

**PILESGROVE TOWNSHIP
WORK SESSION MEETING
IN PERSON AND VIA COMPUTER AND TELECONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 23, 2021
MINUTES**

Mayor Kevin Eachus called the work session meeting of the Pilesgrove Township Committee to order at 7:00 P.M. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Eachus directed the Clerk to read the following Notice:

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings law. Notice of this meeting of February 23, 2021, was sent to the South Jersey Times and the Elmer Times on January 5, 2021, and posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building on January 5, 2021. Dial in information via telephone and computer was posted on the Township website on February 18, 2021 and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

Mayor Eachus advised that proper notice having been given; the Clerk is directed to include this statement in the minutes of this meeting.

Attendance: Kevin Eachus
David Bonowski
Joseph Crevino
Niki Arbittier, Esq.
Kelsey Mitchell, Temporary CFO

Motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Crevino to open the public comment portion of the meeting. Ayes all. There being no public comment, motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Crevino to close this public comment portion of the meeting. Ayes all.

Motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Crevino to approve the bill list as presented by the Treasurer. Ayes all.

Motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Crevino to approve Resolution 21-024, Award of Contract to ALS Environmental in the amount of \$11,376.50 for Quarterly and Annual Sampling of Monitoring Wells at the Sanitary Landfill. Cost of monitoring is split 50/50 between Pilesgrove and the Borough of Woodstown. Ayes all.

Motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Crevino to approve Resolution 21-025, Award of Contract to Randall Scheule, P.P./AICO of Scheule Planning Solutions, LLC as Township Planner. Ayes all.

Motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Crevino to approve on first reading and introduction

Ordinance 21-03

An Ordinance Setting Fees for the Disposal of Items at the Pilesgrove Township Convenience Center

Roll call: Bonowski yes, Eachus yes, Crevino yes.

Motion made by Crevino, 2nd by Bonowski to open the public hearing on

Ordinance 21-02

**Amending the Township Code for the Purpose of Amending the
Definitions Section of the Land Development Ordinance**

Ayes all.

There being no public comment on Ordinance 21-02, motion made by Crevino, 2nd by Bonowski to close the public hearing on Ordinance 21-02. Ayes all.

Motion made by Eachus, 2nd by Bonowski to adopt, after second reading and public hearing, Ordinance 21-02.
Roll call: Crevino yes, Eachus yes, Bonowski yes.

Motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Crevino to approve Resolution 21-027, Extending 2021 Temporary Budget.
Ayes all.

Preliminary discussion on 2021 Municipal Budget –

Township Auditors Henry Ludwigsen and Evan Palmer from Bowman & Company joined the meeting.
Temporary CFO Kelsey Mitchell provided a handout she and the Auditors have prepared with proposed budget numbers.

Based on the handout, Mayor Eachus inquired on the budget amount for legal fee and potential litigation. The litigation line item has been increased by \$2,500.00 from 2020. Storm trust increased by \$15,000.00, solid waste reduced by \$22,000.00. Ms. Mitchell had removed any funding for re-examination of the Master Plan, as that was funded in 2020 based on the Planners proposal. All agreed that \$2,500.00 should be budgeted in 2021 in case there are some matters that need to be addressed. Mr. Ludwigsen provided an analysis of surplus. Ms. Mitchell advised that the goal has been to get to \$2mm in surplus, at the end of 2020, surplus is \$1,838,570.20. Practice has been to only use from surplus is what is anticipated to replenish. Discussion on reserve for uncollected taxes. Mr. Ludwigsen noted that the year end 2020 tax collection rate is 97.09%, up from 96.35% in 2019. Ludwigsen noted that the 2021 budget calls for a 95% collection rate in the reserve for uncollected line. The reserve for uncollected is always a rather conservative number, as the reserve can have a significant impact on the budget.

Discussion on the impending installation of a solar energy system at the Municipal Complex and the anticipated savings.

Discussion on debt service. Ms. Mitchell noted that this year's budget includes a \$35,000.00 reduction in debt payment. Mr. Bonowski would like to see that \$35,000.00 added to the capital budget. 2020 capital budget was \$230,000.00. Mr. Ludwigsen noted that the Township has been using some open space funds for debt payment. Ms. Mitchell advised the 2020 amount was \$161,427.00 – this pays down the portion of the debt incurred to preserve farmland. All agreed to use open space funds in 2021, but to re-evaluate the use of these funds going forward. Mr. Ludwigsen noted that the Township Affordable Housing Spending Plan allows for the use of \$24,800.00 from the affordable housing trust for debt service. Ludwigsen advised that in 2020, the COAH trust fund had \$17,000.00 in fees. Ludwigsen noted that if the affordable housing trust does not have enough money in it to reach the \$24,800.00, the current fund subsidizes the debt payment.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the department capital requests. The 2021 proposed budget includes \$175,000.00 in capital. This includes the \$12,000.00 in SCBA bottles requested by the Fire Company. Mayor Eachus noted that the pipe lining on Fox Road could actually cost much more than estimated. The Clerk/Administrator advised that if Committee decides to move forward on the Fox Road project, it may be best to figure on doing only that project in 2021.

Discussion on the cancellation of outstanding capital ordinance balances. Mr. Ludwigsen was asked what the process would be if an ordinance was cancelled and then funds were needed for the project. Ludwigsen advised that the Township would then have to do another capital ordinance to fund any balance. Cancelling a portion of the technology ordinance and the outstanding construction projects will result in a return of \$54,000.00 to capital. Ms. Mitchell will prepare an ordinance to cancel those outstanding balances.

Decreases in revenue: court decrease of \$10,550.00 and construction decrease of \$38,267.00. Ms. Mitchell noted that per a Local Finance Notice from the State, the Township can do a 3 year average on the UCC fees to meet our appropriation. She will prepare a resolution to that effect.

Ms. Mitchell requested an increase in salary for the Deputy Treasurer position, from \$7,500.00 to \$9,526.00, with the approved increases for completion of finance classes. Committee approved the request.

Township Tax Assessor Roy Duffield joined the meeting to discuss budget requests for his office. Duffield anticipates \$6,000.00 for assistance on tax appeals and at least \$1,000.00 for farm inspections. Ms. Mitchell will increase the assessor fee line to \$9,000.00. Ms. Mitchell asked Mr. Duffield for his feedback on property valuations in the Township. Mr. Duffield noted that the Township has lost 10 properties to either totally disabled veterans and/or nonprofit status.

Ms. Mitchell advised that she will incorporate all of the items discussed and have the budget ready for introduction at the March 23 meeting, with adoption tentatively scheduled for April 27. Mr. Bonowski noted that he would like DPW Superintendent Coulter in attendance for the March 23 meeting. Mayor Eachus thanked Mr. Ludwigsen and Mr. Palmer for their attendance and the assistance provided to Ms. Mitchell in preparation of the budget.

Township Engineer Jim McKelvie joined the meeting to review the proposed amendments to the Township stormwater ordinance. Based on discussion at the February 9 meeting, Mr. McKelvie has incorporated the changes requested by Committee in to the NJ DEP model ordinance. The proposed ordinance now includes the additional Township requirements for a financial plan, maintenance records, annual inspections and penalties for non compliance. Solicitor Arbittier has reviewed the draft ordinance and has approved the draft.

Motion made by Eachus, 2nd by Bonowski to approve on first reading

Ordinance 21-04
Amending the Municipal Code to Revise Chapter 145-34.1
Governing Stormwater Management”

Roll call: Crevino yes, Eachus yes, Bonowski yes.

Motion made by Eachus, 2nd by Bonowski to approve Resolution 21-026, Referring Ordinance 21-04 to the Township Planning Board for Review and Determination of Consistency with the Township Master Plan. Ayes all.

Motion made by Bonowski, 2nd by Eachus to go in to closed session to discuss matters in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, specifically pending litigation. Ayes all.

Motion made by Eachus, 2nd by Bonowski to reopen the meeting to the public. Ayes all.

Committee reviewed the draft of letter to Federal Legislators regarding delays with mail delivery through the United States Postal Service. All agreed with sending the letter.

Newsletter articles were reviewed and approved. Mayor Eachus asked that an article about the installation of the solar energy system at the Municipal Complex be included in the newsletter. The Clerk/Administrator advised she will have that added.

Discussion on the recent legislation legalizing recreational marijuana. The Clerk/Administrator advised that the Township has received several inquiries on possible cultivation sites. Solicitor Arbittier advised that the Township response to inquiries should be that there are no rules or regulations in place to permit the cultivation or dispensing of marijuana, so at this time, it is not a permitted use.

Deputy Mayor left the meeting at 9:00 pm.

Motion made by Eachus, 2nd by Crevino to open the public comment portion of the meeting. Ayes all. There being no public comment, motion made by Crevino, 2nd by Eachus to close this public comment portion of the meeting. Ayes all.

Motion made by Eachus, 2nd by Crevino to adjourn at 9:25 PM. Ayes all.

Maureen R. Abdill, Clerk