

State of the Township



Council President
Craig Bowen
Council Vice President
Cindy Murphy
Bristol Township
January 21, 2021

Welcome

Good evening, members of Township Council, residents, staff, friends and family. Thank you for joining us tonight. I wish all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

As we look forward to 2021, let us hope it will be different than the year we just finished. First, I would like to thank my colleagues on Council; a dedicated group of individuals that work diligently on behalf of our community and with the community's support are all responsible for the great success we have achieved.

I would also like to recognize the many committee members and other volunteers who devote countless hours to the residents of Bristol Township and work hard to better our community. Additionally, we thank our Township Consultants for their knowledge and assistance. And last, but certainly not least, our amazing Township Employees. They keep the day to day running operations, while making recommendations to us on Council for an improved community.

2020 Year in Review During the Pandemic

This past year has been a good year for us as a Township, even with the pandemic. All Departments worked together to ensure we continued to meet the needs of our residents. The Senior Center, with the greatly appreciated assistance from all Township Departments, continued with Meals on Wheels and Congregate meal pick ups for our Seniors. Over 600 meals continued to be delivered or picked up weekly, and for some Seniors, this weekly delivery was the only human contact they had, and it was tremendously welcomed. We are grateful for the opportunity to assist the Senior Center with all they do.

Bristol Township's Community Development Department received \$684,155 CARES Act grant funding through the U.S. Department Housing and Urban Development. This money has been allocated in assisting the Bucks County Senior Center, the Bucks County Homeless Shelter, emergency rental, mortgage and utility assistance for our residents and PPE for Lower Bucks Hospital.

Township Council, consultants and staff worked with Bucks County on two projects awarded Treasury CARES Act Funding. A new Community Education Center at Humphrey's Park and the addition of two (2) modular units for COVID-19 emergency housing at the Homeless Shelter.

Since the start of the pandemic Kevin Dippolito, our Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Director, has monitored the status and the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC and other health officials. We were never out of the loop, information

was shared with our employees, residents, and business owners, sometimes updated daily. As we stated at his Resolution of Commendation presented to him last year, Bristol Township is very fortunate to have Kevin in this position.

Bristol Township also continues to receive support from some of our local businesses. Estee Lauder donated hand sanitizer produced at their NY production facility to the Bristol Township Police Department as a gesture of gratitude and goodwill in recognition of their important and challenging policing work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Effluent Retrieval has provided disinfecting services for our buildings and vehicle and fleet as needed for a significantly reduced cost.

Safety and Community Interactions

The Bristol Township Police Department went through a rigorous assessment by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC) for our 1st Tri-Annual Accreditation Reassessment. This means for each of the 136 standards incorporated into our policies, the BTPD, specifically Officer Aita, had to provide two (2) proofs a year for each of the last three (3) years. On November 19, 2020, the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission unanimously voted to re-accredit the Bristol Township Police Department. The assessors remarked, "This is one of the best run, well-equipped Departments they have seen, and how well our evidence is handled and how poor evidence management gets many departments in trouble. Your work in this program demonstrates the type of leadership that we strive for in law enforcement in Pennsylvania." Thank you Chief Coulton, Lieutenant Johnson, Officer Aita, Bob Hairhoger and the entire Bristol Township Police Department.

The Department was able to continue with replacement vehicles for those with high mileage and breakdown prone. Additionally, patrol cars were retrofitted with new laptops. We purchased Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), traffic calming devices and portable wheel loading scales for truck traffic details through grants received by the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Bucks.

Our Emergency Management and Fire Marshal's Departments handled all changes and challenges they faced. The staff not only completed the normal tasks assigned each year but also took on additional assignments beyond their scope of responsibilities without hesitation. On several occasions the Fire Marshal's Office and Office of Emergency Management staff acquired and picked up free PPE for our EMS, Fire, Police, two (2) nursing homes, and school district. Kevin Dippolito worked with county health and emergency management staff to find a facility in Bristol Township for mass COVID-19 testing and will likely transition to a vaccination site. Over \$11,000 COVID-19 expenses have been submitted and/or reimbursed through FEMA.

Our volunteer Fire Police worked a traffic control detail for Fresh Connect Bucks meal pickups at the Bucks County Community College for thirty-two (32) Fridays, working 550 hours assisting an average of 400+ cars weekly.

The Office of the Fire Marshal responded to 361 Fire and Rescue calls and 44 medical emergencies. Deputy Fire Marshal Brian Gerhard, Firefighters/Fire Inspectors Thomas Stressman, Todd Dipopolo, and Daniel Matthews were recognized with a Life Saving Award for the successful rescue of a 44-year-old female from a house fire. Personnel from the Fire Marshal's Office performed:

- o 1,677 Annual fire inspections
- o 1,001 Re-inspections
- o 3,805 Annual apartment safety inspections
- o 102 Commercial U&O inspections
- o 1,779 Signage and vending inspections
- o Submitted 1,779 emergency contact forms to Bucks Co. 9-1-1, BTPD, and various twp. depts.
- o Conducted 27 incident follow-ups (fire alarms issues)
- o Conducted 61 plan reviews (sprinkler, fire detection, land development)
- o 69 Knox-Box key replacements
- o Replaced truss warning stickers on 18 buildings
- o Installed 22 smoke alarms in homes
- o Provided 22 Fire Extinguisher/Fire Safety trainings at day cares and businesses

Bristol Township Council was fortunate to again allocate \$125,000 in "Glasson Grants" for the Township's five (5) Volunteer Fire companies and two (2) Rescue Squads. Additional grants in the amount of \$160,000 from the Redevelopment Authority of Bucks County were awarded and on the agenda for acceptance later this evening. Council's commitment to public safety will ensure that our Fire Departments and Rescue Squads have the state-of-the-art equipment they need to assist our community.

I know this past year during the pandemic, including some of the staffs having COVID, has been extra hard on all of you. Your Departments have always stood strong and have done a wonderful job again this year. Thank you for keeping all of us safe.

[Continued Capital Improvements](#)

With the assistance of over \$6 million in grant funds, additional capital and infrastructure improvements were still able to be completed in 2020 including:

- Traffic Signal Modernization and Upgrades to all signalized intersections of Route 413; Mill Creek and Haines Roads; Radcliffe Street and Randall Avenue; State Road and Cedar Avenue and S. Oxford Valley Road and S. Queen Anne Drive
- Design for additional Traffic Signal Modernization and Upgrades for New Falls Road and Woodbourne, Edgely Emilie Roads; Mill Creek and Edgely Roads and Hood Boulevard and Queen Anne Drive. Construction grants were halted for 2020 and will resume this year.
- Installation of 114 ADA Curb Ramps.
- 12.7 miles of road paving, totaling 134 miles completed since 2012.
- Upgrade of Croydon Acres Pump Station
- Installation of Generator Connections at all Pump Stations
- Continued investment in Inflow and Infiltration to the sanitary system

And, since coming on Council in 2012, we have been diligently working on the Consent Decree required upgrade to the Croydon Wastewater Treatment Plant. This has been a long process, sometimes felt like a battle with various Governmental Agencies, but am happy to report we will finally be able to award bids for this much needed and desired project later this evening. Thank you to all of our consultants and Township Manager to finally bring this project to groundbreaking fruition!

Parks & Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department implemented a 13-week Rec from Home, Crafts on the Go Program for our Bristol Township youth. An average of 250 craft kits, each different and fun were created, packaged, and delivered every Friday since the COVID-19 mandated shutdown of the schools. Instructional craft videos were created and uploaded with step-by-step directions of the craft. Additionally, virtual field trips were implemented, and “The Little Things!”, a new web series was created and posted every Thursday to help teach our youth little things they can start to learn to help them become little adults. Our kids and community were so excited every week for these videos and craft fun!

The beautiful Municipal Park Recreation Expansion Project opened last year, unfortunately not with the community gathering we all were hoping for. We thank all of our residents for their continued praise and support on this project and are hopefully later this fall we will be able to celebrate this great amenity, **together**. Even with the pandemic, the new turf field was in high demand for youth leagues permitting. We are currently already booked through March of this year!

The Parks and Recreation Department continues coordination with the Community Development Department on eligible Community Development Block Grant Funds to upgrade several parks and their structures throughout the Township. Upgrades that were completed in 2020 include lighting completion at Cedar Ave Park, necessary cameras installed in the parks, new play structures installed at both

Hilltop and Hazel Avenue Parks and the completion of design for JFK park. 2021 will see a continuation of playground equipment upgrades and Master Park planning and construction.

Encourage Economic Development

Encouraging businesses to locate in Bristol Township and creating jobs continues to be one of the highest priorities for Council. This year shifted in helping in any way possible for our businesses to remain successful throughout the pandemic. We are fortunate to report economic development continued last year in Bristol Township. Bristol Township approved 12 subdivisions and land developments. The Department of Building and Planning issued over 3,600 permits. Many businesses and developments have come before us not only for approval but to expand their existing business within the Township. We thank all these businesses for choosing Bristol Township as their forever home.

We continued to work on remediating vacant and blighted home concerns in the Township. The Blight Program has been in effect for five (5) years now and has been a huge success. The Township continues to work with the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) of Bucks County in accordance with the Urban Renewal Law. In 2020, another 14 homes were blighted by Township Council. Our latest count on vacant homes in the Township is down to 38! Let us never forget this list began with 288 in 2015.

Investment in Bristol Township

Sadly we began the year with two great losses, Michael Fitzpatrick and Leslie Kolifrath. Later in the year we suffered the loss of April Samuels, dedicated Community Service Officer for eighteen years. Their honorable service to Bristol Township is remembered everyday.

Bristol Township continued with another busy year for changes on a staff level. Many long-standing employees retired... thankfully the Township was lucky to be able to recruit and promote so that we continue to employ the best of the best.

Randee Elton was appointed as Township Manager. Randee brings 20 years of municipal experience to the job. We were happy when Randee was hired as Project Manager to create the Blight Program, we were happy when Randee was promoted to Deputy Manager, and we thank you Randee, for your dedication, hard work and long hours during your first year as the Bristol Township Manager, in a pandemic! Randee was able to hire Jessica Ireland as Confidential Assistant to the Township Manager and with Jill Maier promoted to Special Projects/HR Coordinator, the Office of the Township Manager will continue to function with this high level of service.

Jai'er Brown was hired as Program Coordinator in the Parks and Recreation Department, much needed assistance as the Department has been expanding

programming and infrastructure annually. Township was also very fortunate to be able to hire Van Strother as Community Development Director. Van came to us from another municipality working in the same capacity, completes the management staff.

All of Township Council and I would like to thank all of our Township staff during this year. You have all stepped up to handle anything that we have asked during the pandemic and should be congratulated. I can honestly say how impressed I am with our community. Having a population of 54,421 people spread over seventeen square miles makes it amazing how this community has come together for all in need during 2020. Looking forward to all continued opportunities and success for us all in 2021.