

**Newlin Township
Board of Supervisors
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2020**

Call to Order: The Board of Supervisors' monthly meeting convened at 8:00 p.m. on Monday, March 9, 2020, at the Lenfest Center, 1199 Cannery Road, Coatesville, PA. Present were Supervisors Bill Kelsall (Chair), Bob Pearson, Jim Cornell and Secretary/Treasurer Gail Abel.

Voluntary Pledge of Allegiance

Announcements: Bill Kelsall noted that the 2020 Census would be the 24th United States Census. Article 1, Section 2 of the United States Constitution mandates a count of all people living in the United States every ten years. The U.S. Census Bureau will conduct the 2020 Census in March and April this year. Because the 2020 Census affects the future distribution of state and federal funding, Chester County's Commissioners have established a Complete Count Committee to help ensure that all residents in Chester County are counted. The Township website has useful information.

He next announced that there will be a Zoning Hearing Board Hearing on Wednesday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. on the application of Ralph & Donna Hood, 1069 Glenhall Road, for a variance and a special exception.

He also announced that the Township has received a Zoning Hearing Board Application from Samuel & George Wickersham for 940 Unionville Wawaset Road. This application is on the Agenda for the Planning Commission's 8:00 p.m. meeting on Wednesday, March 25.

Comments: State Police (Embreeville) Trooper Bill Donohue provided a summary of local crime statistics and confirmed that in light of its consistently low number of incident reports, Newlin Township is a very safe community.

Jack Bailey thanked the Board of Supervisors and the road crew for recent repairs on Laurel Road and Youngs Road.

Mr. Bailey next donated some historical papers and a plaque that had been presented by PA Senator Dinniman some years ago relating to Embreeville's Indian Hannah gravesite. He noted that since the closure of the old Embreeville Hospital entrance off of Route 162, there is no access to the gravesite.

Minutes: Gail Abel presented the minutes of the Supervisors' February 10, 2020 monthly meeting. Bob Pearson's motion to approve those minutes was seconded by Jim Cornell and unanimously approved.

Financial Report: Ms. Abel presented the monthly Financial Report, noting that as of February 29, 2020, the Township had \$1,830,903.64 on deposit (including \$1,571,007.09 in general and unrestricted funds), which represents a net increase of \$13,796.16 since January

31, 2020. Mr. Pearson's motion to approve the Financial Report was seconded by Mr. Cornell and unanimously approved.

Brandywine Battlefield Task Force – Newlin Signage: Bill McGowan, a Newlin resident, and Karen Marshall from the Chester County Planning Board provided an update on the Brandywine Battlefield Historic Interpretive Marker Project (the “BBP”). Mr. Pearson advised that the Wickershams would be delighted to have the Marker on their property on Marlborough Springs Road. Ms. Marshall advised that the BBP would be happy to work with the Wickershams. Mr. Pearson volunteered to meet again with the Wickershams to finalize the details. The Board took no action on this matter.

Update from Chrissy Houlahan’s Office: Scott Nelson, Constituent Advocate from the Office of U.S. Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan, presented a Congressional update and provided information about the constituent services that Ms. Houlahan’s team offers.

Embreeville Building: Bennett Baird the Building Committee’s request for authorization and funding to carry out three projects:

- Repairs and deferred maintenance at the West Unit of the Township House, including electrical and plumbing repairs, flooring repair and interior painting, at a cost not to exceed \$50,000. This will facilitate the rental of the West Unit to residential tenants.
- Construction of a 500 sq. ft. building near the southwest corner of the Township Maintenance Garage, at a cost not to exceed \$25,000. The new building would be used for storage and review of Township records currently housed in the West Unit.
- Replacement of the current West Unit oil furnace with a more efficient and cost-effective heating and cooling system, at a cost not to exceed \$20,000.

Paul Murphy asked whether the Board had considered scanning of the old documents rather than constructing new storage space. After discussion, Mr. Pearson’s motion to approve all three items requested by Mr. Baird was seconded by Mr. Cornell and unanimously approved.

Fire & EMS Update: Mr. Baird, who serves as Newlin Township’s Fire & EMS Commissioner on the Kennett Regional Fire and Emergency Management Commission (“KFEC”) presented a KFEC status report, pointing out that the Township’s initial three-year KFEC commitment will end at the end of 2020 and that the Township is expected to advise KFEC by June 30, 2020 whether Newlin will withdraw or continue with an annual commitment. He advised that the purpose of his presentation was to stimulate informed discussion and allow the Board of Supervisors to make the best decision at the June 8, 2020 Board of Supervisors’ meeting.

He noted that KFEC oversees Fire coverage provided by Po-Mar-Lin Fire Company, and Emergency Management (“EMS”) coverage provided by Longwood Fire Company for the portion of Newlin Township (about 60%) south of Brandywine Creek. North of Brandywine Creek (about 40% of the Township), West Bradford Fire Company and Modena Fire Company provide the Fire coverage and Good Fellowship Ambulance & EMS Training Institute and Modena Fire Company provide the EMS coverage.

In Mr. Baird's view:

Newlin (both north and south of Brandywine Creek) and KFEC are very fortunate to have excellent Fire & EMS service providers. KFEC has greatly improved trust and cooperation among and between those providers and the participating municipalities, as smaller, individual companies – each with a strong identity – have become part of part of an integrated regional effort.

Regional management of these services is the logical strategic direction (providing for larger coverage areas, better-coordinated operational and capital management, and greater resource efficiency).

Issues ahead include continuing rising cost of service, the need for more effective recruitment and retention programs and increasing capital costs for Fire Company assets (engines, ladder trucks, etc.).

Newlin Township's total Fire & EMS budget has been \$80,000 for each of the last three years. Although formal KFEC budget discussions have not yet commenced, an increase for 2021 is virtually certain. The KFEC increase would most likely drive a \$15,000 to \$20,000 increase in Newlin's 2021 total Fire & EMS budget.

The main reason for the Township to exit KFEC would be near-term cost savings; the main reason to continue the Township's membership in KFEC is the long-term efficiency of regional coordination of Fire & EMS coverage.

A discussion ensued, including the Supervisors and several Newlin residents. The Board took no action on this matter, but will revisit the topic in the coming months.

Employee Benefits: At Mr. Kelsall's request Mr. Cornell reviewed the Board's recent deliberations regarding employee health care benefits. He noted that the Township currently has no health insurance plan for its employees; and while one employee is covered under a plan provided by his spouse's employer, the other employee is currently paying for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act "Marketplace". He reported that the Board had explored establishing a Township health insurance plan, which would cost about \$1,000 per month per participant, but determined that because of the "Premium Tax Credit" available to individuals under the Affordable Care Act, Newlin could save a substantial amount by simply increasing that employee's salary by \$488 per month (an amount equal – after taxes – to her net monthly health insurance costs (net of the "Premium Tax Credit") plus approximately \$50 per month in out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Mr. Pearson's motion to increase Gail Abel's salary by \$488/month, effective January 1, 2020, was seconded by Mr. Cornell and unanimously approved.

Adjournment: Upon Mr. Pearson's motion, seconded by Mr. Cornell, the meeting was adjourned.

Time: 9:20pm
Respectfully Submitted,
Gail Abel, Secretary

