

## A MESSAGE FROM GREENE TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

During the November 23, 2021 Greene Township Supervisors' Meeting, there were a number of residents with comments and questions regarding the decision to provide Township employees with Premium Pay under the American Rescue Plan Act. These questions included:

1. Where and when was this meeting advertised and when and where was the ARP money advertised?
2. How are township employees deemed essential workers?
3. What did township employees do different to run the township in 2020 and 2021?
4. Why \$10,000 and not \$1,000 or \$2,000?
5. Why can't this money be used to pay down the sewer debt?
6. Could the money be used for something that benefits all residents and not just 10?
7. Why was this meeting at 3:30 pm?
8. How and when will the questions be answered? How will we receive the answers?
9. How can the Township be more transparent?

What follows is our joint statement outlining the history regarding the Federal program permitting Premium Payments as well as and our reasons for the passage of Resolution 41-2021 in October of 2021.

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") was signed into law by President Biden. Rules and regulations for the ARPA were published by the United States Department of Treasury on May 17, 2021 ("Regulations"). Eligible uses for the ARPA funds include Premium Pay for eligible/essential workers performing essential work. Under the regulations, Premium Pay is retroactive and covers work that was performed since March of 2020.

### **Eligible/Essential Workers**

Eligible workers, as defined in the regulations, include workers that "have been relied upon to maintain continuity of operations of continual infrastructure sectors, including those who are critical to protecting the health and wellbeing of their communities." This includes workers that are "needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors including...sanitation work...maintenance work...solid waste management, response and cleanup work and *any work performed by an employee of a State, Local or Tribal government*". It is also defined in the regulations as work that involves "in person interaction with...the public or co-workers" as well as "regular physical handling of items that were handled by...the public or co-workers".

### **Excluded Uses**

ARPA funds cannot be deposited into any pension fund; cannot be used to directly or indirectly offset any reduction in net tax revenue for the municipality; cannot be used as a non-Federal match for other Federal programs; and cannot be used for project expenditures, *such as the Township sewer project*, that were incurred prior to March 3, 2021.

As required by the Pennsylvania Second Class Municipality Code ("Code") and the Sunshine Act, we advertised the notice of our monthly meetings for the 2021 calendar year in January of this year.

As advertised, our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. throughout the year. We also have an additional meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. as needed. The November 23, 2021 meeting was a fourth Tuesday meeting.

In accordance with the most recent amendments to the Sunshine Act, we posted the agenda for our 2021 meetings conspicuously on the front door of our office as well as on the Township website no later than the Friday before each meeting. Agendas are also present at all meetings.

On May 11, 2021, we held a scheduled meeting. On the agenda was the uses of the ARPA funds the Township received. We held open discussions before a public audience to consider uses for the ARPA funding allocated to our Township. As a result, Resolution 28-2021 was passed that evening. There were no comments, questions or concerns expressed by any of the residents in attendance.

On October 8, 2021 we posted an agenda for our October 12, 2021 meeting which included discussion of the ARPA funding. During the October 12, 2021 meeting, we held open discussions before a public audience for consideration to use a portion of the ARPA funds as Premium Pay for Township employees in the amount of \$10,000.00 per employee. That was Resolution 41-2021 and it was read out loud in its entirety. It was passed that evening. There were no comments, questions or concerns expressed by any of the residents in attendance.

Under the Second Class Township Code, we, as supervisors, cannot establish our own pay while working as an employee. Instead, the Code provides that Township Auditors must approve any such pay. Resolution 41-2021 included Attachment "A" wherein Greene Township Auditors (*elected non-employees*) specifically approved the \$10,000 Premium Pay to all Township employees.

As we do with all monthly meetings, we posted minutes of both the May 11, 2021 and October 12, 2021 meetings on the Township website for public viewing.

Greene Township employees worked in person throughout the pandemic even at times when stay-at-home orders were mandated for many businesses and non-essential workers. They were always available 24/7 by phone performing a variety of functions throughout the Township to keep the Township functioning. They were called out in the middle of the night to take care of flooded roadways, fix water lines and grinder pumps in the sewer systems. They worked without a day off for weeks during the pandemic.

The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors noted that Greene Township employees make \$2 - \$3 less per hour than the average Township employee in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. They also acknowledged that government workers that worked in person are eligible to receive Premium Pay as they are at heightened risk due to being physically present at their workplace.

As Township Supervisors, we always commit to transparency in **ALL** decisions that we make on behalf of the Township. Transparency, however, cannot be accomplished without community input and participation at meetings to address community concerns *before* decisions are made.