

ATTENDANCE:

BOARD Elliot Abrams, Chair
Pam Robb, Vice-Chair
Sultan Magruder, Supervisor
Daniel Treviño, Supervisor
Betsy Whitman, Supervisor

STAFF Amy Farkas, Township Manager
Betsy Dupuis, Solicitor
Nicole Harter, Zoning Officer
Tyler Jolley, Chief of Police
Lawrence Pegher, Finance Director
Ken Soder, Director of Public Works Operations
Leslie Warriner, CRPA Planner
Susan Wheeler, Project Manager (via Zoom)

AUDIENCE C-Net
Amy Smith, Halfmoon Township
Feder Siney, Resident
Scott Conklin, PA Representative
Debbie Scitti, Planning Commission

Maria Truglio, Resident
Douglas Mason, Planning Commission
Chelsea Mali, Resident
Nick Himebaugh, PA Rep Scott Conklin Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Abrams, Chair, called to order the September 13, 2023 Board of Supervisor’s Meeting at 5:30 PM.

a. Announcements

(1) Proclaiming Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated September 15th-October 15th, 2023. The Board should proclaim September as Hispanic Heritage Month in Patton Township.

(2) Proclaiming Suicide Prevention Month

The Board should proclaim September as National Suicide Prevention and Action Month.

(3) Rosh Hashanah will be celebrated September 15th-17th. Yom Kippur will be celebrated September 24th-24th.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

c. Additions to the Posted Agenda – There were no additions to the posted agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Mali asked why the fence along the properties on Ghaner is not going from corner to corner and instead ending at her property because she it makes it look like she is being singled out. Ms. Wheeler stated that fencing is in areas that have slopes, and it was never the RAC’s intention to have the fence the whole side.

3. PRESENTATIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Proclamation Thanking Representative Scott Conklin for Assistance with the Georgetown Sinkhole:

Mr. Abrams stated that Representative Scott Conklin and his staff were instrumental in obtaining \$180,000 to aid the victims of the Georgetown Sinkhole in their recovery. A proclamation thanking Representative Conklin and his staff for their outstanding public service to the residents of the Georgetown community was presented.

b. Spring Creek Watershed Commission 2024 Budget Request:

Ms. Farkas stated that the Spring Creek Watershed Commission submitted their 2024 budget to each of the participating municipalities for review and approval. They have asked for approval by November 15th.

The budget proposes an increase in municipal contributions from \$0.10 to \$0.15 per capita. The additional funds will be used to support cooperative projects and programs the Commission is involved in in the watershed. The Township's current contribution is \$1,565 per year. Under the proposed increase, it would be \$2,347 per year. A copy of the draft budget was included in the packet.

Mr. Mason provided an update on the Watershed Commission's activities.

Mr. Treviño moved to approve the Spring Creek Watershed Commission 2024 Budget including an increase in municipal contributions from \$0.10 to \$0.15 per capita. Seconded by Ms. Robb, the motion passed 5-0.

c. Halfmoon Township Zoning Officer Agreement:

Ms. Farkas stated that the Township has been providing zoning services to Halfmoon Township for a number of years. With the agreement expiring at the end of this year, Staff feels it may be prudent to revisit the agreement, particularly in light of issues Zoning Officer Nicole Harter has been having with elected officials trying to interfere with her decisions and her work. Staff is concerned that with continued interference from the elected officials, Ms. Harter's authority will be undermined and she may end up having to participate in lawsuits related to actions the Board has taken.

At last month's meeting, the Board agreed to put this item on the September agenda for discussion. Since that meeting, Halfmoon staff reached out to ask that we reconsider leaving the agreement and expressed a desire to find a way to continue the working relationship. The Township is losing its planner in mid September, so if Patton Township is to pull out at the end of the year, they will be left with no planning and zoning staff.

Currently, Ms. Harter bills for her time spent on the phone, writing emails, correspondence, issuing permits, performing inspections, attendance at Planning Commission meetings and meeting with residents for potential plans of projects. The Township is also currently rewriting its code and has assigned that duty to Ms. Harter, Halfmoon's clerk and the planner. The Halfmoon Township Board of Supervisors requested that staff meet for 3 hours a week to work on this rewrite.

After speaking with Ms. Harter, we came up with a counter proposal that preserves some service to Halfmoon Township without overtaxing Ms. Harter's time. We suggest the following:

3. PRESENTATIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS (Continued)

c. Halfmoon Township Zoning Officer Agreement:

(1) Ms. Harter no longer be involved with the code rewrite, as she does not feel she will have the time to commit to it.

(2) Patton Township set a cap on the number of hours provided to Halfmoon Township per week. We suggest that we provide a minimum of 4 hours per week with a maximum of 6 hours each week. This will give Ms. Harter time to provide services for communications, permitting, inspections and attendance at Planning Commission meetings.

(3) Duties handled by the Halfmoon Township Planner will not be transferred to Ms. Harter. These duties include writing the Planning Commission agenda each month.

A copy of the current agreement was included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Smith stated that Halfmoon Township values the partnership with Patton Township and appreciate the Board consideration of the renewing the Halfmoon Township Zoning Officer Agreement.

Mr. Treviño stated that he feels that Halfmoon Township has a responsibility to supply their own Zoning Officer and it is not our problem to solve. He stated that he is against renewing our partnership after 2023.

Ms. Whitman stated that she sees this as not just a problem but as an opportunity. She agrees that the agreement needs to be reevaluated in December.

Mr. Magruder stated that it is important to maintain relationships and that they are being respectful of the work that Ms. Harter is doing. He stated he is ok with this plan of extending this till the end of the year 2024 with the ability to pull out if things do not work out.

Ms. Dupuis stated that in this agreement a variety of things can be addressed.

Ms. Robb asked about the notice requirement. Ms. Dupuis answered that there is a 60-day notice requirement. Ms. Farkas stated that we need to give them as much notice as possible.

Mr. Burnett stated that the Planning Commission has a lot of large projects coming in and down the pipeline and wants to support Ms. Harter.

Mr. Sinev stated that he is concerned about the erosion of regional government.

Mr. Treviño asked if there are any other townships that share their Zoning Officer. Ms. Farkas answered not in our area.

Ms. Robb moved to table the Halfmoon Township Zoning Officer until the September 27, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Treviño, the motion passed 4-1.

3. PRESENTATIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS (Continued)

d. Local Planning Services:

Ms. Farkas stated that the Township is currently a member of the Centre Region Planning Agency's local planning program. We currently contract for 50 percent of our senior planner's time from the COG. CRPA also provides local planning services to Harris Township (40 percent) and Halfmoon Township (25 percent).

The Planning Agency is undergoing a major personnel shift, as the Principal Planner is leaving in mid September and the Planning Director has announced his retirement at the end of November. This leaves one land use planner in the agency.

The Municipal Managers met with CRPA Director Jim May and COG Executive Director Eric Norenberg on September 6th to discuss the future of the agency and the services it provides. There was a lengthy discussion about the future of the local planning program and how this program will move forward, particularly in light of the challenges COG has had in recruiting planner candidates.

It was decided at the meeting that each of the members of the local planning program should discuss our participation in the program and how that may change in light of the recent staff turnover at the COG. We intend to meet again in October to continue discussing a possible re-imagining of how CRPA provides services moving forward. The key to that conversation will be how the local planning partners intend to move forward in 2024. If the three partners no longer wish to participate, the program may be eliminated.

One topic for discussion is if the current relationship can continue to serve us in the manner we need. Our current planner will be the only planner in the agency and will be asked to split her time between the three local planning members. While CRPA has pledged to complete the tasks required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, that will leave long range planning initiatives on the back burner for the foreseeable future. We also may need to shift some staff duties around to accommodate the planner's busier schedule and reduced time in Patton Township.

We have options available to us that we should consider as we discuss how we want to move forward:

(1) Give the COG a year's notice that we will leave the local planning program at the end of 2024, as required by the COG Articles of Agreement.

While we have always been a member of the local planning program and we have always benefited from it, this may be an opportunity for us to do some strategic planning for our Engineering/Planning/Zoning Department to determine where we are now, where we want to go and what staffing we need to get there. By giving the year's notice, we would give ourselves flexibility to keep our planning program moving while at the same time considering all of the options available for planning services. These include: hiring our own in house planner, contracting with a neighboring municipality or contracting with an outside firm.

If we do give a year's notice of our intent to leave, we should also consider reducing the amount of hours we are purchasing. While 50 percent is definitely needed, if the local planning program continues, we likely won't get anywhere near 50 percent of the planner's time until staffing levels improve at CRPA. Rather than waiting for a refund at the end of the year, we could drop back to 33 or 40 percent and save ourselves some money.

3. PRESENTATIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS (Continued)

d. Local Planning Services: (Continued)

(2) Stay in the local planning program.

Under this option, we could continue to purchase 50 percent of the planner's time, or we could consider a reduction in the amount of time being purchased (options include 25, 33 or 40 percent). A reduction in time may be beneficial as the staffing struggles at CRPA seem likely to continue, meaning we likely won't get our full allotment of time.

Staff recommends that the Board consider option 1, providing our notice that we intend to leave the local planning program at the end of 2024. The Board should also consider reducing planning hours from 50 percent to 40 percent in 2024. This will give Staff the necessary time to complete a strategic plan for the Engineering/Planning/Zoning Department and to consider fully our planning needs.

Mr. Treviño asked if Patton Township has enough work for a full-time planner. Ms. Farkas stated that with Patton Township growing that we could have enough work for a full-time planner.

Mr. Magruder asked if we can afford it financially. Mr. Pegher stated that we may have to look at planning fees to see if it can offset cost of hiring a full time planner.

Ms. Whitman stated that she has been aware of the lack of long-range planning and if a full-time planner would allow this to happen, she is for it.

Mr. Magruder moved to provide a year's notice to the COG that Patton Township intends to leave the local planning program at the end of 2024 and that we wish to contract for 40 percent of a planner's time. Seconded by Mr. Treviño, the motion passed 5-0.

The Board took a brief 10-minute recess.

4. PUBLIC SAFETY

a. Monthly Report:

Chief Jolley provided a brief overview of the monthly report which was included with the agenda packet.

Ms. Scitti stated that she wanted to thank Officer Soohoo who came to her house when her husband had a heart attack until the ambulance was able to arrive 20 minutes later. She stated that Officer Soohoo went beyond the call of duty help save her husband's life.

5. PUBLIC WORKS OPERATIONS – no items

6. ENGINEERING, PLANNING & ZONING (EPZ)

a. Planning Commission Report:

Mr. Burnett provided a brief update on the Planning Commission's September report.

6. ENGINEERING, PLANNING & ZONING (EPZ) (Continued)

b. College Township Official Map:

Ms. Warriner stated that College Township is amending the College Township Official Map and has provided Patton Township with an opportunity to review the proposed changes to the map and ordinance and provide comments.

Official Map elements that tie into Patton Township:

- Innovation Park Access Ramp
- Proposed road with 60' right of way and 10' bikeway
- Amenity along Fox Hollow Road
- Proposed bikeway
- Off-road connection from the Arboretum to Toftrees
- Shared Use Path (BCRT)

The following items were included with the agenda:

- Cover Letter from College Township, highlighting the changes
- Official Map
- Official Map Ordinance Amendment

The Planning Commission reviewed the Official Map at their September 11th meeting. Staff provided an update on the comments from the Planning Commission at the meeting.

The Board had no further comments.

7. ADMINISTRATION

a. Georgetown Sinkhole Grant Distribution:

Ms. Farkas stated that at last month's meeting, the Board approved the following disbursements to residents affected by the Georgetown Sinkhole:

\$25,000 to units 438, 440, 442, 462, 464, 466 and \$18,000 to unit 458

\$12,000 was left in reserve for requests for additional property owners.

Staff received information from the owner of unit 434. This owner has \$4,001.75 in eligible expenses. Staff would recommend that the Board consider allocating \$3,500 to this unit. That would leave \$8,500 in reserve for future expenditures from other owners.

Mr. Treviño moved to allocate \$3,500 to the owner of unit 434. Seconded by Ms. Whitman, the motion passed 5-0.

7. ADMINISTRATION (Continued)

b. Board Input for the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan:

Ms. Farkas stated that the Township staff began working on the next five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in August. The current 2023-2027 plan can be found online here:

<https://twp.patton.pa.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/69>. It was also attached to the digital version of the agenda packet.

The CIP is a tool that assists in planning for future projects by providing:

- A forum for proposing major capital projects and significant operational increases (e.g., staff increases or COG programmatic changes) several years in advance of implementation
- A means for establishing a process for evaluating each project's justification and benefits
- A process for prioritizing projects in the face of limited funding and
- A platform for evaluating financing alternatives (i.e., bonds/loans, pay-as-you-go, or wait for a grant)

Staff requests that Board members provide input/guidance towards potential new projects or existing projects in the plan.

c. Resolutions for Pennsylvania Municipal League (PML) Summit:

Ms. Farkas stated that the proposed resolutions for the upcoming League Summit were included with the agenda materials. The Board will be asked to provide a final recommendation to the voting delegate, Ms. Whitman at the next meeting on September 27th.

For this initial review, the Board members should review the proposed resolution and provide questions and/or proposed amendments.

No Board action is required at this meeting.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

The items included below are routine in nature and it is not anticipated that any will generate discussion or questions. The actual Consent Agenda with a brief description of each item is included with the agenda packet materials distributed to the Board and available to the public on-line and at the sign-in table. At the request of any Board member, any single item or all items on the Consent Agenda can be discussed and voted on separately. If no items are "pulled," the Board should consider a motion for "approval of the Consent Agenda items as shown on the agenda."

a. Public Safety – no items

b. Public Works Operations – no items

c. Engineering, Planning, & Zoning – no items

8. CONSENT AGENDA (Continued)

d. Administration

1) Minutes – August 9, 2023 and August 16, 2023

The draft minutes of the last two Board meetings are included with agenda materials. Board members having questions or changes should contact the Township Manager prior to the meeting so revisions can be included in a supplemental distribution.

It is recommended that the Board approve the subject minutes.

2) August 2023 Voucher Report

The August 2023 Voucher Report is included in the packet.

It is recommended that the Board approve the voucher report.

3) Resolution 2023-15: Approving the Township’s 2024 Minimum Municipal Obligation

The Township is required by Pennsylvania Act 205 to approve its minimum municipal obligations for its pension plans each year by September 30th. The money will be included in the 2024 Budget.

It is recommended that the Board approve Resolution 2023-15.

Ms. Whitman moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Mr. Treviño, the motion passed 5-0.

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Farkas reported on current items, including the following:

- a. Administration:
 - (1) Energy Contract
 - (2) Rideshare Issues at the Airport
 - (3) Emergency Notifications
- b. Engineering/Planning/Zoning:
 - (1) MS4 Audit
 - (2) Toftrees Resort Plan
- c. Public Works:
 - (1) 2023 Overlay Contract
 - (2) Truck Chassis
 - (3) Road Crew Personnel
 - (4) Herbicide License
 - (5) Spongy Moth
- d. Parks:
 - (1) Ghaner Drive Parklet Fencing

9. MANAGER'S REPORT (Continued)

- e. Correspondence:
 - (1) PFAS Update
 - (2) July Housing Statistics

A full written report was included in the packet.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board members reported on the meeting(s) of the COG and other committee(s) on which they serve, including:

- a. Council of Governments Committees:
 - Human Resources Committee – Magruder – September 6th - cancelled
 - Land Use and Community Infrastructure Committee – Abrams – September 7th
 - Public Safety Committee – Robb – September 12th
 - Finance & Facilities Committee – Trevino & Whitman – September 28th (Finance); September 12th (Facilities)
 - Executive Committee – Abrams – September 19th
 - Parks & Rec Governance – Trevino – September 27th
 - Climate Action and Sustainability Committee – Whitman – September 11th
- b. State College Borough Water Authority
- c. Centre Area Cable Consortium, Trevino
- d. Spring Creek Watershed Commission, – Mason
- e. Centre County Metropolitan Planning Org. – Abrams, Robb Alt.
- f. [Centre County Airport Authority, Downsborough](#)
- g. [Solar Power Purchase Working Group, – Whitman, Pegher Alt. – August 30th](#)

11. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

12. ADJOURN

Mr. Magruder moved to adjourn the September 13, 2023 Board of Supervisors Meeting at 7:47PM. Seconded by Ms. Whitman, the motion passed 5-0.

Amy Farkas, Township Secretary