

**COVINGTON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021**

The September 7, 2021 regular monthly meeting of the Covington Township Board of Supervisors was called to order with a Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 20 Moffat Drive, Covington Township, PA 18444, by Chairwoman Melissa Kearney, then she asked for a moment of silence to remember 9/11 as the 20th anniversary is in a few days and recognize all those who perished on 9/11, in the war after 9/11 and the thirteen soldiers that were just recently lost.

PRESENT:

Chairwoman Melissa Kearney, Vice Chairman John Brostoski, Supervisor Marshall Peirce, Supervisor Vicki Williams, Solicitor Joel Wolff, and Secretary Melinda Musso.

Also present: Police Chief Bernie Klocko; Ronald Donati, Zoning Officer; David Lamm, Building Inspector

Absent: Supervisor Chris Balish

AGENDA:

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept the agenda as presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Executive session on September 2, 2021 at 4 p.m. for personnel to discuss hiring a township secretary, part-time zoning secretary-office assistant, and groundskeeper-maintenance positions.

MINUTES:

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to accept the August 3, 2021 & August 31, 2021 minutes as presents.

BILLS:

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to approve the bills as presented.

Chairwoman Kearney abstained from voting on the bill for herself that pertained to purchasing equipment needed for our camera system at the police department.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept the treasurer's report as presented.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS:

Set wages re: Setzer:

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to set Philip Setzer's wage at \$20.00/hour on a part-time, as needed basis.

Motion to advertise to sell bulldozer:

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to advertise to sell the bulldozer. Supervisor Peirce asked Attorney Wolff if the advertisement ad was acceptable to which he replied, "yes".

Motion to sign bulldozer sale documents:

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to authorize Marshall Peirce, on behalf of the township to sign all documents related to vehicles and equipment titles and bills of sale.

Wonderful (Kelly Davies) lease agreement:

Chairwoman Kearney stated a letter was received by Kelly Davies. Chairwoman Kearney explained Wonderful's lease had expired and after meeting with Kelly Davies, the Board came up with a proposal of \$850.00/month plus heat, however, all other utilities including sewer, electric, snow removal and garbage would be included in her rent. The Board received a letter in reply from Ms. Davies that was read at the meeting since she was not in attendance. The Board discussed Ms. Davies request to stay in the building until the end of the year for \$450.00/month. The terms of her prior leases were reviewed and Supervisor Brostoski voiced that the township has been more than fair offering \$850.00/month plus heat. Mr. Donati stated the township is only charging half of what the rent should be in comparison to other rentals in the area. There were discussions on different terms and Supervisor Peirce suggested \$850.00/month with her paying the heat in November and December to which all supervisors agreed. Chairwoman Kearney asked if those terms were still not acceptable, then how long did the Board want to allow her to vacate the building. All supervisors agreed at the end of September.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to offer Kelly Davies at Wonderful rent at \$850.00/month with her paying the heat in November and December and if not, then must vacate the building by the end of September.

Pocono Spray Patch quote for line painting:

Quote was received to paint lines at the Police Station and Dance Studio parking lots for \$640.00.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to hire Pocono Spray Patch as quoted.

Chairwoman Kearney asked Supervisor Peirce if there was any other information received on Boccicchio Boulevard line painting. Supervisor Peirce advised Pocono Spray Patch doesn't do that anymore and gave the names of two other companies. Ms. Musso was asked to call for quotes. Mary Lou Butler gave another company's name.

JanPro estimate re: Senior Center cleaning:

There were two different estimates given for a one-time cleaning/disinfecting for \$600.00 or for four cleanings/disinfectings for \$999.00. The reason for professional cleaning is because that building has been closed since the beginning of the pandemic and it also needed an extermination which will be done prior to cleaning services.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to hire JanPro for four cleanings at \$999.00.

Extension of Emergency Declaration to 1/3/22:

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Peirce), and carried to extend the Emergency Declaration until January 3, 2022. This has been extended throughout the pandemic and we have received some funding.

Resignation letter re: Kevin Kowalski:

Chairwoman Kearney read Kevin Kowalski's resignation letter.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to accept the resignation of Kevin Kowalski.

Maintenance – Groundskeeper position:

Chairwoman Kearney stated the Board decided to look back at the other recent applicants from two months ago. The person being offered the job has a class A CDL license and feels he would be a good addition.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to hire James Hallock at \$18.00/hour beginning on September 20, 2021, with the possibility of having his wages revisited upon completion of the six-month probationary period.

Appoint township secretary:

Chairwoman Kearney stated Melinda Musso, full-time zoning secretary has been filling in as township secretary.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Peirce), and carried to hire Melinda Musso as the full-time township secretary at a salary at \$46,820.80/year with benefits.

There was a discussion about this being a salary position where Ms. Musso will continue to clock a timecard to track the number of hours worked and comp time for extra hours.

Resignation letter re: zoning secretary-office assistant and pavilion manager:

Chairwoman Kearney read Melinda Musso's resignation letter as zoning secretary-office assistant, zoning hearing board secretary, and pavilion manager. Since Ms. Musso will finish the 2021 pavilion season, this position will be decided upon at the January 2022 meeting.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept Melinda Musso's resignation from zoning secretary-office assistant, zoning hearing board secretary, and pavilion manager.

Motion to advertise for a part-time zoning secretary-office assistant:

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to advertise for a part-time zoning secretary-office assistant with the salary commensurate with experience.

There was a discussion on the possible hours and duties.

Pillar repairs on Moffat Drive:

Chairwoman Kearney stated this was discussed a few months ago and needs to be addressed. Two quotes were received to repair the pillars on Moffat Drive from Reed Masonry. One was for \$4,900.00 to square up the existing damaged wall and pour a concrete edge and top. The second was for \$7,300.00 to rebuild the stone wall edges with existing stone to match and pour a concrete cap. The township would need to provide the excavation needed along with the stone that was removed from the stone wall. Supervisor Peirce recommended the second estimate to make it look like the original pillar. There were discussions concerning other quotes (however, no other quotes were submitted), contacting Moffat Trust and the amount of dead ash trees on the property.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to hire Reed Masonry for \$7,300.00 to rebuild the stone wall edges with existing stone to match and pour a concrete cap. Supervisor Peirce also asked that he repair one stone in the wall and repointing on the Moffat chimney flashing.

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The report was reviewed from their August 18, 2021 meeting.

Mary Lou Butler, Township Engineer, and representatives from North Point Development reviewed a drawing showing in the minor subdivision where two lots are combined and there's a new proposed lot line. There will be one large parcel that the township rezoned to manufacturing (M1) and the remaining parcel will remain residential (R2) as it was before.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to approve the North Point Development minor subdivision application at RGM Drive.

Mary Lou Butler referred to another set of plans for North Point's land development and they are good, but they are just waiting on all their permits. There was a discussion on the permits (which are listed as contingencies) involved with representatives from North Point Development, who assured the Board it will be completed within the next few months. North Point Development asked for approval on this land development application with contingencies.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to approve the North Point land development application with all contingencies being met as set forth in the Planning Commission report.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept the Planning Commission report as submitted.

Mary Lou Butler told the Board she keeps track of all the contingencies to make sure they are completed before the Board signs any plans.

BUILDING INSPECTOR:

David Lamm reviewed his monthly report. Mr. Lamm asked if the pavilion roof leak was addressed and Supervisor Peirce confirmed it was fixed.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to accept the Building Inspector's report as submitted.

ZONING CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

Ronald Donati reviewed his monthly report. He reported that two violation properties have had papers filed with the district magistrate's office and the others that were cited have all been complying with cleaning up their properties.

Scott VanFleet brought up the Yerke property referencing fall approaching with no leaves on the trees and nothing has happened, so the debris behind him will be seen from his business. Mr. VanFleet also stated once the leaves fall off the trees, everything on Yerke's property can be seen from the interstate. Mr. VanFleet wants to know when he will be cited since the only items removed were township property. There was a discussion on if the township has gotten their property back and it was determined there were still items in question. Mr. VanFleet stated this has been going on for a very long time and it was affecting his business. He presented the board with a timeline for their review with issues over the years. Mr. Donati told Mr. VanFleet that the township does not confirm the validity of non-conforming certificates as that's done on a judicial level and Mr. VanFleet can pursue that himself. There were discussions on whether the Yerke property is a junkyard or meets the definition of a junkyard, the legality of the certificates, the fence on the property, the VanFleet Grove business and how it has been affected by this situation for many years, and the valid zone for that area. Mr. VanFleet told the Board he doesn't want to keep anyone from being able to earn money, but he does not want it to affect him from earning money either. Bill Willson discussed with the Board different zoning issues related to junkyards, fences, zones, and non-conforming certificates. Mr. VanFleet asked what he has to do to make this situation better. Attorney Wolff told Mr. VanFleet he has received the zoning office determination. Chairwoman Kearney asked if the zoning officer's determination on this matter can be appealed to the Zoning Hearing Board. Attorney Wolff advised he didn't know if it could work that way. Chairwoman Kearney asked Ms. Musso about the number of cars allowed in this instance since she was the zoning secretary for a long time to which she replied there were zoning letters sent out by the former and current zoning officers about the limited number of cars allowed with the non-conforming certificate but could not remember the exact amount. Attorney Wolff told Mr. VanFleet he will need to consult an attorney for legal advice. Bill Willson stated that since Attorney Mercuri knows all the parties, maybe a different attorney familiar with zoning should be consulted for an unbiased opinion.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to accept the Zoning Code Enforcement Officers report.

ENGINEER:

Mary Lou Butler reviewed her monthly report. She advised the Union Mill Road Stormwater project is still delayed waiting for a trench drain from the supplier and assured the Board she is following up with them frequently. Once received, the project will begin. Mrs. Butler additionally informed the Board about the Storm Road project beginning this Thursday, however, may change due to rainfall.

Mrs. Butler stated September 30th is the deadline for the DCED LSA grant submission which she usually submitted for the Board. If the Board wants to apply for something, a special meeting will need to be held to pass a resolution.

Mr. Sweeney told Mrs. Butler something needs to be done to the left side of the ditch on Union Mill Road due to it overflowing. Mrs. Butler advised at the time it was evaluated with the developer and Board they were told not to address that pipe. She then explained they are taking all the water from the driveway to the right (east) and across the road. Mr. Sweeney explained with another new home being built the water runs along the property line and overflows that ditch and asked if a trench can be dug. Mrs. Butler stated when the contractors are on site, she can ask them that and get a price if the Board approved it.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to accept the Engineer's report as submitted.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:

Marshall Peirce discussed the following:

- Lines need to get painted on Boccicchio Boulevard.
- Tire chain for the front axle of the John Deere loader that will cost approximately \$1,500.00.
- Parts are needed to fix the spreader on the 550 dump truck that's been broken since the middle of last winter.
- Parts are needed to fix the John Deere loader blade.
- There was a leak in the front differential of the freightliner that was there since the truck was brand new. Pocono Towing and Recovery seems to have successfully fixed this issue.
- In Tom Hall's report, he will report on the issues with roads and ditches from the storms.
- Multiple roof leaks everywhere but the Police Station. The dance studio and pavilion have been completely fixed, but they do need to purchase some ceiling tiles and possible insulation.
- The bus company parking their buses at the Police Station parking lot have been asked to find another place to park and they agreed.
- Half of the tires have been removed from the garage dumpster and the person will return another day to get the rest.
- He would like approval for Tom Hall to repair the ditch on the steep hill on MacKenzie Road with approximately 8-10 truckloads of large stone. This can come from Eureka Stone Quarry in Sterling and can be delivered to the job site.
- The Mack truck has gone for inspection and three tires were purchased to get put on it too.

Supervisor Brostoski stated a bunch of items are needed as emergency repairs and regular maintenance to the trucks and didn't think a motion was needed.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to make purchases needed to get everything ready for winter so long as it doesn't exceed the bidding requirements.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to allow the Road Master to get the lowest price for large stone in order to repair MacKenzie Road.

On motion DULY MADE (Willaims), seconded (Kearney), and carried to accept the Director of Public Works report.

ROAD MASTER:

Tom Hall stated he replaced the guard rails on Boccicchio Boulevard that were ripped out by the former Road Master, he put a pipe in on Cherry Street, and everything else was already covered under the Director of Public Works report.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept the Road Master's report.

MOFFAT ESTATE MAINTENANCE – GROUNDSKEEPER:

Chairwoman Kearney stated there was no report and they just hired someone that will be starting on September 20, 2021.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Chief Klocko reviewed his monthly report. Chief Klocko stated that he, Chairwoman Kearney, and Vice Chairman Brostoski met with the school board today to discuss the concerns they had over the SRO program at the high school. Chief Klocko's concerns are the township doesn't have a contract and the school board wants to set the rate of pay for a township police officer. The school board stated they will review the contract and get back to the township by October. Chief Klocko stated worse case scenario, if the school board doesn't sign the contract, the current police officers acting as SRO will be pulled out of the school. Chairwoman Kearney thanked Chief Klocko for working on that contract.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Willaims), and carried to accept the Police Department's report.

RECREATION COMMITTEE:

Chairwoman Kearney stated there is no report but there will be a meeting on September 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the upcoming holiday events in order to plan for the township's big Christmas event.

SEWAGE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

No report was submitted.

SOLICITOR:

Attorney Wolff stated the North Point issues have already been addressed.

The Bracey tax assessment appeal has a status conference scheduled for the 16th. Attorney Wolff stated at the conference, the judge will want to know if there's any reason there can't be a trial set and if so, what the reasons are. If no reasons are presented, the judge will set a trial date. He stated there was nothing for the Board to do at this time.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept the Solicitor's report.

NEW BUSINESS:

Board of Auditors re: working supervisor (Peirce) pay rate:

Chairwoman Kearney read the letter submitted by the Auditor's that determined Supervisor Marshall Peirce will be paid a rate of \$20.00/hour as Director of Public Works.

OLD BUSINESS:

Windmill yearly service:

Chairwoman Kearney stated Supervisor Balish was supposed to contact Bob Jones for this, however, he is not in attendance tonight.

Camera system update:

Chief Klocko confirmed we are up and running with the exception of one camera at the back of the building. Ms. Musso advised Chief Klocko he will be contacted tomorrow to access all township cameras from the police department.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no correspondence.

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:

Supervisor Peirce asked if in the next newsletter and on our website can he have an announcement concerning an ongoing issue that should have been addressed in the past. Properties in developments build their yards right to the road and when plowing in the winter, it affects the yards, however, this coming season, the Road Department will not be fixing any lawns. Mr. Hall asked to have another statement concerning residents placing delineators right along the blacktop because they don't want the snow plowed from the road and into their lawn but then we receive complaints that roads aren't plowed wide enough. Mary Lou Butler suggested the township post the road right of ways in the announcement to explain how many feet from the center of the road the township has the right to utilize.

Bill Willson stated he has spoken to other township officials and a lot of them have commented how they've noticed Covington Township has really settled down and a lot easier to deal with.

Vice Chairman Brostoski stated what a wonderful community event the Kramer Car Show benefit for a high school scholarship was. There was over 250 cars and a couple thousand people in attendance throughout the day that was enjoyed by all.

Vice Chairman Brostoski also stated what a great job our Covington Fire Department did on an accident on Route 502 and we are very lucky to have the crews we have.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Roz Davis asked if Ms. Musso will be receiving retroactive pay back to June 14, 2021 and Chairwoman Kearney stated yes. Ms. Davis also asked if Elmira Brown accepted the EMA position and Chairwoman Kearney replied no since she has dual residency, she's unable to commit to the position, however, she is reviewing our EMA policy to make suggestions and has joined our Recreation Committee. We are still looking for an EMA Coordinator.

ADJOURNMENT:

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Musso, Secretary

Approved: