

THE TOBYHANNA TOWNSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2018

The January 2018 Organizational Meeting of the Tobyhanna Township Economic Development Authority was held on January 17, 2018, at the Tobyhanna Township Government Center Building, 105 Government Center Way, Pocono Pines, Pennsylvania, 18350.

1. Interim Chair Jack Dean calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.
3. Roll call: Present were members Anne Lamberton, John Holahan, III, Edwin “Win” Miller, Solicitor John “Jack” G. Dean, and Township Manager John Jablowski Jr. Robert “Bob” Bossuyt and William “Bill” Van Gilder are absent.
4. John Holahan nominates Anne Lamberton for Chair, Win Miller seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.
5. Win Miller nominates John Holahan for Vice Chair, Anne Lamberton seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.
6. Win Miller nominates Bob Bossuyt for Secretary, John Holahan seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.
7. John Holahan nominates John Jablowski for Executive Director, Win Miller seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.
8. Jack Dean asks if the meetings have been advertised. Julia Heilakka responds yes, all meetings were advertised.
9. New Business
 - a. EDA Roles & Responsibilities Overview. John Jablowski states that in Pennsylvania, local government is not designed for economic development. Authorities have broad powers to levy, and some common authorities in other municipalities include sewer and parking. There may be multiple levies, and these levies shift the burden to consumption instead of taxing the residents. Pocono Summit East and Pocono Summit West (Pocono Summit is split by I-380, which is the line of demarcation for East and West) is the township’s current focus.

John Jablowski proposes a mission statement: The Tobyhanna Township Economic Development Authority (TTEDA) will serve as a catalyst for thoughtful, well-planned economic and village development in the Villages of Tobyhanna Township.

Anne Lamberton updates Win Miller on why the EDA was formed: there is an opportunity at Pocono Manor. If the township can create a new district and access the fees afforded by a levy, it can help pay for infrastructure improvements and repairs, and takes the main burden off of the state.

- b. Public Improvement Fund (PIF). John Jablowski states that he is meeting with ECollect+, Berkheimer, Keystone, and EConsult. Independent evaluations are necessary to help support public financing. Alberta has engaged EConsult for an independent review of the Pocono Manor Property, but has not been engaged to survey Kalahari, which will need to occur. The Public Improvement Levy could be implemented by mid-2018. Alberta is preparing to begin construction in 2019 with deliverables for 2021. Generally, a company takes out a loan at the start of the construction period and borrows extra money to pay the loan's interest until the company has deliverables. Building early payback into that loan gives banks an extra incentive for considering approving the loan in the first place.

Anne Lamberton states that once Phase I of the Alberta development is complete, Phase II may require massive bridge improvements. John Jablowski states that this will be very costly: about \$70 million in public money, and another \$20-40 million for bridge improvements. The Alberta land, at completion, will rival the geographical size of Downtown Disney. John Holahan states that the aquarium slated for Allentown got pulled, which eliminates potential competition.

Jack Dean states that confidential material should not be discussed at public meetings; executive sessions may discuss topics pertaining to real estate, legal, and personnel issues. Further, this Authority is held to the Sunshine Act, which means a quorum of members cannot deliberate outside of a public meeting.

John Jablowski states that Berkheimer, Keystone, and ECollect are all good companies, but ECollect has a better, more specific track record. The Authority must be cognizant of auditing capabilities. This company, whichever they choose, would be responsible for collecting the money each month and delivering it to the township, as well as pursuing collection if necessary. Concerning the actual levy, the point of sale would be 6% and 1%, not 7%. If the point of sale is bundled, it goes through Harrisburg first.

- c. Penn Strategies Grant Funding Update. Jason Fitzgerald states that he will provide biweekly updates to the Authority, now that plans are moving faster. He and township staff identified about ten state programs that could potentially provide the \$70 million in public financing for a potential project. Governor Wolf's office and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) have asked that a meeting be postponed until after the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) has met.

Fitzgerald met with DCED Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko concerning the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP). Senator Scavello has reserved \$20 million from RACP, but that does not mean we are guaranteed the money.

Fitzgerald continues to monitor the CFA, DCED, and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for opening dates on grant programs, available funding, and new programs. There tends to be more grant funding available faster on even years because of elections. Skeleton applications are complete, and he is waiting for the projects to open. Many potential funding sources used to require a 20-30% match, but it seems many of them are dropping to 0% match because the municipalities that need the help the most cannot afford the match money.

Fitzgerald had a conversation with Phil Pullizzi from Cassidy and Associates concerning a possible federal infrastructure bill. The funding seems to be split: half of the applications will be direct federal applications and the other half will be block grants, federal money passed to the state, where agencies like the DCED will decide how that money is used. Congressman Cartwright has indicated that his vote for infrastructure legislation requires a portion of the funds to go to block grants, and that recreational infrastructure must be considered.

Concerning submitted grants, Fitzgerald has been told that the Municipal Assistance Planning grant award to the township is imminent. The township is covered two-fold on this front, because Alberta is helping with funding as well.

Concerning the submitted PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Program, the \$550,000 requested for the Bike and Hike Trail will be 100% funded if we get it. The Bike and Hike project ranked 2 of 6, and missed first place by one vote. This is because Carbon County has more people on the board that voted for their own project, so they have a natural advantage over Tobyhanna Township.

Fitzgerald states that he misread a memo, and to correct himself, states that \$33 million tied to a previous year has been released by PennDOT, and all \$55 million is still available for this year. This should be awarded on the 28th of January, though he was warned of a delay of a few weeks.

Concerning the Green Light Go Grant, the township requested \$46,785 for traffic lights, which was submitted on November 8, 2017. The first round of announcements should occur by the end of January 2018. He has received positive feedback, largely due to outside lobbying efforts: Representative Rader, Senator Scavello, and Congressman Cartwright all showed their support.

10. Additional Reports

- a. Jason Fitzgerald states that the bylaws before the Authority are a sample. Jack Dean states that he will revise and circulate them.
- b. John Jablowski states that the Authority has submitted for an EIN because the Authority needs accounts to hold money from the levy. He recommends the solicitor prepare legislation to create the Public Improvement Fund, for implementation in the 3rd or 4th quarter of the year. Administratively, the Authority could be ready by March.
- c. John Jablowski states that the public improvement district will encompass Kalahari and the Alberta property. The district's outlines can be changed once it is established. Anne Lamberton asks if the bowling alley and doctor's office should be included in the district. John Jablowski recommends including the doctor's office, but the bowling alley may be an issue. Pocono Summit West and Pocono Summit East may need separate levies, due to what improvements the money will be used for in each area. Anne Lamberton suggests making FedEx to 314 one district, because everyone will benefit from improvements to 940. Jason Fitzgerald states that ideally, Lamberton is correct, but it depends on what the market will bear.

Anne Lamberton states that the relocation of the Stillwater Estates entrance and the I-380 southbound off-ramp improvements must occur first.

John Jablowski states that district boundaries should be defined by February or March. Anne Lamberton states that businesses in the area raised \$270,000 for a \$250,000 feasibility study in a matter of days; the businesses are supportive of this project.

- d. Anne Lamberton asks Jason Fitzgerald to ask Leslie from PennDOT how the township would take responsibility for SR940, after he has asked for grant money.
- e. John Jablowski states that the Pocono Summit West and East maps, as well as the Municipal Authorities Act, are permanent fixtures in the binders.

11. Public Comment – none.

12. John Holahan motions to adjourn the meeting; meeting adjourned at 7:21PM.