

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2024 | 6:29 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held on February 20, 2024 and was opened by President Rich Wielebinski at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Jerrod Belvin, present; Ellen Gndt, present; Natasha Leap, present; Mike Velardi, present; and Rich Wielebinski, present.

In Attendance: Taylor Munoz, Township Manager; Leo DeVito, Township Solicitor; Jon Tresslar, Engineer; Pat Briegel, Public Works Director; Lindsay Scerbo, Zoning Officer; and Jennifer Gambino, Administrative Assistant.

Public Comment – None

Announcements

- Mark your calendars for the annual Pocono Township Fishing Derby on April 13, 2024 at TLC Park. Registration instructions will be included on the Township Facebook and website. Any questions or concerns can be forwarded to Jennifer Gambino via the main Township phone number or email.
- The Board of Commissioners held an executive session on Monday 2/26 and prior to this meeting for the purpose of discussing personnel matters and the possible acquisition of real estate.

Presentations

- Special Fire Company Presentation – Township and State recognition.

Chief Michael McMan spoke regarding the honoring of member Donald Simpson with the title of Honorary Fire Chief for his many years of committed service. He is only the second member to receive the honorary title for his many roles, positions held and exemplary response record. Senator Rosemary Brown presented a State Senate citation and Chairman Wielebinski presented a certificate on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

Hearings

Ordinance 2024-01 – Wawa Inc. (2977 PA Route 611, Tannersville) – Public hearing for consideration of Ordinance 2024-01 authorizing the transfer of Restaurant Liquor License No. R-19903 to a new Wawa facility located in Tannersville.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to open the public hearing. All in favor. Motion carried.

L. DeVito provided a summary of the proceedings. Attorney Ellen Freeman presented on behalf of the applicant regarding a license transfer to the Tannersville Wawa. Reviewed Wawa's policies and procedures for how they operate their 27 PA stores with liquor licenses. Provided floor plan for review. Questions were discussed pertaining to sales of wine, drinking on the premises, and clarification that no liquor is being sold.

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

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to approve Ordinance 2024-01 approving the transfer of Restaurant Liquor License No. R-19903 from Middle Smithfield Township to the Wawa facility located at 2977 PA Route 611, Tannersville. All in favor. Motion carried.

Resolutions – None

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve a consent agenda of the following items:

- Old business consisting of the minutes of the February 5, 2024 regular meeting.
- Financial transactions through February 15, 2024 as presented, including ratification of general fund expenditures, sewer operating expenditures and gross payroll; vouchers payable, sewer operating expenditures, construction fund expenditures, capital reserve expenditures and transfers.

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

NEW BUSINESS

1. Personnel

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to authorize the hiring, including re-hiring, of seven (7) seasonal park employees. The lead and assistant lead are to receive \$19.50 and \$18.00 per hour respectively, with five additional crew members to receive \$17.00/hour. E. Gmandt asked for clarification. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Discussion and possible action regarding the advertising of the Pocono Township Manager position. No action was taken.

2. Travel/Training Authorizations - None

Commissioner Comments

Richard Wielebinski – President

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gmandt, to approve Payment Application No. 2 payable to PIM Corporation in the amount of \$3,679.50 for completion of the 2023 Sanitary Sewer Manhole Rehabilitation Contract, as recommended for approval by the Township engineer's review later dated February 28, 2024. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to advertise the 2024 Material Bids with a bid opening date of April 1, 2024. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to ratify the advertisement of the Pocono Township Spring & Fall Cleanup bid with a bid opening date of March 18, 2024. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to pass a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Teamsters Local 773 to establish a second notary among the clerical administrative staff at an additional rate of \$.50 per hour. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to pass a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Teamsters Local 773 to establish a second JNET certification among the police administrative staff at an additional rate of \$.50 per hour. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to execute a sale agreement for the purchase of 103 Kenny's Way in Tannersville. J. Belvin, yes; E. Gmandt, no; N. Leap, yes; M. Velardi, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to authorize PFM to put out an RFP for bank financing sufficient for the purchase of 205 Old Mill Road (the old NCC campus) and 103 Kenny's Way. E. Gmandt asked for clarification. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to advertise for public hearing an ordinance consolidating the Township's police pension ordinance amendments and adding language to incorporate provisions establishing a Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP). All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to appoint Jon Tresslar of T&M Associates as the Pocono Township Engineer. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to authorize the destruction of Township accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll and banking files for the year 2016. All in favor. Motion carried.

Jerrod Belvin – Vice President

- Emergency Management Update – Took a recent tour of the new Old Dominion facilities.
- Update – Archer Lane. No response has been received from the property owner to-date. Township will file a civil complaint.
- Update – Laurel Lake Dam – HOA Board representatives will attend an upcoming Board meeting.

Ellen Grandt – Commissioner

- Update – SBA Cell Tower – T. Munoz stated a request came through asking for clarification on the process for setting up a land development review escrow.
- Stated there is a DEP Warehouse Hearing this evening pertaining to the Core5 Warner Road project.

Natasha Leap – Commissioner

N. Leap made a motion, seconded by J. Velvin, to advertise a vacant Planning Commission Alternate position. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mike Velardi – Commissioner

M. Velardi made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to formally authorize the Township Zoning Officer to investigate and generate a report regarding 229 Hemlock Drive, as required by the Township's Dangerous Structure Ordinance. All in favor. Motion carried.

Reports

Zoning

Update was given regarding current violations and actions. Discussion regarding 197 Camelback Road violations and contractor equipment along Cherry Lane Road in violation of residential zoning.

Police Report

- Department updates. Provided January call report and training update.
- Discussion and possible action regarding setting a policy where the Township will accept police officer applications from candidates without their Act 120 certification and, should a conditional offer be offered, the Township cover the cost of the Police Academy subject to specific parameters and state agency cost offsets. No action at this time. Township will proceed hiring an Act 120 certified patrol officer.

Ambulance Report – None

Public Works Report

- Sewer Updates. Road crew had 811 training for the “call before you dig” program. Will conduct tour of sewer pump station in three weeks. Cellular backup installation almost complete for pump stations.

- Discussion regarding Cobble Creek Drainage Project. Will continue to firm up details for completing drainage work.
- Current Public Works Projects. Andrew Brand completed his inspection mechanic licensure. Road Crew will coordinate with Police to begin conducting inspections and basic maintenance of police vehicles, saving Township dollars. Looking at options for new furnace in Road Crew building.
- Mountain View Park Updates. Challenge course installation is complete. Mulch will be added soon.
- TLC Park Updates. Ice rink has been removed for the season and basketball standards installed.
- Old Learn Farm parking access.

Administration – Manager’s Report

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve a Storage Agreement with Northampton Community College for the purpose of storing donated office furniture at the 205 Old Mill Road property. All in favor. Motion carried.

- T. Munoz gave a thank you message to the Board of Commissioners for his time spent as Township Manager over the last four years. Thanked them for their faith and confidence in him and recapped the many projects and initiatives completed.

Township Engineer Report

- Sewer Updates. None at this time.
- Learn Road safety enhancement project and roundabout survey work. Received a design back from PPL for pole relocation.
- Update – TASA SR 611 sidewalk project. Ongoing.
- In Progress – Discussion and possible action regarding the Township’s revised Act 167 stormwater ordinance, incorporating changes to the ordinance as prepared by the Township engineer and as required by PA DEP. No update.

E. Gndt asked for update regarding Swiftwater Solar inspections. Engineer has been conducting twice weekly inspections.

Township Solicitor Report

- Sewer Legal Update. Had recent meeting with legal counsel regarding outstanding items and submissions to DEP for Act 537 and EQ tank requirements.
- General legal update.
- Zoning Hearing Board updates.
 - February 22 – PoconoPlaces, LLC. Continued to March 26 at 5:00 p.m.
 - February 27 – MCTI Variance Hearing. Concluded and decision issued granting variances.
 - March 6, 2024 – 154 Ruby Lane. Continued to March 28 at 5:00 p.m. Will go to Planning Commission first.
- Update – Johnson Appeal Commonwealth Court argument. Petition being filed and submitted to the Supreme Court this week.

Public Comment

Tom Rowan (Resident) – Always felt safe in Pocono Township due to the Township Police presence. Commended the Board for their work and doing what is best for Township residents. Complimented Board for the professional conduct of Township meetings.

Adjournment

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.