

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2021 7:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held remotely on January 19, 2021 via video and teleconference and was opened by President Rich Wielebinski at 7:04 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Jerrod Belvin, present; Ellen Gnadtt, 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; Judy Acosta, Township Zoning Officer, SFM; and Krisann Wean, Administrative Assistant.

Public Comments – No public comment.

Announcements

- We encourage residents to avail themselves of our Township ice skating rink located at TLC Park at the corner of Route 715 and Route 611 in Tannersville. The rink is open weather dependent. While we do our best to update our Facebook page with its availability, we ask residents to always exercise caution and use common sense before using the rink when the weather allows.
- 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 – None

Resolutions – None

OLD BUSINESS

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gnadtt, to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel – None

2. Financial Transactions

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to ratify vouchers payable received through January 14, 2021 in the amount of \$102,608.83. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to ratify gross payroll for pay periods ending January 10, 2021 in the amount of \$101,262.70. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve vouchers payable received through January 14, 2021 in the amount of \$232,951.07. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve sewer operating fund expenditures through January 14, 2021 in the amount of \$155,150.57. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve capital reserve fund expenditures through January 14, 2021 in the amount of \$11,321.63. All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Travel/Training Authorizations – None

Report of the President

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to adopt amended Civil Service Rules as recommended and approved by the Pocono Township Civil Service Commission. Under discussion, it was clarified that Township Labor Attorney John Harrison had reviewed the changes. L. DeVito noted the changes clarified the role of the Civil Service Commission as the grievance hearing body, not a disciplinary body. Other changes within the contract were discussed. E. Gmandt indicated she was not finished reviewing the document and would like this motion tabled so she has the opportunity to have questions answered, including sections 3.02, 4.01 and 4.05. T. Muñoz noted the online platform for receiving police applications requires the Township to provide a copy of the Civil Services Rules as part of the application packet. E. Gmandt's remaining questions will be submitted to Larry Fox for his review and changes will be considered accordingly. Roll call vote: J. Belvin, yes, E. Gmandt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to accept the recommendation of the Civil Service Commission to proceed with the hiring of three police officers for the Pocono Township Police Department. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to have the Township zoning officer inspect the property located at 1079 Sullivan Trail due to resident concerns expressed regarding junk vehicles and/or trailers on the premises. E. Gmandt asked for clarification. R. Wielebinski indicated the Township requested the owner clean up the property over a year ago. No action has been taken and it has gotten worse. He proposed that the Township proceed with another warning, waiting 30 to 45 days, and then take further action if required. Motion amended to include 1089 Sullivan Trail, a neighboring parcel. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to grant the request of the Pocono Garden Club for a waiver of seven (7) monthly pavilion rentals for April through October 2021. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Discussion regarding amendment to the Transient Dwelling Unit ordinance providing for occupant limitations. Pocono Township does not limit the number of occupants allowed in a short-term rental. The Township currently has a permit application for a nine-bedroom home, meaning the owner could advertise for up to twenty-two occupants. Middle Smithfield and Paradise Townships have additional limitations in their respective STR ordinances. Middle Smithfield Ordinance 107-7a allows for two occupants per bedroom, plus four additional persons for a maximum of fourteen occupants. They also limit the number of cars on the premises to one car per bedroom. It was recommended that L. DeVito work with Township personnel to prepare a red-line copy of an ordinance amendment for Board of Commissioners consideration for a possible future hearing.
- Discussion regarding amendments to the Township's Stormwater and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to 1) streamline the process for lot consolidations and 2) reflect process changes in the recording of land development plans with Monroe County. Currently, Township residents owning two adjoining lots who wish to join those lots must complete a full land development plan. J. Acosta informed the Board it is in the Township's best interest to streamline this process, similar to other Townships. Middle Smithfield Township streamlined this process by passage of a resolution. All commercial properties require land development, but adjoining residential lots could be joined without going through the rigorous process of land development. J. Tresslar feels if the Township is going to eliminate the need for land development plans, it should appear in the SALDO where most engineers and real estate professionals are going to look for that provision. L. DeVito agreed with J. Tresslar. A red-lined draft will be prepared for review. If the changes meet the Board's approval and all the questions are answered, the Township will move forward with advertising for a hearing.

Commissioner Comments

Jerrold Belvin – Vice President – No update.

Ellen Grandt – Commissioner

- Amusement Tax receipts for Q4 of 2020 – January 31, 2021 payment deadline
 - Notices were sent to all amusement producers in the Township. It was stated that one tax producer has submitted their amusement tax collections, and a friendly reminder will be sent out accordingly.

Jerry Lastowski – Commissioner

- Follow-up regarding Christmas Eve UGI incident on S.R. 314
 - A meeting with the Township, UGI and Senator Scavello has been confirmed for January 28, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the December 24, 2020 natural gas incident on S.R. 314.

Keith Meeker – Commissioner

- PMCCCI Health & Safety Issues – Zoning Inspections
 - Sending out friendly violation letters and waiting on a response from operator of the seasonal water system.
- K. Meeker was approached by a resident who submitted his taxes to the tax collector in December and the check has not yet been deposited. The resident is concerned about late fees. It was advised the individual reach out to the tax collector directly.

Reports

Zoning – None

Emergency Services

- Police – Report sent on a monthly basis.
- EMS – No report.
- Fire – No report.

Public Works Report

- Public Works crew currently trimming trees and cutting back brush. Also completing equipment repairs in shop.
- Replacement of basketball court fence at Mountain View Park. Fence project was complete at end of last week. A gate was added to the project and installed for the purpose of providing access for maintenance of the basketball court lights.
- Update – Park Lane Culvert Replacement – Dirt and Gravel Grant – No update.
- Update – Well Work at MVP – Met with plumber today onsite. Will set a date for repair work, as there is an issue with either wiring or the pump.

R. Wielebinski stated he received calls from residents relating to the Robin Lane project that was completed. They are very happy with the work done and one resident stated that, after 25 years of drainage issues, he no longer has water issues in his driveway. Also received positive feedback from the other resident.

Administration – Manager's Report

- Monroe County Land Bank – Site visit and potential acquisition of 17 Summit Drive, Pocono Manor. Waiting to hear back from Land Bank after site visit that occurred.

- Evaluation of Township's Wireless Carrier – Verizon vs. FirstNet (ATT) – Continuing to evaluate the offerings from each respective company.
- Township Administrative Building Improvements
 - The Township has upgraded internet bandwidth and has saved money while achieving improved internet coverage.
 - Video intercom system has been installed and is very effective for communicating with individuals prior to entering the building.
 - Township has completed filing and improving document organization efforts.
 - Scantek will begin Police Department document digitization at the end of January.
 - Completed walkthrough with D'Huy Engineering to update cost estimates for Township Municipal Complex infrastructure improvements.
- Appraisal of Township-owned property along I-80 by Tom McKeown is forthcoming.
- Amended Sign Ordinance draft is being completed by Lisa Pereira, Township Planning Commission solicitor. The ordinance will be submitted to the Monroe County Planning Commission for review and a hearing will be advertised for March.
- Update – Pending grant applications – LSA, Multimodal & Recreation Grant Applications. Consideration of grant applications was delayed from January and will now occur in March.
- Wine Press Inn – Interest in Township-owned property. No update.
- The next Regional HSPS Comprehensive Plan meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
- A letter was received from Tannersville Point Luxury Apartments requesting a six-month extension for the Commissioners' review period through July 31, 2021. The applicant is still working through outside agency approval with PA DEP.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to grant a six-month extension for Tannersville Point Luxury Apartments. J. Lastowski asked if the applicant is looking to hook into Township sewer. J. Tresslar indicated they are looking at the potential of sharing costs for joining the sewer system with a proposed adjoining warehouse. All in favor. Motion carried.

Township Engineer Report

- St. Paul's Lutheran Drainage Basin. Plan was submitted by church engineer and incorporated suggestions for remediating flooding issues and better utilizing existing drainage basin. New environmental requirements stipulate the applicant must reduce the post-development storm runoff to less than pre-existing conditions, which they have included in their plan.
- A hearing is scheduled to address Archer Lane Drainage issues before the District Magistrate on February 24, 2021.
- Righthand turn lanes from Rt. 611 onto Rimrock Road and Bartonville Avenue – No update.

Township Solicitor Report

- Discussion regarding I-80 parcel easement request – Jonathan Weber. L. DeVito determined the property Weber is looking to purchase is in fact landlocked. Currently performing additional deed research to see how the landlock occurred. If it is indeed landlocked, the Township may be required to provide access. E. Gnantd asked for clarification as to the criteria. L. DeVito stated the landlocked parcel may have been part of a unified tract with the Township's existing parcel. If it is landlocked but was never part of the Township's parcel or another parcel, then they may not be entitled to easement rights.
- Discussion regarding HJP Park. A work session was held recently with Jackson Township to discuss the future of the park.

- Update – Kelly Family Trust. Filing an amended complaint to include the specific current trustee. Communicating with the trustee’s attorney.
- Zoning Hearing Board Update
 - A variance requested by Sheetz, Inc. was granted in a quick proceeding, as a follow-up to their original hearing in December.
 - Appeal of Ryan Possinger. The Zoning Hearing Board decided the jurisdictional issue in favor of the Township. Hearing will continue next week.
- Discussion regarding Sheetz request for a liquor license transfer and authorization to proceed with advertising an ordinance hearing. Township received a request for a liquor license transfer hearing from outside Pocono Township for the Sheetz project in Swiftwater. The Township is required to hold a hearing within 45 days. Public hearing will be advertised for the transfer and for the ordinance to authorize the transfer. Need authorization to advertise the hearings.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to have the solicitor prepare the advertising and ordinance hearing for the Sheetz request to transfer a liquor license to Pocono Township. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment – No public comment.

Adjournment

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to adjourn the meeting into executive session at 8:37 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Union issues and to not return. All in favor. Motion carried.

DRAFT