

BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

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BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP Board of Supervisors Work Session Agenda September 23, 2020 6:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m. Budget – Building and Codes Department

Manager's Items:

- Pineville Tavern – Wrightstown Review

Executive Session

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors
Work Session
Minutes

The work session of the Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors was held September 23, 2020 electronically via the Zoom application due to the current State and Federal regulations in place from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Present:	Jon Forest	Chairman
	Maggie Rash	Vice-Chairman
	Paul Calderaio	Member
	Dana S. Cozza	Township Manager
	Daniel Gray	Township Engineer
	Craig A. Smith, Esquire	Township Solicitor
Not Present:	Tom Kelso	Township Water/Wastewater Consultant
	Luke Rosanova	Bucks County Planning Commission

The work session began at 6:00 p.m.

Budget – Building and Codes Department

Mr. Kettler, Director of the Code Enforcement Department, was present along with Mrs. Pistory, Director of the Finance Department, to discuss the projected 2021 budget.

Mr. Kettler highlighted the following permit related items:

- Projections for permit fees / building permits:

A decrease was noted in the permit applications for new homes and townhomes in 2020. Toll Feeney (Fenton's Corner) has 8 houses left to pull permits for this year (per Toll Brothers projections), leaving 9 for year 2021. (This decrease reduces revenue.)

- Single lots and teardown/rebuilds are unpredictable.

- Decks/patios/swimming pool permits (including Zoning permits) are up from 19 in 2019 to 23 as of August. This may be a COVID-19 related item with vacation money being spent on home improvements.

- Commercial: 5 permits are projected (as were budgeted in 2019). Penn's Purchase may come in, depending on their building/water issues. Wawa is expected. Technically the Biotech Center is part renovation/addition, and they are discussing converting some existing storage space into new labs; in addition to the Land Development Permit which is approved pending payment and resolution of stormwater management items.

Commercial fit-outs are unpredictable; there have been increased vacancies but people are moving into them.

Capital Purchases – Minor Machinery/Equipment

Mrs. Cozza said the GIS System proposed in last years budget is repeated, as it was delayed with the COVID-19 situation. She said there is another start-up meeting in a

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couple weeks with a presentation and she will let the Board know if the cost has increased.

Mr. Calderaio requested a refresher on this topic. Mrs. Cozza explained it is a GIS Mapping System plus more, aiding the Building department with stormwater mapping. She said the Water and Wastewater Department will use it to map wells, pump stations and pipes, and the Road Department can use it for traffic signals. Mrs. Pistory said it may be compatible with the current financial system in use, Edmunds. Mrs. Cozza said Administration could use it to track citizen concerns. She said it all will be mapped to the tax parcel file and could be an incredible resource for all of the employees who need the information. Mr. Kettler said Middletown Township is currently testing the web-based software. Mrs. Cozza said \$30,000 is budgeted as a start-up fee for the system.

Mr. Calderaio asked about licensing and software update expenses. Mr. Kettler said there is a cloud hosting fee. Mrs. Cozza said she will find out at the presentation about all associated fees, adding that the Board will need to approve it.

MS4 Stormwater / TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads)

Mrs. Cozza said that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection now requires TMDL for all of Buckingham Township, whereas previously it was only to be required for a portion of the township near the Plumstead Township border. Mrs. Pistory advised this will not be cheap. Mrs. Cozza said there are some basin renovations needing improvements, and they would count towards credit for MS4 requirements.

2021 Code Budget

Mr. Kettler noted the following items:

- General building permit fees are at 50% of what was budgeted in 2019.
- Mechanical permits are high due to school district renovations (mostly Central Bucks East High School).
- Swimming pools are increased.
- New houses are decreased.

Building Permits – Fees

Mr. Kettler said with building permits being on a downward trend, and increased alterations and renovations (which take extra time with reviews, site meetings, extra inspections, etc.), perhaps the fees should reflect the time spent accordingly.

Mrs. Cozza said the building department has traditionally paid for itself, and suggested due to decreased income and increased expenses, the fee schedule should be considered throughout the budget discussions this year to make proper adjustments. Mrs. Rash said that permit fees should cover the cost of expenses.

Mrs. Cozza presented a Residential Alterations Comparison Sheet showing similar Bucks County municipalities (such as Hilltown, Solebury, Doylestown Township and Northampton) permit fees. She said Buckingham is currently charging the lowest permit fees, and suggested raising it to an average amount in order to cover expenses. Mr.

Kettler said these fees have not been adjusted in at least 10 years. He said we want to recuperate our costs and be comparable to our neighbors.

Mr. Kettler said he had prepared a Swimming Pool Comparison Chart, in which Buckingham is also on the low side. He said the township added a “Pool stake-out” inspection to verify the pool is placed where it was shown on the approved plan, and this adds an expense.

Mr. Kettler said Fence Permits also require additional inspections.

Mr. Kettler discussed a Fireworks Permit for professional displays, as they are not specified in the fee schedule and the township currently covers these under the “Blasting Permit” fee.

Mr. Calderaio suggested a sliding scale for alterations. Mr. Kettler clarified such as the cost per \$1000 is adjusted based on the cost of the work? Mrs. Cozza said that would be difficult as each project is different.

Mrs. Cozza suggested the following fee revisions:

- Increase Swimming Pool permit fees from \$300 to \$400
 - Increase Alterations from \$9.00 per \$1,000.00 construction cost to \$13.00 per \$1,000.00
- The Board agreed. The Board also agreed to add \$500 for a Fireworks Permit.

Budget – General Fund Revenues

Mrs. Pistory said the general fund revenues are difficult to predict this year, as there is a post-COVID bubble occurring. She said there is a downward slide in the earned income tax. Mrs. Pistory said that revenues are \$500,000 to \$600,000 lower this year, and that associated interest will decrease. Mrs. Pistory also mentioned that she conservatively predicts real estate transfer taxes as the township is getting built out. Mrs. Cozza said they wanted to inform the Board that this is something to watch.

Budget Meeting Schedule

Mrs. Cozza said that proposed budgets for the Water, Wastewater, Police, Roads and Facilities, and Administration department are scheduled for the October 14, 2020 work session, and suggested the Board may want to begin the meeting earlier than 6:00 p.m. Mr. Calderaio suggested 5pm, and everyone agreed. Mrs. Cozza said that provides the October 28, 2020 work session for a wrap up, and presentation of the budget in November.

7:30 p.m. The Work Session adjourned.

8:30 p.m. The Work Session resumed.

Pineville Tavern Land Development, Buckingham Township TMP #6-25-22 and Wrightstown Township TMP #53-004-008

Mrs. Cozza said the township had received a proposed land development plan for the Pineville Tavern, proposing to enclose the outdoor dining area. She said previous improvements to the site, which straddles the township line with Wrightstown Township, had been relinquished to Wrightstown Township for review and processing. The Board agreed this proposal may be relinquished to Wrightstown Township, with copies of correspondence to be provided to Buckingham Township.

Tree Lighting Ceremony

The Board discussed the holiday Tree Lighting ceremony in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions. Various suggestions were discussed ranging from outdoor celebrations to having a mailbox for letters to Santa. The Board agreed to discuss this again next month.

Halloween

The Board agreed to continue Buckingham's policy that Halloween is celebrated on Halloween, and the township does not make regulations. However, suggestions from Bucks County Department of Health have been posted on the township website.

"Ready for 100" Resolution

Mrs. Cozza provided the Board with an update on the "Ready for 100" resolution as was previously presented by the Environmental Advisory Commission, advising the Board's revised resolution was provided to the EAC, which then submitted it to the Sierra Club for their review.

Support for Police Signs

Mrs. Cozza advised the Board that per the discussion during the last Work Session regarding a resident's request for "Support for Police" signs, the Buckingham Advisory Network (BAN) has decided to purchase signs as a fundraiser for the police department. Mrs. Rash said the signs reportedly cost \$8.75 each and 100 must be ordered, with BAN's charge to residents to be \$20.00 per sign. Mr. Calderaio said he knows of a less expensive source and will contact the Chief.

Political Signs

Mrs. Cozza said the township had received the usual calls at election time regarding political signs being placed on various properties. She said based on Craig Smith's memo from several years ago on this issue, respecting First Amendment rights, the Township should not restrict political signs in the right-of-way, but that PaDOT does have regulations regarding interfering with sight distances.

Draft Concept Plan for Buckingham Village

Mrs. Cozza said she had found available grant funding for projects through a PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund, and suggested that with the roundabout as proposed by PennDOT to be installed at Route 202 and Route 263, perhaps it would be a good time to extend the trails from Quarry Road to the proposed roundabout (as shown on the approved Trails Plan). Mrs. Cozza said the funding may offset the improvements that landowners along the trail are required to complete.

Mr. Gray suggested that the trail continue from the roundabout up to Route 413 and crossing to Route 413 and Old York Road (Route 263), including the appropriate crosswalks.

Mrs. Cozza said the grant application is due November 6, 2020 and may provide matching funds. The Board agreed unanimously that the grant would be beneficial to pursue. Mrs. Cozza said she and Mr. Gray would work on it together.

PennDOT Intersection Improvement – Old York Road and Swamp Road

Mr. Gray said he met with PennDOT a few months ago to discuss repaving Old York Road from Swamp Road towards Warminster to Sugar Bottom Road, and as part of that improvement PennDOT offered to update the Old York Road / Swamp Road intersection to provide a dedicated left turn lane from Old York Road onto Swamp Road. He said the improvements would include restriping the pavement and signage, but no physical upgrades to the traffic signal controller cabinet. Mr. Gray said the improvement would add a dedicated left turn lane in addition to the existing 2 travel lanes in each direction.

Mr. Gray said the intersection currently has a left turn arrow for the Old York Road northbound approach which lasts for 7 seconds no matter how many cars there are.

Mr. Gray said that PennDOT had advised the Township that they would only install any necessary pavement markings, and any changes to the traffic signal facilities would be the Township's responsibility to fund. Mr. Gray suggested that the Township consider installing video detection for the new left turn lane to improve the efficiency of the intersection. Mr. Gray said the estimate to upgrade the signal box for video detection is \$7,000.00.

Mr. Calderaio asked why there isn't a designated left turn signal when traveling southbound on Old York Road, and Mr. Gray said it is based on traffic volumes. He added that providing the dedicated left turn lane will improve the intersection movements.

Mr. Calderaio voiced approval of the Township installing the video detection, with Mrs. Rash and Mr. Forest neutral, but not opposed.

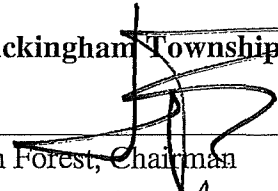
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9:15 p.m. The Board retired into Executive Session to discuss ongoing litigation concerning Right to Know requests.

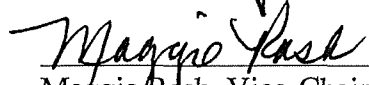
9:55 p.m. The Work Session adjourned.

Approved by the Board of Supervisors on the 28th day of October, 2020.

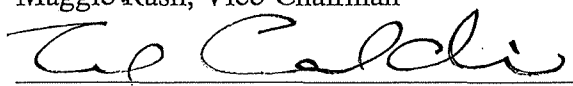
~~Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors~~



Jon Forest, Chairman

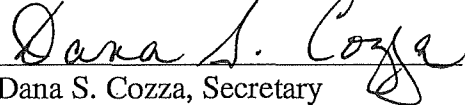


Maggie Rash, Vice-Chairman



Paul Calderaio, Member

Attest:



Dana S. Cozza, Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.

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