

COVINGTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
JANUARY 10, 2023

The Covington Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 7 p.m. at the Covington Township Municipal building, Moffat Estate, 20 Moffat Drive, Covington Township, PA 18444.

There were present: Chairwoman Melissa Kearney, Vice Chairwoman Vicki Williams, Supervisor Marshall Peirce, Supervisor William Willson, and Attorney Joel Wolff. Supervisor Wanda Andreoli was absent.

Also present were: Police Chief Robert Bastek, and Building Inspector David Lamm.

Agenda: Chairwoman Kearney stated a motion was needed to amend the agenda to include the increase in the monthly contract amount for Stonehouse Financial. This will be under administrative actions. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Willson) and carried to amend the agenda to include the increase in the monthly contracted price for Stonehouse Financial.

Announcements: Executive sessions were held on December 22, 2022 and January 10, 2023 to discuss legal matters and personnel raises. Chairwoman Kearney asked if anyone in the meeting would be recording the meeting. No was the answer. She also announced that the re-organization meeting, the board of supervisors imposed a time limit for public comment. There will be a time limit of three (3) minutes for the public to speak, although the board of supervisors could grant an extension.

Public Comment: Roz Davis stated she had a question regarding the minutes, but she would table it until we reached the minutes section of the agenda.

Minutes: Roz Davis stated that the information regarding her request for \$100 per zoning hearing board member was incorrect, she stated it was \$50 per zoning hearing board member per meeting that she had requested. Also, she questioned where the \$500 for the zoning secretary was and that it included the laptop for the secretary. Secretary Kearney stated that she would have to review the recording of the meeting as she listens to the recordings as she does the minutes. It was decided to accept the minutes as presented, and if there was an error in the minutes, it would be addressed in the minutes of next month. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the minutes of December 6, 2022 regular meeting and the January 3, 2023 re-organization meeting as presented.

Bills: Chairwoman Kearney reported that the Fleet Pride bill will be reduced to \$828.59, as an item had been returned and not credited on the payment invoice. Supervisor Peirce questioned the bills for Jack Williams and Weldon Tire. These 2 bills are for the same amount, and it was discussed that Weldon Tire is the new name for Jack Williams. Chief Bastek confirmed that only 1 set of tires were purchased. After review of both invoices, it was decided that the invoice for Jack Williams would not be paid. Supervisor Peirce questioned the invoice for the Propane for Occhipinti Dance Studio. A discussion was held on how the township gets billed for the propane to be sure there is heat in the building and the bill is then mailed to Occhipinti for re-imburement of the bill. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to pay all bills with the exception of the Fleet Pride invoice of \$765.24 and the Jack Williams invoice for \$509.80.

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

Administrative Actions:

Increase in monthly contract amount for Stonehouse Financial: Chairwoman Kearney reported that at the re-organization meeting last week, the monthly amount for Stonehouse Financial was tabled as the board was unsure if there would be an increase. The monthly contract does have a 10% increase bringing the monthly total to \$2,029.92. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the monthly contact price of \$2,029.92 for Stonehouse Financial.

Authorize acceptance of Daleville Cemetery: ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the Daleville Cemetery. The survey map, description, and deed were all provided to the board of supervisors for review. Atty. Wolff will have the school district record the deed once it is signed by the school board.

Accept insurance proposal for Worker's compensation and liability: ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Willson) and carried to accept the worker's compensation and liability insurance. The worker's compensation rate was reduced this year.

Planning Commission: No report submitted.

Building Inspector: David Lamm reviewed his monthly report which included (1) permit for cell tower alterations. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce) seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the building inspectors monthly report.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer: Chairwoman Kearney reviewed the zoning code enforcement officer's monthly report which included (4) Eagle Lake permits and (2) sign permits. She reported that he is still working on violations. ON MOTION duly made (Williams) seconded (Willson) and carried to accept the zoning code enforcement officer's monthly report as submitted.

Engineer: MaryLou was not present, but Chairwoman Kearney reported that the grant for stormwater was submitted. She also stated that Portman Industries rep, Dan Naylor came into the office to inform the township that they would begin drilling a well in the rear of the property at the end of the week. Atty. Wolff questioned when the conditional use hearing decision was set to expire. The date would be in April.

Solicitor: Reported on Daleville Cemetery earlier in the meeting.

Director of Public Works: Supervisor Peirce spoke about a roller. Last year we advertised twice for a roller for up to \$50,000.00. A brief discussion was held. Since the advertising requirements were met, we can purchase a roller up to the amount previously advertised. ON MOTION duly made (Kearney), seconded (Williams) and carried to allow the road department to purchase a roller up to \$50,000.00. Supervisor Peirce would also like to purchase some signs and cones. There was money budgeted for this, so he will have Tom meet with one of the 2 secretaries to see about ordering them online. He also would like to see about having some lights installed in the parking lot near the dance studio, since it is very dark there. He will speak with Adam to see what the best options would be along with the cost for this. ON MOTION (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the Director of Public Works report as discussed.

Roadmaster: Tom Hall, roadmaster was absent. Chairwoman Kearney reviewed his monthly report which stated they have been working on the equipment, maintaining Lehigh Road, and plowing when necessary. Supervisor Peirce also commented that unlike in the past, the road department has been working on the equipment to help maintain it.

Moffat Maintenance: No report was submitted, however, Chairwoman Kearney reported that Jay has begun taking down the outdoor Christmas decorations.

Police Department: Chief Bastek reviewed the monthly report for December. He also reviewed his yearly report from 2022. There was a total of 1,849 service calls, the busiest since he's been here. Chairwoman Kearney commended the police department for their hard work throughout the year, it really shows that we have a police department. Supervisor Peirce questioned the Chief about the incident that happened at Eagle Lake yesterday (Monday, January 9, 2023), asking if there were going to be any arrests made by the police department. Chief Bastek explained that the humane officer would need to make the arrests; if the police were to charge them for the same issue it would be double jeopardy. He did not see anything in the home that would allow him to bring charges against the occupants. The police department is unsure if they have the proper owners, as they have received different names from Eagle Lake. The occupants of the home were not there. Chairwoman Kearney asked the Chief about a program for updated property owners, as this seems to be an issue within the township. He will look into a

program if it's available. *ON MOTION* duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the police departments monthly report.

Recreation Committee: Vice-Chair Williams reported there hasn't been a meeting. Chairwoman Kearney reported they decorated the hall for Christmas and held the Pictures with Santa event which was a huge success.

Sewage Enforcement Officer: No report submitted.

New Business: None.

Old Business: The Wonderful lease has expired and they have moved out.

Correspondence:

Auditor's meeting minutes from Jan. 4, 2023: Chairwoman Kearney had Auditor secretary, Adam Horsky, review the minutes of the Jan. 4, 2023 meeting. He reported the auditors set the following pay rates for working supervisors for 2023: secretary \$52,000.00; DPW Director \$27.50 per hour; Truck/Plow Driver for Road Crew: \$25.00 per hour; and Pavilion Manager \$27.50/hour. They also set the Federal Mileage Reimbursement Rate at 62.5 cents per mile per the IRS rate set on June 1, 2022. They scheduled their next meeting date for March 8, 2023 with a time to be determined at a later date.

Letter from Brad Jones, Covington Fire Company: Chairwoman Kearney read a letter received by Fire Chief, Brad Jones regarding the fatal fire held on December 12, 2023, commending the Police Department and the Road Department, specifically Chief Bastek, Patrolman Robert Bastek, Jr. and Roadmaster Tom Hall for their assistance to the fire department while they fought the fire. The Board of Supervisors thanked the fire department for all they do. Chief Jones discussed further the issues the fire department is facing at this time, as on December 15th the Command vehicle, of the fire department, was totaled while on the scene of a vehicle accident on the interstate and they have recently had to purchase 2 newer ambulances. Chief Bastek commented that he is proud to have Covington Fire Co in our township and that he is proud of them. Roz Davis commented from the community stating that everyone is very grateful for the Fire Department, Police Department, and the Ambulance, stating they all do a great job.


Supervisor Comments: None.

Public Comment: Roz Davis questioned the new businesses coming to the township. She asked about the tire place and the possibility of a Sheetz coming in. Chairwoman Kearney replied that Kost tire is under construction and there is nothing into the township for a Sheetz. Roz then questioned the area where the McDonald's once was, Chairwoman Kearney replied that Mavis Tire has recently submitted plans to the township. A grocery store was then questioned, and the reply was that nothing has been submitted to the township. Fire Chief Brad Jones informed the Board of Supervisors and public that the Fire Company ended the year with a total of 257 calls, the most calls the department has ever run. He is thankful for the board of supervisors, and he reminded everyone that the fire company is still a volunteer fire company. He feels that it is important that everyone understand what the fire company is faced with, financially. He reviewed the financial strain the fire department is under due to antiquated equipment and expired Scott Air Packs, and the issue it may have on fighting fires on the commercial buildings within the township. They have applied for grants for the past 4 years and have been denied every year. He is asking that the township help to come up with some procedure, policy, or fee(s) to help the fire company generate revenue to upgrade their equipment without taxing the taxpayers or the township budget. The fire department is willing to work with the township on coming up with a solution, enforcing ordinances, etc. One way that was discussed to assist with generating revenue for the fire company and helping to keep commercial buildings safe would be to impose yearly fire inspections on commercial buildings. Chairwoman Kearney asked if there was some way that the township could allow the fire company to enforce the ordinances that pertain to them, i.e. the Knox box ordinance. The current enforcement officer for this ordinance is our Zoning Code Enforcement officer, but it might be more beneficial to have the fire department enforce these ordinances and impose and collect the associated fees. Atty. Wolff believes we would be able to have the fire company enforce. Chief Jones discussed the lack of donations received

from the many million-dollar corporations within the Industrial Park that have made zero donations to the Fire Company. Americold, on the other hand, has verbally committed to a significant donation to the Fire Company for the purchase of Scott Air Packs (Chief Jones previously mentioned in the meeting that the air packs were ordered for a total of \$156,000). He will inform the board if (and when) it happens. Brad Jones, of Preferred Management, spoke of the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Preferred Management will work with the township to get the ordinance in order to get the ordinance in place. Chairwoman Kearney stated that the board is hoping to schedule a hearing in February to adopt the Short-Term Rental Ordinance for Eagle Lake and to adopt the changes to the original ordinance for Short Term Rentals. A short discussion was held on the change to the original ordinance to include Big Bass Lake and the new ordinance for Eagle Lake only. Supervisor Peirce offered the following in follow up to Chief Jones comments. Supervisor Peirce mentioned that when Americold first came in, they were known as VersaCold and they made the largest donation, at that time, that the fire company had ever received. They donated \$75,000 for the purchase of the Scott Air Packs that the fire company is now replacing. He also mentioned that the EMS calls ran for the year were 760 transports, which would equal more than 2 calls per day. Supervisor Willson mentioned the total number of calls for the year were 1,262 calls total for the year for the ambulance and Chief Jones reported that there were maybe 20 calls for the year that were missed by the ambulance because they were on other calls and unable to respond. Chairwoman Kearney again commented that we are very blessed with the first responders that we have within our township.

Adjournment: ON MOTION duly made (Willson) seconded (Williams) and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Melissa Kearney, Secretary

Approved: 
2/7/2023