

**SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**September 6, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.**  
**Solebury Township Hall**

**BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES**

Attendance: Helen Tai, Chair, James Searing, Vice-chair, Paul Cosdon and Kevin Morrissey. Dennis H. Carney, Manager, Gretchen K. Rice, Assistant Manager, Michele Blood, Finance Director and Jordan B. Yeager, Solicitor, were also in attendance.

Absent: Noel Barrett

The meeting was called to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Tai noted that the second annual Solebury Day will take place at Laurel Park on Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> (rain date Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>) and encouraged the audience to attend.

Approval of Bills Payable – September 1, 2016

**Res. 2016-121 – Upon a motion by Mr. Searing, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, the list of Bills Payable dated September 1, 2016 was unanimously approved as prepared and posted.**

Approval of Minutes – August 10, 2016 Budget Session – Mr. Searing requested revisions to the draft Minutes all of which were agreed to by the Board.

**Res. 2016-122 – Upon a motion by Mr. Searing, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, the Minutes of the August 10, 2016 Budget Works Session were unanimously approved with revision.**

Approval of Minutes – August 16, 2016 – Mr. Cosdon noted two revisions both of which were agreed to by the Board.

**Res. 2016-123 – Upon a motion by Mr. Cosdon, seconded by Mr. Searing, the Minutes of August 16, 2016 were unanimously approved with revision.**

New Business

Gun Safety Resolution – Mr. Tai introduced the topic with the following statement:

*“The Gun Violence Archive website defines a mass shooting as FOUR or more [people] shot and/or killed in a single event [incident], at the same general time and location, not including the shooter. In the two-and-a-half months since the massacre in Orlando, there have been 125 mass shootings in the US, killing 110 people and injuring 508. The United States has on average more than one mass shooting a day. Every year, 108,000 people are shot and 32,514 people die from gun violence. That’s the equivalent of almost eleven 9/11’s **every single year**. A poll conducted by CNN in June showed that 92% of Americans want expanded background checks, 87% support a ban for felons or people with mental health problems and 85% say they would ban people on federal watch lists from buying guns. Despite these overwhelming facts, state and federal legislatures have repeatedly refused to implement effective gun safety laws.*

*The Board of Supervisors is charged with securing the health, safety and welfare of Solebury's residents, yet under Pennsylvania Law, we are not permitted to regulate firearms beyond what state law requires. Without adequate gun safety laws, we cannot secure the health, safety and welfare of our residents from a mass shooting nor can we protect our police officers from a gunman with an AK-47.*

*As an elected official, you entrust me to represent your interests. That's why I, with support from the majority of the board, put forward a proposed resolution urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the United States Congress to enact laws to reduce gun violence. The proposed measures recognize the rights to individual gun ownership and the right to self-defense provided for by the 2nd Amendment while also recognizing that these rights are not unlimited.*

*The proposed provisions are:*

- 1. Preventing known and suspected terrorists, those convicted of violent hate crimes and those with a history of domestic abuse from legally buying guns,*
- 2. Ensuring that background checks are required on all gun sales, including online and at gun shows. In Pennsylvania, preserve the provisions of the Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS) which provides instant access to background records,*
- 3. Funding research into the effects of gun violence and gun safety technology,*
- 4. Requiring trigger locks on all firearms in homes where children are present, [CONSIDER CHANGING TO: "Requiring trigger locks on all firearms or that firearms are stored safely in a gun locker in homes where children are present"]*
- 5. Banning access to assault-style rifles,*
- 6. Reducing the number of permissible cartridges in a clip or magazine."*

Mr. Searing commented that there needs to be increased education and additional research into the root cause of gun violence. He supports the idea of the resolution but questioned some of the statistics cited and felt that issues such as trigger locks are a common sense issue and should not need to be legislated. He would also support reinstating the Federal Assault Weapons Ban that expired in 2004, adding that clearly something needs to be done and this Resolution at least adds additional voices to the conversation.

Mr. Morrissey expressed his support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment right to bear arms and read the exact wording aloud but added that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment does not provide unlimited rights. He emphasized that topics involving the safety of our citizens in any form is a responsibility of local government as well as the federal and state governments. He supports the proposed Resolution and hopes that it will help to focus the federal and state officials to stop ignoring the issue and pass responsible gun control measures opining that if enough townships say something maybe our state and federal representatives will do something.

Resident Ed McGahan commented that he was not aware that the Board was considering such a Resolution and opined that the Board is not qualified to discuss the issue. He believes it is a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment matter and not within the realm of the Board. If the Board wants to adopt such a Resolution, the question should be placed on the ballot so the Resolution really represents the community's position and not just the agenda of the Board members.

Mr. Searing recommended revisions to the wording in the first 'Whereas' clause and Mr. Cosdon recommended adding the first names of those receiving copies. Both revisions were agreed to by the Board.

Resident John Brandes agreed with Mr. McGahan that gun control measures are not local issues, and the Resolution is far too broad in scope and requires more resident input.

Resident John Rodwell expressed disagreement with Mr. McGahan, and applauded the Board for taking the position, adding that the state and federal levels of government have taken no action so local government needs to do something.

Resident Carol Taylor agreed that responsible gun ownership is a local issue and expressed her support for the proposed Resolution.

Resident Brian Luce agreed with the points raised by Mr. Searing and also agreed that using 'broad statistics' could hurt the message, opining that using real facts would be better.

Resident Alan Keim expressed his total support adding that federal and state representatives seem to be more focused and intent on their re-election than actually doing something.

Resident Bill Tinsman opined that it is incomprehensible that anyone other than military or police would need to own a military grade rifle.

Ms. Tai explained that the impetus for the Resolution was the event in Dallas, following which she had a discussion with Chief Bellizzie and he agreed that there are too many guns on the street.

Mr. Cosdon expressed a fear that as time goes on, the events in Dallas, Orlando, etc. will fade. He supports adopting the Resolution now.

Mr. Searing stated that he objected to the process used to solicit public opinion, opining that there was not much time given for public input on the matter, however, he would vote on the issue, adding that voting on the proposed Resolution was an effort to motivate our state and federal representatives to take action.

Mr. McGahan recommended the Board table the issue until a future meeting and publish the proposed Resolution to get more resident input.

Ms. Tai noted that the Board's agenda is posted the Friday before the meeting and lists all topics to be discussed and considered at the meeting. Additionally, she had posted the item on her website and received feedback from many viewers. One in particular suggested that instead of trigger locks, guns in households with children should have to be stored in secure gun lockers. Ms. Tai noted that trigger locks are available in the police department.

Ms. Tai also noted that although Mr. Barrett was unable to attend the meeting, he has expressed his support for the Resolution before the Board.

**Res. 2016-124 – Upon a motion by Mr. Cosdon, seconded by Mr. Tai, it was unanimously agreed to adopt a RESOLUTION OF THE SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS URGING STATE AND FEDERAL LAWMAKERS TO ENACT STRONGER PROTECTIONS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE, with revision.**

November Meeting Date – The administration has recommended that due to a scheduling error, the meeting in November, originally scheduled for November 3<sup>rd</sup>, should be revised to November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Res. 2016-125 – Upon a motion by Mr. Cosdon, seconded by Ms. Tai, it was unanimously agreed to reschedule the November 3<sup>rd</sup> Board of Supervisors meeting to Tuesday, November 1, 2016.**

Asplundh Zoning Hearing Board Application – The applicant is requesting relief from multiple Zoning Ordinance regulations.

**Res. 2016-126 – Upon a motion by Mr. Cosdon, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, it was unanimously agreed to authorize the Township Solicitor to attend the Zoning Hearing Board hearings scheduled on the Asplundh ZHB Application to oppose the application.**

#### 2017 Budget Presentations

Free Library of New Hope & Solebury – The library was represented by Carol Taylor, Vice-President of the Board, Connie Hillman, Director, and Board member Jacqui Griffith. The library is requesting an increase of an additional \$20,000 annually. This would result in the current per capita dollar figure of \$10.35 increasing to \$12.50. Currently the funding received directly from Solebury Township is \$90,000.

Ms. Hillman provided history on the public library and the branch system. Ms. Hillman explained that in order for the library to qualify for the maximum amount of state aid, it needs to receive \$12.50 per capita from its local municipalities. A \$20,000 increase from Solebury Township would address that issue.

Mr. Searing questioned where he could find the reference to the \$12.50 requirement as well as what the impact would be if the library did not receive that per capita figure. Ms. Hillman agreed to email Mr. Searing the information, including where to find the funding formula in the Library Code.

Solebury Township being the largest contributor to the Library, Mr. Searing also requested copies of the Library's financial statements. Ms. Hillman will forward those as well.

Mr. Searing commented that the Township has consciously decided to place emphasis on land preservation which benefits not only Solebury Township but the New Hope community and the school district as well. He also noted that Solebury residents already pay \$168,000 in library taxes to the County in addition to the \$90,000 paid directly from the Township to the library.

Mr. Morrissey questioned what additional projects were planned. Ms. Hillman responded that a strategic plan is being undertaken in the fall to serve as a guide map going forward and that increasing the hours of operation and staffing would be considered as well as a computer help desk with additional staffing. Ms. Griffith added that the library budget is a bare bones budget and that the raises have been minimal at best at 2%.

Ms. Tai expressed that she is a big believer in libraries and that the NHYS library is an asset to our community that serves everyone regardless of age or income. She also commented that in a community as affluent as Solebury, we should be able to support a public library.

Resident Faye Christiansen commented that the library adds local flavor and the feeling of “New Hope” while providing tangible services and because of its location, many people can walk there without having to drive.

Charles Huchet of New Hope commented that the library is not just a repository of books it is a gathering place for community members as well.

Resident John Rodwell said he appreciates the library, but would appreciate better parking, or perhaps giving some thought to allowing people to park free if going to the library.

Judith Patterson, a home-school instructor, commented that the early morning literacy program and room is amazing with puppet shows, animal programs, etc.

Polly Wood, a member of the Library Board, added that there is something for everyone, noting that not everyone has a computer and at the library they have access to one without charge and are able to participate for free in many programs and presentations regardless of ability to pay.

Mr. Morrissey asked if Ms. Hillman could provide a breakdown by demographics for the Board. Ms. Hillman stated that she could provide that detail.

The Board will take the request for the additional \$20,000 under consideration.

Police Department – Chief Dominic Bellizzie – Chief Bellizzie addressed the Board revisiting an earlier presentation he made in June of this year. In addition, the Chief has budgeted for in-car cameras for two cars per year. In response to a question posed from resident Beth Houlton, the Chief stated that when a car is replaced, the cameras can be transferred into the new vehicle.

Resident John Brandes asked if car cameras were less expensive than body cameras. The Chief noted that they are not, however, there are still many issues to be addressed with body cameras in addition to concerns related to wiretap laws. He recommends obtaining in-car cameras rather than going to body cameras at this time.

Resident John Rodwell asked how long the proposed improvements would last. The Chief responded that he would expect the proposed improvements to adequately serve the department for the next 20 to 25 years.

The Board discussed having the architect look into including installation of windows in the police department with the overall improvements rather than revisiting the issue at a later date. Mr. Carney and Chief Bellizzie will look at the layout and come back with an estimate of costs to include windows.

Public Works Department – Mr. Carney presented a seven year road program from 2015 – 2021 that covered projects completed and proposed.

The Capital Projects Fund will be revised to reflect expenses of \$400,000 for the salt building in 2017; \$20,000 for the police department entry in 2018; and \$30,000 for the multipurpose field in 2017. A breakout of anticipated expenses between restoring the area of the current pole barn back to grass or a field will be provided.

The Board recommended that the proposed budget for deer management be increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually beginning in 2017.

\$50,000 has been budgeted for Aquetong Creek stream restoration work in 2017 and \$450,000 budgeted in 2018.

Mr. Carney and Ms. Blood asked the Board if they should contact PFM and explore borrowing funds for the salt building and police department improvements. Ms. Blood commented that in previous conversations, it appeared that there may be an opportunity to pay off one of the earlier borrowings and borrow funds for these projects and save approximately \$200,000.

Ms. Tai expressed concern about the fees charged by PFM in the past. Mr. Carney will explore reducing the fees with PFM.

Direction was also requested regarding policies to be established for the General Fund Balance.

Mr. Carney informed the Board that part of the original bid on the Public Works Building included the salt building. At that time, the Board had opted not to build the salt building due to budget constraints. However, as our contract with Walter Brucker & Co. is still open, we could ask them to build it as a change order. The Board authorized Mr. Carney to speak with Walter Brucker & Co. about construction of the proposed salt building in 2017 without making any commitments.

Public Comment – No additional public comment was offered.

Adjournment

**Res.2016-127 – Upon a motion by Mr. Cosdon, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted  
Gretchen K. Rice  
Assistant Manager