

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2020 7:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held on October 19, 2020 at the Pocono Township Municipal Building and opened by President Rich Wielebinski at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Jerrod Belvin, present; Ellen Gndt, 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.; and Taylor Muñoz, Township Manager.

Public Comment – None

Announcements

- Pocono Township's Trick-or-Treat hours will be held this year on Saturday, October 31st from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- 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.

Hearings

- Ordinance 2020-07 – Motion to adopt Ordinance 2020-07 amending the Pocono Township Code of Ordinances by adopting a new Chapter 150 related to maintenance of properties within the Township; providing for remedial action by the Township in specified situations; and prescribing penalties for violation of the regulations and repealing all ordinances inconsistent therewith.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to open a public hearing on Ordinance 2020-07. All in favor. Motion carried.

L. DeVito confirmed hearing has been properly advertised. No public comment.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to close the public hearing on Ordinance 2020-07. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to adopt Ordinance 2020-07 amending the Pocono Township Code of Ordinances by adopting a new Chapter 150 related to maintenance of properties within the Township; providing for remedial action by the Township in specified situations; and prescribing penalties for violation of the regulations and repealing all ordinances inconsistent therewith. Roll Call: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

Presentations - None

Resolutions - None

OLD BUSINESS

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve the minutes of the October 5, 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 E. Gnandt, to ratify vouchers payable received through October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$101,457.14. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to ratify gross payroll for pay period ending October 4, 2020 in the amount of \$99,409.60. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve vouchers payable received through October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$203,762.66. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gnandt, to approve sewer operating fund expenditures through October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$105,397.28. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gnandt, to approve capital fund expenditures through October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$5,819.02. All in favor. Motion carried.

3. 2020 3rd Quarter Budget Adjustments

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve 3rd Quarter General Fund budget adjustments for the 2020 Fiscal Year. Discussion followed. E. Gnandt commented that, according to First Class Township code, budget adjustments should be approved as expenditures are incurred and line items exceeded. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Travel/Training Authorizations - None

Report of the President

Richard Wielebinski

- Proposed date for next FY 2021 Budget Work Session – Wednesday, November 4, 2020. E. Gnandt questioned timing of meeting and having sufficient time for review before official presentation of budget.
- Discussion regarding proposed amendment to Township Fireworks Ordinance and possible advertisement for public hearing. Recapped discussion regarding requiring store owners to display placard with specified information about Township fireworks regulations.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to authorize solicitor to advertise the proposed amendment to Township Fireworks Ordinance. Discussion - E. Gnandt expressed concern that we are penalizing business owners. J. Lastowski said the placard is to notify individuals what the ordinance requires. R. Wielebinski feels people should know some of the regulations, helping with compliance. J. Belvin added that the Township has struggled with getting compliance from some fireworks store owners on other Township ordinances too. Roll Call Vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gnandt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

- Discussion regarding remaining park capital projects for the year – chain link fence at Mountain View Park and new John Deere Gator. R. Wielebinski indicated approximately \$40,000 is left in the park capital budget. Fence around the basketball court is in disrepair.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to replace the basketball court fence and to purchase two gators at the park. Discussion - E. Gnandt does not feel the timing is correct with funds in the budget and expressed concerns about equipment sitting until spring. J. Lastowski feels reluctant to spend the monies this year. Motion rescinded by R. Wielebinski and K. Meeker.

- Update – Electronic radar speed signs permit received. Speed signs were installed. T. Muñoz will look into the speed signs not flashing speeds above 20mph.

Commissioner Comments

Jerrod Belvin – Vice President

- Emergency Management Update – No update.
- Tropical Storm Isaias Update - Everything from FEMA has been turned over to PEMA.
- FEMA Flood Mitigation grant application. FEMA opened their 404 Flood Hazard Mitigation grants. Information was submitted last week. J. Belvin and J. Tresslar expressed concern about the washouts on Wilke Road and one side's vulnerability to future washouts.
- Motion to authorize the hiring of three new Pocono Township police officers.

J. Belvin made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to authorize the hiring of three new Pocono Township police officers. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ellen Gndt – Commissioner

- Township financial status update - Budget work session on November 4, 2020.
- Discussion regarding Township Road Crew paving roads versus hiring a contractor and whether any cost savings are realized. E. Gndt inquired whether hiring an independent contractor to pave Township roads would be more cost efficient than having the Township road crew do the work, taking into consideration all the equipment needed.

Jerry Lastowski – Commissioner

- Commended T. Munoz for his response to concerns expressed about a short-term rental (STR) on Gravatts Way. J. Lastowski said to reach out to residents again and tell them why it is important that residents report it and that they be willing to testify. Will look into information to allow manager to run registration of plates.
- Expressed concerns about PennDOT activity at the corner of S.R. 314 and Upper Swiftwater Road. PennDOT cut out a square of asphalt on the eastbound side. It was repaved but repave is about 1.5 inches lower than the road surface. This has created an unsafe pavement condition. Asked that T. Muñoz or R. Sargent reach out to PennDOT to see if they can level out the road.
- Asked that temporary signs be removed from Township road right-of-way. Removal from Township right-of-way is appropriate because it is not private property.

Keith Meeker – Commissioner – No comment.

Reports

Zoning – No report.

Emergency Services

- Police – No report.
- EMS – No report.
- Fire – No report.

Public Works Report

- Current and remaining Public Works Projects for 2020. Work on TLC pond is ongoing. Base of pond has been sealed with clay. Waiting for rain to fill the basin. There is not enough water flow in the Pocono Creek to bring water into the ponds. The Road Crew is also working to change around the parking area in the rear area of the Municipal Complex to allow access to the antiskid and salt bins.
- Robin Lane Drainage Project – Project has been started. Trees were removed and digging is to begin Wednesday. Public works crew will get as far as they can based on weather. Trucks are being outfitted with winter gear.
- Update – Park Lane Culvert Replacement – Dirt and Gravel Grant. On the back burner until Spring due to trout spawn. Received half of grant funds from Conservation District, which was placed in a dedicated account.
- Update – Well Work at MVP. Water test results received were very good. Mike Gable and Craig Labar are finalizing seasonal start-up procedures along with the paperwork that C. Labar must submit to DEP with the water test results. November 1 is the last day the park is open to the public. Park shutdown will begin November 2.

Administration – Manager’s Report

- Discussion regarding proposed amendments to Pocono Township Sign Ordinance. A draft copy of the Sign Ordinance amendment completed by the Planning Commission was provided to Commissioners. Any questions should be submitted before the next Commissioner meeting, leaving sufficient time for answers or clarification. This ordinance amendment must go to Monroe County Planning Commission before a hearing, and back to the Township Planning Commission for final stamp of approval. Advertising must be done twice.
- Township properties for land bank consideration. The Monroe County Land Bank is interested in properties the Township identifies as blighted for potential acquisition. Land bank properties do not require that property owners be behind on their taxes. Properties would be rehabilitated and put back into productive use. E. Gndant suggested a property at 3408 Route 715 with a vacant trailer, graffiti and garbage be considered.
- Update – Administrative Assistant hiring process. Received 130 job applicants which were whittled down to 18 applicants who will be interviewed later this week.
- Update – Amusement Tax Implementation & Applications Received. Four applications have been received, including the Pocono Candle Shoppe. Will follow-up with Great Wolf for application submission. Researching if Escape Room and hatchet throwing business are operational. J. Lastowski noted that Hatchet Throwing will be operational by the end of the month. Further discussion regarding potential collection of amusement taxes on parking fees in the Township. Eckert Seamans will provide further information and research.
- Update – Pending grant applications – LSA, Multimodal & Recreation Grant Applications. Nothing new to report.
- Wine Press Inn – Interest in Township-owned property. Waiting to hear back from owner.
- Update – Regional HSPS Comprehensive Plan. A meeting will take place Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
- Update – MS4 Requirements. Received information from M. Prugar from Boucher & James, with a summary of all the Township’s MS-4 compliance for this last year showing what the Township has done in order to comply with regulations.

- The Township received a call from MCTI. They have requested the Township approve an hourly rate for our police services for 2021. Rate was calculated reflecting cost increases in the contract.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to approve a MOU with Monroe Career Technical Institute for Township Police services at a rate of \$79.42 per hour. E. Grandt reviewed calculations under discussion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Township Engineer Report

- St. Paul's Lutheran Drainage Basin – Waiting to hear back from St. Paul's Church or Deanna Schmoyer, the project engineer.
- Archer Lane Drainage Issues – No report.
- Update – Righthand turn lanes from Rt. 611 onto Rimrock Road and Bartonsville Avenue. No new report.

Township Solicitor Report

- Archer Lane. Have a citation prepared by Zoning and will give them approval tomorrow to cite Mr. Archer for ongoing environmental issues.
- Discussion regarding amendment to the HJP Park cooperation agreement. Solicitors spoke and corresponded. Hoping to have by next BOC meeting a resolution prepared by Todd Weitzmann on behalf of Jackson Township, indicating that Jackson and Pocono Townships will take over responsibility for the park.
- Update – Kelly Family Trust. L. DeVito stated he believes we have identified the trustee of the Trust, who lives in Pittston, and is hopeful this will move the case forward.
- Johnson Appeal Zoning Hearing. Zoning Hearing Board to reconvene on October 27, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. to render its decision.

Public Comment – No public comment.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Belvin, to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.