

**Memo to:** Board of Commissioners  
**From:** Jonathan Bleemer, Assistant Township Manager  
**Date:** April 7, 2022  
**Subject:** ACTION to authorize contract for a Disaster Recovery Consultant

On September 1, 2021, portions of Upper Dublin were ravaged by an EF-2 tornado and five hours of heavy rain that followed, both events associated with Hurricane Ida. Lying within the path of destruction was public property owned and/or maintained by Upper Dublin Township including the township building and police station, public works garage, fire house, SPARK athletic complex and other parks, waterways, municipal vehicles, and street lights, street signs and traffic signals.

The costs associated with the township's emergency response, and for repair and replacement of damaged Upper Dublin Township property, is estimated to be around \$40 million. As the largest claim ever managed by the Delaware Valley Trusts, the township's insurance carrier, all parties continue to learn the depths associated with their roles and responsibilities related to the claim.

Township administration determined early on that to maximize reimbursement, outside professional and consulting assistance was needed to develop and support its insurance claim. As extra professional services and management costs are reimbursable expenses under the claim, a number of consultants were engaged to provide assistance with implementing emergency mitigation measures, building temporary operations spaces, assessing and valuating damages and repairs, and managing claim documents. The exception is the township's contracted public adjuster, a team of highly knowledgeable, experienced large claims professionals whose guidance has been vital in the process but whose cost will not be covered under the insurance claim.

When a Major Disaster was declared in Pennsylvania for the period of August 31-September 5, 2021, Upper Dublin Township became eligible for federal funds through FEMA's Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation grant programs. Following its initial consultation and Scope of Work meetings between Township staff and FEMA representatives, the township determined, like so many other municipalities impacted by natural disasters over the years, it would be well served to engage a Disaster Recovery Consultant to help navigate the intricacies and nuances of these federal programs. Disaster Recovery Consultant fees and charges are allowable expenses for FEMA grant reimbursement.

The steps to select a Disaster Recovery Consultant were managed through HGACBuy ([www.hgacbuy.org](http://www.hgacbuy.org)), a nationwide, government procurement service available to local governments that operates similarly to how PA COSTARS operates. Vendors are registered and certified to meet federal requirements; contracts meet state and local procurement policies. Three firms responded to Upper Dublin Township's RFQ. Following proposal review, telephone interviews and reference checks, Witt O'Brien's, LLC (Houston, TX) was selected. Witt's team assigned to Upper Dublin stood out by their decades of experiences and proven knowledge, understanding and established relationships with multiple Federal agencies. Well-seasoned with a successful track-record of FEMA grants management, they are also currently working with Montgomery County, PA on their FEMA grant. The contract is NTE \$200,000 which should fall well within the administration costs that are eligible for reimbursement.

Through the FEMA grant program and with the guidance of Witt O'Brien's, the township expects to receive a significant portion of the cost differential between the total loss and the insurance claim proceeds.