

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2022 | 7:09 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held on January 17, 2022 and was opened by President Rich Wielebinski at 7:09 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

In Attendance: Leo DeVito, Township Solicitor via Zoom, Broughal & DeVito; Jon Tresslar, Township Engineer, Boucher & James; Taylor Muñoz, Township Manager; Sergeant Shawn Goucher; and Robert Sargent, Roadmaster.

Public Comment – None

Announcements

The Township's seasonal ice-skating rink is open on the basketball court at TLC Park, located at the corner of Route 715 and Route 611. Please know that the rink and ice condition are weather-dependent. Ice skating hours are from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Hearings

- Ordinance 2022-01 – Amusement Tax Increase

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to open a Public Hearing to consider adoption of an Ordinance amending Chapter 398, Taxation, Article IV, Amusement Tax, of the Code of Ordinances of Pocono Township to increase the rate of the amusement tax from 3% to 5% for general Township purposes. No discussion. All in favor. Motion carried.

L. DeVito stated that an amendment to the existing amusement tax ordinance requires a public hearing. Once comments are addressed, the hearing can be closed and action can be taken on the proposed amendment.

No public comment.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to close the public hearing. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to adopt Ordinance 2021-06 to approve the adoption of an Ordinance amending Chapter 398, Taxation, Article IV, Amusement Tax, of the Code of Ordinances of Pocono Township to increase the rate of the amusement tax from 3% to 5% for general Township purposes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Presentations

- Township Municipal Complex Architectural Feasibility Study Design Presentation – Joseph Phillips of Phillips & Donovan Architects - Joe Donovan presented a conceptual site design and floor layouts for a proposed new Township complex.

R. Wielebinski asked questions regarding the ceiling heights of the public meeting space and whether the building could be designed to support additional office space above the public meeting area if the Township wanted to expand in the future.

J. Lastowski asked about the square footage of existing administrative office space; current police space versus what is being proposed; and whether the proposed spaces meet the Township's future needs.

J. Donovan stated the next step would be to get the architectural proposal to the cost estimator to do a more detailed financial breakdown. If the Township moves forward following that process, the Township will need as-builts for public works, go through a schematic design phase, design refinement phase and a construction documents phase.

J. Lastowski asked about point of no return. J. Donovan stated the construction document phase is the most labor-intensive portion and something the Township would not begin unless they were serious about moving forward with the plan.

R. Wielebinski asked when plans should be presented to the public. J. Donovan stated next step would be to go through cost estimation and go through further design work. This is an approximate three to four month process.

J. Belvin asked about seating capacity for public meeting area.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to proceed with the cost estimating portion of the feasibility study. All in favor. Motion carried.

Resolutions

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve Resolution 2022-01 Granting Approval of the Pocono Township Municipal Complex Lot Consolidation Plan. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve Resolution 2022-02 Granting Conditional Approval of The Crossings Premium Outlets Food Trucks Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve Resolution 2022-03 Authorizing the Submission of a 2022 Monroe County Open Space Development Grant Application in an amount not to exceed \$40,000. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve Resolution 2022-04 Amending the Township Fee Schedule for Subdivision, Land Development, Zoning and Zoning Hearing Board Fees, and other miscellaneous applications and permitting fees, Repealing and Replacing all Prior Fee Resolutions. All in favor. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

- Motion to approve a consent agenda of the following items:
 - Old business consisting of the minutes of the January 3, 2022 Reorganization and regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners.
 - Financial transactions through January 13, 2022 including:
 - Ratification of vouchers payable in the amount of \$1,603.68 and sewer operating expenditures in the amount of \$475.45.
 - Ratification of gross payroll for the pay period ending January 9, 2022 in the amount of \$114,203.35.
 - Vouchers payable in the amount of \$173,500.25.
 - Sewer operating fund expenditures in the amount of \$113,810.16.
 - Capital reserve fund expenditures in the amount of \$615.32.
 - An American Rescue Plan Act transfer to the General Fund of \$5,240.00 for implementation costs for the Township's new e-permitting platform.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve the consent agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to extend an offer of employment for the Township's open Administrative Assistant position to Jennifer Gambino. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to extend an offer of employment for the Township's open Road Crew position to Michael Ferrera. T. Muñoz noted motion should include CDL check and 6 months to get inspection license. Motion amended and accepted. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. Travel/Training Authorizations – None

Report of the President

Richard Wielebinski

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to set 2022 Planning Commission meetings for the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Pocono Township Municipal Building. When a regularly scheduled meeting falls on a holiday, the meeting will be held at the same time the following day. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve reducing the years of service required for the rank of Corporal within the Pocono Township Police Department, changing the minimum required years of service from 5 years to 3 years per the recommendation of the Civil Service Commission. J. Lastowski asked if this was vetted within the Police Department. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to set Pocono Township's 2022 Spring Cleanup Days for April 28-30 and Fall Cleanup Days for September 30-October 1, 2022 and to advertise the Cleanup Days for public bid. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Acknowledgement of Correspondence: Tannersville Point Luxury Apartments six-month extension request to July 31, 2022 – L. DeVito indicated no motion is necessary. J. Belvin asked for update on the project and T. Muñoz gave a summary.

Commissioner Comments

Jerrod Belvin – Vice President

- Emergency Management Update - Warner Road/Route 611 traffic light has been fixed. Currently a delay for delivery of traffic camera for the SR 715/Warner Road light. J. Lastowski asked about the timing of the light at SR 314/SR 611. Timing is affected by an issue with the loop detector and cold weather.

Ellen Grandt, Commissioner – Absent

Jerry Lastowski – Commissioner - Stated UGI night work is very disruptive. T. Muñoz will call the PennDOT permitting department to get clarification as to why work is being conducted at night.

Keith Meeker, Commissioner – No comment.

Reports

Emergency Services

- Police Report – S. Goucher shared end of year Police Department statistics for 2021 versus 2020. Many categories were up by double digit percentages - 18,948 incident responses for 2021 versus 9,923 incident responses for 2020. Conducted a detective test and five officers have tested. 12-hour shifts are showing a positive effect within the Department. License plate readers (LPRs) are having a dramatic positive impact on traffic citations and identifying issues with vehicles.

Public Works Report

- Current Public Works projects – Gave credit to the department for good job clearing Township roads.
- TLC Park Project Update – Ice rink is open. Will obtain pricing on playground equipment.
- Update – Park Lane Culvert Replacement – Dirt and Gravel Grant – Placeholder.

Discussion regarding purchasing new Gator and baseball field groomer. Will obtain formal quotes for Board consideration.

Administration – Manager’s Report

- Working with grant consultant on new grant applications for 2022.
- Traisr permitting platform is available for Township staff’s internal use and will be proceeding getting the public-facing system complete.
- Regional HSPS Comprehensive Plan update – Still waiting on draft plan.

R. Wielebinski asked about grant funding for Learn Road.

Township Engineer Report

- Update – Righthand turn lanes from Rt. 611 onto Rimrock Road and Bartonsville Avenue – Placeholder.

Township Solicitor Report

L. DeVito discussed the PA Attorney General’s Opioid Settlement and the need for six municipalities in Monroe County, including Pocono, to sign off on the settlement to allow the County to receive all the funds.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to authorize Township signatories to sign off on the PA Attorney General Opioid Settlement, removing Pocono Township from the settlement so all funds can be passed through Monroe County. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Zoning Hearing Board updates.
 - Update – Taveras Appeal – Waiting to see if they appeal to the Appellate Court.
 - Update – Johnson Appeal – Received brief filed by the Johnsons and working on a reply.
- Update – PJJWA transfer agreement – Provided update at last meeting.
- HJP Park Agreement between Pocono and Jackson Townships – No report.

Public Comment – No comment.

Adjournment

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.