

TOWNSHIP OF WEST HEMPFIELD

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

RESOLUTION NO. 11-20

A RESOLUTION SEEKING THE IMMEDIATE REOPENING OF LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, INCLUDING WEST HEMPFIELD TOWNSHIP

WHEREAS, on April 6, 2020, Pennsylvania Secretary of Health Rachel Levine, MD, issued an Order outlining the safety measures to be taken by employees and customers of businesses which are open either as a “life-sustaining business” or via a waiver; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Order provides common-sense measures which the Secretary of Health has determined provide a safe environment for employees and customers to conduct business; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Order could certainly provide safety for all other businesses; and

WHEREAS, On March 19, 2020, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf ordered all “non-life-sustaining businesses” to close, with a vague and confusing list of “life-sustaining businesses”; and

WHEREAS, On March 27, 2020, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf issued a “Stay at Home Order” for Lancaster County, including West Hempfield Township; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf allowed businesses not on the “life-sustaining businesses” list to seek waivers until April 3, 2020. Criteria for such waivers was not made clear and the list of those granted waivers has not been provided to the public; and

WHEREAS, many residents of Lancaster County and West Hempfield Township have been laid off and/or furloughed resulting in decreased or eliminated incomes to support their families; and

WHEREAS, many businesses in Lancaster County and West Hempfield Township have lost most, if not all, of their revenues and many will have a difficult time recovering and remaining in business as this business closure continues; and

WHEREAS, municipalities in Lancaster County, including West Hempfield Township, are seeing, and will continue to see, our Earned Income Tax revenues decrease; and

WHEREAS, the continued decline of municipal Earned Income Tax revenue will most certainly result in a significant increase in 2021 real estate property taxes for our taxpayers to allow much needed municipal services to continue; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf has established a “Phased Reopening Plan” which provides unrealistic and arbitrary thresholds for Lancaster County, arbitrarily places Lancaster County in the same region as Philadelphia for the purposes of reopening, and arbitrarily bases the ability to reopen on the raw number of positive cases of COVID-19 over a 14 day period while continuing to push for increased testing which will undoubtedly result in the increase of the raw number of positive, possibly asymptomatic, cases; and

WHEREAS, given the aforementioned criteria of Pennsylvania Governor Wolf's "Phased Reopening Plan", the economy of Lancaster County and West Hempfield Township could remain closed for several more months; and

WHEREAS, the residents and businesses of Lancaster County and West Hempfield Township cannot afford to have our economy arbitrarily closed for several more months without severe and permanent negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, the reopening of the economies of Lancaster County and West Hempfield Township could allow the reopening of businesses but would not require it, thus businesses wishing to remain closed would certainly be permitted to do so and residents who wish to remain at home would certainly be permitted to do so; and

WHEREAS, our local hospitals are not seeing the significant surge previously anticipated and most inpatient severe cases are those within the most vulnerable at-risk groups, including over 70 years of age with significant underlying medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, the average deceased age from COVID-19 at our local hospital is currently 77 and approximately 75% of deceased patients have been residents of skilled and long-term care facilities; and


WHEREAS, according to the data available for this area, the average resident of Lancaster County and West Hempfield Township has a very low chance of contracting COVID-19 (positive test results have accounted for 0.3% of County residents), and an even lower chance of contracting life-threatening complications from COVID-19, and a far lower chance of dying from COVID-19 (deaths have accounted for 0.03% of County residents, with no West Hempfield Township deaths to this point); and

WHEREAS, West Hempfield Township understands that our most vulnerable residents must be protected, but also understands that the remainder of our businesses and residents must be given the opportunity to move on with their lives and be given the opportunity to financially survive this pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, that this Board of Supervisors seeks the immediate reopening of Lancaster County and West Hempfield Township; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Board of Supervisors supports the continued efforts of our State and local leaders to institute common-sense safety precautions to protect employees and customers of businesses which choose to reopen.

TOWNSHIP OF WEST HEMPFIELD
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

By: 
David M. Dumeyer, Chairman

Attest: 
Andrew Stern, Secretary

