

**Millcreek Township Government Study Commission  
Regular Meeting**

**February 10, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Millcreek Township Government Study Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Vice Chairman Art Oligeri in the Assembly Room of the Millcreek Township Municipal Building. In attendance were Commissioners Paul Vojtek (via telephone), James DeDad, John DiPlacido, Bill Schaaf, Donna Shaw; Alternates Bob Enas, Douglas Krugger, Nancy Shea, Marcia Terry, Kim Huff and Suzanne Weber; PA DCED Local Government Specialist Mary Ammann and Sheryl Williams. ALOM/Public Partner Consultants Michael Foreman and Jerry Andree were also in attendance. Absent was Commissioner Robert Zonna.

Following the Pledge to the Flag, Mr. Oligeri called for public comment on agenda items. None was offered.

On motion by Mr. Schaaf, seconded by Mr. DeDad, the minutes from the January 27, 2025 regular meeting were approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Treasurer James DeDad reported that there were two bills to be approved: Recording Secretary Services for \$680.00, and duplication of meeting documents for \$48.07. On motion by Mr. DeDad, seconded by Ms. Shaw, the bills were approved for payment by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Oligeri stated that New Business will be discussed after Committee Reports are given.

**Committee Reports**

Budget Committee Chairman and Treasurer James DeDad reported that of the \$100,000 budgeted, excluding bills that were approved this evening, \$99,550.92 still remains. He stated that the Budget Committee has agreed to analyze Millcreek Township's budget and compare it to other Township budgets, including audited financial statements.

Local Government Structure Committee Chairman John DiPlacido reported that his committee met on February 3, 2025 virtually along with the consultant, ALOM/Public Partners, and has planned a trip to Cranberry Township on February 18, 2025 to meet and interview representatives of four (4) Townships, and has prepared a list of preliminary questions. He stated that interviews must be completed by early March to adhere to the planned schedule.

Public Outreach, Public Relations, Public Education and Promotions Committee Chairman Art Oligeri reported that they met today prior to the regular meeting to discuss various venues and vehicles to disseminate information to Township residents, and discussed possible ideas, such as: filming a television spot at the end of the month, linking the Government Study Commission web page to the "A Better Millcreek" webpage, advertising on social media in April at a cost of \$1,000, and doing a mass mailing targeting zip codes 16505, 16506 and 16509. Mr. Oligeri relayed that the committee discussed taping a television interview on Inside Erie Politics, Erie News Now on Channel 12 in mid-March, and has notified the media of GSC meeting dates. Mr. Oligeri stated that committee members would like to give monthly reports at civic organization meetings, such as Kiwanis, Rotary and Elks Clubs, and discussed town hall meeting sites, such as the Township building and possibly at one of the schools in Millcreek. He reported that they are working with the Township's IT Manager and the new webpage is under construction, and concluded by stating that a survey will be going out to residents in the near future.

Mr. Vojtek offered to help with public outreach by providing write-ups but suggested that the outreach ideas should be promoted closer to November when it will stay fresher in people's minds. Ms. Shaw replied that the committee is focusing on September and October but noted that these events need to be scheduled so that they are on everyone's calendars.

Mr. DiPlacido asked if the committee considered a mass mailing, but Mr. DeDad advised that doing mailings is very expensive. A member of the audience mentioned putting an article in the In Millcreek magazine, which is mailed to all residents, and it was noted that there is no cost to place an article in the magazine.

Ms. Weber questioned the duplication costs for the past month, approximately \$48.00, and Ms. Williams explained that most of the cost was for making copies of the consultant's presentation for this meeting for the commission and alternates. Ms. Weber then offered to provide duplication services free of charge to the commission in the future.

Treasurer Mr. DeDad noted that the budget had to be set even though the Commission does not yet have a recommendation for the ballot.

Millcreek Resident Gerald Servidio asked when the commission's recommendation must be submitted to put it on the November election ballot, to which Mr. Oligeri replied no less than sixty (60) days before the election.

Mr. Oligeri reported that a month-by-month plan or work schedule will be posted online soon.

Committee of the Whole Chairman Paul Vojtek reported that he has been trying to reach Daniel Ouellet, Chairman of the Millcreek Township Board of Supervisors, to schedule an interview with the Supervisors at the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, because information is needed to compare Millcreek's current form of government with other forms of government utilized by other municipalities. He stated that he is waiting to hear from Mr. Ouellet. Mr. DiPlacido suggested presenting the Supervisors with a list of written questions as an alternative. Mr. Vojtek then excused himself from the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

### New Business

Michael Foreman, Lead Consultant from Allegheny League of Municipalities (ALOM) Public Partners, gave a summary presentation on the Optional Plans of Government Available: Executive (Mayor) Council Plan A (department of administration is optional), Executive (Mayor) – Council Plan B (department of administration is mandated), Executive (Mayor) – Council Plan C (provides for the office of managing director), and Council – Manager Plan, but noted that "No Change" is also an option if the Commission decides not to recommend any change in the current form of government. Mr. Foreman emphasized that the responsibility of the government study commission is to not only study the existing form of government by interviewing officials, but also to talk with staff, and to talk with other townships that are of a like structure as well as municipalities that have adopted an optional plan of government similar to what he has presented today. Mr. Foreman also emphasized that regardless of which optional plan is selected, Millcreek Township still remains subject to the provisions of the Second Class Township Code, except where it is superseded by the structural provisions of the optional plan. Also, he noted that any optional plan cannot diminish any rights or privileges of any present municipal employee with regards to their pension or retirement system, and all collective bargaining agreements would remain intact and untouched until the contract or other conditions of employment are up, should the Millcreek Township voters approve an optional plan of government. Mr. Foreman opined that should an optional plan of government be adopted, "the government will gain the kind of structural and administrative change that can provide for greater accountability and effective government."

Mr. Foreman then explained the three mayor-council plans and council-manager plan of governments in depth, stating that each of these forms of government remedies the structural weaknesses in the various Municipal Codes, including the Second Class Township Code. He also stated that “the most characteristic structural weaknesses in the various municipal codes are a blurring of responsibility and the consequent lack of accountability for government action”, noting that “each of the mayor-council plans and the council-manager plan provide for a governmental structure in which legislative and executive functions are separated, and in which supervision over administrative organization is centralized, meaning that greater accountability is being gained.”

Alternate Nancy Shea asked if the Township’s current form of government is a combination of both legislative and administrative functions, to which Mr. Foreman replied yes. Ms. Shea asked if this could cause a conflict of interest, to which Mr. Foreman commented that this is the arrangement laid out in the Township of the Second Class Code, adopted by the PA General Assembly, which permits elected supervisors to simultaneously be employees of the township. He emphasized that the optional plans of government offer a separation between the legislative and executive function, and execution of the policies of that governing body are through an appointed manager or director of administration.

Ms. Weber stated that when looking at the chart of the twenty-five (25) most populous Townships in Pennsylvania, she does not see a designation of which type of government each municipality has, but rather the term “council” is used instead of “supervisor.” Mr. Foreman explained that under the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Statute, the term used to represent a governing body is called “council.”

Ms. Shea stated that she would like to see more transparency and accountability in government, and asked for examples of how a different form of government could increase accountability or transparency. Mr. Foreman explained that a legislative body would pass the laws and appoint a manager, who would implement the policies. The manager would then be accountable to the governing body and to the people, which creates transparency. Ms. Shea asked if the word “supervisors” could be used rather than the word “council,” which is confusing. Mr. Foreman stated that this may require a legal opinion for the final report regarding whether a government could call a governing body a board under that form of government.

Mr. Oligeri stated that perhaps there are a lot of Millcreek citizens who do not realize that the current form of government functions both executively and legislatively.

Mr. DiPlacido asked Mr. Foreman to clarify that the current form of government is still “on the table,” and Mr. Foreman replied that yes, the GSC can decide to recommend that the current form of government should remain in place, and thus “no change” is still “on the table.” The matter would not go to a referendum and Millcreek would then stay a Second Class Township municipality. Mr. DiPlacido asked if it would be possible to get copies of some organizational charts that show the various forms of optional governments being presented, which might be easier to understand. Mr. Foreman replied that he would provide organizational charts within the next few days, and Mr. Oligeri stated that they will also be posted on the Millcreek website, as well as on the corresponding GSC web pages.

Mr. DeDad asked Mr. Foreman if the GSC would have the ability to recommend that the current form of government be amended to have five (5) Supervisors elected by voting district. Mr. Foreman answered that the Second Class Township Code allows for the current Board of Supervisors, through a referendum, to change from three (3) to five (5) Supervisors, and if the Township later is not happy with it, to return to three (3) Supervisors within a certain period of time. However, the Second Class Township Code does not provide the option to elect Supervisors by voting by district. They must be elected at large. Mr. DiPlacido then asked if, under the current form of government, Millcreek Township could currently go from three (3) to five (5) Supervisors even if the recommendation is “No

Change” in the government structure, to which Mr. Foreman replied yes, under a referendum and as long as they are elected “at large.”

Millcreek resident Harry Morgan asked if the township decided to go to five (5) Supervisors, would they all have to be full-time Supervisors, or could they be part-time Supervisors who are not employees of the Township, to which Mr. Foreman replied that the additional two (2) Supervisors would have the option of being employees of the Township or not.

Millcreek resident Gerald Servidio asked if the GSC is going to investigate other Townships with supervisors other than Cranberry Township, such as Indiana Township in Allegheny County and College Township in Centre County. Mr. Foreman explained that Indiana and College Townships operate under the Council-Manager optional form of government. Mr. Servidio asked if the commission will be looking at other Townships with the same form of government as Millcreek. Mr. Foreman stated that they are still waiting to interview Millcreek’s governing body. Consultant Jerry Andree noted that Hempfield Township in West Moreland County also operates under a Council-Manager optional form of government. Ms. Shaw added that the GSC is looking to study the top twenty-five (25) most populous Pennsylvania townships and noted that Millcreek is number two on the list. Mr. Foreman offered to send Mr. Servidio the list.

Mr. Servidio mentioned October 17<sup>th</sup> as being a recommendation deadline date, but Mr. Oligeri and Mr. Foreman clarified that a recommendation for optional form of government must be submitted to the Erie County Board of Elections no less than sixty (60) days before the November election date (November 4, 2025). Mr. Servidio commented that in his presentations, Mr. Foreman seemed to be stressing and implying that accountability is paramount and asked him what he is trying to convey. Mr. Foreman explained that he would hope that his message to people is that he is presenting factual information to the GSC for them to make informed and objective decisions when studying the current and potential forms of optional government and then ultimately make their recommendation. Mr. Oligeri noted that a timeline for the study will be posted within the next week.

There being no further business nor anything for the Good of the Order, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm on motion by Mr. Schaaf, seconded by Mr. DiPlacido.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl A. Williams,  
Recording Secretary

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Approved February 24, 2025

**MILLCREEK TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION**

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John DiPlacido, Secretary