



TOWNSHIP OF SPRING

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS VISION MEETING MINUTES MAY 31ST, 2024

OPENING OF MEETING: Chairperson Smith called the Vision Meeting of the Board of Supervisors to order at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, May 31, 2024, in the Public Meeting Room of the Township of Spring Administration Building, located at 2850 Windmill Road, Spring Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania.

ROLL CALL: Upon roll call, Supervisors Smith, Stuck, Royer, and Kocher were present. Supervisor Wertz arrived at 8:03. Also present were John Groller, Dean Murray, Mary Rossi, Paul Darrah, Jen Bensinger, Jeremy Baez-Reyes, Chief Hackman, Aaron Wozniak, Judy Houck, Chief Powell, Jim Moll, and Jason Reichert.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None

OPEN TO THE FLOOR: None

ACTION ITEMS FOR APPROVAL: None

TOWNSHIP VISION PROJECT WORKSHEET STATUS REPORT

Mr. Groller reviewed the purpose of the meeting and the documents presented to all in attendance. Documents included the Township's Mission and Vision Statements adopted on May 26, 2015, and the Township Vision Project Status dated May 24, 2024.

Mr. Royer requested that the date be added when an update is memorialized.

TOWNSHIP PROPERTY and EQUIPMENT

Item 1: Relocation of Yerger Blvd. Yard Waste Site & Secure and Controlled Access to the Yerger Site and the Goose Lane Site

Goose Lane- Mr. Groller stated that the Township opened the Goose Lane Yard Site to the public in November 2023. Staff is evaluating purchasing and installing a backup generator for the site to allow access/operation when power failures occur. To date, the Township has issued over 600 access cards to the residents, and for the most part, the response from the residents has been positive. Mr. Groller stated that the Township received reimbursement from the DEP for the 2022 grant application, and staff recently submitted the 2024 DEP grant application for the remainder of the project's cost. Mr. Darrah confirmed for Mr. Stuck that each time the Township needed to grind the material at the Goose Lane site (about every month and a half), it cost the Township approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000.

TOWNSHIP PROPERTY and EQUIPMENT *(Continued)*

Item 1: Relocation of Yerger Blvd. Yard Waste Site & Secure and Controlled Access to both the Yerger site and the Goose Lane Site *(Continued)*

Yerger Blvd-Staff is moving forward with the project, and per the Board's agreement, the site will remain at its current location. Staff has met with consultants, SRC, and K&W, who are working on a proposal. Staff is considering the installation of one main gate, with the access location off Yerger Boulevard, and fencing will be less involved than at the Goose Lane site. The site will run off the same access system as the Goose Lane site so one access card will work for either site. Mr. Groller said that the first step in the process is to obtain the Permit By Rule by the DEP, noting that SRC is working with the DEP on the permit process. Mr. Groller reviewed the site and said the staff met with E-Lock to discuss security and fencing.

Mr. Darrah noted all the items illegally dumped at the Yerger Boulevard site in the last few weeks, including a piano, noting that this site is heavily used. He said that he is looking into purchasing cameras to use temporarily. For now, Ms. Smith suggested hiring someone part-time to monitor the site and installing a gate in the front to block access to those without an access card. Mr. Darrah noted that most of the illegal dumping is done by non-residents. Mr. Groller stated that one of the potential highlights of the Yerger Blvd site is that staff is looking into a higher level of yard waste maintenance and processing, explaining that process.

LIBRARY OPTIONS

One Township Library/Library Commitment & Construction- No Update

PARKS AND RECREATION

Item 1: Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan

Mr. Groller stated that the Township received the fourth draft of the plan on April 29, 2024, and that the Parks and Recreation Board reviewed it for completeness and content at the Parks and Recreation Board Meeting held on May 16, 2024. Ms. Houck returned those comments to the consultant, and the Parks and Recreation Board will review the fifth draft at the June 2024 meeting.

Item 2: Development of an RFP for the Creation of a Master Site Plan for Kline's Creek

Mr. Groller stated that the Township was not awarded a DCNR Grant for this project. The RFP was updated and advertised on April 23 and April 27, 2024. Ms. Houck stated that the RFPs came last Friday; the Parks and Recreation Board will review them in June, set up interviews, and anticipate having a recommendation for the Board of Supervisors in July to award the contract and appoint committee members. Ms. Houck stated that the P&R Department will mail out postcards to the residents in that area as notification for residents who may be interested in serving on the Committee. Ms. Smith and Mr. Stuck both volunteered to serve.

Ms. Houck stated that she believes Kline's Creek will be different from any other park in the Township due to its environmental conditions. She noted an excessively high water table in the location and that playground equipment had rotted from the ground up. In the preliminary discussions, Ms. Houck pointed out that the Parks and Recreation Board would like to install some equipment. Still, the park will be more of a naturalized area with more defined wetlands, perhaps even a boardwalk trail, noting that sometimes it is challenging to mow. Mr. Wertz asked if the runoff would be affected if a developed built homes in that area. Mr. Moll reviewed the proposed plan for a detention basin in that area.

PARKS AND RECREATION *(Continued)*

Item 3: Development of an RFP for the Creation of a Master Site Plan for the Shoener Lake Property

As per the Board of Supervisors' direction at the July 24, 2023 meeting, the site has been eliminated as a potential park site. Mr. Kocher and Ms. Smith requested staff install a few benches in the area for passive recreation. Mr. Moll discussed stormwater and noted that it is still a likely spot for a stormwater project in the future.

Ms. Houck briefed the Board, stating that in 2009, the Township did a Master Site Plan for the Shoener Lake Property, which involved a trail around the entire lake, parking enities, and such, and that the plan was not approved to move forward. In 2019, per request, Ms. Houck had a Sketch Plan prepared for the field area off of Yerger Boulevard, and it was presented on February 10, 2020; at that time, she had heard that there was discussion of expanding the WWTP, and the Township put the project on hold.

Item 4: Development of RFP for the Creation of a Master Site Plan for the West Wyomissing Property

Mr. Groller reported that since the last Vision Meeting, the sale has gone through, and the contract for developing the Master Site Plan was awarded to YSM on March 25, 2024. The first public meeting to discuss a proposal will be in June 2024.

Item 5: Evaluate the Opportunity to Develop a Festival/Community Type Event for the Township

Mr. Groller stated that the Township filled the Recreation Program Director position in January 2024. Ms. Houck has spent the last five months training and bringing the new staff up to speed with various programs and events. The Department is working on planning a festival/community type of event for the 2025 summer season. The Parks and Recreation Department recently hosted its first Touch-A-Truck Event in May, noting the event went over very well, and everyone is looking forward to it next year. Based on some informal discussions on hosting a car show, the staff is attending events and learning best practices to host a car show, potentially in September 2025. Mr. Stuck volunteered to assist the staff with this event.

Item 6: Safe Routes to Parks

No new reports have been updated since the last Vision Meeting. However, the Board of Supervisors informally discussed painting the word "SLOW" on the streets near the park entrances. The Board agreed that they would like staff to move forward with it.

Mr. Kocher mentioned the West Wyomissing property and the traffic problems in that area. People park on Wellington Boulevard and cross it, as there is no off-street parking. He noted that it is a wide road, and cars fly up and down it, and anything that staff can do to reduce traffic speed is appreciated.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS

Item 1: Maintain and Enhance Employee Relations and Communications

Mr. Groller thanked the Board for authorizing the hiring of additional staff, noting that this has been highly beneficial to existing staff and the Township residents. Since the last update, the Township has filled the Recreation Program Director position, the newly created Assistant Township Manager position, and the Deputy Fire Chief position. Mr. Groller said the staff is refining job descriptions for the Codes Department. Mr. Murray has been especially active in turning the Codes Department to focus on being proactive rather than reactive. Staff has been working on redefining the vacant Environmental Waste Coordinator position, which was budgeted for 2024. Mr. Groller stated that staff would like to fill this position with the uptick in PA One-Call requirements, the FOG Program, and other areas.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS *(Continued)*

Item 1: Maintain and Enhance Employee Relations and Communications *(Continued)*

With the hiring of the Assistant Township Manager, Dean Murray, the redirection of facilities responsibilities has begun, allowing Directors to focus on their core area. Mr. Groller said he and Mr. Murray have been working closely together, building teamwork amongst staff and refining best practices and areas for development and improvement to empower staff while providing the highest service to the residents.

Mr. Groller reported that staff continues to work on the Website Upgrade Project, the Codification of Ordinances Project, and the Mixed-Use Development Zoning Regulations updates. The Energov software was recently upgraded, and the accounts receivable module was implemented. Staff is nearing completion of the Online Payment Acceptance Project. Mr. Wozniak confirmed for Mr. Royer that the Codification Project will integrate with the Township's website on E-Code 360.

Mr. Groller stated that in Human Resources, the HR Team continues to work on revising job descriptions, reallocating responsibilities, creating positions, revising the employee handbook, and recently implementing the Management Development Program.

Mr. Groller stated that on the employee relations side, he continues with an open-door policy for all staff. Contract negotiations with the Township's Firefighter's Union have started, and the Township-wide holiday luncheon was resurrected last Christmas.

Item 2: Continue to Provide Residents with Quality Police and Fire Services

Fire Department: Chief Hackman stated that as of March 1, 2024, the Department's Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating was lowered from a 4Y to a 3Y, noting that this is a substantial accomplishment. The Fire Department ISO Rating determines the amount property owners pay for fire insurance. Chief Hackman pointed out that there are only 3,826 Departments with an ISO Level 3Y countrywide. The rate is based on fire flows, emergency communications, the fire department's general staff and training, community outreach, and water supply.

The Township officially terminated the Wyomissing Intergovernmental Agreement, effective April 30, 2024. The Department is up to 950 responses (a little lower than last year), and the average Turn-Out per incident is 4.9 personnel. The Department's Volunteer Deputy Chief Rick Schartel has retired after 50 years of service. Mr. Schartel will continue to update the Department's website and be their Public Information Officer.

Chief Hackman reported the following staffing levels:

- Volunteers:-24 (11-FF1, only 4 *Active*, 5 Exterior Only- *Only 3 Active*, 4 Fire Police, *Only 3 Active*, 4 Support)
- Career:15 Full-Time and 1Part-Time. Currently have one vacant position.
- Deputy Chief: The position is filled, and the new Deputy Chief will start on June 2, 2024.

Entry Level Firefighter List: The Physical Agility Testing is complete, and 14 out of 28 candidates passed the test. The Department will move on to the panel interview in June.

Command Vehicle Replacement: Both command vehicles were placed in service on May 30, 2024. The Department will re-assign existing vehicles and sell a 2003 Ford F350 utilized as a utility vehicle.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS *(Continued)*

Item 2: Continue to Provide Residents with Quality Police and Fire Services *(Continued)*

Fire Department: *(Continued)*

Records Management System: Starting to migrate data, build out reports, and train personnel and expect to go live with the new system on January 1, 2025.

Grants: The Department continually applies for grants through the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, FEMA, PA American Water, and UGI. The Department has submitted a FEMA Grant for self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA) and hoses. Chief Hackman said that since 2010, the Department has received \$387,582.77 through grant funding and discussed exploring grants for a possible North Station through Federal Appropriations Projects.

Projected Renovations: Chief Hackman reported working on 5-and 10-year plans. Chief Hackman noted that with the station approaching 20 years, the Department will need to start planning for capital renovations.

Projected Apparatus Replacement: Working on redefining to have a tiered-out plan.

Police Department: Chief Powell stated that the Department will continue to provide high-quality police services to the Township residents, noting that the Department was re-accredited by the state. The Department will continue to partner with federal, state, and local agencies on mutual areas of concerns and interest, as well as to continue to partner with Township Departments in the various internal departments of the Township, particularly with the Fire Department and Public Works Department, who the Police often work actively in incidents together; with planning and response. Chief Powell said that the Department works with the Parks and Recreation Department and Codes to a lesser extent, but they also appreciate their support. Chief Powell said that regarding technology, he discussed using force multipliers whenever possible, including the website and LTR cameras, and looking into internal cameras at Broadcasting Square.

The Department will continue to address and prioritize issues that are important to the community, noting that the Department does receive a lot of community feedback, including complaints, requests, and suggestions. The Department incorporates that into everyday activities, especially speeding and reckless driving. They will continue to develop and invest in the police personnel, noting that the Department has their last two (2) officers in the "Drop Program" retiring as of January 1, 2025, and is currently working with HR on a succession plan.

Chief Powell stated that the Department would like to continue to work on facility management upgrades, hopefully through grant funding. The Department did receive LSA County Grant funding, approximately \$52,000.00, which will be used for engineering, and the Department is hopeful to receive state funding. Chief Powell said that he and the Department appreciate the Board's support. The Department will have one (1) more individual at the academy and 32 officers until January 1, 2025, when it will drop to 31.

Item 3: Maintain Quality Roads

Mr. Groller stated that Service Electric is getting ready to embark on a similar project as Fast Bridge Fiber in the Township and discussed the installation of the cable box cabinets. Ms. Smith requested that staff look into whether there is any way to regulate the placement of these types of boxes. Mr. Groller confirmed for Mr. Royer that Fast Bridge Fiber is still working in the Township.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS *(Continued)*

Item 3: Maintain Quality Roads *(Continued)*

The Contract for the 2024 Roadwork, which includes construction and maintenance, was awarded Monday night for \$1,200,577.00. Mr. Groller stated that staff will be reevaluating where and when the Township will be paved and will move towards a more internal study than the HRG Study.

Item 4: Harvard Boulevard Road Restoration

Mr. Groller stated that there is no update other than the fact that the LSA Grant application was submitted last fall as directed by the Board of Supervisors. The expected announcement date to award the bid is fall 2024.

Item 5: Explore Merging Services With Neighboring Municipalities

The Township has ended the Municipal Agreement with the Borough of Wyomissing to allow a direct focus of manpower and resources for its businesses and residents.

STORMWATER MANDATES

Item 1: MS4 NPDES Permit Renewal

There is no update. Staff will start the renewal process in the 3rd quarter of 2024.

Item 2: MS4 Pollutant Reduction Facilities (Permit Requirements)

Mr. Groller stated that construction on the Werner Estates Improvements has been completed. Construction of the Yerger Boulevard improvements began in November 2023 and has reached substantial completion. The Wyomissing Creek Watershed Coalition continues to evaluate an option to retrofit the Stanford Avenue Dam location behind Lowe's. A Rehabilitation Project south of the Werner Farms retrofit is being considered for MS4 credit. Discharge across Old Fritztown Road has caused severe erosion within the existing channel.

PARKS AND RECREATION *(Continued)*

Item 7: Recycling Containers in Parks

Ms. Houck facilitated a "Park Maintenance Roundtable" session at the 2024 PRPS Conference in March. The roundtable did not have any new ideas for recycling, and they all noted that they were not using recycling containers in parks due to the time the staff spent separating co-mingled trash. Mr. Groller stated that the Township staff uses recycling containers for special events and programs, and staff will continue investigating other options.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS *(Continued)*

Item 6: Renewable Energy/Moving Towards a Greener Outlook

Mr. Groller stated this is ongoing as needed.

Item 7: Impact of Additional Career Firefighters on Tax Rate

The Board included a .25 mill tax increase in 2024 to begin addressing a potential staffing upgrade and discussed a possible additional .25 mill tax increase in 2025.

Item 8: Penn Avenue Revitalization Plan

Mr. Groller stated that staff would like this vision item, along with the Penn Avenue sidewalks and street crossing at Dwight Street and Penn Avenue, to be grouped and analyzed as part of the Penn Avenue Revitalization Plan.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS *(Continued)*

Item 9: Penn Avenue Sidewalks from Dwight Street to Howard Street

There is nothing new to report other than staff would like this vision item, along with Howard Street Sidewalks, to be grouped as part of the Penn Avenue Revitalization Plan.

Item 10: Howard Street Sidewalks

There is nothing new to report other than staff feeling that this vision item, along with Penn Ave Sidewalks and Street Crossings at Dwight Street and Penn Avenue, should be grouped together and analyzed as part of the Penn Ave Revitalization Plan.

The Board discussed vacant properties on Penn Avenue. Mr. Wertz questioned if PennDOT would look into a turn lane when the bridge is replaced. The Board agreed to form a Committee and look at the big picture of Penn Avenue and sidewalks. Mr. Murray discussed a grant that was available, up to \$300,000.00, noting it is a shared cost and the details of what is required, noting that it is an annual grant. Mr. Murray will look at the areas instructed by the Board, including Harvard Boulevard.

Next Vision Item

The Board agreed to add the Reading Hospital Tract as a vision item.

Mr. Wertz stated that since he became a Supervisor, he has seen many projects with the Board and staff working together. The Township is moving ahead, and it is a good thing.

Mr. Darrah reiterated his comments about the Christmas luncheon, stating that his staff appreciated the luncheon and the Supervisors coming out and speaking with staff.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Chairperson Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary L Rossi
Township Secretary

