

September 30, 2021

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL/POTTSTOWN SCHOOL BOARD JOINT MEETING

The Joint meeting of the Pottstown Borough Council and Pottstown School Board was called to order on Thursday, September 30, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers Room with President Dan Weand and President Amy Francis in the Chairs.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

School Board Directors present were Amy Francis, Laura Johnson, Steve Kline, Thomas Hylton, John Armato and Katina Bearden. Also in attendance were Superintendent Stephen Rodriguez, Executive Secretary to Business Administrator Joanne Rhoads, Assistant Business Manager Mary Ellen Urquhart and Student Board Representative, Jimi Chavalaporn.

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Lisa Vanni (virtual), Donald Lebedynsky, Trenita Lindsay (virtual) and Dan Weand. Also present were Manager Justin Keller, Borough Secretary Virginia Takach, Mayor Stephanie Henrick (virtual), Finance Director Marley Boone, Public Works Director Doug Yerger (virtual), Parks & Recreation Director Michael Lenhart (virtual), Human Resources Director Sandi Chieffo (virtual), Fire Chief Frank Hand (virtual) and Human Resources Representative Nancy Lawrence (virtual).

WELCOME

Manager Keller and Superintendent Rodriguez welcomed all to the Joint Meeting.

PAID REPORT

Peggy Lee-Clark was present to provide the Status of Pottstown's Economic Development. She highlighted the new Fairfield Marriott, previously the Comfort Inn on Rt 100 and the progress of the Pottstown Sustainable Energy Plant, Keystone Boulevard. The plant is geared to employ 245 construction jobs over 18 months. She included the progress of the Mercury Hotel, the former Mercury Newspaper building, the Y3 Life Science Incubator at 159 East High Street and the IronGlobe Entertainment venue to be located near the Schuylkill River. She also provided an analysis of the real estate assessments from 2005 to 2021.

Ms. Lee-Clark introduced John Jones, Pottstown investor, and highlighted his contributions and investment in Pottstown, including the former Pottstown Plating Works, the former Nipple Works, the remediated Laticrete Concrete facility, 1200 High Street and the former Farmers Market, 300 East High Street, now the High Street Terminal and the Alley.

Mr. Jones commented on his commitment to Pottstown and praised the assistance of Ms. Lee-Clark.

Ms. Lee-Clark noted that the Borough needs additional warehouse space and announced that PAID is now the administrator of the Land Bank Board. She also reviewed the tax exempt properties in the Borough and advised that certain veterans are entitled to tax exemptions on their properties.

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SUSTAINABILITY PLAN AND UPDATE

Thomas Hylton, School Board Member, provided a presentation on the history of the earth and the involvement of the climate over 10,000 years. Mr. Hylton referred to the Borough's Sustainability Plan of 2018 and the storm water issues throughout the Borough, the worst in Pennsylvania as per the Pottstown Borough Authority. He added that in 2013, Trees, Inc. provided a Land Analysis relating to trees and their ability to reduce stormwater runoff. He advised that the best way to manage stormwater is to capture it where it falls, including tree canopies.

Mr. Hylton referred to studies done in Philadelphia, a Green Stormwater Management Project and New York City's plan to plant a million new trees in 10 years. He also advised that the Pottstown School District has implemented a stormwater management plant in 2015, beginning with a sidewalk rain garden in 2015 and a meadow in the location of Edgewood School in 2017. He added that meadows were added to another 11 acres of the School District. He also outlined the Rotary contribution of trees for the High School and the benefits of planting trees in the parking lots. Mr. Hylton added that 550 trees will be planted for a total cost of \$450,000 and highlighted tree conversions including Wyomissing, Pennsylvania.

STATUS OF 2021-2022 BOROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Manager Keller referred to the ongoing Project Summary report. He outlined the alley pilot project, the High Street LED conversion, stormwater arch repair, the Airport upgrades, the King Street Pedestrian crossing, the Oak Street improvements, the 2021 Water and Sewer main replacements and the water treatment LT2 upgrades and the time lines for each. Other highlighted items included the PECO projects, namely the King Street Bridge, gas line replacements, High Street underground electric line replacement and overhead electrical transmission upgrades. The County projects reported upon were the Keim Street Bridge and the Schuylkill River trail extension. Mr. Keller reviewed the costs and funding sources for the projects, adding that grant announcements should be announced in October, 2021.

Mr. Keller reviewed the 10-year Capital needs summary report including the stormwater arch rehabilitation, the bridges over Norfolk Southern tract, the Keystone Boulevard extension construction, the Moser Road Bridge repairs, the LED streetlight conversion, repaving public parking lots, the Airport hangar roof and the Memorial Park bridge replacement for a total cost of projects to be \$36 million, with \$7.4 million from the General fund, \$27 million from grants and \$75 million from the America Rescue Plan Act.

SUMMARY OF COVID-19 MITIGATION EFFORTS TO KEEP SCHOOLS OPEN

Superintendent Rodriguez outlined the School District's ongoing plan to keep students safe and healthy and in school. He provided a summary of the three-day collaborative planning meeting. He also outlined the staff vaccinations and testing requirements. Mr. Rodriguez also provided the goals and academic projects for the district with continued collaboration and with the goal to prepare each student for success at every level through the MTSS process. He noted that Staff has been under a mental health crisis and student attendance is at an all-time low. Mr. Rodriguez also explained the safety and health measures throughout the schools, including closing the cafeteria and providing chrome books for all students.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Armato requested that these presentations be forwarded to all the Board members.

President Weand thank all for attending and for the great information and presentations.

President Amy Francis agreed, noting the goals are the same for all.

Adjournment

Mr. Keller noted that the presentations will be forwarded and will begin scheduling another joint meeting for the future. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Justin M. Keller
Borough Manager