

**COVINGTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS  
MONTHLY WORK SESSION  
JANUARY 31, 2023**

The Covington Township Board of Supervisors held their monthly work session on Tuesday, January 31, 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, Supervisor Wanda Andreoli and Attorney Joel Wolff.

Also present were: Police Chief Robert Bastek, and Zoning Code Enforcement Officer David Hall.

**Agenda:** Chairwoman Kearney asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none.

**Announcements:** Chairwoman Kearney announced there was no expectation of privacy at this meeting, and that the meeting was being recorded. An executive session was held on January 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss personnel discipline and an executive session is scheduled for February 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss legal matters.

**Public Comment:** Roz Davis questioned the status of the amended minutes from December 6, 2022. Chairwoman Kearney advised that she reviewed the recording and she read what was said, verbatim, at the December 6, 2022 meeting. Ms. Davis agreed with what Chairwoman Kearney read. Chairwoman Kearney then asked Ms. Davis what she (Kearney) had in the minutes that was wrong. Ms. Davis replied "A Hundred Dollars per member, per meeting." Chairwoman Kearney then questioned it being a typo, to which Ms. Davis replied "Yes. You had a hundred dollars per member per meeting and you didn't have the \$500 zoning hearing board..." (the remainder of the statement was illegible on the recording). The minutes stated that Roz was requesting \$100 per zoning hearing board member, per meeting and a laptop for the secretary, where it should have stated \$1,000 per zoning hearing board member, per meeting and a laptop. Secretary Kearney will review this once again for accuracy.

**Minutes:** Chairwoman Kearney asked all board members to review the monthly meeting minutes and let her know of any changes or corrections prior to the meeting.

**Bills:** The bill list will be available at next week's monthly meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** The treasurer's report will be available at next week's monthly meeting.

**Administrative Actions:**

**Resolution 2023-02 Appoint Chief Administrator for retirement Plans:** Chairwoman Kearney stated that an audit was completed on the PMRS retirement plan for the years 2018-2022. Upon the completion of the audit, the auditor found that the Chief Administrator of record was Kate Tierney and he requested a new resolution be adopted to appoint a new Chief Administrator for both the uniform and non-uniform retirement plans. Since the treasurer handles the retirement plans, Diana Patton will be appointed as the Chief Administrator for the plans. Police Chief Bastek questioned whether we would be having a meeting regarding the retirement. Chairwoman Kearney advised that she will be reaching out to PMRS to schedule a meeting. Supervisor Peirce asked if we owed any monies; Chairwoman Kearney advised that we did not, but that she believed they may owe the township money.

**Knox Box Ordinance Extension:** The Knox box ordinance was enacted in March of 2022 giving the commercial businesses one (1) year to come into compliance, however, the township never sent letters to the business owners advising them of this. Chairwoman Kearney is looking to extend this ordinance by six (6) months to give them some time to come into compliance. She and Dawn (zoning secretary) are working on a list of businesses, and the letter, so they can get them sent to the businesses within the township. Chairwoman Kearney has spoken with the Fire Chief about the extension.

**Nuisance Alarm Ordinance:** All supervisors were given a copy of the draft for the Nuisance Alarm Ordinance. They were asked to review this and advise of any changes. Attorney Wolff recommended a definition be added for the incident commander. A short discussion was held on the number of false alarms that should be allowed prior to the property owner being fined. Attorney Wolff also recommended verbiage regarding recouping attorney's fees.

**Discuss enforcement of Fire Co. ordinances:** Chairwoman Kearney asked the board of supervisors to begin thinking about the possibility of hiring a Fire Inspector and implementing a yearly fire inspection for commercial buildings. A discussion was held on the enforcement of the ordinances regarding the fire department and the yearly fire inspections. Supervisor Williams commented that at the previous meeting, Chief Jones mentioned imposing a 1 cent increase on new building permits for the fire department to assist with them financially. This was just added to the agenda to get the supervisors to begin thinking of ways to assist the Fire Department.

**Short Term Rental Ordinance update:** There are no updates yet. The goal of the board is to have the hearing for the updated STR ordinance(s) in Mid-March. Attorney Wolff confirmed the changes that were being requested. Chairwoman Kearney stated that we are amending the original ordinance to include Big Bass Lake and there will be a new ordinance for Eagle Lake. The question was asked on whether we want to have the ordinance by zone or by recreational vehicle. A short discussion was held, and it was decided that the second ordinance will be for the MP-RV zone.

**Repeal Ordinance #2005-01, Amusement Tax:** This ordinance was originally put into effect to collect a tax on the admissions collected at the Grandview. It was discovered by DCED thru the audit last year that the reported monies collected was zero. It was then recommended by DCED, that if the tax was not being collected, the ordinance should be repealed. Supervisor Willson commented that the ordinance should be repealed. We will have to adopt a new resolution repealing this ordinance.

**Land Bank (2) properties:** An email was received by Lackawanna County Land Bank for 2 properties within Eagle Lake. Supervisor Peirce asked the secretary to reach out to the sender, Mr. Pappas at the county to have him change the contact names listed (Melinda & Kate).

**Hometown Hero banners:** Supervisor Andreoli mentioned that she had been contacted about the Hometown Hero banners that were hung in the township a few years ago. A large number of the banners have been knocked down due to the improper hanging of the banners. She was asked if the township would be willing to re-hang the banners the proper way. A discussion was held regarding the liability and how the township was not originally involved. It was advised that the township would not get involved with re-hanging the banners.

**Planning Commission:** Supervisor Willson pointed out a typo on the planning commission minutes. It has already been brought to the attention of the planning commission secretary. He also asked that everyone keep planning commission member, Paul Schneider in their prayers as he will be undergoing surgery on Friday.

**Building Inspector:** No report submitted.

**Zoning Code Enforcement Officer:** David Hall was present. He asked that the board consider the purchase of a bullet proof vest for himself. He sometimes approaches doors of upset property owners and would appreciate the added protection. He will also be sending a condemnation letter out and he is asking the board to consider the cost of this condemnation. This will need to be sent out for bids and there will be timelines that need to be adhered to. He anticipates this to be added to the March meeting agenda. He also discussed an ordinance called the 3-Strike Rule; an ordinance where municipalities can go after property owners of nuisance rental properties that call the police more than 3 times. This ordinance goes against the property owner, not necessarily against the tenants. A discussion was held on the pros and cons of this ordinance. If this ordinance was to be considered, we would need to be sure there were proper protocols put into place to assure there are no ramifications from this. Supervisor Peirce asked that the ZCEO and the police chief work together to gather the proper information and present it to the board and solicitor for consideration.

**Engineer:** No report submitted.

**Solicitor:** An assessment for Hinkley has been received. The school district, the county and the assessor's office have already signed off on the assessment. .

**Director of Public Works:** No report submitted.

**Roadmaster:** No report submitted.

**Moffat Maintenance:** No report submitted.

**Police Department:** No report submitted.

**Recreation Committee:** Chairwoman Kearney reported that the Recreation committee held their re-organization meeting to re-organize the board

**Sewage Enforcement Officer:** No report submitted.

**New Business:** None.

**Old Business:** Christian Kramer is looking to return to work for the township for the summer months. Supervisor Peirce suggested speaking Jay (Moffat Maintenance) to see if he would be needed.

**Correspondence:**

**County Hazard Mitigation Plan 2026 Update:** Chairwoman Kearney reported that this is just an update for the county and it appears that the township has participated in the past. A signature to continue participating will be needed. If any supervisor has a question, please ask the secretary.

**PA Route 6 Alliance:** This committee is awarding grants to Lackawanna County commercial building owners, or businesses and nonprofits with property-owner approval to update and improve the facades of commercial buildings.

**Solar Ordinance:** ZCEO Hall mentioned that his township cell phone has been receiving multiple calls regarding solar energy. He is just bringing this to the attention of the board, so they are aware of the interest in this. This ordinance will be going before the planning commission and a public hearing will be scheduled. A discussion was held. This will be added to the agenda for next week's meeting to schedule a public hearing to adopt the ordinance.

**Supervisor Comments:** None.

**Public Comment:** Roz Davis asked Supervisor Peirce if the Fire Department has any radon kits for give-away or purchase or if he can recommend a reputable radon kit. He reported that the Fire Department does not have any radon kits and he wasn't able to make any recommendations. They can be purchased at Ace, Home Depot, or Lowe's.

**Adjournment:** ON MOTION duly made (Williams) seconded (Andreoli) and carried to adjourn the work session at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted:  
Melissa Kearney, Secretary

Approved:

