

**TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA
COUNCIL VIRTUAL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2021**

Manager Jakubec read a statement concerning virtual meeting procedures.

I. OPENING PROCEDURES

A. Call to Order by Vice President Vogel at 7:01 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice President Vogel.

C. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Charles A. Vogel, Vice-President of Council;
George H. Stewart, Second Ward; Gregory Caprara,
Third Ward; Allison Berger, Fourth Ward;
Cassandra Eccles, Fifth Ward

Absent: Robert John Smith, President of Council; John R.
Denny, Jr., At-Large

Also Present: Ted Curran, Treasurer; Julie A. Jakubec, CPA,
CGMA, Township Manager; Dan Garfinkel,
Township Solicitor; Charles W. Steinert, Jr., P.E.,
Township Engineer; Loren R. Kephart, Public
Service Superintendent; Scott K. Slagel, Police
Superintendent; Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

Manager Jakubec noted President Smith was tending to a personal matter and Mr. Denny, Jr. had a work scheduling conflict.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Council Workshop – February 2, 2021

B. Council Regular Meeting – February 9, 2021

Motion by Ms. Eccles to approve the subject minutes as presented was seconded by Ms. Berger and carried unanimously.

III. FINANCE

A. Vouchers – February 2021

Motion by Mr. Caprara to pay the subject Vouchers as presented was seconded by Ms. Berger.

Mr. Stewart presented questions which staff answered satisfactorily.

The motion carried unanimously. The Vouchers total \$1,103,257.90.

B. Receipts and Expenditures Records – January 2021

Motion by Mr. Stewart to approve the subject Receipts and Expenditures Records as presented was seconded by Ms. Eccles and carried unanimously.

C. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Curran noted 2021 started with uncertainty due to the pandemic. He noted Police vehicles will be replaced and services expected by the residents would continue. The Township has not had to leverage any short-term borrowing since real estate is strong.

IV. REPORTS

A. Other Organizations and Agencies Reports

No reports.

B. Monthly Department Reports

Ms. Eccles stated there seems to be a lot of permits. The Manager noted people seem to gear up with projects at this time of the year.

Ms. Berger requested Lennon Smith Souleret Engineers ("LSSE") to provide a cost estimate for each project, and if not available, a ball park figure, in their report. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. indicated he would follow up with LSSE.

Mr. Stewart suggested contacting the Manager with anything to include in the Newsletter. Manager Jakubec stated the next Newsletter will include the Veteran's Property Tax Program and storm water information. Ms. Cindy Harris requested establishing a corner in the Newsletter about what is going on with the Long Range Plan.

Mr. Stewart asked if special inspections are required for the swim school in Fox Chapel Plaza and if there is a safety plan for the use and storage of chlorine and other pool chemicals. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. explained the Building Code provides requirements for chemical storage, as well as special drainage control and other safety requirements which the Township will inspect. The project must comply before any occupancy permit is issued.

Ms. Eccles believed a permit from the water authority is needed from her experience working with the Community Swim Club. Mr. Stewart and Vice President Vogel noted other requirements, which Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. indicated he would follow up.

Mr. Stewart inquired about the location for storm water controls on Greyfriar. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. explained it is property the Township owns. The pipe is exposed. The plan is to construct a retention facility to help downstream flows.

Vice President Vogel inquired about the retention facility on Riverview. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. noted the developer was getting ready to dedicate the pond, but something is clogging the outfall. Vice President Vogel stated it has to be fixed before the Township will accept dedication.

Mr. Stewart questioned when the final storm water study report would be received from LSSE. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. stated they are confirming what the Township has is true, and should submit the report to the Township by June.

Mr. Stewart inquired about the Act 152 Program. Manager Jakubec explained the program provides funding for demolishing blighted properties. She recalled the Township has demolished some houses under the program.

Mr. Stewart inquired about 'Ride Outs'. Police Superintendent Scott Slagel noted a trend in major cities where a flash mob of dirt and street bikes, and unregulated ATVs perform stunts on roads. The City is following incidents due to concerns that the numbers are growing. It is something municipalities need to be aware of. Intelligence of this has been obtained through meetings on social media. Mr. Stewart inquired about the intent, which Police Superintendent Slagel stated is to show-off, create a disturbance, get on YouTube.

Mr. Stewart inquired about information related to recent burglaries. Police Superintendent Slagel stated County Detectives are following up and have a few people to look at. He noted there have been no other incidents since that weekend.

C. Township Manager's Report

No comments.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Ordinances – Second Reading and Adoption

- (1) Relocating the Stop Sign on Parkview Boulevard at Kirkwood Drive B-6-2021

Manager Jakubec stated Township Engineer Chuck Steinert, Jr., P.E. reviewed traffic at the intersection of Parkview Boulevard at Kirkwood Drive and is recommending relocating the STOP sign from Parkview Boulevard to Kirkwood Drive, on the southbound approach with Parkview Boulevard. The existing STOP sign is positioned nearly 70 feet beyond the intersection, and traffic on Kirkwood Drive travels at a higher rate of speed. Relocating the STOP sign will create a safer intersection for motorists and pedestrians.

Motion by Ms. Eccles to adopt ordinance Bill No. B-6-2021 was seconded by Mr. Caprara and carried unanimously.

- (2) Replacing the YIELD Sign on Weir Drive at Oakhurst Road B-7-2021
with a STOP Sign

The Manager noted staff has been verifying authorized traffic signs by ordinance in connection with the Codification of Ordinances project. It was realized the YIELD sign, authorized by Ordinance No. 848 does not exist on Weir Drive at Oakhurst Road. Upon further investigation, staff is recommending a STOP sign on Weir Drive at Oakhurst Road instead of a YIELD sign.

Motion by Mr. Stewart to adopt ordinance Bill No. B-7-2021 was seconded by Ms. Eccles and carried unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolutions

(1) Authorizing the Purchase of Police Vehicles B-19-2021

Manager Jakubec stated Police Superintendent Slagel is requesting authorization to purchase one 2021 Ford Police Interceptor Utility AWD and one 2021 Ford F150 4x4 Responder from Laurel Ford through the SHACOG Purchasing Alliance Program. The cost of the two vehicles is \$68,945, less trade in values of one 2019 Ford Police Interceptor SUV in the amount of \$14,000, and one 2014 Dodge Charger in the amount of \$4,000, for a total cost of \$50,945 for the two new vehicles, plus the cost of new equipment needed for the vehicles. The 2021 budgeted allocation for the vehicles is \$92,000.

Motion by Mr. Caprara to approve resolution Bill No. B-19-2021 was seconded by Mr. Stewart and carried unanimously.

(2) Authorizing the Execution of a Municipal Police Cooperative Agreement B-20-2021

The Manager noted Police officials from several area municipalities have recommended entering into an agreement to continue participating in the North Hills DUI Task Force, provide resources, and improve the ability to enforce DUI laws. The resolution authorizes the execution of the Cooperative/Mutual Aid Agreement among all participating municipalities.

Motion by Ms. Eccles to approve resolution Bill No. B-20-2021 was seconded by Mr. Stewart and carried unanimously.

(3) Authorizing the Purchase of Public Service Department Equipment B-21-2021

Manager Jakubec stated Public Service Superintendent Loren Kephart is requesting authorization to purchase one 2021 Ford F-250 4x4 Super Cab Pickup Truck and one 2021 Ford F-250 Regular Cab 4x4 Pickup Truck with the snow plow package from Laurel Ford of Windber, PA through CoStars Contract No. 025-043. The cost of the new Super Cab Pickup Truck is \$34,750, less the trade in value of \$18,000 for the 2015 F-250 Utility Truck, for a total purchase price of \$16,750. The cost of the Regular Cab 4x4 Pickup Truck with snow plow package is \$35,895. The 2021 budgeted allocation for Public Service Department equipment is \$71,000.

Motion by Ms. Eccles to approve resolution Bill No. B -21-2021 was seconded by Mr. Caprara

Mr. Stewart questioned if the Township does its own maintenance; keeps up on the warranty; and about the dealer's reputation. Mr. Kephart stated Township staff does perform maintenance on the vehicles. He added Charapp Ford would handle any warranty services on Public Service and Police vehicles.

On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

- (4) Authorizing the Advertising of a Request for Proposals B-22-2021
for a Long Range Comprehensive Plan Consultant

Manager Jakubec stated representatives of the Joint Long Range Comprehensive Plan Review Committee presented a proposed Request for Proposals for a Plan Consultant at the March 2nd Council Workshop. The resolution authorizes the advertisement to receive proposals.

Motion by Mr. Caprara to approve resolution Bill No. B-22-2021 was seconded by Ms. Berger.

Vice President Vogel acknowledged several representatives of the Committee were in attendance to answer questions. He commended the Committee on the very comprehensive RFP.

On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

Vice President Vogel noted a lot more people are attending meetings since COVID-19.

A. Citizens

Mr. Tom Portante, Margery Drive, indicated he had heard talk about changing the Home Rule Charter, and questioned what is being discussed.

Manager Jakubec noted residents have expressed interest in changing how a Council Person that has resigned is selected. Instead of appointing a person from the same political party, considering the best qualified candidate regardless of political affiliation. It has also been suggested to change the Charter to be gender neutral.

Vice President Vogel added Council is proposing those two items to be put up for referendum for the voters to decide in the fall. He further explained the process to have the referendum on the ballot.

Mr. Portante was not opposed to cleaning up the gender lingo. He explained that Council is a political organization voted on by the people. The current Charter makes it a political party issue. If this change as suggested is put into effect, four members of Council decide who will fill the vacancy. Mr. Portante believed the decision should be up to the voters. The way the system works now, if somebody is elected and takes Office the first week of January and they die three days later, whoever Council chooses to fill the vacancy serves on Council for the next four years. He suggested if the Charter is to be changed regarding a vacancy, the person who the new people select could be elected in the next available election, or as soon as practical, or someone else could be elected. This way, someone is holding a temporary, non-elected position for a very short period of time. He stated Pennsylvania has state-wide elections every spring and every fall. He would not advocate the expense to have a new or special election just for one office. Anyone interested in filling the seat would follow the current criteria; they obtain ten signatures on a petition to be placed on the ballot. If there are eight people on the ballot, the one with the most votes is inaugurated upon certification of the election. This would allow for the people to be in charge of

who that person is and not four members of Council. Mr. Portante acknowledged Council does a lot of work for the community without much recognition and for not much pay, which he really appreciates, but four people making a selection for that person to be replaced is not how democracy is supposed to work. The system now says you're replacing a party person with the same party. That person was elected by their party. He understood that Council would decide who that best person is, and maybe Council picks the right person, but maybe they don't. Mr. Portante recalled how the system used to be for the At-Large election, that the person with the most votes became President and the second most votes became Vice President. The Charter was changed to make it up to Council to decide at their first Organizational Meeting, who is to be President and Vice President, which he opposed. Mr. Portante explained Council is taking the value and judgement of the entire electorate and subjugating that to what four people on Council want to do. Vice President Vogel agreed, but recalled that was decided by referendum. Mr. Portante recalled back then there were maybe three people attending the Council meetings, other than staff and Council. Nobody seemed to care. He believed it should be up to Council to recognize what is best, not for Council, but what is best for the overall Township, the voting public. He acknowledged the change went through the system as it should, but it wasn't well known and it is the peoples' fault for not paying attention.

Ms. Harris stated she had not thought about once Council appoints a person to fill a vacancy that they would be in that position until they have to run for election. She also noted the Home Rule Charter is up for discussion among the Long Range Comprehensive Plan Review Committee.

Vice President Vogel stated he has always felt the seat should be filled by the voters and was not opposed to considering putting that up for referendum. Vice President Vogel thought it a good suggestion and was open to further discussion.

B. Council

Ms. Eccles referenced a letter received from Mr. Don Lightner concerning the Margaret Weil Nature Reserve. The letter noted things residents are doing to fix it up. The Audubon Society donated a bunch of trees that were planted. The letter also states the park does not need a picnic bench. Vice President Vogel stated the park is another hidden gem that people do not know about. Ms. Eccles added that the local Boy Scouts of America have done a lot of work in the park as well.

C. Staff

Manager Jakubec acknowledged Mr. Kevin Brett, of Lennon Smith Souleret Engineering joined the zoom meeting if Council has any questions regarding their report.

The Manager informed Council that the Township received the Government Finance Officer Association ("GFOA") Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. She also stated the Township was once again named a Banner Community.

Manager Jakubec noted staff has been working with Township resident, Sanford Leuba. She stated Mr. Leuba has donated 100 Silky Willow Trees to plant along the streambank in O'Hara Township Community Park.

Vice President Vogel stated the Allegheny League of Municipalities (“ALOM”) conference has been scheduled in June this year.

Manager Jakubec recommended not renting park shelters or opening park restrooms until more people are vaccinated and information on the virus variants is available. Mr. Caprara questioned if any County reports reflected any guidance about opening parks. The Manager had not found any guidance about opening park facilities, though the number of COVID-19 cases was down. She would continue checking with the Recreation and Park Society for guidance. Manager Jakubec noted vaccines are to be available by the end of May for everyone.

Vice President Vogel was in agreement to continue monitoring the data and stay the course. He stated the experts do not know how or if the variants will react to the vaccine, and Spring Break is in full force.

Mr. Stewart agreed but also noted a hardship in not being able to use the restrooms. He questioned if there were any procedures in an emergency; i.e. one person at a time. Manager Jakubec stated she would check the Recreation and Park Society recommendations/guidelines, but did not believe one person could sanitize all park restrooms multiple times a day.

The Manager stated an Executive Session was not necessary unless Council wished to discuss something.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Vogel thanked everyone for attending.

Motion by Ms. Eccles to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Ms. Berger and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Cathy Bubas, Manager’s Secretary

Attachment: Attendance Sheet