

West Vincent Township
Special Board of Supervisors Meeting

March 12, 2015 7:30 PM

Attendance: Chairman Kenneth Miller, Jr., David Brown, John Jacobs, James Wendelgass Township Manager, and Township Secretary Tammy Swavely.

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

This is the second meeting that the Board has scheduled to discuss a 5-year plan for West Vincent Township. At the first meeting, several topics were written down on a board and are now the subject of discussion tonight.

24 hour police coverage. Mr. Brown stated that currently the Township has police coverage from 6:00 AM – 2:00 AM. During that 4 hour gap, the State Police cover the area. There are at least two reasons why the police department will be going to 24 hour coverage. The first reason is that the State is talking about charging a significant amount of money for Townships to use State Police as coverage. The number is as high as \$250,000 or more a year. The second reason is that it is good to have local coverage. The State may not always respond if the dispatcher can determine it is not an emergency and can wait until the local staff comes on duty. Chief Michael Swinger has provided figures for the next 5 years. If the department goes 24 hours, it will need 2 more Full Time police officers. The fully loaded increase for this would be approximately \$197,000. This is an increase in the budget that the Township has to keep in mind. This would be phased in. A problem with this is that another issue arises, and it is space. We currently have the Chief of Police, five Full Time officers, and three Part Time officers. Some of the times West Vincent has only one officer on duty, but Chief would have to be consulted for the exact coverage. Some Townships mandate that two officers be on duty at all times. We also use assistance from other Townships when necessary, as we do the same. The office space will be a major issue. Different ideas need to be explored. An idea that was suggested was to use the barn and turn it into offices. Another idea would be to use the Griffith property as a location or some other piece of property that the Township owns. Mr. Wendelgass stated that he has been in contact with an architect firm who does feasibility studies. This firm did the one for the current Township building. They would do research and come up with recommendations, costs, and a sketch. For this total cost, it would be approximately \$10,000. They would be able determine which would be better, how to get better use of this building, build other buildings, or lease space. This company does this on a regular basis and has done it recently for a regional police force. Mr. Jacobs stated that he would like to get this done sooner rather than later. He stated that the barn may be feasible for the road crew also. Mr. Wendelgass stated that this building probably would be more suited for the police and have the Township offices move to a new space in the barn. That is where the Township would benefit from the expertise of a company to do a study.

Additional staff: Mr. Miller stated that the Township is getting more roads with each new subdivision and the Road Department is going to need another crew member. Residents expect quick response and now that we will have another truck, it would cut down on overtime and

contracted time. If necessary, the Township would be able to rent equipment with another qualified driver. Mr. Miller would like to add that person on within two years. A Full Time person with qualifications including a CDL would be approximately \$55,000-\$60,000. Mr. Wendelgass stated that he did not estimate administrative staff. It would depend on what they are hired for. For an estimate, the average salary with benefits may cost \$55,000-\$60,000.

Sale of Sewer Plants: Mr. Wendelgass stated that the RFP is currently in draft form. He is working with Carroll Engineering on language. These plants are difficult to reach an estimated value since they were given to the Township by Deed of Dedications. A PUC would purchase these plants based on assets and expansion. Mr. Wendelgass hopes this will get done this year. Mr. Jacobs stated that it is the difficult part, you can't spend money until you have it but in the long haul, he does not want the Township to have a Municipal Authority. Mr. Jacobs asked if the purchaser would be buying on future uses. Mr. Wendelgass stated that yes, the Township would get paid for all the expansions as they came on line. It would all be in the Agreement of Sale. The Township Solicitor says that this is not uncommon. These companies purchase the old plants based on what future uses are available. They are purchasing an income stream. Mr. Brown stated that since the profit numbers would be significant, the projects on the Township's list would benefit.

Update Ordinances: The Township Comprehensive Plan gets updated every ten years. West Vincent Township is part of the Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission with four other municipalities. The last major update of the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO was in 1998 when the Township adopted the Growing Greener Ordinance. The PRPC will update the Comprehensive Plan when necessary. Regional Planning was discussed. Mr. Brown stated that the purpose of being in the PRPC helps West Vincent because State Law does not allow Townships to prohibit porn shops (for example) and trailer parks, bill boards, etc. As long as the Township is part of a regional plan, and that somewhere this type of zoning is permitted, then it counts. West Vincent's Zoning Ordinances have been found in compliance with the PRPC. Mr. Wendelgass stated that the costs associated with updating ordinances is not that expensive. Advice from counsel is obtained and sometimes additional zoning laws get put in when PA law changes.

5-year road improvement program: Mr. Miller stated that Carroll Engineering did road repair estimates with 2015 pricing. The following is a list of roads that need costly repairs: Blackhorse Road, gravel portion from Rt. 401 to Route 100 - \$606,438.00; Davis Lane culvert - \$376,362.00; Dewees Lane - \$52,920.00; Jaine Lane - \$311,094.00; Red Bone Road - \$931,800.00; Saw Mill Road - \$1,082,760.00; St. Andrews Lane - \$425,502.00; St. Matthews Road - \$493,440; Flint/Old Kimberton Road - \$600,000.00; Blackhorse Road, paved portion from Route 100 to the Upper Uwchlan Township border - \$150,000.00. The total for all projects is \$5,030,316.00. The Board has discussed how to fund these projects, but currently does not have an answer. Mr. Jacobs stated that some of the gravel roads may be able to get tar and chip on them to help maintain them which is a less expensive way to repair them. Mr. Miller stated that the Township has plans to do S. Chester Springs Road to the top of the hill this summer. These road improvement figures are not in the annual budget, they are in addition to the annual road repairs. Mr. Miller feels that these numbers may be high estimates, as much as 20%. He continued stating that these roads have received the most complaints. The problem is that there is no permanent fix for gravel roads. People who have been complaining is mostly for ditches washing out, for example on Saw Mill

Road. Some of this paving would change the neighborhood. If Blackhorse Road was paved, it could potentially be a cut through for those on Route 100. Neighbors cannot decide, it almost always ends up 50% want one thing and 50% want another. Mr. Jacobs stated that how the Board makes a decision is tough. In 2014 the road department did go over budget because a lot of remedial work was done. People in West Vincent Township expect a certain level of service.

Increase parks and playing fields: As the population increases, the demand for playing fields will increase. The parks we have West Vincent got them through development. Developers know that buyers want parks so they want to install them. In 2012, the Northern Federation of Chester County did a study which came out saying that the area needs 23 diamond fields and only 6 are available. For rectangular fields, the area needs 19 and only 6 are available. The cost to build a baseball field on a flat piece of ground is approximately \$250,000. The Township used a grant to build Matthews Meadows Fields. Mr. Wendelgass stated that the Park and Recreation Commission researched areas for playing fields and could not find suitable space. All the areas were wet, hilly or had too many trees. Mr. Wendelgass stated that the new homes being built are geared towards families so this need will not go away. Mr. Jacobs suggested that the Board can consider adding funds to the Budget each year to save for fields.

Budget Surplus: The Board needs to decide on how to maintain the budget surplus and how much. In 2014 there was over 1 million in unspent funds. Mr. Jacobs would like this broken down into the budget so the calculation can be seen. Mr. Wendelgass stated that all the figures are in his Township Treasurer Report. This tells you how much money is in each account. Mr. Brown stated that he does not feel income is a problem because we have a balanced budget. It is when the Township would get a windfall of funds, such as from the sale of the sewer plants, the Board needs to maintain some as a rainy day fund.

Multi-modal Implementation: The Township needs to have a plan in place before Bryn Coed gets subdivided. This would make it easier to get walking trails along road frontage in West Vincent. If it is in the Zoning Ordinance, it is the easiest way to have a developer put them in. The Township is not on the defense asking for them. If the Multi-Modal Plan was adopted, this would be used mainly for new development. There are many projects in the plan that the Township would not have the funding for, but if a new development would come in, then a developer would have to see that the plan gets followed. This plan would not keep traffic from going on certain roads unless they were closed. The Township can work with a developer to install things on their property, but to install them on someone else's would not work. Traffic calming was discussed. Speed bumps are not the answer since Emergency Services do not like them. Trees sometimes can be planted since the sight of a tree alongside of the road would be a traffic hazard.

Legal Costs: Mr. Brown stated that he along with the other Supervisors review each attorney's invoice. He feels that the rates are reasonable. Mr. Jacobs stated that the residents do not have the ability to see what is actually behind the legal fees until the Board has a settlement. Many of the legal bills the Board is not at liberty to share. He does not have an answer if they are too high. Mr. Wendelgass stated that in 2014 the invoices reflected many litigations. This included paying some settlements that were out there for several years that finally got settled. It also included union contracts, and the sale of the sewer plants. Most of these were one-time expenses and were

not anticipated to all be in the 2014 Budget, especially the litigation. One never really knows how long a litigation could go. The costs comes from the Township defending their ordinances. Mr. Miller stated that is what we are to do. He has not seen anyone over using counsel. Mr. Brown agreed. Mr. Jacobs stated that there may be somewhere to cut spending on legal fees.

The Township debt was discussed. Mr. Wendelgass had the figures and shared them with the Board. Mr. Brown asked if the Township has an excess of Open Space taxes. Mr. Wendelgass stated that yes, in fact the Township accumulates over \$200,000 every year and they can only be spent on open space. The bond cannot be prepaid due to penalties. At some point in the future, the Township will be able to pay more on the bond, but not at this time. The Township has .25% Open Space EIT which cannot be changed. The bond prohibits it from being changed.

Mr. Brown reiterated the volunteer fire departments are the biggest bargain the Township has from the last meeting. He agrees with Mr. Miller from the last meeting that if the sewer plants sell, that the Township should put aside some funds in trust for them.

Mr. Wendelgass compiled a list of projected expenses for the next 5 years from replacing the HVAC system in the main building to replacing road equipment which Mr. Miller shared with the audience. Some have a funding source, such as the general fund or impact fees, and some still need to be determined.

The Board took many comments from the residents during the meeting. The Board will consider all the topics and the planning will be added to the next Board meeting on March 23, 2015.

Meeting adjourned 9:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Swavely
Township Secretary