

SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

November 4, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.

Solebury Township Hall/Virtual – Hybrid

BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Mark Baum Baicker, Chair, Kevin Morrissey, Vice-Chair, Noel Barrett, John S. Francis, Robert McEwan, Dennis H. Carney, Township Manager, Michele Blood, Assistant Manager, and Catherine Cataldi, Secretary. Mark L. Freed, Township Solicitor was also in attendance.

The recording device was turned on.

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

II. Approval of Bills Payable – October 28, 2021

Res.2021-122 – Upon a motion by Mr. Morrissey, seconded by Mr. McEwan, the list of Bills Payable dated October 28, 2021 was unanimously approved as prepared and posted.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2021

Res.2021-123 – Upon a motion by Mr. Francis, seconded by Mr. McEwan, the Minutes of the October 19, 2021 Meeting were unanimously approved as prepared and posted.

IV. Supervisors Comment

- Mr. McEwan commented on renewable energy and solar power (copy of which is attached).
- Mr. Francis expressed support for addressing climate action. Mr. Francis suggested the public review the climate action plan located on Pennsylvania’s website.
- Mr. Morrissey agreed that the need to examine ways for the Township to reduce the Carbon footprint. Mr. Morrissey expressed interest in engaging technical consultants to help the Township to analyze all alternative solutions.

V. Public Comment

- Nancy Wolff, resident, gave an update regarding Denise Lotito. No one has contact Ms. Lotito regarding the water issue in her home.
- Ms. Wolff questioned and commented on the possibility of a dog park within Solebury Township.
- Ms. Wolff questioned the future of the New Hope Quarry.
- Ms. Wolff commented on Parks & Recreation projects and activities.
- Ms. Wolff congratulated the Supervisors on the election and commented on political sportsmanship.
- Keith Wolff, resident, commented on the proposed spending operation of capital expenses and receipt of tax payer revenue.

Disaster Relief Funds – Designation of Agent Resolution

Mr. Baum Baicker opened the topic with the following: *The Township became aware only yesterday of an additional filing requirement for disaster relief funds from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This filing must be done by the end of this week and followed up with expense details by December 1, 2021.*

Res.2021-124 – Upon a motion By Mr. Baum Baicker, seconded by Mr. Francis, it was unanimously agreed to add Disaster Relief Funds – Designation of Agent Resolution to the agenda.

Res.2021-125 – Upon a motion by Mr. Baum Baicker, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, it was unanimously agreed to approve the Township Administration to file the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Application and to designate Dennis H. Carney, Township Manager as Solebury Township’s agent for the purpose of signing all required paperwork.

VI. Budget

2022 Budget – Authorization to Advertise for Adoption December 14, 2021

Mr. Baum Baicker gave an overview of the Budget process. Ms. Blood presented highlights of the proposed 2022 budget.

Conversation ensued between the Board regarding the Solar Panel Installation Project and the 2022 Contribution to the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury.

- Solar Panel Installation Project –
Highlights of the discussion included: the interest in additional analysis on sustainable energy sources; funding; and the year to include the installation in the budget.

It was decided to include the expense for the Solar Panel Installation project in the budget for 2023 as a placeholder.

Mr. Baum Baicker, Mr. McEwan and Mr. McEwan for including it in the 2023 budget.

Mr. Morrissey for including it in the 2024 or 2025 budget

Mr. Barrett was undecided

- Contribution to The Free Library of New Hope and Solebury –
Highlights of the discussion included: background information on Solebury Township’s contribution to the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury; Library usage by Solebury residents; and a service agreement with the Library.

It was decided that the 2022 contribution to The Free Library of New Hope and Solebury in the amount of \$125,000.00 is to be included in the budget.

Mr. Baum Baicker, Mr. Barrett and Mr. Morrissey for the contribution amount of \$125,000.00

Mr. McEwan and Mr. Francis for an increase in contribution amount.

Joseph Varone, resident, commented on and expressed opposition to the installation of Solar Panels at the Township building.

Conrad Vogel, resident, commented on the use of the Bucks County Free Library in Doylestown. Mr. Vogel expressed opposition to raising taxes to increase the contribution to the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury. Mr. Vogel also expressed opposition to the installation of Solar Panels at the Township building.

John DeAndrea, resident, commented on electricity in the United States and the percentage of energy generated from Solar Panels. Mr. DeAndrea expressed interest in the Township analyzing other avenues to reduce Solebury’s carbon footprint and offered to help analyze where the Township is losing energy.

Mr. DeAndrea commented on Police Chief Bellizzie's presentation to the Board, at a previous meeting, requesting to purchase a high-water vehicle. Mr. DeAndrea questioned the opposition given by some Supervisors on the purchase of the vehicle needed for safety but the support for giving a contribution to The Free Library of New Hope and Solebury. Mr. DeAndrea commented on Aquetong Spring Park and the associated road and traffic issues. Mr. Baum Baicker confirmed that the high-water vehicle is in the 2022 budget. Mr. Morrissey commented on the property purchased by the Township located on State Route 202.

Doug Brindley, President of the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury, commented on the information allowed to be retained by the Library. The Library will continue to work on gathering and researching the information requested by the Board. Mr. Brindley thanked the Board of Supervisors for their continued consideration and support.

Mr. Wolff commented on reduction of the Township's carbon footprint. Mr. Wolff expressed opposition for Solar Panels.

Hanna Howe, resident, commented on the purchase of paper books and eBooks.

Bob Scirocco, resident, questioned where the Solar Panels are made and the carbon footprint from making them. Mr. Scirocco questioned the consequence if not installed within the next couple years.

Res.2021-126 – Upon a motion by Mr. Baum Baicker, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, it was unanimously agreed to advertise the proposed 2022 Budget for adoption at the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors scheduled for December 14, 2021.

VII. Public Comment

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Cataldi
Secretary

BoS 4/11//2021. Robert McEwan Comments on Renewable Energy and our Solar Power efforts

This week's Glasgow's Climate Summit is an opportune time to discuss what we in Solebury Township are doing to address a few aspects of the township's energy needs.

These are my comments alone and are based on my personal belief in the long-discussed science of climate change. In addition, my thoughts are grounded in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan which addresses Solebury's energy conservation needs in chapter 11 and in the Ready for 100 (RF 100) resolution the Board signed July 2020. Both of these strong documents direct the Township's actions to decrease fossil fuel consumption by increasing our use of alternate energies like solar, geothermal and wind power.

Here I would like to discuss a Solar Power Project that has been perhaps too casually batted about in the past several years. Recent dialogue about it at the Planning Commission and EAC meetings informed me that I for one, have not outlined what this concept is, our recent fact-finding efforts that have enlightened our thinking, and the need for more fact finding before any of our committees, residents, the administration and the Board can have clearer dialogue and perhaps bring a specific proposal to the table.

The concept:

The concept that is under review is to install solar power generation panels on the roofs of the Mechanical and Salt Storage buildings to generate power which would decrease our purchases from PECO. We should recognize that this is an investment that the Township could own. It will pay off itself via the decrease in monthly PECO charges. Paying off the set-up costs and allowing the eventual "free" power will lower the annual operational budget demands as well contributing to lower demand for polluting, fossil fuels.

Work to Date:

Over several years the Administration, at the Board's request, has generated free quotes from established Solar installers which tell us it is possible to replace 80 to 95% of our Laurel Road Facility's PECO demands. The estimated cost for this would be in the range of \$500,000 to \$625,000. Please be aware these numbers can change; they are not offers. At the future moment when we might approve such a project, it would go for public bidding. Additionally, the Administration has secured the assurance of an engineering firm that the roofs of these building can carry the load solar panels will create.

Next Step:

At this point the Administration and the Board have to consider how we would pay for such a project. Several avenues are open to us and of course, from now on, as in the past, we welcome resident's input. Some ideas to be investigated include:

- a. Taking money from the general fund.
- b. A onetime tax to pay for the entire amount.
- c. A financial arrangement with a 3rd party would which would own the installation and therefore be able to take advantage of tax breaks generated by the project. Such tax breaks would hopefully be shared with the township via a lower project cost. For this particular arrangement we need the Administration to look into all aspect of such a set up. There are a number of factors to consider which the administration could discover and share with the community. SREX's, or the possibility to sell excess energy on the open market, is part of this equation that needs illumination. For this investigation I call upon the Board to approve an Administration's search.
- d. Forming a consortium with other townships to build a facility and share the generated power.

e. New ideas residents might offer.

Conclusion:

While this specific Solar Power project is being investigated it is clear upon reading the RF 100, The Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan and our own 2014 Comprehensive Plan there are many additional topics under "Climate Action" we could or should consider. One insight I've found is quite a number of parties in Solebury's government have a say in the possibilities, opening us to mis-direction and lack of focus. I wonder if this is the most effective way to build a township plan and execute actions. After all it has taken 7 years since the publication of the 2014 plan to get to this starting point... maybe we could speed it up somewhat in light of the urgent need for action.

Thank you for your time.