



## Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting Via 801 Burrows Run Road & Zoom

June 7, 2023

7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Geoffrey Gamble, Esq., Chairman; Dr. Richard L. Leff, Vice Chair; Amy Heinrich, Finance & HR Director; Diane Hicks, Planning & Zoning Director; Ted Otteni, Director of Public Works; Matt Gordon, Chief of Police; Dave Sander, Solicitor

**Absent:** Scudder G. Stevens, Supervisor; Eden R. Ratliff, Township Manager.

### 1. Call to Order

### 2. Pledge of Allegiance

### 3. Embezzlement Recovery Update

There were no updates to provide.

### 4. Executive Session Announcements

There were no Executive Sessions to announce.

### 5. Meeting Minutes/Presentations

#### a. April 19, 2023, Meeting Minutes

[www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6504](http://www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6504)

*Gamble: In the absence of our colleague Scudder Stevens, we will have to hold off on Agenda Item 5b. as Dr. Leff was not here for that meeting, but we can move forward with 5a.*

*Motion to adopt the April 19, 2023, Board of Supervisor meeting minutes was made by Leff and seconded by Gamble. Motion passed 2-0.*

#### b. May 17, 2023, Meeting Minutes

[www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6505](http://www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6505)

#### c. Historical Commission Award Presentation

[www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6510](http://www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6510)

*Denise Klein (544 E. Hillendale Rd.): I am here tonight to talk about some awards that the Kennett Township Historical Commission received for some of the historical work that has been done recently. There was a task force that was sponsored by The Sons of the Revolution and Color guard. They work specifically with Chester County and the task force and the result was 15 municipalities putting up these Brandywine Battlefield markers. Several locations were discussed, and the marker is at the Chandler Mill Bridge where the TLC offices are. Some updates to the location of the sign will be made. Once it is achieved, the next step will be making a dedication of the sign.*

*Gamble: Maybe in September.*

*Klein: September will be ideal.*

*Karen Marshall (21 Southridge Drive): What is interesting is the task force has been meeting for 25 years and we have a 30,000-acre battlefield we are trying to interpret. The single largest battlefield of the American Revolution was fought in our backyard. What happens is these missions within the 15 municipalities get together (Denise is our representative from the Township, which is why she*

received the award). We very carefully worked with military historians to identify significant authentic landscapes within each municipality, and then the municipality would then choose the among those significant landscapes where they would like their sign for future interpretations. Klein: All is very true. It was long coming, and we have worked on this for a while. We got an Honor of Award for the Historic Preservation from Chester County Historical Preservation Network (CCHPN). There were a few other awards. From the Board of commissioners of Chester County. The Senate of PA got involved and they gave us a congratulatory letter for historic preservation and lastly Chrissy Houlahan's office has given us an award from the House of Representatives. At the same event: our Chair of the Historical Commission: Karen Marshall, was given an Emeritus award for the work she has done.

Gamble: Thank you Denise. Let me make a comment on the positioning of the sign. One of our residents complained that it blocked his view, so we are hoping that we can move it over 5 feet or whatever it takes to make everyone happy. I talked to Karen about the possibility of creating in time a Historical Society, this is different than the commission. A commission's mandate is the preservation of historical structures that have significance. A historical society would be more scholarly, monthly lectures which then leads me to my next comment of using the old Farmhouse at Spar Hill as a repository or as Township archives. I am hoping that at some point we can go forward with a study, it is not an actuality. I also want to thank the Historical Commission for the valuable work it does for the Township. Preserving and maintaining is very important. So thank you and best wishes!

## 6. Public Comment on Agenda

There were no public comments on the agenda items.

## 7. Business Items

### a. Consider June 7, 2023, Bill Voucher

[www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/5633](http://www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/5633)

Motion to approve the June 7, 2023, Bill Voucher in the amount of \$173,175.53 and to approve total transfers in the amount of \$37,433.73 was made by Leff and seconded by Gamble.

Motion passed 2-0.

### b. Consider reinvesting additional funds into PLGIT

[www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6511](http://www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6511)

Amy Heinrich: Over the last 6-9 months we have been doing a couple different investments in PLGIT since rates have risen and is well worth our time to manage our cash flow more closely to ensure we are getting the best investment returns possible. We are very limited as a second-class township as far as what we can invest in. The CD rates and other investments at PLGIT are quite favorable. The CDs allow us to stay within the FDIC insured structure and we spread it out across different banks so we are still covered. I am suggesting we move another half million from the Open Space account, a million dollars from the General Fund to PLGIT to invest in the short term which is 3-6 months and bring it back as we need it. We are just managing the cash flow for better returns.

Motion to approve the re-investment of up to \$1.5M from our Fulton General Fund and Open Space bank accounts to our PLGIT accounts following the included schedule was made by Leff and seconded by Gamble.

Leff: I think this is great that we are doing this, and it is useful. The money is just sitting in a bank. Banks have gotten a little more generous.

Gamble: I noticed it is 1.5-5% and over the next 6 months it would give us an increase of \$36,000.00

Heinrich: Yes.

Gamble: Thank you. Well done.

Heinrich: I was doing some quick calculations and some of our other investments we are getting \$38,000.00 a month.

Motion passed 2-0.

**c. Consider appointment of “Alternate Wastewater Engineer.”**

[www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6506](http://www.kennett.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6506)

Ted Otteni: The Township and the Borough are moving forward on an ACT 537 plan to expand sewer capacity at the wastewater treatment plant. The ACT 537 plan is a required component for DEP. The Township has our consultant, and the Borough has their consultant, both parties thought that their should be an alternate engineer that was approved and off to the side waiting in case there was an impasse is coming on we could turn to the alternate engineer who will cast a tie breaking vote. Carroll Engineering was agreed upon by both the Township representatives and the Borough representatives that were at the table. We are bringing it to the Board for consideration.

Gamble: This is an objective, professional group?

Otteni: I have worked with them in prior capacities. They have extensive experience in the wastewater industry with municipalities across Chester, Montgomery, and Bucks County.

Gamble: It is like an arbitration arrangement.

Otteni: Yes, that’s a good way to put it.

Motion to appoint Carroll Engineering Corporation as the Township’s Alternate Wastewater Engineer for the remainder of 2023 and authorize the Township Manager to execute the professional services agreement was made by Leff and seconded by Gamble. Motion passed 2-0.

Leff: That was a good explanation. I am looking forward to moving it ahead. In order to have more housing and more businesses it all has to flow somewhere, and the ACT 537 plan will help us with that.

**8. Public Comment**

Gamble: A couple comments from us. I am going to see if Rich wants to give us an assessment of the Kennett Square Borough Expert Presentation.

Leff: The Borough held a public meeting on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. They brought in an expert because they are challenged financially in the Kennett Fire EMS Regional Commission (KFERC) and are looking at alternatives or ways to enhance the commission. They brought in a professional group that has a lot of experience with this even though they only gave them six weeks rather than the usual six months to do an evaluation. They received some high-level viewpoints. There was a fair amount of discussion around the challenges facing the Borough. The challenges, although when the commission was set up, did consider the value of properties in each municipality. It was one of four items. Amy did some nice work and summarized and helped us understand a bit more, she calculated that their mil rate would go up twice when there is an increase in expenditures by the commission than the other municipalities. I think that is just much harder for a municipality to deal with. They are looking at ways to limit or figure out another system. All the high-level options were all significantly more expensive than staying in the commission. It will be an interesting challenge moving forward. There are fewer and fewer volunteer firefighters for a variety of reasons. There are roughly 85-90% fewer volunteers than there were 40 years ago. Part of it is different pressures to work different jobs, just to get started as a volunteer you have to do close to 180 hours of training, and that is just the basics. The commission is on its second year with helping volunteer firefighters who put in the training, and extra training or the hours in the fire department or responding with stipends to cover some of their expenses. It seems to be working to some degree. The state pushes things to the county level, if you look at our neighbor Hockessin, Delaware their fire department is run by the county but is also county

funded. Here in Pennsylvania, it is up to the municipality to fund it. I think it is more challenging for the Borough and looking at the finances is there a way to do it for less money.

*Gamble:* Eden is attending the Council meeting tonight, there are deliberations on how they are going to move forward. This is very important to all the Townships who are part of the commission. We are going to have a very tough time ending up in a situation where the residents of Kennett township are subsidizing the residents of Kennett Borough. This happened last year when our increase was 30% and their increase was 4%, which was a one-shot deal. We are talking enormous amounts of money over the next few years for capital equipment that we are paying special attention to.

*Leff:* The challenges that I mentioned before, their mil rate would go up 2x as much as the other municipalities and their median income is half of ours. Part of the challenges that we faced early with the other system was half of our Township wasn't getting what the other half was receiving in terms of fire response. When we found out about that, and it was thanks to the Kennett Fire Company analyzing their data, we made substantial changes a few years ago.

**Diane McGovern (345 E. Hillendale):** I too attended the meeting, and I was wondering what your take was on a few of the items the consultant said: one thing he said was a 30% increase every year moving forward. Is there anything to substantiate that? And the second item was, what do you think of his idea about hiring an administrator?

*Gamble:* The Township has been on board with hiring an administrator for a few years, but we have been out voted. In terms of the 30% increase, there are two 30% increases that are parallel. (1) is a 30% increase for capital expenditures such as vehicles and the other is the operating budget. Is that correct?

*Heinrich:* We are just starting to get information; we have a meeting with the commission next week which some of the numbers Geoff is referring to haven't gone anywhere yet. There was a vehicle study that was done in 2021 and we are looking at those results. The report stated what we needed to buy but not in a format of numbers as to how much it is going to cost to know what the impact is. I have done that, and we are going to be talking with the commission next week about that. Our concern is that if we follow that study exactly it could potentially be 30%. That is not a published number or a discussed number, it is in the analysis for discussion.

*Gamble:* These commission meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month and are at the Pennsbury Township building. They are open to the public, and you should attend, because they are making big decisions that are affecting us. These items are coming up now, but no one is there from the public when we present our budget next fall and residents then ask why we weren't told or informed? This is the time to be present. Having the public there makes a big difference. It is at 5:00PM next Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

*Leff:* Diane, they did talk about an administrator, and I went up to the outside expert to clarify something, because even with our regional commission at six isn't large enough to run an efficient operation. He then clarified it would not need to be a full-time person; it could be a part-time person. Then as we spoke more about standards of coverage that the municipalities would like, that could also be studied by the group, but if you want a fire truck on every corner or an ambulance on every other corner, it's more expensive than having two or three in place. There can be tradeoffs that can be done not only with equipment, but also with staffing. Those tradeoffs are hard ones to make. Those two items would be covered under administrative help for the commission.

*Heinrich:* That is the potential 30% and the other is the operating 30% increase, which when it was announced last year, likely there will be more with a similar need and the expert for the Borough pointed it out as well. There are some big numbers out there, but I do not think the Commissioners have absorbed that and received feedback from the municipalities or challenged it, which is the kind of conversation we are trying to spur next week, to get everyone to understand the numbers we are looking at.

**Pat Muller (22 Deer Pond Lane):** I too was at the meeting, and one of the things that struck me was the public commentary was not as informed as many of the other people and professionals in the room. It is

difficult to understand what is appropriate, maybe this is what you were talking about in terms of hiring and administrator to make some value-added decisions. I know on the Planning Commission when we look at a development: we say that we are going to need “xyz” type of fire coverage because they can’t get to the back of the building, so this type of truck is needed. Then the question comes up who has to pay for that truck? Just thinking from a regional point of view, you have Unionville High School, which is tall and big. You have some structures in the Borough that are coming that are going to be difficult to approach and get to and as we get into the denser housing the maneuverability becomes an issue. Should this administrator come to be, we as a region need a better understanding of what’s appropriate. How many trucks respond to a single house fire? How many fire companies need to come? There was a fire in Mendenhall yesterday and I counted six different companies, and I do not know if that was appropriate or if that was overkill. Personally, I would like a better understanding of the utilization of resources. If that is what the administrator is going to do I think that would be good and we can get some economies of scale and save some money.

**Leff:** It also takes money to hire an administrator.

**Heinrich:** What we have talked about in the past with an administrator because it has been an open item. They haven’t hired anyone who knows all about that and can do all the requirements, is independent etc.

**Leff:** One thing to note about the 30% was that in the first three years of the commission there was a 0% increase. The last two years it has been 30%. They took two years of 30% and made a straight line go up forever. I have not seen the numbers yet for this upcoming year. The issue we are facing is making sure there are no empty spots on an ambulance or a fire truck when one is needed. It’s a competition for the workers as they can work elsewhere as well, which is good in a free-market economy but also comes with increased costs with a lot of other things we are seeing today with inflation. During Covid the cost of masks and gloves skyrocketed and now the cost of equipment has gone up too.

**Heinrich:** Things have stayed up even after the crazy spikes and there was no supply of anything. There have been drastic increases with all types of costs that fire, ambulance, and municipalities face day to day.

**Gamble:** I want to mention one thing that Scudder would have wanted to mention and that is we have had several reports of poison hemlock growing in the township. Poison Hemlock looks a lot like Queen Anne’s Lace except it can grow to 6ft high and is highly poisonous to animals and humans.

**John Wilkens:** It grows along Chandler Mill Road and two days ago it got taller than I am.

**Gamble:** It’s 6ft and the stalk has purple blotches on it. Queen Anne’s lace is more like a weed/plant that’s low to the ground. Dr. Leff might be able to tell us a little bit. I am not sure if you can be poisoned by it just by touching it, I am sure if you touch it and put your hands in your mouth, maybe.

**Leff:** I have not looked it up. Many things can give you a reaction such as poison ivy with a rash.

**Gamble:** Don’t touch it.

## 9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Leff and seconded by Gamble. Motion passed 2-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eden R. Ratliff  
Township Secretary