

Statement on behalf of the Board of Supervisors regarding an increase in overall overtime payments made to Township employees that occurred during the two-week period March 16th to March 26th.

The Board has reviewed in Executive Session the circumstances to this situation and provides the following explanation:

- Given the unprecedented circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board supported the Disaster Declaration for West Goshen Township and signed the document with an effective date of March 12th.
- Four WG police officers were potentially exposed to an infected individual during the Arbors Square bomb threat response on March 8th and their subsequent interactions with other officers, staff and the township buildings necessitated both a facility wide deep cleaning and an assessment by department heads on ways of working going forward.
- Additionally the stay-at-home order from the PA Governor drove the need to close the Township offices, initially through March 30th and later extended through April 30th.
- **Therefore, the immediate consideration was how to ensure the Township, as your local government, could continue to provide its essential services to residents and businesses, while doing so in a manner that employees could feel safe from infection and that also protected the public. A determination of how these services could best continue to be delivered was made by the Township Manager and the department heads in circumstances where quantities of PPE in terms of masks, etc. were initially limited.**
- For the Police, Public Works (Streets & Sewer) and Parks staff it was decided that splitting into two or more distinct teams on a rotating schedule would enable all critical work to continue. This would minimize the risk that a whole department could become exposed and quarantined that would jeopardize service delivery.
- During the two week pay period 3/16 to 3/26, paid on 4/2, there was a combination of emergency work (repairing a sewer line break), establishing new work patterns (e.g. police dispatch coverage to include weekends) and incentive pay (as OT) for individuals to perform essential work in an uncertain environment, namely limited PPE availability/the early advice on social distancing needs and recognizing employee concerns about the potential risks for Covid-19 exposure.
- The Board recognizes this was the initial period for the Township to determine how to manage services in the pandemic crisis and represented a transition and learning curve on how to get essential service work performed.
- The Board was made aware of the cost of the OT incurred and has reviewed the initial practices and payments. The Board supports the segregation of employees into separate, rotating teams as a practical risk management approach that maximizes employee safety while minimizing service delivery risk. Therefore, this will incur some continuing overtime (e.g. Police Dispatch) due to hours worked in excess of the normal 40-hour work week by employees, and possible overtime to deal with emergency situations that arise (e.g. stormwater, streets, sewer issues). However, the Board was not consulted beforehand and does not support use of OT pay as an incentive to perform work. This has stopped as of 3/26.