

Meeting Minutes
Lehigh Tax Collection Committee
Thursday, November 16, 2023, 8:30 A.M.

I. Roll Call/Quorum determination

A meeting was held on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 8:30 am at the South Whitehall Municipal Building. The purpose of the meeting was to continue the process of compliance with Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Act 32.

Officers in Attendance were:

<i>Shane Pepe</i>	<i>Chairperson</i>
<i>Cathy Bonaskiewich</i>	<i>Vice Chairperson</i>
<i>Jack Meyers</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Steven Miller</i>	<i>Solicitor</i>
<i>Bruce Koller</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>

The meeting was called to order at 8:35. Meyers took the roll call vote for the delegates. There were a requisite number of delegates from both the School Districts (7/9) and Municipalities (17/25) in attendance for the meeting. Therefore, a quorum was met for the purposes of conducting the meeting and resolving issues.

II. Public Comment regarding agenda items

There were no members of the public present for comment.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made (Roth) and seconded (Betz) that the April 20, 2024, meeting minutes be approved as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. Approval of Treasurer's Report

Koller reported that the taxing authority assessments were almost fully collected. Notable were the advertisements for the RFP for Solicitor and Executive Director. Koller added that the cash is in good shape and he may be looking into a short-term CD. The budget will be prepared for the next meeting. Wehr moved, seconded by Beitel that the report be approved as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. Approval of Invoices for Payment

Three invoices were presented for payment as noted in Koller's report. Payments noted were to The Morning Call, Atty. Steven Miller and Lafayette College. A motion was

made (Wehr) and seconded (Beitel) to approve the invoice for payment as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. Tax Officer's Report

Sean Sanderson presented Berkheimer's report. Collections, as stated in his report, increased 5.50% over the prior year. He added that if any taxing authority has any questions, they are free to email him. He encouraged taxpayers with issues to email Berkheimer with any questions. The rest of his information was provided in the report to the Committee.

VII. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

VIII. New Business

Executive Director Update – As Director Beckett was not in attendance, the Committee deferred discussion until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Update on RFP Process for Solicitor – Beitel reported that there was one response to the RFP from Atty. Michael Gaul of the firm of King, Spry. Attorney Gaul represents the Northampton TCC and is familiar with the functions of the Tax Collection Committee and Act 32. Motion was made by Pepe, seconded by Frisbee, that Atty. Michael Gaul be approved as Solicitor for the LTCC. The motion was approved unanimously.

Update on TCC Website – Pepe reported that the present site is very basic and includes minutes and agendas. For a year and a half there was no current host for the site. Pepe will be working through the process, including obtaining a URL, and will report progress as the situation develops.

Further Discussion on Executive Director – It was reported that one applicant presented themselves of the position. The Northampton TCC has not made progress on their search. Beckett has informed both the LTCC and NTCC that her service and that of the Meyner Center will cease at the end of 2023. Pepe noted that the position carries approximately 100 hours of work. Frisbee maintained that combining resources with Northampton would carry additional value. Betz and Duane Pepe recommended that the candidate be interviewed, to determine if the candidate possesses the qualifications to serve in the role of Executive Director.

Discussion of the Amendments to the By Laws, Appeals Board Rules and Regulations Governing Practice and Procedure – Atty. Miller reported that, with Act 32, the LTCC established By Laws, created a Tax Appeals Board, and adopted Rules and Procedures governing its functions and operations. In so far as approval of revisions requires, in our bylaws, a 10-day notice to the delegates, these changes would be deferred until the Committee's next meeting.

The recommended amendments will be forwarded to the executive board so that they can be provided to the delegates within the proscribed timeline. Saul recommended that these necessary amendments be in force and effect upon approval by the TCC.

IX. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on April 18, 2024, at the South Whitehall Municipal Building at 8:30 am. It was indicated by Pepe that this could be changed to earlier than scheduled to approve the changes in the bylaws and regulations. It could possibly be a Zoom meeting if the needs require it to be. Pepe noted that the re-organization of the Board would also occur at the April meeting. He concluded by the thanking the committees in the Solicitor search and all other activities for their service and efforts.

X. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XI. Adjournment

The date for the next regular meeting is April 18, 2024, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made (Saul) and seconded (Pepe) to adjourn the November 16, 2023, meeting at 9:02 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack D. Meyers
Secretary