reject the bid by George Coyne Chemical Co. due to the bid exception.

Mrs. Carter asked what the bid exception was. Mrs. Zadell said Coyne added a stipulation to their contract.

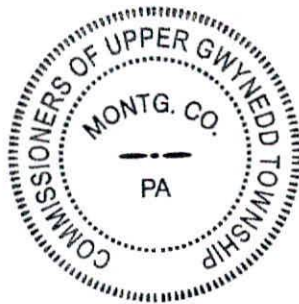
29. Approval of Resolution 33-2022, Merck 537 Plan

This is a requirement when an update has occurred. Currently there has been no public comment made about the plan.

Other Business

30. Approval of November 2022 Open Invoices (via roll call vote)
31. Approval of November 2022 Paid Invoices (via roll call vote)
32. Call for Adjournment

Mrs. Hull adjourned the meeting at 8:43 pm.



Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Brookley Zadell
Secretary

Approved December 20, 2022

/djl