

Tredyffrin Township
Special Meeting – Strategic Funding Options
Minutes – April 4, 2022

A special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Tredyffrin Township was held on the above date at the Tredyffrin Township Building and via Zoom. Board members present included Chair Julie Gosse, Vice-chair Matt Holt, KS Bhaskar, Mark Freed, Sharon Humble, David Miller, and Murph Wysocki. Also, in attendance were Township Manager William Martin; Assistant Township Manager/Finance Director Joseph DiRocco; Public Information Specialist Amanda Lafty; and Recording Secretary Patricia Hoffman.

The meeting dates for the special meetings were advertised in the 1/29/2022 issue of Daily Local and the 2/6/2022 issue of the Main Line Suburban.

Dr. Gosse called the above meeting to order at 6:58 PM.

This meeting was being held as a follow up to a presentation by Mr. DiRocco at the 2/28/2022 Board of Supervisors meeting regarding strategic funding options for future expenditures and was continued from the 3/7/2022 Special Meeting.

Mr. Martin provided a meeting introduction and reviewed the guidelines. He noted that residents can continue to submit feedback prior to the April 18 Board of Supervisors meeting by email at ttbosmeeting@tredyffrin.org.

Mr. DiRocco reviewed the revised spreadsheet that was updated after the 2/28/2022 Board of Supervisor meeting and the 3/7/2022 Special Meeting, providing a high-level overview of the impacts of each funding alternative which included: issuing long-term bonds, earned income tax (EIT), stormwater fee, and sale of the sewer system. He showed how each choice would impact the residents of the Township. He also reviewed the current 5-year capital plan unfunded items that were not stormwater related. He provided a comparison between a potential tax increase versus a bond issuance for unfunded projects in the 5-year plan.

Dr. Gosse reiterated guidelines for the meeting, stated that the meeting would end at 9 PM, and that the Supervisors would plan to choose the funding options at the regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting on April 18.

New Garden Township resident Bill Ferguson shared his concerns regarding the sale of the sewer system to Aqua and shared New Garden residents' experiences and the impact after the sale of their system.

Tom Torresson, Dayleview resident and Berwyn Fire Company president, expressed concerns with Berwyn Fire Company expenses. He stated that the fire company did not have a stand on any of the funding options but that he personally favored an EIT or a Township real estate tax increase.

Resident Tony Dill, Princeton Road, does not support the sale of the sewer system but does support a stormwater management fee.

Willistown Township resident William Gordon, formerly a Tredyffrin Township resident, does not support the sale of the sewer system and commended Tredyffrin Township's history of its sewer system management.

Catherine Williams, W. Valley Road, stated that stormwater and fire company support should be considered separately adding that she supports a stormwater management fee and a bond issuance to support the fire companies. She does not support the sale of the sewer system to Aqua.

Willistown Township resident Henry Yordan opposes the sale of the sewer system to Aqua and support the issuance of bonds. He shared his experience with the sale of the system by Willistown to Aqua.

Resident Ed Sweeney, Wembley Drive, does not support an EIT nor the sale of the sewer system but does support issuance of bonds and a stormwater management fee.

Resident Richard Gage, The Quarters in Chesterbrook, opposes the sale of the sewer system and added it could impact water rates as well as sewer rates.

Resident Bod Atchinson, Lisbeth Lane, thanked the Willistown Township residents for sharing their experiences with the sale of that system to Aqua.

Resident Brendan Howard, Long Lane, opposes the sale of the sewer system but asked what stormwater projects would be funded. Dr. Gosse summarized the proposed stormwater plan that was presented at the February 28 Board of Supervisors meeting. Mr. DiRocco added that the Supervisors have identified the need to address stormwater issues long-term. They have also identified projected operating costs for the MS4 plan and a flood reduction plan, the needed funding for which is over and above budgetary needs.

Resident Nicholas Carosella, Stonehurst Court in Chesterbrook, expressed concerns regarding the sale of the sewer system to Aqua. He does not support an EIT. He supports a stormwater management fee to fund stormwater projects and a bond issuance.

Resident Mark Smith, Old State Road, supports a bond issuance. He also asked if stormwater runoff could be collected in now defunct septic systems.

Resident Paul Eisenberg, Orchard Road, opposes the sale to Aqua but does support a stormwater management fee.

Resident Geoff Meyer, Old Forge Crossing HOA President, shared that the association has spend over \$1million to mitigate stormwater on the property over the last eight years. He opposes the sale of the sewer system to Aqua. He does support as stormwater management fee and then a bond issuance if needed. He asked which option had the least cost impact on residents over the next 20 years. Dr. Gosse referred to the spreadsheet presented at the beginning of the meeting adding that an EIT would affect the residents the most and a bond issuance have the least impact. Selling the system would also have a great impact. Mr. Holt clarified that the information presented on the spreadsheet were estimates of the potential impacts.

Resident Mike Heaberg, Margo Lane, expressed appreciation to the Willistown Township residents for sharing their experiences. He opposes the sale of the sewer system to Aqua and does not support an EIT because of the tremendous impact on Tredyffrin Township wage earners. He supports a stormwater management fee as the most logical option to fund stormwater projects. He supports funding non-stormwater capital projects and EMS funding through the budgetary process and use of reserves.

Resident Joe Canterelli, Camsten Court in Chesterbrook, opposes the sale of the sewer system and an EIT. He supports a bond issuance and a real estate tax increase.

Resident Peter Cordray, Deepdale, thanked the Willistown Township residents for sharing their experiences and opposes the sale of the sewer system and an EIT. He is strongly in favor of a stormwater management fee.

Resident and Stormwater Task Force Member Ray Clarke does not support the sale of the sewer system or an EIT. He shared concerns for the impact of any of the options on Township residents. He supports a stormwater management fee. He also asked for a specific project list from the fire companies that require funding. He supports funding pension needs/OPEB through the budget.

Resident Catherine Miesen, Berkley Road, supports a stormwater management fee and supports funding for the fire companies but opposes the sale of the sewer system.

Resident David Bennett, Hillside Road, does not support the sale of the sewer system or an EIT but does support a stormwater management fee. He also expressed support for taxing future development projects as a funding source.

Resident Joe Sermarini, Springdell Village, asked if there were grant sources available to which Dr. Gosse replied that there were, that staff were applying where applicable, but that the funding is not enough for the projects proposed.

Resident Pat McHugh, Stirling Drive, expressed concern that there was no burden on the developers; that once the developments are complete, the burden remains on the residents. He thanked the stormwater task force for their work and their report. He opposes an EIT and supports a bond issuance.

Resident Barbara Kerner, W. Valley Road, shared her personal stormwater issues.

Mr. Freed does not support an EIT nor the sale of the sewer system to Aqua because of the ultimate impact on the residents. He supports a stormwater management fee that would be paid by every property owner. He stated that the two main issues facing the Township are stormwater and supporting the fire companies. HE added that the Supervisors need to continue to consider a bond issuance and real estate taxes. He thanked everyone who participated in person and virtually.

Mr. Miller expressed appreciation for the public's input, adding that stormwater and fire company support are the two major issues facing the Township. He stated that the stormwater management fee makes the most sense to fund stormwater projects and possible bond issuance for funding the fire companies. He does not support an EIT adding that not having an EIT keep the Township as a desirable location for commercial re-location. He opposes the sale of the sewer system.

Mr. Wysocki opposes an EIT and the sale of the sewer system. He supports a stormwater management fee for stormwater project funding and supporting remaining needs through the budgetary process and use of reserve funds, only issuing bonds if needed.

Mr. Holt does not support the sale of the sewer system but added that there will be future staffing issues within the sewer department and that currently, repairs are done on an as-needed basis as they occur. He also added that the Township does not own a treatment plant so residents will always be impacted by any increases at the treatment plants owned by others that Tredyffrin Townships uses for conveyance. He shared that he did not have enough information/detail regarding an EIT. He stated that by implementing a stormwater management fee, stormwater issues become a Township-owned problem. He also added that the other funding needs (library, staffing, pensions) are a tax burden owned by Township residents.

Ms. Humble stated that there are numerous legacy issues that need to be addressed. She supports reasonable real estate tax increases and a short-term bond issuance. She supports a stormwater management fee levied based on the square footage of impervious surface for each property and a credit for stormwater remediation work already completed. She opposes an EIT, because to implement one would discourage businesses from locating to the Township. She added that she would find the impact of the sale of the sewer system a tremendous burden on the residents. She thanked the participants who attended in person and virtually and encouraged continued contact via email.

Mr. Bhaskar thanked all the participants and added that he listened to all comments and read all the emails with an open mind. He reiterated that stormwater is a major issue for the Township. He stated that to issue bonds, specific projects will need to be identified. He also stated that sewage processing is a growing issue and concern. He added that a long-term support solution is needed for fire company funding. He opposes the sale of the sewer system and an EIT. He supports a stormwater management fee with more work to be done on the details for such.

Dr. Gosse thanked the public for their input. She supports a stormwater management fee and support for the fire companies through real estate taxes, a bond issuance, or a fire tax. She does see some benefits to the sale of the sewer system, especially considering future treatment costs. She encouraged residents to continue to participate.

Ms. Miesen shared concerns for flooding on Valley Forge Road and asked if the Township ever contacts PennDOT to which the response was that they do, and they are also in contact with the state representative for this district.

Mr. Heaberg stressed the need for residents of the Township to respond to the fire companies' voluntary fund drives which provides a large amount of support for the fire companies. He cited the statistic that only about 38% of those eligible responds to the fund drives each year.

Mr. Bhaskar echoed Mr. Heaberg's call for support for the fire companies' fund drive campaigns.

Mr. Eisenberg asked what percentage of a stormwater fee would be made by businesses vs. residents to which Mr. DiRocco responded that it would be about 70% residential, 30% commercial. Mr. Eisenberg then asked if non-profits, using the school district as an example, would pay the stormwater fee to which the response was that they would.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Hoffman
Recording Secretary