

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BUSINESS MEETING
December 1, 2022**

Call to Order: Chairman Neights called the hybrid live/virtual meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Protocol for Hybrid Meetings: Chairman Neights provided an overview of the protocols for public participation for members of the public attending the meeting virtually over Zoom.

Roll Call:

- a. The following Board members were in attendance: Chairman Neights, Vice Chair Coless, Supervisors Darby (via Zoom), MacFarland and Sorgini.
- b. Also in attendance were: E.J. Mentry, Township Manager; Lauren Gallagher, Township Solicitor; Tim Woodrow, Township Engineer, Mike Mrozinski, Community Development Director; Police Chief Michael Jackson, and Student Representative Ashish Jeyapratap.

Chairman's Comments

Chairman Neights announced that an executive session was held prior to the meeting on December 1, 2022, to discuss personnel and legal matters.

1) Presentations

- A) Student representative report – Ashish Jeyapratap

2) Consent Agenda

- A) **MOTION:** Supervisor Sorgini made a motion to approve the consent agenda, moving the minutes of the Board of Supervisors business meeting of November 17, 2022 into the record. Supervisor MacFarland seconded the motion.
 - i) There was no public comment.
 - ii) The motion *passed* 5-0.

3) Old Business

- A) Presentation on Township Budget, Fund Balance and American Rescue Plan Funds
 - i) Mr. Mentry presented an overview of the Board of Supervisor's fiscal planning efforts for 2023 and beyond. He said that it is anticipated that the Township will have a General Fund balance at the end of 2022 of \$5.6 million. This significant reserve is a result of the Township's history of conservative budgeting, fiscal restraint, and the maintaining of minimum staffing levels for a number of years. He noted that the supervisors have held many discussions, including 10 hours of public meetings, to develop the 2023 budget and a plan for meaningful allocation of the General Fund balance. The plan includes:
 - (1) Reserve \$450,000 to balance the 2023 budget
 - (2) Maintain \$3.25 million in the General Fund as Unassigned Fund Balance or "rainy day" funds
 - (3) Allocate the remaining \$1.9 million to a newly-created municipal complex fund and to existing underfunded capital projects and stormwater funds.

- ii) Mr. Mentry said the Board's discussions had also included planning for the approximately \$2.8 million federal funds received from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Approximately \$1.3 million of the funds have been obligated through the 2023 budget.

(1) Preliminary plans for the remaining \$1.5 million include reserves for grant matching funds, stormwater/drainage improvement projects, and a yet-to-be-determined community project. Mr. Mentry said plans will be finalized throughout 2023 and community input will be important. He said that at a future meeting staff will present a fund balance policy for the Board's consideration to provide guidance on how to handle any surplus.

B) Consideration of Resolution 2022-34 adopting the 2023 Budget and appropriating specific sums estimated to be required for the specific purposes of the municipal government

- i) Mr. Mentry said the budget had been advertised as required and posted to the Township website. In response to Chairman Neights, he said no public feedback had been received at the Township office.
- ii) There was discussion regarding the productive conversations that had taken place during the Board's budget process. The supervisors noted that the decisions regarding the budget were not made lightly. The need for investment in personnel, services and equipment was cited.
- iii) Supervisor MacFarland expressed serious concern about the recurring operating costs and the lack of projected revenue increases.
- iv) **MOTION:** Supervisor Sorgini made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-34 adopting the 2023 Budget, seconded by Vice Chair Coless.
- v) There was no public comment.
- vi) The motion *passed* 4-1, with Supervisor MacFarland opposing.

C) Consideration of Resolution 2022-35 establishing the 2023 real estate tax millage rate

- i) Mr. Mentry outlined the tax rates included in the 2023 Budget: 1.5973 mills for General Purposes, .500 mills for Lower Providence Emergency Services, .345 mills for Lower Providence Community Library, .276 mills for Debt Services, and .241 mills for Parks and Recreation Operations.
- ii) The tax rates reflect "Option C" from the advertised budget. The rates represent a .3118 increase in the General Fund and a .06 mill increase in the Fire/EMS fund for a total increase of .3718 mills. This will generate \$600,500 in revenue. With the tax rate increase, the average taxpayer will see an average annual tax increase of \$62.80. There will be a remaining deficit in the General Fund of approximately \$450,000.
- iii) It was explained that 1 mill equals \$1 for every \$1,000 of assessed property value.
- iv) **MOTION:** Vice Chair Coless made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-35 establishing the 2023 real estate tax millage rates. Supervisor Sorgini seconded the motion.
- v) There was no public comment.
- vi) The motion *passed* 3-2 with Chairman Neights and Supervisor MacFarland opposing.

4) New Business

A) Authorization to advertise an amendment to Chapter 123 of the Lower Providence Township Code, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance regarding waiver of land development

- i) Solicitor Gallagher explained the amendment would create exemptions to the land development process for smaller projects on nonresidential properties.
- ii) There was discussion regarding the inclusion of more parameters and a checklist of items that could prevent unintended consequences from a waiver. Staff was requested to research existing ordinances and to revise the draft amendment for future consideration.

- B) Authorization to advertise amendment to Chapter 11A of the Lower Providence Township Code, Environmental Advisory Council ordinance regarding membership of EAC
 - i) The amendment expands the council to seven members from the current five and includes language changing election of the EAC chair to be made by the EAC members rather than the Board of Supervisors.
 - ii) **MOTION:** Chairman Neights made a motion to authorize advertisement of the EAC amendment, seconded by Supervisor Darby.
 - iii) There was no public comment.
 - iv) The motion *passed* 5-0.
- C) Consideration of acceptance of phasing update for Shannondell Phase Four
 - i) Mr. Mentry said the Township received the annual schedule update from Audubon Land Development Corp. notifying the Township that phase four of the five-phase project will be submitted on or before December 31, 2035.
 - ii) **MOTION:** Chairman Neights made a motion to accept the phasing update, seconded by Supervisor Sorgini.
 - iii) There was no public comment.
 - iv) The motion *passed* 5-0.

5) Announcements/Meetings

- A) The Caring and Sharing holiday food and gift drive is underway. Details can be found on the Parks and Recreation website, lptrec.com.
- B) The Board of Supervisors is looking for qualified residents interested in serving on various boards and commission. Details can be found on the Township website, lowerprovidence.org.
- C) The annual tree lighting will be held Dec. 2 at the Township complex at 6:30 p.m.
- D) Sewer Authority meeting – Dec. 12 at 4:30 p.m.
- E) Environmental Advisory Council meeting – Dec. 19 at 7:00 p.m.
- F) Parks & Recreation Board – Dec. 20 at 7:00 p.m.
- G) Zoning Hearing Board – Dec. 22 at 7:00 p.m.
- H) Planning Commission – Dec. 28 at 7:00 p.m.

6) Comments and other Business

- A) Supervisor MacFarland noted that the Lower Providence Fire Company is hosting its annual Breakfast with Santa on Dec. 3. and Santa will be visiting neighborhoods on a firetruck on Dec. 10.
- B) Supervisor Darby reiterated that the Board is looking for citizens to serve on boards and commissions.
- C) Vice Chair Coless announced that a holiday community dinner is being held at Chadwick's on Dec. 23 with sponsorship by Audubon Land Development.

7) Courtesy of the Floor

- A) Karen Stine, president of the Library Board of Trustees, thanked the Board for its ongoing support. She noted that the library's December meeting, originally scheduled for Dec. 19, will be held Dec. 15 at 6:00 p.m.

8) Adjournment

- A) **MOTION:** Chairman Neights made a motion to adjourn. Supervisor Darby seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Next Business Meeting: December 15, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.
Reorganization Meeting: January 3, 2023 @ TBD