

**TOWNSHIP OF FALLS  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**

**ROLL CALL:**

<b>ROBERT HARVIE, JR., CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
<b>JONATHAN SNIPES, VICE-CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
<b>JEFFRY DENCE, SECRETARY-TREASURER</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
<b>JEFFREY ROCCO, SUPERVISOR</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
<b>BRIAN GALLOWAY, SUPERVISOR</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>

The meeting commenced at 7:17 p.m. with roll call and salute to the flag. All Board members were present with the exception of Member Snipes. Member Snipes joined the meeting at 7:32 p.m. Also present were Township Manager Peter Gray, Township Solicitor Michael Clarke, and Township Engineer James Sullivan. Chairman Harvie apologized for the meeting starting late as there were some technical difficulties.

**ITEM # 1 DISCUSSION REGARDING HURRICANE SANDY THAT AFFECTED  
FALLS TOWNSHIP**

Chairman Harvie spoke about Hurricane Sandy and the efforts by the employees, volunteers, and citizens of the township to make getting through this storm as smoothly as possible. Fire Marshal Rich Dippolito shared some information of what the township did ahead of the storm and during the storm. He said the Public Works Department, fire departments, police, EMS, PECO, and the township administration met ahead of time to coordinate efforts. He said everyone worked very well together as this was a storm that none of them have ever seen. Mr. Dippolito said they started storm preparations on Thursday and Friday, coordinating their efforts and checking to make sure their emergency power was ready to go. They had a formal meeting with department heads, the fire departments, rescue squad, Public Works, supervisors, and key people on Sunday. They had a lot of wind coming and ten inches of rain was predicted. The guys got out to clear storm drains, they sent out information via texts and e-mails, posted on the website and cable channel, and they declared a state of emergency. They posted recommendations on Facebook. They made sure the township had fuel. They spoke to the school about setting up a shelter. On Monday morning the fire marshal's staff, Mike Margerum and Ed Pullen went out and helped the road crew getting the storm sewers open, and visited with all of the hotels to make sure they were prepared. They met with Aria Bucks and Home Depot to make sure they had plans in place in case they needed supplies. They spoke to apartment complexes that were prone to flooding. All three volunteer fire departments manned their stations twenty-four hours a day for two full days. The rescue squad brought in additional manpower as did the police department. The township building was closed on Monday except for key personnel. The storm caused over 13,000 accounts to lose power. By Tuesday afternoon the three volunteer fire departments responded to over one hundred calls for service, consisting of down wires and building collapses. They had no communication with the township building as phone service was out. Cell phones were not working either



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but they did have communication radios. Among the emergency calls were thirty homes that had fallen trees on them. On Tuesday the County and Red Cross opened a shelter at Pennsbury High School East. There were only a couple of Falls Township residents who sought shelter. There was a problem with the emergency generator and heat so the shelter was moved to Bensalem. There was a decision made on Tuesday to postpone Halloween to Saturday night. By late Tuesday morning the road crew and outside contractors that came in, cleared all of the streets in Thornridge to make the roads fully accessible. They did a great job getting the streets open. They opened the township Wednesday and Thursday for people to use to power their electronic devices. On Wednesday the regional shelter was moved from Bensalem to Bristol. By 3:30 p.m. Wednesday afternoon PECO stated they expected 85-90% of the outages to be corrected by Friday. On Thursday they had a visit from Representative Galloway, Congressman Fitzpatrick, Senator Tomlinson, Lt. Governor Cawley, Chairman Harvie and Member Galloway. They took a tour of Thornridge to look at the damage and see what they were up against. On Friday PECO said they hoped everyone would get power back by Sunday. PECO brought in 3,000 outside contractors from South Carolina, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. These folks worked around the clock. As frustrated as people were, they did notice a lot of people helping each other. By Monday morning there were about forty or so people without power. As of today everyone is back on. (Member Snipes joined the meeting at 7:32 p.m.) Mr. Dippolito said with all that happened, everyone did a great job. He thanked everyone who helped and thanked the public for being so patient. Lt. Todd Pletnick said everyone did a wonderful job. The brunt of the calls came in from midnight Sunday to Monday night. They responded to over one hundred calls. By Tuesday night the calls started to go down. Lt. Pletnick said even though they were not accustomed to this type of storm, they adapted the best they could. The radio system within the county worked very well. They didn't have any problems communicating with their radios. Mr. Dippolito said for the amount of destruction not one person got hurt. It is amazing that there were no injuries. Member Galloway thanked both of them and commended the township staff and the residents in the township. Member Snipes also thanked the township. He said we have another agenda item and said they are open to other suggestions. Member Dence said thanks as well. He said to see Thornridge in person and what actually happened there and in Birch Valley it is unbelievable that no one got hurt. Member Rocco also thanked everyone. He said he is proud to say he got to witness the operation and said everyone did a good job. Chairman Harvie said he went on the tour on Tuesday morning. He said people were out early cleaning up. He drove around the township throughout the week and was impressed to see people helping each other out. Some people still have to deal with issues, but it is stunning that no one was injured. Chairman Harvie said for most of what Mr. Dippolito reported on, that was all before the storm even hit. There were a lot of plans made from Thursday before the storm hit on Monday.

### **ITEM # 2 CONSIDER WAIVING PERMIT FEES RELATED TO HURRICANE SANDY**

Chairman Harvie said one of the things that the board has discussed was a way to help people whose homes were damaged due to the hurricane. Mr. Bennett, Zoning Officer, said they are trying to determine what to do about the permit fees. They could post a form on the



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website that people would need to fill out. It would describe their damage, they would submit it to the township, and then someone from Code Enforcement would go out to check on the damage. They would enter it into the township computer so they would know the damage was from the storm. Some insurance companies do not act as fast as others. This could take months even close to a year. We want to help those who were affected by the hurricane but, at the same time, we have to prepare for people who might try to take advantage of this. Member Dence made a motion to waive the permit fees for homes, businesses, and non-profit institutions for damage related to Hurricane Sandy; Member Rocco seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0)

**ITEM # 3 PUBLIC COMMENT – FIVE MINUTE LIMIT PER PERSON  
FORTY-FIVE MINUTE MAXIMUM**

Mr. Dick Trimble spoke about an issue with the Lower Bucks County Joint Municipal Authority (LBCJMA). He said the authority is going to the residents of the township and telling them they can't do things in their yards because the authority has an easement. They are also telling people the authority can hold up the settlement of their property if they don't do certain things. Mr. Trimble said he has a copy of the authority rules and what the authority is saying is not true. There are a lot of things they are doing which our contradictory to their rules. The only easement deed for the authority is from 1952. The rules do not have anything in there saying that they have special powers nor do they say you cannot put a shed in a certain location. Mr. Trimble asked the board to contact neighboring municipalities, bring this to their attention, and maybe join forces to do something about this problem. Mr. Trimble said this is getting out of hand. He said the township does not have any kind of representation on the authority board. Mr. Trimble said he ran into a situation where the authority came out to do the meter reading and then they inspect the sewer line. They also mark the trees on the property that need to be taken down. The easement doesn't give them any more rights to access one's property than PECO or the telephone company would have. They are doing this and getting away with it. Mr. Trimble spoke about the rules for putting in a grease trap. He said the authority is violating their own rules. He thinks it is very important that the board take some kind of official action to help the residents of Falls Township. Member Galloway spoke about an authority crew that went onto someone's property late at night and they startled the homeowner. Mr. Trimble gave several examples including residents being told that trees needed to be removed at the homes that his clients are selling. Chairman Harvie said he has had some conversations about this and it sounds like they are taking advantage of people that really don't know what an easement is. Mr. Trimble said when a bank sells a property, not a word is mentioned about things having to be done.

**ITEM # 4 CONSIDER WAIVER OF LAND DEVELOPMENT – ARIA HEALTH,  
380 NORTH OXFORD VALLEY ROAD, TMP # 13-004-297**

Manager Gray introduced this item. Mr. Michael Connor, Civil Engineer from Stantec Engineering, spoke about the project, located at 380 North Oxford Valley Road. They are planning to add a one-story addition to the rear of the property as well as a two-story second



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story overbuild in the rear of the hospital. Site improvements include a sidewalk along with modifications to an existing driveway. They received approval from the Planning Commission on September 23, 2012 and a letter dated November 6, 2012 from T&M Associates. They are requesting a waiver from land development for consideration and approval to move forward. Chairman Harvie said Traffic Planning and Design had no issues. Mr. Sullivan said the T&M Associates letter dated November 6, 2012 is based on the letter dated November 1, 2012 which addressed some issues. Those issues have been resolved by between November 1, 2012 and November 6, 2012. Member Snipes said he is glad to see the renovations are happening and that we are looking forward to this in our community. Member Dence agreed and said he is glad this is happening in Falls Township and not somewhere else. Member Dence moved to approve Resolution 12-24, waiver of land development for Aria Health, 380 North Oxford Valley Road, TMP 13-004-297; Member Galloway seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0)

### **ITEM # 5 CONSIDER BIDS RECEIVED FROM AUCTION OF TOWNSHIP SURPLUS VEHICLES**

Manager Gray said public bids were publicly opened and reviewed on Friday, October 26, 2012. The bids for the five vehicles were reviewed. They were \$501, \$100, \$100, \$80, and \$80. The township received quotes from Junkyard Barbie/Pick A Part and Crescent. Scrapping some of the cars may give the township the opportunity to bring in more money than the bids that were received. Member Dence moved to sell the 1995 Chevrolet Caprice for \$501 to the highest bidder, Jane Levson; Member Rocco seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0) Member Dence moved to reject the other four bids and to scrap the vehicles; Member Rocco seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0) Manager Gray was directed to contact the junkyards to scrap the cars.

### **ITEM # 6 MINUTES - OCTOBER 2, 2012 AND OCTOBER 16, 2012**

Member Snipes moved to approve the minutes from October 2, 2012 and October 16, 2012; Member Dence seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0)

### **ITEM # 7 EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board went into Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. and the board reconvened at 8:58 p.m. Mr. Clarke said that while in Executive Session, the board discussed a litigation matter.

### **ITEM # 8 MANAGER COMMENT**

- A. Member Galloway moved to ratify the state of emergency imposed in the township from 5 p.m., Sunday, October 28, 2012 until 5 p.m., Wednesday, October 31, 2012; Member Dence seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0)
- B. Member Galloway moved to waive the permit fees for the Zoning Hearing Board application made by the Falls Township Fire Company #1 for a rental hall at the rear



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- of the fire company; Member Snipes seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0)
- C. Kanga Roof is having their Third Annual Roof Give-Away Contest. They asked for the township to waive the permit fees and costs with obtaining a permit for the roof project. This is a Falls Township business that does this as a community-service opportunity. Member Snipes moved to grant the waiver of the roof fees for Kanga Roof; Member Dence seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0)
- D. Manager Gray said there are mylars ready for signature for Aria Health and General Office Area South.

### ITEM # 9 BOARD COMMENT

Member Rocco thanked Fire Marshal Dippolito and Lt. Pletnick for reporting on the series of events during the hurricane. Member Rocco reminded everyone that this coming Monday is Veteran's Day. Member Rocco said last night's election had a good turnout by Falls Township voters. Regardless of who won, you should be proud for getting out to vote.

Member Galloway said our thoughts are with the thirty homeowners who had damage during the storm. He wishes them well.

Member Dence agreed with Member Galloway. He said he took the tour after the hurricane and said it was a horrible sight to see. He hopes everyone can get things taken care of quickly. Member Dence said with changing the date of Halloween, it was amazing how the word spread so quickly. Member Dence hopes everyone can get back to normal as soon as possible.

Member Snipes thanked everyone for a good meeting tonight. He gave a lot of gratitude to the township staff and people in the community. He said it was good to see so many people helping each other. Member Snipes said some people were out of power for a long time and there are still some folks struggling. With regard to the election, there were a lot of complaints in voting district area 1-5 at Eleanor Roosevelt. Something needs to happen there and maybe we can find the people who control those things and change the situation. We will see what we can do. Member Snipes said the Girl Scouts helped direct people to the right line and he thanks them for doing that.

Chairman Harvie thanked the board members and especially the township staff for their efforts before, during, and after the hurricane. Chairman Harvie said Veteran's Day is a day to thank all people who have served. He thinks about the people who sacrificed by serving and he wonders if we are living up to what they gave up, and if we treat each other the way people should be treated. Maybe it will start with this election. Maybe people will realize there is a gridlock and get them to realize it is not working. Chairman Harvie said there are still some vacancies on some of the volunteer boards. Any interested folks should check the website and cable channel for more information. The Community and Economic Development Commission has been looking at Lincoln Highway and improving its image. They wanted to have a meeting with business owners toward the end of November but they

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will probably hold off that meeting until sometime in January. Chairman Harvie had a discussion with the head of the Historic Preservation Committee. There was a history of Falls Township which was written about twenty years ago. He has asked the Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission to see if their commission would give an update of the last twenty years and work on an addendum to that history. The Historic Preservation Commission thought that would be a useful project to take on. Chairman Harvie thanked the staff for getting everything ready for tonight's meeting. He thanked the board members for their dedication and hard work over the past few weeks.

Member Galloway moved to adjourn the meeting; Member Snipes seconded the motion; all board members were in favor. (5-0) The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.



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Jeffrey Dence, Secretary