

**South Fayette Township
Township Manager's Report
March 9, 2022
Submitted by John M. Barrett**

Summary: This report will summarize activity since our February meeting. Since that time, we have had significant advancement of the Municipal Complex Project as well as a number of other priority projects. The Township has issued a formal Notice to Proceed to our prime contractors, and a pre-construction meeting will be held on March 9th. The issuance of the Notice to Proceed means that the time limitations in the contract have begun, and a 14 month maximum construction date has begun. Once we have a firm construction schedule, the Board will be informed of the construction timeline and mobilization of equipment. In addition, our Independent Auditors have performed a fair amount of site work to advance our annual audit and review our annual financial statements. They hope to wrap up the field work later this month and have draft reports to us within 60 days. The Manager has also spent some time reviewing our zoning ordinances particularly the zoning requirements within our Planned Economic Development zoning district. Given the recent completion of the Southern Beltway, the Board will be asked to consider making some changes to our zoning regulations to ensure the potential of the Southern Beltway is maximized. We will integrate our review of the Southern Beltway District into our Comprehensive Planning process, and hope to have this area be looked at closely by our consultants and our Steering Committee.

In addition to these items, the following information is being shared with the Board;

Volunteer Fire Departments: South Fayette Township recognizes that our four Volunteer Fire Departments, like most volunteer departments in the Commonwealth, struggle with adequate staffing levels particularly on weekdays. As a result, the South Fayette Community is at-risk most weekdays as our fire stations are mostly without sufficient manpower to respond to daylight calls. The Township has been asked to consider providing additional funding for our departments to cover the hourly rate of a paid daylight firefighter. The concept needs to be fully vetted with the Board of Commissioners and additionally reviewed with all four of our Volunteer Fire Companies. The concept thus far would be for support from the Township to come in the form of additional funding that a VFD would be eligible for after meeting certain criteria. The criteria are yet to be established, but would likely include a description of work plan for the individual, some level of fiscal transparency and accountability to qualify for the additional funding. The individual would not be a Township employee but an employee of the Volunteer Fire Company, and the Township contribution would be a reimbursement of wages paid. The wage scale for this Full-Time position can vary as deemed appropriate by the Department, but \$20 per hour is the proposed maximum amount the Township would offer reimbursement for. In addition, VFDs are able to supplement this income with paid time off, health insurance, workers comp insurance, and any other employment benefit that is deemed appropriate.

Training in Hickory Grade Road Building: The Township was asked to permit our Volunteer Fire Companies to use the existing buildings at 337 Hickory Grade Road for training purposes. The Township has been planning to demolish these structures. Our tentative schedule is to bid the demolition in April, award the contract in May and demo the buildings very soon thereafter. We have already concluded asbestos sampling and testing on the buildings. The good news is that there were only limited amounts of asbestos found in the buildings. With traditional demolition, the material would have to be removed and taken offsite but the abatement costs are minimal and it doesn't require any action before the demo....meaning the contractor can pull out the tile and place in a small dumpster and take the buildings down immediately after.

The VFDs are requesting permission to seek a state burn permit and conclude the training with a controlled burn of the property. This would come with additional asbestos abatement as additional material would likely have to be removed and taken off site whereas it would not require such treatment with normal demo. It is my recommendation that we permit training in the building but stop short of burning the structure. The Board is being made aware of this so they can provide feedback and guidance. The Township has requested and received a proposed training calendar. The training would be made available to any of our four departments, as well as select invitation to neighboring communities within our COG districts. The Board is being made aware of this request and is being asked to provide feedback. Given the relatively small window we have to accommodate training in these buildings, the VFDs are looking to start as soon as possible.

Fire Code Official Position: The Board of Commissioners expressed an interest in creating a new position to enforce various codes of the Township. The desire was for the position to have a safety focus and provide ancillary support to our Volunteer Fire Companies by enforcing the fire code in our business districts and commercial corridors. A 2022 Budget allocation of \$50,000 was provided from the General Fund to initiate this effort. The Board recognized that annual personnel and operating costs for this position will be greater than this allocation. The Manager was authorized to begin developing the details required to successfully establish a new position on the Township staff. During the first quarter of this year, the Manager and Commissioner Dernosek have spent time discussing and refining this conceptual plan. The new position would primarily serve to inspect, evaluate or in some form or fashion analyze the building condition of commercial buildings throughout the Township. These efforts would be meant to improve public safety and specifically reduce the likelihood of a fire call through preventative efforts and enforcement of the Fire Code. The new position would primarily serve to inspect, evaluate or in some form or fashion analyze the building condition of commercial buildings throughout the Township. These efforts would be meant to improve public safety and specifically reduce the likelihood of a fire call through preventative efforts and enforcement of the Fire Code. Additionally, this position could provide support to Code Enforcement by enforcing the International Property Maintenance Code to address blighted properties in the Township. This information is being shared with the Board so next steps can be properly planned.

Municipal Complex Groundbreaking Ceremony: At the last Board of Commissioners meeting, contracts were awarded to the four prime contractors that bid on the Municipal Complex/Police Building project. Paperwork has begun and formal Notice to Proceed awards have been issued. The first pre construction meeting will occur on March 9th. It is anticipated that a projected construction schedule will be shared with the Board at our upcoming meeting. It has been suggested that we coordinate a Groundbreaking Ceremony before the project construction commences. We are working through the details and will be reaching out to the Board with the logistics of the event, but it could happen as soon as March 31.

Road Program Update. The Board will have a proposed road program and will be asked to advertise the project for public bidding at the April meeting. The project will conform with our \$1.5M budget allocation and will be driven by the data gathered through the Roadbotics program. Once the 2022 Program has been established and advertised, Gibson-Thomas will work with the Township in developing a 10-year Road Program.

If anyone would like to discuss any issue independently, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will also be prepared to discuss with the group at our upcoming meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Barrett
Township Manager