

**TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HUNTINGDON, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2022, 7:00 P.M.
11279 Center Highway, North Huntingdon, PA 15642
Presiding Officer – Zachary Haigis, President, Board of Commissioners**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Haigis called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Stump	Present	Also Present:
Commissioner Atwood	Present	Mike Turley
Commissioner Gray	Present	Solicitor Alexander
Commissioner Zona	Present	Lt. McCurdy
Commissioner Wengrzyn	Present	Dan Miller
Commissioner Gass	Tele-conference	Ryan Fonzi
Commissioner Haigis	Present	Rich Albert

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPENING PRAYER

CITIZENS INPUT

Bob Morgan – 871 Northeast Drive – thanks the Board for serving the community and the road crew for an awesome job during the past snow storm and also installing the new sign on Norwin Avenue. He asks if there is a possibility of putting signs with the new logo on the east and west sides of the Township. He states he noticed in Irwin and Monroeville, they have reflective tape on stop signs and asks if we could do that in the Township to improve visibility. At last meeting, the extended warranty was discussed on the HVAC system. He states he is concerned with the cost of the HVAC and if something goes wrong with it, could be very expensive to repair and having the extended warranty may be worth. Mr. Morgan inquires what the money for the recycling rebate is used for and does it include commercial accounts. He states at last meeting he brought up the need for a senior center and spoke with State Rep. George Dunbar’s office and was told they would get back to him regarding grant money as Hempfield just received a one million dollar grant. Lastly, he speaks of the jake brake notice by Malts Lane and does this need approved by PADot and why just that section of Route 30.

Debbie Howe – 11169 White Street – states she is reiterating what Bob Morgan spoke of about the senior center and how she has to go to Penn Township and Hempfield to pay for activities. She

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feels there is nothing here in North Huntingdon for seniors. She asks if the high school will open for senior citizens.

RESPONSE TO CITIZENS INPUT

Commissioner Haigis asks Rich Albert to look into the reflective tape for the stop signs. In regards to the warranty on the HVAC system was discussed last week and the Board was not in favor of the extended warranty. He states Mr. Morgan is welcome to reach out to George Dunbar's office in regards to the senior center and the Board would be receptive to work with him if he explores options and bring back. Mike Turley states that PADot permits the jake brake on Malts Lane. Commissioner Haigis refers back to the signs on both ends of the Township and states PADot would need to approve the permit. Mike Turley states that basically PADot does not want the signs especially in the right of way.

Commissioner Wengryzn asks if there is already a sign in place but may faded, do we still need to go through the procedures if already existing. Mike Turley states we should be able to replace an existing sign.

Commissioner Haigis states the senior center can be looked at and the pool is handled through Norwin School District. He recommends to speak with Dan Miller about activities in the parks.

Commissioner Stump states there is to be a senior complex built behind the Norwin Library if the developer or County would be willing to preserve some land so maybe the first step would be to speak with the Housing Authority. Regarding the high school pool and there is an agreement with the Township for crossing guards, but she states she is seeing nothing in return and needs to be investigated.

Commissioner Wengryzn states the senior center will be her focus going forward.

Mr. Morgan asks it would be an option to hire someone to research grant money.

Commissioner Atwood adds that in speaking with Mr. Miller, there are plans to add some facilities for pickleball.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Commissioner Gray
Second: Commissioner Atwood

Motion to approve. (Special Meeting 12/9/21)

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Wengryzn

Motion to approve. (Regular Meeting 12/15/21)

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

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PAYMENT OF BILLS

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Atwood

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

STAFF REPORTS:

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Rich Albert states it has been a long week with a challenging snowstorm and there were some struggles with equipment and staffing issues.

Commissioner Atwood thanks Public Works and the crews for an awesome job. Commissioner Wengrzyn seconds the thanks.

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

Dan Miller reminds the public of the snowman concert.

POLICE REPORT

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT

ENGINEERING REPORT

FIRE OFFICIAL'S REPORT

There are no Board comments.

SUBDIVISION & LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

1) SP-03-2020: Kenny Ross Mazda Dealership

*Action to amend plans for the Kenny Ross Mazda Dealership.

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Stump

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

2) S-25-2021: Tomasic Consolidation Plan

*Action to approve a consolidation of two lots into one.

Motion: Commissioner Stump
Second: Commissioner Wengrzyn

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

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SOLICITOR'S REPORT – Solicitor Alexander

- 1) Action to amend Ordinance No. 443 of the Township of North Huntingdon authorizing the placement of no engine brake retarder signs along S.R. 30 between Malts Land and Bethel Road.

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Stump

Motion to amend.

Commissioner Atwood asks where this ordinance originated from as he does not recall talking about it. Commissioner Zona states it was discussed months ago and he asked that it be put on the agenda for there were a lot of complaints from residents on Bethel Road.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

TOWNSHIP MANAGER'S REPORT

- 1) Action to approve the December check register.

Motion: Commissioner Atwood
Second: Commissioner Zona

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 2) Budget Report – December 2021 Report.

- 3) Action to approve Resolution No. 1 of 2022 to agree to the terms of the Pennsylvania Opioid Misuse and Addiction Abatement Trust.

Motion: Commissioner Stump
Second: Commissioner Wengrzyn

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 4) Action to appoint Joe Korenic to NHTMA Board.

Motion: Commissioner Gray
Second: Commissioner Zona

So moved.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Stump – YES
Commissioner Atwood – YES
Commissioner Gray – YES
Commissioner Zona – YES
Commissioner Wengrzyn – YES
Commissioner Gass – NO
Commissioner Haigis – YES

Motion carried 6 – 1 – 0

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- 5) Action to appoint Kevin Zenk to the Emergency Management Committee.

Motion: Commissioner Stump
Second: Commissioner Gray

Motion to approve.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- 6) Action to appoint Robert Merda to the Emergency Management Committee.

Motion: Commissioner Gray
Second: Commissioner Stump

So moved.

Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

FURTHER BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Atwood states he has been given by Dan Miller a lot of information regarding the last attempt for the rec center and states he is willing to head-up another inquiry to see if this is a feasible thing for us to do in the Township. He understands it was put out approximately a decade ago and was voted down but with the change of dynamics in the Township, he feels it warrants another look.

Commissioner Stump states if Commissioner Atwood is willing to do the research and bring it back to the Board, would be appreciated.

Commissioner Haigis states he is definitely open to the idea, but would caution the project doesn't get too grand and what the Township would be willing to spend.

Commissioner Atwood provides his email for any residents would like to contact him directly.

Commissioner Gray states he appreciates Commissioner Atwood spearheading this, but the one caution he would suggest is to not involve a lot of staff time since there is no Township manager right now and that needs to be the focus. Commissioner Atwood states this will certainly not be an overnight process based on the amount of time it took him to read through all of the documents and will be a slow moving task.

Commissioner Zona states going back to discuss the signs on each end of the Township, he would like to see new fresh signs in lieu of the larger ones that were discussed and feels it looks better coming into the Township.

Commissioner Gass offers his condolences to the Ruthie Shuster Family.

Commissioner Gray states he was hoping that Chief Rizzo would be here to discuss that in December the former Board authorized the police chief to enter into an agreement with the Attorney General's office where by we have personnel working for the AG's office and yet remain on Township payroll, liability insurance, and have all the costs. Commissioner Gray states there was no public debate on it, no public discussion or vote and he feels this is not typical. Craig Alexander agrees that it is not typical. Mr. Gray states he considers that a violation of the Sunshine Law that could be amended or corrected by having a ratification or discussion or vote in public.

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He states Mike Turley was not in favor of it because of the costs, liability and other matters that fall on the Township with the AG's having all the benefits. One of the biggest problems with the arrangement is that it takes someone off the road in the Township in an already short-staffed department. Commissioner Gray states he spoke with other Commissioners about this over the concern that it wasn't discussed in public and some Board members had concerns over not only the program but also that it was done in private. He states that over the last four years this Board has lost sight of transparency and it is his goal to restore that. Commissioner Wengrzyn states she agrees with the transparency piece and feels it is important to be out in public but her concern is to keep the individual working with AG confidential. Commissioner Gray states he did not mention the individual only personnel and generic information. Solicitor Alexander states while this is not typical, there is a lot of confidentiality involved. Commissioner Gray asks that because it is tax dollars being spent should it be public. Solicitor Alexander states because of the confidentiality would be an exception in the Sunshine Law. Commissioner Haigis states it was a personnel matter and Solicitor Dice recommended, because of that, could be discussed in Executive Session. He states he was opposed to the agreement but it was the Board's decision to make the agreement and he believes we could get out of the agreement with a thirty day notice, so if this is something to be discussed could be put on the agenda for next month. Solicitor Alexander states clearly it could be discussed in Executive Session, but the issue would be whether it could be voted on in Executive Session. He states he goes back to the confidentiality section in the Sunshine Law and will review the law. Commissioner Gray states it only was only a personnel issue because Chief Rizzo specifically named individuals that were involved. Commissioner Atwood agrees that an inter-governmental agreement should be discussed publicly. Commissioner Zona adds that there was a lot of talk of whether that was a fare agreement but this is a standard agreement and hundreds of police officers in Pennsylvania are working under those agreements with homeland security, FBI, ATF, DEA and is nothing out of the ordinary and this is how the task forces work. Lieutenant McCurdy states he has been involved in this for a long time and says the drug problem the Township suffers from spreads far and wide. Unfortunately, walls cannot be built around the Township and the drug problems citizens experience come from outside as well as inside and in having an agreement with a state wide agency is beneficial. Commissioner Gray states he fully understands Lieutenant McCurdy's position and feels we all have to same goal, but his concern is the tax dollars are going to fund the agency and if they need people should hire them to staff their own agency. Commissioner Zona adds the agency is staffed and what they do to compliment are the task forces to give communities more coverage. He states the federal agencies all have task forces that have State Troopers and local officers that all work together on task forces. Commissioner Haigis states this will be on the agenda for next week. Commissioner Atwood states the question is that it should have been discussed in public and he is ok with discussing it in public. Commissioner Zona states not one person said anything in the executive session and all listened to the solicitor saying it was ok to do and there was a vote to approve the agreement.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Zona
Second: Commissioner Gray

Motion to adjourn. (7:52 P.M.)
Motion carried 7 – 0 – 0

- Regular Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2022 were approved by the Board of Commissioners on February 16, 2022.

Zachary Haigis, President

Michael Turley, Interim Township Manager
/jjm