

ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

NOVEMBER 9, 2023



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORKING SESSION



TOWNSHIP OF ABINGTON

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORKING SESSION

A G E N D A **November 9, 2023** **7:30 PM**

There are three ways for the public to participate in the meeting: in-person, online or by phone. Residents who wish to attend in person can do so in the Abington Township Board Room located at 1176 Old York Road, Abington, PA 19001, 2nd Floor. Alternative means of public participation are offered for those who do not wish to or are unable to attend the meetings in person. Residents who wish to participate in the meeting remotely can access the meeting online by a computer, iPad, iPhone, or Android at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88216803878>. This link will enable residents to hear the meeting, see presentations, and ask questions. There will be no video interaction capabilities. Residents, who are unable to join online, can listen to and participate in the meeting by calling 1-929-436-2866 and entering the meeting ID number 882-1680-3878 when prompted.

CALL TO ORDER

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Motion to approve the Minutes from the Working Session of October 12, 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Presentation on Single-Use Plastics & Expanded Polystyrene Products Ordinance - *by Faran Savitz, Penn Environment*

ADJOURNMENT

BOARD POLICY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

For Information Purposes Only

The Township shall conduct business in accordance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Laws governing the conduct of public meetings and only establish guidelines that shall govern public participation at meetings consistent with the law.

Each commenter shall:

- Direct their comments to the Presiding Officer;
- Speak from the podium or into a microphone designated by the presiding officer;
- State their name for the record;
- Either orally or in writing provide their address for the record;
- Have a maximum of three minutes to make their comments. Each commenter when speaking to a specific agenda item, is to keep their comments relative to that identified agenda item;
- Speak one time per agenda item;
- When commenting on non-agenda items, the commenter is to keep their comments related to matters of the Township of Abington, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.
- State a question to the Presiding Officer after all commenters have spoken, and;
- Be seated after speaking or upon the request of the presiding officer;
- Not engage in debate, dialogue or discussion;
- Not disrupt the public meeting, and;
- Exercise restraint and sound judgement in avoiding the use of profane language, and the maligning of others.

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners Working Session was held on Thursday, October 12, 2023 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:41 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners ROTHMAN, DiPLACIDO, VAUGHN, BROWNE, WINEGRAD, HENRY, CARSWELL, SPIEGELMAN, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, HECKER
Excused: Commissioners BRODSKY, ZAPPONE, BOLE, VAHEY

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Township Solicitor CLARKE

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Hecker made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Browne to approve the minutes from the Working Session of August 10, 2023.

MOTION was ADOPTED 11-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Introduction and Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Proposed Annual Budget

Manager Manfredi said this is the unveiling of the Fiscal Year 2024 preliminary proposed annual budget as well as the online budget book that will be available for review for an additional 25 days over what is required by the First-Class Township Code. We try to achieve excellence by striving for perfection in what we deliver to the people of Abington.

He recognized all the directors of the Township for their work as they have been committed to providing excellence in striving for perfection to deliver the best service to the residents of Abington Township. He especially thanked Ms. Jeannette Hermann for all her work and effort she put into this budget along with Deputy Chief Porter, Chief Molloy, and their command staff as well as the administrative staff who strive for excellence for the residents of this Township.

The proposed preliminary budget includes a no tax increase, no increase in refuse fees and no increase in wastewater fees. A formal review by the Board is scheduled for November 9, 2023, and once the proposed preliminary budget is approved, there be additional time for further review with a tentative date for final approval by the Board on December 14, 2023.

The Fiscal Year 2024 Township budget as presented holds the current total property tax rate at 5.922 mills; general fund revenues and expenditures are balanced; and wastewater and refuse fees remain unchanged.

The total FY 2024 budget for all operating and capital funds is \$77,343,126; the General fund totals \$47,358,059 and all other operating funds total \$19,747,056; General fund permanent improvement capital fund totals \$6,452,040; and the funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of \$16,334,343 brings the total budget to \$93,677,469.

The 2024 fiscal plan establishes fund equity at an unrestricted fund balance reserve of three months of operating expenditures; an increase in the Township's cash reserve beyond previous projections; and the general fund balance available after reserve meets the Generally Accepted Accounting Principal (GAAP) standard and exceeds the minimum two (2) month Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) best practice.

Real Estate Tax Distribution 2024: Abington School District 77%, Abington Township 13%, Montgomery County 9%, and Montgomery County Community College 1%.

The FY 2024 budget is driven by the Strategic Plan that was adopted by the Board of Commissioners and focuses on fiscal sustainability, economic growth, vibrant public spaces, excellent public services, sustainable infrastructure, and inclusive community.

FY 2024 full-time complement comparison by function chart was presented noting there will be an increase in the Fire Marshal's Office of an additional fire inspector.

Fire Marshal Platz said after review of the Fire Marshal's fee schedule, which has not been updated since 1992, as well as review of the current costs for programs based on the National Fire Protection Association's Staffing Analysis for fire prevention, and comparing it with over a dozen local municipalities, it showed that Abington's fee schedule for annual fire inspections is dramatically lower. So, to support this additional position without increasing taxes, he proposed to increase the fee schedule over time to accommodate for it.

Ms. Jeannette Hermann said there will be no tax increase or use of Fund Balance to balance the budget. The average value of a mill for Abington Township based on assessed value for 2024 is just a little more than in prior years, and although we are not expecting a significant increase in tax collection revenue, we are expecting it to remain stable.

FY 2024 proposed budget v. FY 2023 projected actuals summary of operating and capital funds were presented noting that approximately \$11 million will be allocated for the park's infrastructure investment program from the ARPA funds. Earned Income tax is a significant revenue stream that continues to grow, and the 2023/2024 expenditure budget comparison was presented noting revenues and expenditures are balanced and fees for refuse and sewer are not expected to increase.

Fund balance ending 12/31/23 increased due to cost-saving measures resulting in a balance of \$22,203,376 million as three months operating expenditures were reserved. \$5,700,124 of the fund balance is required to be transferred to the capital fund; \$3,627,351 will be transferred to the OPEB fund; and \$1,036,386 is available in fund equity. FY 2024 the balance available for allocation after reserves is \$10,363,861.

The estimated Permanent Improvement Fund Balance as of January 1, 2023 is approximately \$5 million, and we expect to spend about \$3.5 million with \$1.9 million available for appropriation. So, we are preparing to budget approximately \$5.7 million for projects, and if we spend that entire amount in the year 2024, that will leave a balance of \$1.2 million by the end of 2024.

All budget information can be found in the onlinebudgetbook@abingtonpa.gov.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Spiegelman said this is the best budget he has seen in his entire time on the Board.

President Hecker said on behalf of the Board of Commissioners we recognize and appreciate Township staff for their effort and hard work that goes into the size and complexity of this budget, which is an art, and to balance the budget and provide this level of service is an extraordinary feat, and he thanked them for it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Joe Rooney, resident, expressed concern that a fee increase is a tax increase operating under a different guise, and there is an increase in EIT, which is taxpayers' money and he suggested giving some of it back; also, he asked about the increase in state pension.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the amount of time for public input on the budget; and she asked about the amount of funds for the construction services crew in which proposals for projects should require public comment. Also, she asked for a hard copy of the budget book.

Manager Manfredi replied regarding the construction services crew, it has been documented that the amount of money saved by the team in doing most of the work in-house versus contracting it out through public bidding is the reason why so much has been accomplished. Every project that the construction crew works on is part of the budget and reviewed by the Board of Commissioners where public input is taken and then approved by the Board before moving forward.

Also, this budget is based on the Strategic Plan; a Park, Recreation, and Open Space study; and an Economic Redevelopment study, which all included public engagement. So, everything in the budget is driven by the goals and vision of the Board of Commissioners as well as the public. And a hard copy of the budget book is available.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORKING
SESSION

AGENDA ITEM

November 9, 2023

DATE

Administration

DEPARTMENT

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost > \$10,000

Yes No

PUBLIC BID REQUIRED

Cost > \$20,100

Yes No

AGENDA ITEM:

Single Use Plastics Ordinance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Faran Savitz started at Penn Environment in 2019 B.A., cum laude, University of Pennsylvania. Faran works on PennEnvironment's Conservation and Zero Waste programs, working to reduce plastic waste in PA and to protect our parks and open spaces.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTIONS:

n/a

RECOMMENDED BOARD ACTIONS:

Presentation on Single-Use Plastics & Expanded Polystyrene Products Ordinance -by Faran Savitz,
Penn Environment