

**COVINGTON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2021**

The November 2, 2021 regular 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.

PRESENT:

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

Also present: Police Chief Bernie Klocko, Road Master Tom Hall, Building Inspector David Lamm, Engineer Mary Lou Butler, Groundskeeper Jay Hallock.

AGENDA:

On motion duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Balish), and carried to accept the agenda as presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There was a budget workshop on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Executive session was held on November 1, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. for personnel reasons to discuss the Police Chief's contract.

OPEN BIDS '07 JOHN DEERE DOZER:

Tim Beach	\$75,101.00	Gerlach Excavating	\$41,250.00
Bradco Supply Co.	\$81,818.18	LC Enterprise, LLC	\$68,679.92
Kuharchik Construction, Inc.	\$35,000.00	Stephen L. Musser	\$43,650.00
A.R. Sokol & Son Excavating	\$31,755.00	William G. Bracey	\$50,025.00
Titan Tree Service, Inc.	\$47,500.00	Valley Truck Center, Inc.	\$50,150.00
Kern Machinery, LLC	\$65,000.00	Nature's Creations	\$70,250.00
Drifton Precision Machining, Inc.	\$25,000.00	Nathan Abbott	\$25,595.00
Franchelli Enterprises, Inc.	\$55,000.00	Vito Pilosi III Excavating, LLC	\$66,000.00
Stephen Sledzinski	\$32,000.00	Anthony D'Angelo	\$6,000.00
Just In Time	\$48,201.00	Henry Orlovski	\$27,580.00
S&B Construction	\$51,000.00	Fabcor, Inc.	\$52,300.00
Latona Trucking & Excavating	\$59,500.00	Marshall Machinery, Inc.	\$57,777.00
Mike Zielinski Trucking	\$65,000.00	Merlino Bros Farms	\$40,000.00
Alderman's Excavating, LLC	\$64,100.00	SK Construction	\$75,000.00
Earl Henninger	\$52,420.00	Mike Maylath & Sons Farms, Inc.	\$42,600.00

Chairwoman Kearney announced the highest bidder was Bradco Supply at \$81,818.18 and 10% of that amount is due by 4:00 p.m. tomorrow. Second highest was Tim Beach for \$75,101.00 and third was SK Construction for \$75,000.00.

MINUTES:

Roz Davis asked who transcribed the minutes from the October meeting. Ms. Musso stated she completed the minutes. Ms. Davis expressed her surprise and disappointment over the way they were transcribed on the section concerning Mr. Willson. Ms. Davis stated specific reasons as to why they were unacceptable: Attorney Wolff's concerns over the police report and events were left out, Mr. Brostoski's comments regarding terminology and denying he ever made any allegations against Mr. Willson were omitted, there were no responses to any of the concerns or questions by Chief Klocko, also omitted was Chief Klocko's investigation proving the allegations were baseless but was still ordered to go to the District Attorney's office who agreed with the Chief's outcome, Attorney Wolff was unable to receive the meeting recording because Mr. Hein deleted them, and nothing about Attorney Wolff returning the \$1,000.00 fee which was denied since he did perform the work. Ms. Davis stated the Board has said they want to be transparent and do things differently, but in her opinion from the issues she just mentioned, as well as, other matters being omitted, is far from being transparent. Ms. Davis compared different conversations with less time that had better details than this lengthy topic.

Chairwoman Kearney stated she asked Ms. Musso to only summarize the conversation held and apologized for the minutes not being fully completed as maybe they should have been, then spoke on the difficulties of summarizing a lengthy conversation. Roz Davis stated she found it insulting because she can read long minutes and feels anyone should be able to come in and fully understand what took place at the last meeting.

Vice Chairman Brostoski spoke about how long it takes to do minutes and felt if people are interested, then they would attend the meetings. Mr. Brostoski stated he's sure that Ms. Musso would do better. Ms. Musso explained they were fully completed and included in the work session packets, but was asked to consolidate them.

Scott Van Fleet felt it's important to have detail, even for those who would normally come to meetings but may happen to miss one and doesn't understand why they were consolidated.

Chairwoman Kearney felt too much was emphasized on the one conversation and didn't feel the minutes were fair. Ms. Williams stated she understands where Ms. Davis is coming from and would like to see the minutes returned to what they were at the work session in the original draft.

Chairwoman Kearney stated she was going to bring this up later in the meeting when they spoke about the transcription software and if they purchase it, then every word spoken will get recorded. She wanted to table the software to find better options. Mr. Van Fleet expressed concern over consolidating the minutes and how it makes people wonder what the Board is hiding and not being transparent.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to accept the original draft of October 5, 2021 meeting minutes that were presented at the work session on October 26, 2021. Chairwoman Kearney stated she agreed to pass the motion because she wanted this issue to be done and over with and doesn't want to bring it up again next month. She stated this is now closed in the eyes of the Board of Supervisors.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to accept the October 26, 2021 work session minutes as presented.

BILLS:

Vice Chairman Brostoski questioned the Pocono Spray Patch bill. This was for line painting at the Police Department parking area.

ON MOTION duly made (Balish), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept and pay the bills as presented. Chairwoman Kearney stated she is abstaining from the bill in her name but is agreeing to the rest.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual: This is something Diana Patton presented for the Board.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS:

Appoint Zoning Secretary – Office Assistant & set rate:

Chairwoman Kearney stated interviews were held by herself and Supervisor Williams. They are recommending Tiffany Moore for this position, along with the position of Zoning Hearing Board Secretary, and Planning Commission Secretary, for \$16.00/hour as a part-time employee, no benefits, no paid holidays, and no paid time off.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Balish), and carried to hire Tiffany Moore as the Zoning Secretary – Office Assistant, Zoning Hearing Board Secretary, and Planning Commission Secretary for \$16.00/hour.

Appoint Planning Commission Solicitor & set rate:

Chairwoman Kearney stated the Planning Commission has recommended Attorney Jamie Hailstone as the new Planning Commission Solicitor.

ON MOTION duly made (Balish), seconded (Williams), and carried to hire Attorney Jamie Hailstone as the Planning Commission Solicitor at a rate of \$150.00/hour.

Senior Center Side Roof Estimate:

Estimate was received by David Lindsey for \$1,900.00 plus any repairs would be extra.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Balish), and carried to accept the estimate and complete the work.

Advertise 2022 Budget:

2022 Budget will be adopted on December 7, 2021 and is available to view on our website and in the office.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to advertise the 2022 Budget.

Chairwoman Kearney asked if she needs to announce the fire tax tonight or is that done when the budget is approved. Solicitor Wolff advised it's when they approve the budget.

PLANNING COMMISSION:

Monthly report was read by Chairwoman Kearney.

Robert T. & Margaret Storm Minor Subdivision re: Recommendation of final approval:

There was a discussion on the process of turning in the sewer module.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Balish), and carried to approve the Storm Minor Subdivision with a contingency of obtaining the Sewer Module approval.

Thomas Millard Minor Subdivision (Lot combination) re: Recommendation of final approval:

Chairwoman Kearney stated we have already approved this and the supervisors just need to sign the plans. Drawings have not been received in the office yet. Mary Lou Butler stated she will email Mr. Millard.

Surveyor George Parker explained information for Matter's highway occupancy permit has been submitted for a minimum use driveway. He has received a response from PennDOT that states they will give the permit once they see the approved subdivision plans. The township needs the approved highway occupancy permit to sign the plans. Mr. Parker has copies of this letter for our record and is asking for approval on the subdivision plans, then he will give the township a copy of their permit once he receives it. Chairwoman Kearney asked if PennDOT doesn't give them their permit, doesn't that put the township in a pickle because the supervisors signed the plans. Mary Lou Butler stated the Board already gave approval contingent on an approved highway occupancy permit. Ms. Kearney asked if the other contingencies have been met from May. Mrs. Butler stated she believes they were. There was further discussion.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Balish), and carried to sign the Matter plans.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept the Planning Commission's monthly report.

BUILDING INSPECTOR:

David Lamm stated there were no permits this month. Mr. Lamm stated Bill Anderson, from Portman Industries, contacted him on Lot 5 to ask if they can reduce their performance bond as they go along and make improvements. Attorney Wolff stated he doesn't have a problem with that as long as somebody from the township will verify the site improvements were actually made. Mary Lou Butler stated she is usually the person called to verify this information, then she will write a letter to the Board and the Board will decide whether to decrease the performance bond at that time.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Balish), and carried to accept the building inspectors report.

ZONING CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

Chairwoman Kearney read the report due to Zoning Officer not being present.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Balish), and carried to accept the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer's monthly report as submitted.

ENGINEER:

Mary Lou Butler advised the Board that Storm Road was completed with the exception of the contractor returning to remove five trees. There's been no application for payment yet but we should have it for next month.

Mrs. Butler advised it's the same contractor for the Union Mill Road project and there's been a lot of issues getting the specialized trench drain parts from the manufacturers. Her idea is to ask the contractor to move forward with the project except for a trench drain and hopefully this can start to correct 95% of the storm water issues. If in the spring the township notices the trench drain is still needed, we can address it at that point. Chairwoman Kearney stated we need to move forward with this.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to have the contractor start the Union Mill Project with the exception of a trench drain.

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

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:

Marshall Peirce announced the insurance company denied the claim for the damage to the Recycling Center. The township has three choices: tear the building down and rebuild, replace the entire roof, or fix the damages, then install a new tin roof. There was a discussion detailing the options available and the possible ways to precede. Chairwoman Kearney stated in worst case scenario, if choosing to repair the roof, once it's completely opened, it could be discovered that all the trusses are rotted out and we'd have to replace the entire roof. Mr. Peirce stated the remaining panels will need to be removed to further assess whether the roof can be repaired or replaced.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to proceed with the repair of the recycling center roof and to spend the money needed to assess the situation.

Mr. Peirce stated that now since the dozer is being sold, he would like to purchase a used large tractor with a boom mower and a roller for the Road Department. He would like approval to advertise for these items.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to advertise to bid for a tractor with a boom mower and a roller.

There was further discussion of bidding used equipment. Attorney Wolff suggested capping the cost within the bid. Mr. Peirce stated he could cap the cost of the tractor with a boom mower at \$50,000 and the roller between \$20,000-\$30,000. Scott VanFleet asked if it can be worded so both pieces cannot exceed \$81,000. Mr. Peirce stated it may be an

issue if two different companies are bidding on only one piece of equipment and felt it should be more specific to each item.

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to approve the Director of Public Works report.

ROADMASTER:

Tom Hall reported Lehigh Road is complete and they are currently working on Freytown Road using millings from Bill's ShopRite parking lot that were given to the township. He stated Eagle Lake has lent them their roller to help get the job done.

Tom Hall explained a section of AM Hughes Boulevard where there's a drop off that goes down into a spring and he would like to build a retaining wall to prevent washouts. Currently, part of it is washed out right up to the pavement. Mr. Hall estimates approximately twenty (6'x3') concrete interlocking blocks would be needed from Eureka Stone Quarry and stated they cost around \$35.00 each. Mary Lou Butler stated guiderails should be installed once the retaining wall is installed.

Mr. Hall stated the potholes on Center Street have been filled.

Scott Van Fleet asked Tom Hall if he has been able to get the inventory of any equipment on the Yerke property since the Board had asked for that a few meetings ago. Tom Hall stated there are a few pieces that he believes are still there that belong to the township: John Deere back blade 3-point hitch, bits from the auger used for signposts -these were never kept in the township garage and the small bits are missing, 2 pallets of stone leftover from the retaining wall by the basketball court, Milwaukee grease gun with the extra batteries and charger -the case and batteries are missing too, and the hose and wand for the air compressor.

Mr. Van Fleet asked the Board what they are going to do. Vice Chairman Brostoski asked if anyone has contacted Mr. Yerke to return these items. Chairwoman Kearney stated she hasn't reached out since she didn't know exactly what was over there and was waiting on the list from Mr. Hall. She assumed we had gotten everything when the township was there last. Mr. Brostoski stated he would try to call Mr. Yerke tomorrow.

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

Tom Hall asked if there was a way for the township to regain the loss of \$30,000 from the contractor who was supposed to repair these roof issues not that long ago. Chairwoman Kearney stated they have talked about it but the contractor was hired with just an invoice and nothing that included any warranty of his work. Attorney Wolff stated it would be challenging for him to recover it since there was no contract and only an invoice.

MOFFAT ESTATE MAINTENANCE-GROUNDSKEEPER:

Jay Hallock explained what he has accomplished in the seven weeks he's been working for the township. There are still boiler issues and is appreciative having Christian Kramer still being able to come in to help part time. Vice Chairman Brostoski complimented Mr. Hallock on the rhododendron bushes.

There was further discussion on the boiler issues in the mansion and what has been worked on. Rite Temp had submitted a quote for a valve actuator and steam valve vent to allow proper operation, then testing the system upon completion.

On motion duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Peirce), and carried to pay Rite Temp \$719.77 to proceed with the repair.

Chairwoman Kearney told Mr. Hallock the senior center will be reopening in January. She would like to have the furnace serviced, turn on the propane, fireplace pilot light needs to be lit, and they are requesting a grab rail on both sides of the stairs since there is only one there now. Mr. Hallock said he would take care of those items.

ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams), and carried to accept the Moffat Estate Maintenance-Groundskeeper report.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Chief Klocko reviewed his monthly report.

SRO Contract:

Chief Klocko advised he reached out once again to Dan Powell and was told there were no updates. The last Chief Klocko knew, the school was trying to get their SPOs to rotate into the high school and they all threatened to quit. The school did have one SPO put in their two week's notice and another one decided to stick it out to the end of the year but doesn't plan to return.

Supervisor Peirce asked Chief Klocko about the Eagle Lake contract. Chief Klocko advised he had reached out to them and was told it was tabled last month and they would have an answer after their next meeting.

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

RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING:

Chairwoman Kearney stated the Recreation Committee kind of met and they had two new people who were interested in joining: Rose Gazelle and Mindy Hughes. She stated that Bill Beavers and herself were present and they discussed doing the Christmas event differently by holding it at the pavilion with the Hall of Trees. They would provide an individually wrapped cookie, juice box, and goodie bag to the kids, and the fire department would parade Santa around the town where he would be at the pavilion around 4:00 p.m. to visit with the kids, and hand out the goodie bags. There will be donations for the Hall of Trees if anyone wanted to donate their tree to a needy family. The event will take place the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to allow a \$1,000.00 budget for the Christmas event.

Jay Hallock asked if the pavilion being winterized will be an issue for the event. Chairwoman Kearney stated since the facilities won't be available, people won't be at the event for long. She explained they use to have a big event in the mansion, but this year it's much shorter where they will see Santa, get a snack, and leave.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to accept the Recreation Committee report.

SEWAGE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

Chairwoman Kearney reviewed the report.

SEO Fee Explanation from Treasurer:

Chairwoman Kearney stated our treasurer put a SEO fee explanation showing how the permits are costing the township money and this month it was \$145.19. It's being recommended that the Board review the sewage fees and we may need to increase them.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Brostoski), and carried to accept the Sewage Enforcement Officer's report.

SOLICITOR:

Attorney Wolff stated North Point is having challenges with their NPDES permit. There was a discussion about their difficulties with needing an on-lot system and possible land treatment.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Transcription Software:

Chairwoman Kearney stated it was discussed previously about obtaining this. She stated she received a demo on another type of program and even though it wasn't what she's looking for, she's still looking for alternatives to assist with transcription and minutes. Chairwoman Kearney stated she will be reaching out to PSATS to see if they have any experience with these kinds of programs. She would like to table this for one more month and no one was opposed.

Monthly Meetings & if Work Session Meetings are Necessary:

Chairwoman Kearney stated we discussed this last week at the work session. She stated a lot of townships don't have work sessions and the Board can't vote on anything during work sessions. This will be brought up at the January reorganization meeting.

Roz Davis suggested if they stop having work sessions, then the monthly meeting should possibly start at 6:00 p.m. to accommodate for things that may need more discussion. Attorney Wolff questioned the December work session meeting. Traditionally that meeting is cancelled and the Board will announce that at their December meeting.

Sewer Authority Financial Statements 2020:

Chairwoman Kearney stated the Sewer Authority's 2020 Financial Report is here for review and their capital assets net balance as of December 31, 2020 was \$4,371,563.00.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairwoman Kearney asked if all the trees will be removed before winter and Supervisor Peirce stated he believed so. There was a discussion on the remaining stumps and what they can do in the future. Roz Davis suggested that the stumps can be hidden by planting lilies around the stumps to hide them.

Chairwoman Kearney asked if the windmill repair was taken care of. Supervisor Peirce state he had called but has not received a return call yet.

CORRESPONDENCE:

10/27/21 email from Paul Tashjian re: Freytown Road:

An email was received from Paul Tashjian concerning issues on Freytown Road with DCNR property that they discussed at the last work session. Melinda Musso advised that DCNR did return her phone call. She was

informed there was nothing the township can do to prevent anybody from entering DCNR property because it's considered public property. Ms. Musso asked the DCNR representative about planting trees and regrowing the forest in the problem area. The representative from DCNR has agreed to have a meeting at our township building with the group of residents and our Board so that these issues can be addressed.

Supervisor Brostoski asked when they started allowing people to drive into their land to park. Ms. Musso advised she was told there is no parking areas for that piece of land and people are supposed to park along the road. The DCNR representative said they would investigate the claim of those who drive their vehicles on that land, however the other issues related to safety and trespassing are issues to be taken up with the police department and game commission. Chairwoman Kearney stated this would be set up as a special meeting.

Invitation to U.S. congressman Matt Cartwright's Municipal Leaders' Conference (November 10th):

This is being held in Wilkes Barre. Anyone wanting to go will need to let Ms. Musso know by November 8, 2021 in order to make reservations.

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Roslyn Davis asked what the cost of the Storm Road project was. Mary Lou Butler stated the bid was just over \$98,000.00 and explained the final bill has not come in yet but so far, they are slightly below the bid amount.

ADJOURNMENT:

ON MOTION duly made (Brostoski), seconded (Williams), and carried to adjourn at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Musso, Secretary

Approved: