



## **Press Release**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Towamencin Township Pool Not to Open for 2017 Season**

*Towamencin Township, PA* – During the presentation of the 2017 proposed budget this evening, the Towamencin Township Supervisors indicated that the Township will not be able to open the municipal pool for the 2017 season due to ongoing and significant operational costs that are not covered by membership and use fees.

Despite the installation of a new competition-size pool and significant facility improvements in 2008, the pool has experienced declining revenue since 2004. Total revenue has gone from \$220,554 in 2004 to \$151,407 in 2016; Pool membership fees alone during this same period have seen a 52% decline, falling from \$175,720 to \$90,900 this past season.

Each year the Township has had to transfer dollars from the General Fund to the Pool Operating Fund to cover the expenses not paid for by the users of the pool. Since 2008 a total of \$561,828 has had to be extracted from the General Operating Fund to pay for the pool deficit; an additional \$115,285 would be needed for 2017.

The Township has been attempting to address this issue for the past eight years. Efforts to increase revenue have included major capital improvements to the facility, adjustments in membership fee structures, joint purchasing for supplies, reducing utility costs, hosting special entertainment events, and holding management expenses level by engaging the North Penn YMCA to manage the pool, including the hiring and paying of lifeguards and staff since 2011.

During the past two years, the Township has explored the feasibility of leasing the entire pool facility to the North Penn YMCA, a well-respected non-profit community organization that has proven experience in cost-effectively operating aquatic facilities. Unfortunately, due to expectations of the Towamencin Swim Team that could not be met, further discussions of this arrangement are not possible.

One of the key requirements for the YMCA to lease the pool facility was that the Township reach an agreement with the Towamencin Swim Team as to the future operation of the swim team. The Swim Team was given a choice of leasing time from the YMCA and running their own program or joining a team that would be operated by the YMCA. In the middle of discussions and the exchange of financial information, the Township received a curt email from the Towamencin Swim Team Board President stating that "Based on our board meeting, we will continue to support the agreement from last year. We are unable to absorb any additional costs." This was not one of the options under discussion that would have enabled the Township to reach an agreement with the YMCA.

Additionally, Towamencin Swim Team members have made, over the last couple of years, derogatory comments about the YMCA's personnel and operations of the Township's pool facility. Most recently comments have been made to the effect that Swim Team members would leave the Towamencin Pool for an adjoining municipal pool if it became a YMCA facility. The bad publicity and the financial uncertainty created by these comments, as well as the unwillingness to discuss the options presented for the Towamencin Swim Team moving forward, have made it impossible to continue discussions regarding leasing the pool facility to the YMCA.

A further and major obstacle to the Township's dilemma was presented this past Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, when the North Penn YMCA advised that they would no longer be able to manage the Towamencin Pool starting in 2017.

The Board of Supervisors strongly believes that a collaboration with the YMCA would have been hugely successful and beneficial to all stakeholders (taxpayers, pool members, Swim Team members, and the YMCA) and could have resulted in the pool facility being sustainable and open for many years to come.

**END OF PRESS RELEASE**