

**Towamencin Township
Board of Supervisors
Special Meeting - Consider Appointment of Supervisor
March 3, 2025
5:30 PM**

Present:

H. Charles Wilson III, Chairman
Kofi Osei, Asst. Treasurer/Asst. Secretary
Joyce F. Snyder, Secretary
Kristin Warner, Treasurer

Staff:

David G. Kraynik, Township Manager
Tim Troxel, Chief of Police
Niral Modi, IT Specialist

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Comments

1. The purpose of this meeting is for the Board to consider an appointment to fill the Supervisor vacancy for a term expiring on December 31, 2025.
2. On February 14, 2025, Township staff advertised on the Township website and Facebook page that we were seeking submissions to fill the vacant seat, with a deadline to submit applications by February 28. A legal advertisement was placed in the Reporter with publication dates of February 17 and 24.
3. A total of 11 applications were received and reviewed by the Board, with two applicants withdrawing their submissions.
4. This meeting is provided live via Zoom for residents and taxpayers unable to attend in person. Public comments from residents and taxpayers submitted by 4:30 p.m. this afternoon will be read at the start of the meeting. Residents and taxpayers present this evening who wish to speak must come up to the podium and state their name and address.
5. A brief executive session was held before the meeting to discuss whether some of the emailed public comments were appropriate to be read aloud, considering the public comment policy.

Summarized Emailed Comments

Supervisor Snyder noted the following comment would be edited because it refers to the name of a private citizen.

Resident Lynn Sweet-Reimel shared her opposition to Dan Bell for the appointment of Supervisor. Supervisor Snyder stated the following comment would be partially edited because it refers to names of private citizens.

Resident Candi Roberts noted her opposition to appointing Dan Bell or Jenn Foster to the Supervisor vacancy. She criticized Supervisor Snyder's reading and asked that she stop sending emails. She proposed addressing the blight at Allentown and Forty Foot Road by implementing an ordinance that charges a fee (not a fine) on commercial or retail properties that remain vacant for more than 30 days, which would generate revenue and encourage businesses to fill vacancies. She then criticized Supervisor Osei, suggesting he should resign due to his anger, hate, dishonesty, and divisive actions. She feels he harms the community and should contribute positively. She questioned the far-left's values of tolerance and love, stating Supervisor Osei's behavior is counterproductive and creates division. She suggested Supervisor Snyder also resign.

Resident Ezra Schwartz stated he has tried to consider both sides of this situation but believes Supervisor Osei is acting maliciously. He thinks the residents are savvy enough to see through him, and that his comments will backfire. In his opinion, Laura's salute, which was wrongly interpreted as a Nazi salute, was not one, and people are simply ignorant of the context. The issue arose when Laura allegedly misgendered a fan sparking anger. The situation, including a TikTok video and Laura's explanation, also connects to the reaction to Donald Trump winning the presidency, which fueled their anger. He feels news stations stayed neutral and did not engage in local conflicts, particularly avoiding the resignation meeting. He claimed Supervisor Osei never directly accused Laura of being a Nazi and challenged him to do so if he strongly believed it, noting he used the word "alleged" to avoid legal liability. He feels that the media overlooked the far-left group's attempt to manipulate the media for political purposes. He encouraged the Board to get to work.

Summarized Public Comments

Solicitor Iannoizzi noted it was his understanding that public comment would occur and follow with applicants' statements in the order in which they were submitted. Chairman Wilson responded that was incorrect, and that it was decided there would be no specific order.

Resident Daniel Bell thanked the Board for the opportunity and emphasized that this is a crucial moment for the Township, with the remainder of the term significantly impacting the community. He highlighted three key priorities for an appointed supervisor: 1) establishing and executing a unified plan for the community, 2) building trust and fostering inclusive conversations with the community, and 3) moving beyond partisanship to ensure excellent management of Township resources. He stressed the importance of collaboration to create a model of great governance. If given the opportunity to serve, he would be honored to be part of bold leadership, but if not, he expects the Board to lead in a way that strengthens the community for the future.

Resident Don Littman shared he applied to serve because he sees a lack of trust in the Board within the community. Having raised a family here, he values diversity and believes in fostering strong community bonds. He is committed to promoting respect, trust, and transparency, emphasizing that the community deserves honesty and inclusiveness.

Resident Steve McMasters stated he submitted his application as he can offer a fresh perspective having lived in and worked for the Township for many years. His goal is to help restore the community's integrity.

Resident Vaughn Trader decided to apply for the vacancy after seeing it, and inspired by Joe Madison's quote, "What are you going to do about it?" While he has never served on a committee or board, he has military experience. He believes that people make choices, both good and bad, and mistakes happen. He emphasized collaborating to solve problems over political alignment. While acknowledging that not everyone will get what they want, he believes in working toward the greater good and wants to give it a try to see what he can contribute.

Resident Richard Burlingame thanked the Board for the opportunity and expressed confidence in using his engineering skills to assist the Township. He appreciated Supervisors Snyder and Osei for reaching out to assess his qualifications. After their conversation, he felt they had a clear vision for the Township, and their passion was evident. He believes they are focused on long-term goals that will transform the Township. If selected, he plans to educate residents about their options and encourage greater community involvement. He also mentioned the recent comprehensive plan and the low survey response rate, suggesting that the Township could have done more to encourage participation.

Resident Amer Barghouth was thankful for the opportunity to apply for the vacancy. He is eager to contribute in any way to make the Township a better place for all. He shared his personal background and professional experience and his appreciation for the Township. He noted key areas of focus if he is selected: 1) fiscal responsibility 2) efficient responsive government 3) safe and clean neighborhoods, and 4) promoting local economic development.

Resident Tom McClennen commented having watched the video, he believes it is a disgrace that anyone would accuse Ms. Smith of being a Nazi or that she was making a Nazi salute, and those making such claims should not be running our Township.

Resident Judith Phipps disagreed with the previous comment, stating that the action in question resembled a Nazi salute and should never happen again. She criticized the Supervisors who failed to stand up for the residents, calling their actions reprehensible. She emphasized the need to end the ongoing mistreatment of residents and highlighted the importance of fiscal responsibility.

Resident Jacqueline ter Kuile commented she has always felt safe in the community, but seeing the salute made her feel unsafe. She believes permission to behave poorly is being encouraged in this County. She then referenced a podcast that described the fear felt by those living in Nazi Germany during the holocaust, stressing residents should not be fearful of losing their safety due to differences in religious beliefs or political persuasions. In her opinion, the public comments are overly gossipy, and the focus is too much on power dynamics in the Township. She knows both Supervisor Osei and Snyder personally and thinks they're doing a great job. She hopes the Board will rise above this and move forward.

Supervisor Osei responded he has always been open about being a politician and noted his position as vice-chair of the Towamencin Democratic Association. He emphasized that he would continue political attacks and defend free speech without hesitation, but stressed his attacks are usually policy oriented. He acknowledged the criticisms, calling him a bad supervisor with no details of wrong doing. He dismissed them as not worth taking seriously. Regarding Laura's gesture, he referred to it as a referential joke but stated that it resembled a Nazi salute. He noted he

never called Laura a Nazi, but she choose to resign because of her action. He explained that there is no rule mandating the resignation of a Supervisor.

Consider Appointment of Supervisor

Chairman Wilson made a motion to appoint Vincent Sherpinsky to the Board. Of all the resumes received, he felt that Mr. Sherpinsky had the most extensive background in local government and public policy, having served on various boards, including North Penn School District for several years, showing a great deal of commitment to public service. He noted he did not solicit the resume but is impressed with his experience and has an outstanding background to fill this position.

Supervisor Osei commented he spoke with Mr. Sherpinsky, and they had a good conversation. However, because the Township does not have a Vacancy Board, he will not vote for a registered Republican, regardless of his background and would be voting no.

On a motion by Chairman Wilson, seconded by Supervisor Warner, the motion failed 2:2.

Voting Yes: H. Charles Wilson, Kristin Warner
Voting No: Joyce F. Snyder,, III, Kofi Osei
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

Supervisor Osei made a motion to appoint Daniel Bell to the Board. Supervisor Osei shared his vetting process for the vacancy, which included a pre-screening system with a points-based evaluation. He also asked the applicants several questions, including their approach to moving forward from the incident, and others related to the comprehensive plan update, policy interests and the high school renovations. Based on his prescreening and response to questions, Dan Bell scored the highest and considered the best fit for the position. While acknowledging differences in personal political views and policies, he clarified that Mr. Bell's nomination was a compromise pick, and he believes Mr. Bell remains the best candidate despite potential political risks.

On a motion by Supervisor Osei, seconded by Supervisor Snyder, the motion failed 2:2.

Voting Yes: Joyce F. Snyder,, III, Kofi Osei
Voting No: H. Charles Wilson, Kristin Warner
Abstaining: N/A
Absent: N/A

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Ehrle
Director of Administration