

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
June 15, 2020 7:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Commissioners was held remotely on Monday, June 15, 2020 via video and teleconference, and was opened by President Rich Wielebinski at 7:02 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** Jerrod Belvin, present; Ellen Gnandt, present; Jerry Lastowski, present; Keith Meeker, present; and Rich Wielebinski, present.

**IN ATTENDANCE** - Leo DeVito, Township Solicitor, Broughal & DeVito; Jon Tresslar, Township Engineer, Boucher & James, Inc.; Taylor Munoz, Township Manager; and Dee Ackerman, Administrative Assistant.

**Public Comments** – No public comments.

**Announcements**

- An executive session will be held tonight following the meeting to discuss personnel issues.
- Township residents are encouraged to please respond to the 2020 Census by going to [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov). It is critical that Pocono Township receives an accurate census count, so the Township receives the state and federal funds due the Township for the next 10 years.
- If you have not already, we would encourage you to “get in the know” with Pocono Township news. You can sign up for the Township newsletter at [www.poconopa.gov](http://www.poconopa.gov), follow our Facebook page for frequent community updates, and subscribe to our township-wide Savvy Citizen notification system at [www.savvycitizenapp.com](http://www.savvycitizenapp.com).
- Pocono Township’s 2020 road paving projects have started as of today. Residents are encouraged to visit the Township website or Facebook to view the exact roads being paved, so you can plan your local trips accordingly. The project timeline is weather-dependent, but we anticipate all paving to wrap up within four weeks.

**Hearings** – No hearings.

**Presentations** – No presentations.

**Resolutions**

Resolution 2020-13 – Motion to approve the submission of an Automated Red-Light Enforcement (ARLE) grant application in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to be used for a transportation upgrade project in the Township.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve the submission of an Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) grant application in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to be used for transportation upgrade projects in the Township. T. Muñoz discussed strategy for applying for the ARLE Grant. He stated that these grant funds, if received, would help fund the remaining turning lane improvements for the Rimrock Road and S.R. 611 intersection in addition to traffic light sensor upgrades. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gnandt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gnandt, to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gnandt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Personnel** - None

## 2. Ratification of COVID-19 Related Decisions

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to ratify Board of Commissioners COVID-19 Declaration of Disaster Emergency extension approved on June 8, 2020. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

## 3. Financial Transactions

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to ratify vouchers payable received through June 11, 2020 in the amount of \$99,655.63. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, to ratify gross payroll for the pay period ending May 31, 2020 in the amount of \$98,069.90. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve vouchers payable received through June 11, 2020 in the amount of \$236,832.81. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve sewer construction fund expenditures through June 11, 2020 in the amount of \$4,333.80. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, to approve capital fund expenditures through June 11, 2020 in the amount of \$11,519.60. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

## 4. Travel/Training Authorizations

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, to authorize Commissioner Jerrod Belvin to attend the G-364 Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools training in Allegheny County, September 8 & 9, 2020. Discussion followed about applicability of the training and what is involved J. Belvin clarified this is to assist in coordination of hazard planning with educational institutions, including MCTI and NCC. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

## Report of the President

Richard Wielebinski

- Issues discussed with a short term rental at 255 Faber Circle. Residents have shared ongoing concerns of trash and issues from loud partying.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, for Township Zoning Officer to inspect 255 Faber Circle for violations. Motion was withdrawn until T. Muñoz completes further investigation.

- Discussion regarding adding of three non-union Township administrative positions to the Police health insurance plan with new deductibles.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to add all non-union administrative positions to the police health insurance plan. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Discussion regarding interview and appointment of alternate Planning Commission members. Christina Kaufman and Joe Folsom submitted letters of intent for the alternate positions. Township will confirm their attendance at the first meeting in July for interviews.

- Discussion was held regarding the need to interview and appointment alternate Zoning Hearing Board members, as it is difficult to host hearings if an individual is unavailable or on vacation. T. Muñoz was authorized to advertise for the positions including use of electronic billboards.
- Discussion regarding extending the implementation of the Township's Amusement Tax.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to extend enactment of the amusement tax to August 1, 2020. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Motion to approve MOU with Monroe Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) for Township police services at a rate of \$79.28 per hour.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, to approve MOU with Monroe Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) for Township police services at a rate of \$79.28 per hour. Discussion followed regarding overtime. A statement will be sent to Sgt. Shawn Goucher regarding monitoring overtime. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Discussion regarding MCTI roof replacement project permit fees. If the non-prevailing wage is used to calculate MCTI's project permit fees, permit fee by approximately \$5,000. The Township Zoning Officer evaluated the non-prevailing wage calculations and agreed that \$29,656.50 would be an appropriate fee for the permit.

E. Gndt stated the Board agreed to give paperwork to J. Tresslar to evaluate the prevailing wage versus non-prevailing wage calculations. J. Tresslar reviewed the paperwork and reported back to T. Muñoz the disparity between prevailing and non-prevailing wage fees. J. Lastowski noted the Township has existing permit fees that individuals were charged in the past, adding that others in the past did not receive this break. He stated that MCTI is comprised of four school districts and to forgive any fees would equate to taking money from Pocono Township taxpayers to fund an entity for which other school districts are responsible. He stated he would not support fee forgiveness due to the Township's financial condition. R. Wielebinski stated it is a fair thing for all taxpayers. E. Gndt feels the Township is picking and choosing who receives forgiveness.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to set the permit fee for MCTI's project at \$29,656.50. Discussion followed with E. Gndt questioning whether labor rates were legitimate, given J. Tresslar's opinion on labor rates. R. Wielebinski indicated further discussion will be held regarding this issue. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, no; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Motion to update Township short-term disability policy.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, to update the Township short-term disability policy, to adjust the short-term disability benefit from current rate of 70% of any employee's pay with a cap of \$500 per week, to 70% of any employee's pay with a cap of \$1,000 per week, for a maximum of 26 weeks. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Update - LED Speed Signs – No update.

### **Commissioner Comments**

Jerrod Belvin – Vice President

- COVID-19 Update. Monroe County is approved to enter green phase starting Friday, June 19, 2020. Next meeting can be in-person. On June 19, 2020, parks and pavilions will be open as we move things back to normal.

J. Belvin made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to extend the Township's Declaration of Disaster Emergency to June 19, 2020. Discussion followed regarding Camelback's compliance, since they opened prior to going green. Also discussion regarding Township losing reimbursement for COVID expenses if state guidelines are not followed. J. Belvin indicated Camelback's compliance would be a discussion for the State and that the County is following Governor's orders. R. Wielebinski agreed the Township should stay in line with the County. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Discussion regarding Sponsorship of Monroe County Conservation District Stream Gage.

J. Belvin made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, for Pocono Township to sponsor \$300.00 toward the stream gage for Monroe County Conservation District. Discussion followed and E. Gndt made a motion to table the item until the Township's financial condition is further reviewed. Motion failed. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

Ellen Gndt – Commissioner

- Thanked Public Works Crew and all parties involved in the Spring Clean-up Day.
- Discussion regarding activities allowed during yellow phase of COVID-19 restrictions. Asked for confirmation that all parks will fully open on Friday, June 19, 2020, anticipating County entering green phase. J. Belvin indicated that opening the parks is feasible within the scope of green phase.
- Reaffirmed that public meetings will resume, anticipating green phase. Teleconference phone call-in will be available for residents wanting to stay home.
- Review of year-to-date Township financials. Requested a work session be scheduled to review Township budget details. Requested follow-up regarding sewer delinquencies and how they are being handled. T. Muñoz will work on getting a final report.

Jerry Lastowski – Commissioner

- Re-opening of Stites Tunnel/191 Bridge. Stated the Township has been told the anticipated re-opening of Stites Tunnel will occur in mid-July. T. Muñoz will post an update publicly when additional information becomes available.
- Special allocation to fire company for costs incurred at Pocono Manor fire. Jerry spoke to Chief Kresge who is waiting to hear back from the insurance company.

Keith Meeker – Commissioner – No report.

## **Reports**

**Zoning** – No Zoning report.

**Emergency Services** – A monthly Emergency Services report will be issued.

- Police
- EMS
- Fire

## **Public Works Report**

- Road Crew Projects. Mowing is in progress. Previously approved signage has been installed and speed strips have been installed with an extra strip installed on Cranberry Road which was paved last year.
- Road paving projects commenced June 15, 2020.

- Update – Lighting at MVP and Heritage Center – Public Works crew has gotten halfway around the parking lot with electrical wiring. Stanchions will set for about a week before posts and heads are installed for new lights, then wires will be hooked up.
- Update – Park Lane Culvert Replacement – Dirt and Gravel Grant. R. Sargent met with Missy from Boucher & James to look at a culvert structure installed by Hamilton Township two years ago. Will update after they get numbers together.
- Update – Well Work at MVP and Replacement Fixtures. Need electrician to get wiring completed. All plumbing and all fixtures have been installed. Only electric is needed to the pump.
- Discussion regarding Robin Lane drainage issues. For years properties have been flooded by water coming off Fish Hill and past fixes have not completely worked. New alternative is to pipe the whole system with pipes running underground down Robin Lane to Tanbark. R. Sargent will set a date next week to do a walkthrough of the project.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, for R. Sargent to move forward with the Robin Lane drainage project at an amount not to exceed \$14,500 for material. Discussion followed about completing work on someone else's property, which was referred to L. DeVito. Further approval will be needed from properties affected by this project and further cost analysis completed. Motion was rescinded by R. Wielebinski and agreed to by J. Belvin.

- Discussion followed on the severity of Township water runoff damaging properties and E. Gndt requested the Board have a work session for further discussion.

#### **Administration – Manager's Report**

K. Meeker made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to authorize Township Manager to interview and hire an intern at a cost not to exceed \$12,000, as provided for in the Township budget. Discussion followed with E. Gndt suggesting the Township look at finances before hiring an intern. T. Muñoz stated the window for hiring an intern is limited. It was also stated that intern funds were approved in the 2020 budget. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Motion to approve Great Wolf application for fireworks display permit.

E. Gndt made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to approve Great Wolf permit application for fireworks display to occur July 5, 2020. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- A virtual work session will be held to discuss Township Amusement Tax. Session will be advertised for June 29, 2020 at 6:00 PM.
- 2017 Green Light Go Project. This is an ongoing Adaptive Signaling project. The Township received notice from PennDOT that the project is delayed over lack of state funding.
- T. Muñoz provided an update on pending grant applications, including applications for ARLE, Multimodal and LSA funds. Also identified there is a potential federal grant opportunity through COVID funding that might benefit PJJWA which will be discussed with Jackson Township and the PJJWA board. Will share further details with the Board as they become available. E. Gndt inquired about the sidewalk grant. T. Muñoz stated, for Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project (RACP) funds, the municipality is put on a list and your application is good for ten years. Within a ten-year period, one can apply each time there is a round of funding. Unaware of recent rounds of funding announced and the Township must reapply for the sidewalk grant funds.
- Establishing a non-profit park foundation within the Township was discussed that would be able to give the Township some additional opportunities for private funding or foundation funding in

addition to the public grants the Township pursues. Also discussion of re-establishing the Park Board.

J. Lastowski indicated a need to better establish and clearly delineate the roles of the Park Board members. R. Wielebinski suggested renewing conversation regarding a shared park director with Jackson Township, with J. Belvin agreeing. E. Grandt stated, while she is not opposed to a shared park director, she would like to see a re-implementation of the volunteer Township Park Board at no cost to the Township.

- Enterprise Fleet Management Meeting. Continued investigation of potential savings of leasing all Township vehicles, including Police and Public Works.
- The Township is lagging in 2020 Census responses due to COVID. Township residents are encouraged to go on-line at [www.census2020.gov](http://www.census2020.gov) to fill out the census questionnaire.
- Update – Regional Comprehensive Plan – The May 14, 2020 meeting was postponed. An alternate date will be announced in the future.

### **Township Engineer Report**

- St. Paul's Lutheran Drainage Basin. Waiting to hear back from their engineer to move forward with the recommendations outlined in the letter.
- Roof Replacement on Maintenance Building. Bid was uploaded to PennBid. We will have a pre-bid meeting next week to move forward.
- White Oak Culvert Replacement Project. The project is finished with minor punch-list items for the contractor to complete. The road is now open.
- Archer Lane Drainage Issues. A notice of violation dated May 14, 2020 was sent out by Zoning Officer. Will follow-up with Shawn McGlynn regarding next enforcement steps.
- PennDOT request for Township to assume responsibility for flashing light on Sullivan Trail as part of bridge rehabilitation project – No update.
- Update – Right hand turn lanes from Rt. 611 onto Rimrock and Bartonsville Avenue – No update.
- Update – TLC Bridge & TLC Dam – No update.
- Update – Master sidewalk plan Multimodal grant – No update.

### **Township Solicitor Report**

- Update – ZHB Hearing for Camp Lindenmere Special Exception. Received special exception to allow special exception expansion.
- Discussion regarding Amusement Tax. Work session will be scheduled as discussed earlier.
- Pocono Jackson Joint Water Authority (PJJWA). No update.
- Johnson Appeal for Transient Dwelling Unit postponed from March 24, 2020. Still working to schedule a hearing.
- Update – Electric contract discussion. Further research needed regarding limitation of liability.

**Public Comment** – No public comment.

*Please limit individual comments to 5 minutes to allow time for others wishing to speak and direct all questions and comments to the President.*

**Adjournment**

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. and go into executive session. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Grandt, yes; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.