

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

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held on September 7, 2021 and was opened by President Rich Wielebinski at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Jerrod Belvin, present via Zoom; E. Gndt, present; J. Lastowski, present; Keith Meeker, present; and Rich Wielebinski, present.

In Attendance: Leo DeVito, Township Solicitor; J. Tresslar, Township Engineer; Taylor Muñoz, Township Manager; Paola Razzaq, Finance Administrator; Robert Sargent, Roadmaster; Judy Acosta, Zoning Administrator; Shawn Goucher, Acting Chief of Police; Eric Rath, Police Corporal; and Krisann MacDougall, Administrative Assistant.

Public Comment

- Claire Learn, 5312 Birchwood Drive, Oakwood Acres – Inquired about maintenance of the grass and storm drains along her road and asked that attention be given to addressing stormwater concerns.

Announcements

- Emergency meetings of the Board of Commissioners were held on August 23rd and September 1st for the purpose of declaring a Disaster Emergency in response to Hurricanes Henri and Ida.
- Pocono Township's Fall Cleanup will be held Friday, October 1 and Saturday, October 2 from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. Residents can visit www.pocconopa.gov for more information as the Cleanup Days draw near.
- The Board of Commissioners has scheduled dates for two budget work sessions at 5 p.m. on Monday, September 13 and Wednesday, September 29. These in-person meetings are open to the public.

Hearings – No hearings.

Presentations

- Presentation by Traisr, LLC regarding a proposal to provide software to Pocono Township for public works management and tracking of Township assets; online permit applications, payments, and licensing; zoning and building codes inspections; and a portal for citizen complaints. Dan Reavy, General Manager of Business Development at Traisr, LLC, spoke on behalf of Traisr, and T. Muñoz summarized the Township's needs for online permit applications, and tracking of Township's assets. E. Gndt asked about history of projects being stored in Traisr, how frequent the information is updated and storage limits. J. Acosta discussed Traisr's ability to track inventory of permits issued. L. DeVito asked where the Township's information goes if Traisr is no longer in business. D. Reavy indicated the Township will always have access to their data, even if Traisr goes out of business.
- Presentation and discussion regarding adoption of a 12-hour shift pilot program for the Pocono Township Police Department corporals. T. Muñoz gave summary of research collected for 12-hour shifts with various police departments in other townships. Corporal E. Rath discussed unsupervised shifts and the benefit of 12-hour shifts with supervision. S. Goucher, Acting Chief of Police, indicated potential new hires inquire about 12-hour shifts and feels better candidates will come forward if the Township has 12-hour shifts. E. Gndt requested clarification of who would be doing the pilot 12-hour shift, the number of hours in a work week, and time-off scheduling. J. Lastowski asked how the pilot program would be evaluated, and what determines its success. T. Muñoz suggested creating a rubric and send it to the Board for feedback.

Resolutions – No resolutions.

Consent Agenda

- Motion to approve a consent agenda of the following items:
 - Old business consisting of the minutes of the August 16, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
 - A budget transfer of \$20,500.00 for the purpose of supplementing the Public Works overtime budget and covering increases to the cost of fuel for park maintenance equipment.
 - Financial transactions including:
 - Ratification of vouchers payable received through September 2, 2021 in the amount of \$9,889.07; sewer operating expenditures in the amount of \$3,444.95; and capital reserve expenditures of \$54,417.38.
 - Ratification of gross payroll for the pay period ending August 22, 2021 in the amount of \$122,428.25.
 - Vouchers payable received through September 2, 2021 in the amount of \$85,407.69.
 - Sewer operating fund expenditures through September 2, 2021 in the amount of \$46,238.87.
 - Sewer construction fund expenditures through September 2, 2021 in the amount of \$13,546.35.
 - Capital reserve fund expenditures through September 2, 2021 in the amount of \$10,795.56.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve the consent agenda. E. Gmandt asked for clarification on the budget transfer. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Personnel** – No personnel new business.
2. **Travel/Training Authorizations** – No travel/training authorizations.
3. **Financial Transactions**

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to open a new checking account with ESSA Bank and Trust for the purpose of depositing the federal funds received from the American Rescue Plan and to add the Board of Commissioners, Township Manager, and Treasurer as authorized signatories on that account. E. Gmandt suggested it should be an interest-bearing account. P. Razzaq inquired and is waiting for bank response. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to approve American Rescue Plan expenditures for the following, after October 1, 2021:

- \$500 COVID-19 hazard pay per each full-time Township employee employed between March 1 and December 31, 2020.
- \$1,000 per full-time Township employee who provides evidence of COVID-19 vaccination.
- \$20,160.88 to the Pocono Township Volunteer Fire Company for 2020 fundraising losses and lost rental income.
- \$101,522.58 for the purchase of a Bobcat E88 R2-Series Compact Excavator for completion of Township stormwater projects.

E. Gmandt inquired about the calculation of the fire company fundraising losses. R. Wielebinski amended his motion to reflect approval of a \$21,000.00 grant to the Pocono Township Volunteer Fire Company. E. Gmandt also inquired about the \$1,000 for full-time employees who provide evidence of COVID-19 vaccination and requested a vote for the items separately. R. Wielebinski rescinded his original motion, and K. Meeker rescinded his second. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve an American Rescue Plan expenditure after October 1, 2021 for a \$500 COVID-19 hazard pay per each full-time Township employee employed between March 1 and December 31, 2020. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve an American Rescue Plan expenditure after October 1, 2021 to pay \$1,000 per full-time Township employee who provides evidence of COVID-19 vaccination. Roll call vote: J. Belvin, yes; E. Gndt, no; J. Lastowski, yes; K. Meeker, yes; R. Wielebinski, yes. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve an American Rescue Plan expenditure after October 1, 2021 to provide a \$21,000 grant to the Pocono Township Volunteer Fire Company to offset 2020 fundraising losses. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve an American Rescue Plan expenditure after October 1, 2021 in the amount of \$101,522.58 for the purchase of a Bobcat E88 R2-Series Compact Excavator for completion of Township stormwater projects. All in favor. Motion carried.

T. Muñoz gave explanation for the approval of the American Rescue Plan expenditures after the date of October 1, 2021.

Report of the President

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to ratify the Disaster Emergency Declarations issued at emergency meetings of the Board of Commissioners on August 23rd and September 1st. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Discussion and possible action to authorize revisions to the Township's grading ordinance and to advertise for public hearing. T. Muñoz explained that there is a perception that the Township's grading ordinance is too onerous, particularly on individual homeowners, and that some reputable builders claim Pocono Township is not friendly to new home construction. Township Zoning officials and J. Tresslar reviewed the ordinance. J. Tresslar feels the issue is not with the Township's grading ordinance, rather that they must comply with the stormwater management ordinance. J. Tresslar feels the percentage of grades could be eliminated and reminded the Board that the Township adopted this grading ordinance to try and solve specific problems in the Township and to remove the requirements could result in more of the same problems.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to waive the Pavilion fees for Pocono Pride Softball's 3rd Annual Hit-A-Thon at Mountain View Park. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to waive Mountain View Park pavilion fees for the meeting of the Northeast Chapter Assessor Association of PA on September 10, 2021. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to terminate the agreement for e-permitting services with Cloudpermit. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to approve a contract with Traisr, LLC to provide an Asset Management Application for the Township and to authorize an American Rescue Plan expenditure in the amount of \$27,300 for the implementation and one-year subscription to the Traisr Asset Management Application subject to Solicitor review. E. Gndt asked if payment would come from the American Rescue Act funds. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to authorize the advertisement of three (3) Ford Explorer police interceptors and one (1) Ford Expedition police vehicle on Municibid. E. Gndt asked for clarification. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, authorizing the Township Manager and Solicitor to develop a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a pilot 12-hour shift schedule for two Pocono Township Police Department corporals. T. Muñoz discussed a draft MOU that was distributed. J. Lastowski suggested a rubric be developed by the Township to evaluate the success of the 12-hour shift trial. E. Gndt asked question regarding overtime. L. DeVito spoke to J. Harrison for clarification of overtime. R. Wielebinski indicated the proposal would include 80-hours per two-week period and anything over that would be considered overtime. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gnandt, to accept the bid from Thomas Levito of Pocono Farnstand LLC to purchase the Township-owned I-80 parcel. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Update regarding the installation of the basketball court at TLC Park and other projects at the site – Work has begun on drainage, lighting, and walkway. Aesthetics of the park were discussed.

Commissioner Comments

Jerrod Belvin – Vice President

- Emergency Management Update – Hurricanes Henri & Ida – Reviewed storm damage from Hurricanes Henri and Ida. Review underway of drainage issues throughout the Township. Thanked Township Public Works and the fire department for their help. The Township did not hit the threshold for FEMA or individual public assistance. Monroe County Office of Emergency Management went to the federal SBA seeking 1% interest loans, and information for residents and business owners affected by the storms will be submitted next week.
- Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – During hurricane Henri, there was a diesel oil spill in the creek on Lower Swiftwater Road. The pipe was traced to an effluent discharge pipe that came from PMSD's old sewer plant that discharged into the creek on Sanofi's property. The pipe was purportedly abandoned. DEP was contacted and multiple agencies have used supplies to combat the spill. During hurricane Ida, there was another spill on the same stretch of pipe. Pocono Mountain School District is heading up this issue and was contacted multiple times with no response.

J. Belvin made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to open the agenda for discussion and possible action regarding sending an invoice to Pocono Mountain School District to recuperate the supplies lost. All in favor. Motion carried.

J. Belvin made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to send Pocono Mountain School District an invoice for reimbursement of emergency supplies used. No public comment. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Discussion and possible action regarding the appointment of a new Zoning Hearing Board member following the resignation of Angela Tullo – Requested T. Muñoz write a thank you letter on behalf of the BOC for Ms. Tullo's service.

J. Belvin made a motion, seconded by J. Lastowski, to follow seniority and appoint Bill Sayre, Zoning Board Alternate, as a full-time Zoning Hearing Board member. E. Gnandt asked for clarification on Bill's position. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ellen Gnandt – Commissioner – Asked for update regarding an inquiry a resident had with a pothole at corner of Cherry Lane and Sebring Drive and asked about the Township-owned Alger Avenue property being demolished.

Jerry Lastowski – Commissioner – No comment.

Keith Meeker – Commissioner – No comment.

Reports

Zoning and Emergency Services reports were emailed to the Board.

Public Works Report

- Current Public Works projects and storm damage report – Currently completing storm mitigation.
- Upcoming fall projects – Working on current unfinished projects.
- TLC Park Project Update – Waiting on completion of the basketball court.
- Update – Park Lane Culvert Replacement – Dirt and Gravel Grant – Have DEP permit. Working on getting structure price, build time and construction timeline estimates. R. Wielebinski asked to put a priority on this project this spring.

Administration – Manager’s Report

- Discussion and possible action regarding a quote for professional services received from Phillips & Donovan Architects to update and complete a feasibility study for the Township municipal complex – T. Muñoz contacted Phillips & Donovan Architects and received a quote of \$9,860.00 to update a previously prepared feasibility study for the Pocono Township municipal complex. Quote includes conceptual site and floor plan designs. If the Board approves the quote, a motion is needed to transfer funds. E. Grandt asked to see the prior feasibility plan.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to amend the agenda to do a budget transfer. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, to transfer \$10,000 from the legal services line item to the professional services budget. All in favor. Motion carried.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by K. Meeker, for a quote for professional services received by Phillips & Donovan Architects to update and complete a feasibility study for the Township municipal complex. All in favor. Motion carried.

- Renewed PennDOT permit for temporary speed signs located throughout Township and added a portion of Sullivan Trail in response to speeding concerns raised by area residents – Complaints from Cobble Creek area residents resulted in renewing temporary speed sign permit early to include a section of Sullivan Trail.
- Update – County Tax exemption hearing held on Wednesday, 9/1 for 114 Alger Avenue – The County has granted the Township a tax exemption for the 114 Alger Avenue property.

Township Engineer Report

- Stormwater and infrastructure issues identified following recent storm events – Observed areas identified by members of the Board and feels the Stadden Road bridge erosion needs further review. Laurel Lake was evaluated, and a plan will be put together for review by the Board. Archer Lane and Learn Road have ongoing issues requiring continued evaluation. Ski Haven bridge is part of a private HOA and is a challenge because it is in Paradise Township but is an access point for Paradise and Pocono Township residents. Discussion on Ski Haven continued. Pursuing grant funding for Wilkie Road. Drainage on Buck Valley Circle, the Woodlands, and Birchwood was evaluated and an assessment will be presented to the Board for review.
- St. Paul's Lutheran drainage basin repairs – Waiting for better weather.
- Righthand turn lanes from Rt. 611 onto Rimrock Road and Bartonsville Avenue – Waiting for PennDOT feedback on their comments.
- Preliminary plan and cost estimates to address drainage issues at Sunlite Lane & Tara Hill Drive – Plans were given to R. Sargent for review.

Township Solicitor Report

- HJP Park Agreement between Pocono and Jackson Townships – Working with T. Muñoz on agreement.
- Zoning Hearing Board updates – Will combine with land use updates. Finishing Kopelson brief and scheduled for hearing at end of September. Taveras STR hearing is scheduled for October 18, 2021.
- 150 Gravatts Way – Court Appearance on October 21 at 1:30 p.m. – Will contact people to attend and testify in the contempt hearing.
- E. Grandt asked if a brief executive session was going to be held on an existing union grievance.

Public Comment – No public comment.

Adjournment

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Grandt, to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m. and go into Executive Session and not return. All in favor. Motion carried.