

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

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held remotely on December 7, 2020 via video and teleconference and was opened by President Rich Wielebinski at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Jerrod Belvin, present; Ellen Gnanadt, present; Jerry Lastowski, present; Keith Meeker, present; and Rich Wielebinski, present.

In Attendance: L. DeVito, Township Solicitor, Broughal & DeVito; Jon Tresslar, Township Engineer, Boucher & James, Inc.; Taylor Muñoz, Township Manager; and Krisann Wean, Administrative Assistant.

Public Comments – No public comments.

Announcements

- If you have not already, we would encourage you to sign up for the Township newsletter at 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.

Presentations – No presentations.

Resolutions

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve Resolution 2020-26 for the submission of a Greenway Trails and Recreation Program grant application to the Commonwealth Financing Authority. T. Muñoz explained the purpose of the grant. E. Gnanadt asked about whether there is a matching requirement. All in favor. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel – No new business.

2. Financial Transactions

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to ratify vouchers payable received through December 3, 2020 in the amount of \$1,057,497.06. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to ratify gross payroll for pay periods ending November 15 & 29, 2020 in the amount of \$216,797.68. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve vouchers payable received through December 3, 2020 in the amount of \$97,222.91. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve sewer operating fund expenditures through December 3, 2020, in the amount of \$20,258.88. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve sewer construction fund expenditures through December 3, 2020 in the amount of \$8,884.00. E. Gandt asked for clarification regarding the amount. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve capital fund expenditures through December 3, 2020 in the amount of \$57,703.40. All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Travel/Training Authorizations – None.

Report of the President

Richard Wielebinski

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to engage Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC to audit the financial statements of Pocono Township as of and for the year ended December 31, 2020 and to authorize the Township Manager to sign the engagement letter on behalf of the Township. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to renew/reengage Penn Strategies for grant writing services and authorize the Township Manager to sign the contract with JDM Consultants LLC for grant writing services. J. Lastowski asked if enough funds were brought in to justify this expense. E. Gandt inquired about need for the service and expressed concerns with the confidentiality provision, as the Township is subject to the Right to Know Law. The motion was amended to include that the payment frequency should be clarified in the contract to reflect payments once per month and the confidentiality clause removed. All in favor. Motion carried.

Commissioner Comments

Jerrod Belvin – Vice President

- COVID-19/Emergency Management Update. Stated COVID numbers continue to rise. Governor Wolf had press conference this afternoon where he stated citizens are not following guidelines and he may announce additional mitigation efforts. Temperature scanning and masks have been reinstated.
- Tropical Storm Isaias Update – Denial. FEMA denied PEMA for receipt of Isaias funds.
- FEMA Flood Mitigation grant application – Working to obtain funds for Wilkie Road.
- Will complete end-of-year maintenance on Township traffic signals.

Ellen Gandt – Commissioner

- Discussion regarding timing and traffic patterns at the new Brookdale Road & S.R. 611 Intersection. Sated that Initially a four-way stop was located off 611 and the wait time was long at the traffic light. Stop signs were removed, and some timing issues may be resolved. T. Munoz is in discussion with PennDOT.
- Had talked about training for employees and asked what opportunities were being offered to staff.

Jerry Lastowski – Commissioner

- Traffic light timing issues at intersection of S.R. 314 & S.R. 611 – Problem with the synchronization, where it took three cycles to get six cars through the light. Light changed almost immediately after changing to green and appears to be a timing issue. J. Belvin will take a look at the system tonight after meeting and report back indicating it could be an issue between the camera and loop detector.

Keith Meeker – Commissioner

- PMCCI Health & Safety Issues – Zoning Inspection(s). Zoning officials are putting together an action plan following two drive-by inspections.

Reports

Zoning

- November 2020 Report was submitted to Commissioners.

Emergency Services

- Police – Chief Werkheiser submitted report to Commissioners.
- EMS – No report.
- Fire – No report.

Public Works Report

- Current and remaining Public Works projects for 2020. All trucks are in “snow mode.” Leaf collection continuing weather-permitting.
- Update – Dump truck body replacement. Stripped off old body and will be taking it to the body company this week so that installation can occur as soon as the body is delivered. Checked with a half dozen companies and was given the same tentative time period. Also checked with two rental companies, but they do not rent out snowplows or cinder spreaders. E. Gndt asked about timeline of getting the dump truck body. Clarification was provided.

J. Lastowski made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to ratify the ordering of the truck body. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Update – Park Lane Culvert Replacement – Dirt and Gravel Grant – No update.
- Update – Well Work at MVP – Well work complete.

Administration – Manager’s Report

- Update – Leasing of Township Vehicles.

J. Lastowski made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to rescind the motion to enter into an agreement with Enterprise Fleet Management for leasing Township police vehicles. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve leasing three Ford Explorer police vehicles through F.N.B. Finance, subject to L. DeVito’s review of lease documents. E. Gndt asked that L. DeVito review and ensure that the vehicles are also in line with the Steel Procurement Act. T. Munoz will check with the dealership. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Update – Receipt of COVID Grant Funds from County. Half of the COVID-19 grant funds have been received from the County. Also received \$18,000 which covered earlier expenses. Will received a check of \$23,000 this week which will cover all new COVID-19 expenses incurred by the Township, including a new audio/visual system and PPE. An additional \$7,000 was received for police expenses related to COVID, specifically relating to the police computer system. In total, \$50,000 was received through Cares Act funding with the County.

- Evaluation of Township's Wireless Carrier – Verizon vs. FirstNet (ATT). Verizon contract is ending, so Township is evaluating cost comparison between Verizon and ATT FirstNet. FirstNet is a network that gives priority status and data to all first responders. Undergoing evaluation of cost differences, coverage and quality differences between the two.
- Discussion regarding installation of dry hydrant at Laurel Lake.

J. Lastowski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to allow Township Manager and L. DeVito to work with the fire department for the installation of a dry hydrant at Laurel Lake. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Discussion regarding donation to the Brodhead Creek Watershed Association –

E. Gnant made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to donate \$500 to BWA (Brodhead Creek Watershed Association). Discussion regarding what the BWA does in relation to Pocono Creek. E. Gnant explained they are active in the community and critical to preserving high quality streams. They provide educational opportunities and will talk to Township about MS-4 and creek preservation. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Monroe County Land Bank – Potential acquisition of 17 Summit Drive, Pocono Manor. Working on getting 17 Summit Drive property submitted to the land bank for consideration.
- Amended Sign Ordinance Update. L. DeVito indicated the Township has the option to reject comments from Monroe County Planning Commission (MCPC), or to refer the comments back to the Planning Commission for evaluation. If they are incorporated, it goes back to MCPC. When returned, it comes back to the Township for adoption. E. Gnant would like to see the comments provided by the MCPC.
- Update – Pending grant applications – LSA, Multimodal & Recreation Grant Applications. Township has two active LSA grant applications, one for Rimrock Road intersection improvements and one for the fire department; and two active Multimodal grants, one through DCED and one through PennDOT. Also have an active application through the DCED Greenways, Trails & Recreation program. All grants, with the exception of the PennDOT grant, will be considered at the same meeting in January, or March at the latest.
- Wine Press Inn – Interest in Township-owned property – Owner is still interested in purchasing Township-owned property.
- Update – Regional HSPS Comprehensive Plan – Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Stroud Township building and is open to all Commissioners to attend.
- Tom McKeown is in the process of completing an appraisal of the Township-owned 10-acre property off I-80. Information was sent for verification to J. Tresslar regarding access and buildability.

Township Engineer Report

- St. Paul's Lutheran Drainage Basin – Received email from their engineer informing the Township that a plan is in the works and will be submitted for review as early as tomorrow morning. Will follow up with the Board after receiving additional information.
- Archer Lane Drainage Issues – No update.
- Update – Righthand turn lanes from Rt. 611 onto Rimrock Road and Bartonsville Avenue. Project is ongoing. Survey crew is finishing topography.

Township Solicitor Report

- Gravatt's Way Short-Term Rental – Default judgment date and potential injunction. Complaints for the injunction and petition for preliminary injunction are all drafted. Looking to file with the court tomorrow and anticipating a hearing scheduled within the next couple weeks. Will follow up once we have a date, time and courtroom. E. Gnandt asked a question regarding a default judgment and J. Lastowski asked if the \$12,000 kicks in today. L DeVito said it should, but we will not know until we check with the MDJ.
- Discussion regarding HJP Park. Now that Hamilton is out of the partnership, Todd Weitzmann is suggesting an informal meeting to sit down and talk about future plans for the Jackson-Pocono joint park. Will coordinate a joint work session regarding park and PJJWA. Also include B. Sargent for maintenance questions. Get dates from Jackson and then talk with Pocono. Get dates for beginning to mid-January.
- Update – Kelly Family Trust. Served on November 20, 2020 and they have 20 plus 10 days to respond. Trustee of the trust was served.
- Update – Ryan Possinger Appeal Zoning Hearing – November 24, 2020. Met on November 24, 2020 but was missing a ZHB member. Hearing rescheduled for 5 p.m. on December 22, 2020. Was advertised for in-person.
- Township received a zoning hearing board application for the proposed Sheetz project and their sign package. Does not believe there is a need for the Township to object and feels it is best to allow ZHB to make their decision without the Commissioners opposing. Hearing scheduled for December 15, 2020.
- The Johnsons appealed the STR decision by the ZHB to the Court of Common Pleas. Would like BOC authorization to file on behalf of Township to intervene.

J. Lastowski made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to authorize L. DeVito to file papers necessary to have the Township intervene in the Johnson appeal. No public comment. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment – No public comment.

Adjournment

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gnandt, to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.