

**COVINGTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OCTOBER 4, 2022**

The Covington Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 4, 2022 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 Wanda Andreoli, and Attorney Joel Wolff. Supervisor William Willson was on speaker phone. Chairwoman Kearney confirmed everyone was able to hear Supervisor Willson and vice versa.

Also present were: Chief Robert Bastek, Engineer Mary Lou Butler, Building Inspector David Lamm, Zoning Enforcement Officer David Hall and Road Master Thomas Hall.

Agenda: The following items need to be added to the agenda: appoint a Right to Know officer and appoint a CDL liaison. Chief Bastek also asked that a discussion be held regarding bullet proof vests. A discussion was held regarding the need to appoint a CDL liaison. Chairwoman Kearney stated this will be addressed at the reorganizational meeting in January. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the agenda as amended.

Announcements: Chairwoman Kearney announced a budget workshop was held on September 12, 2022. There were no actions taken, as this was simply a discussion on the budget.

Public Comment: Chris Kelly, NP Library, spoke about the library. He mentioned the events that are upcoming at the library and handed out brochures to the attendees of the meeting. He also asked for the township's financial support going in to the New Year. He stated there are between 40-50% of our residents that use the library.

Minutes: ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the minutes of the September 6, regular meeting and the September 27th work session.

Bills: Chairwoman Kearney asked that a bill from ABC Fuel Oil, in the amount of \$1,921.20, be added to the bill list. This bill is for the equipment tank (off road fuel) and was received early this morning. A discussion was held regarding the cost and usage of fuel for this year. Supervisor Williams questioned the Pocono Towing bill. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to pay the bills.

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

Administrative Actions:

Budget for pictures with Santa: ON MOTION duly made (Kearney), seconded Williams and carried to allow for a \$500 budget for the pictures with Santa event. The event will be hosted by the Board of Supervisors. The budget would allow for refreshments to be purchased from Bill's Shoprite. We have goodie bags that can be given to the children and we are hoping to host it the same weekend as the Senior Center Holiday weekend (December 3rd).

Probationary period ending for Justin Musgrave and Dawn Coco: ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to promote Justin Musgrave to a permanent full time road employee with a pay rate of \$20/hour and full benefit package. Tom Hall, roadmaster, stated that Justin is interested in getting his CDL license. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to promote Dawn Coco to a permanent part-time employee with a pay rate of \$22/hour, no benefit package. Prior to the motion, a discussion was held on a pay increase. Roz Davis mentioned the previous person did more duties and was paid almost \$4/hour less.

Appoint/hire secretary: Supervisor Williams announced there were 20 applications received, with 6 interviews held. After the interviews were held, there were 3 applicants who stood out, with the most qualified being Melissa Kearney. Roz Davis raised some concerns on the position of a supervisor being a secretary and how the supervisor/employee would be able to differentiate between the positions. Scott VanFleet raised concerns on past practices within this township, as previous working supervisors acted as the township manager when they were not. A further discussion ensued with Chairwoman Kearney advising the residents that this current board is a team. This current board discusses everything, and everyone is aware of what is going on. Chairwoman Kearney also advised that she questioned the board on whether she was the most qualified candidate for the job, being advised that she was. Supervisor Willson spoke about past practices and how things have changed with this board. Supervisor Andreoli also spoke on the difficulties of choosing a qualified candidate. She also spoke on the open conversations

the supervisors have and that no decision is made without the entire board being made aware and having a say. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried 4-0 to hire Melissa Kearney as the permanent township secretary. Chairwoman Kearney abstained.

Zoning change hearing date for M-1 property: ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to hold the M-1 zoning change public hearing on Monday, October 24, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. Prior to the vote, Supervisor Peirce wanted to be sure that David Hall, zoning officer and the zoning solicitor would be available for the hearing. David is available and he will check with the solicitor. Roz Davis questioned if the hearing would include both parcels. A discussion was held determining that the hearing would include the two parcels, since it will be to revert the zoning back to the previous zones. A further discussion was held regarding the owner of the property, so they can be informed of the hearing date and time.

MMO calculation sheet: Atty. Wolff explained the MMO calculation sheet was the breakdown for the contribution paid by the township for the non-uniform and uniform pension plans. There was an issue in the past where the retirement plan was underfunded, but a plan was put in place to get the fund caught up. Chairwoman Kearney will speak with Diana to see if the retirement plan has been caught up and properly funded. ON MOTION duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Peirce) and carried to accept the MMO calculation sheets.

Appoint RTK officer: ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Willson) and carried to appoint Dawn Coco as the Right to Know officer.

Appoint CDL Liaison: ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Willson) and carried to appoint Melissa Kearney, secretary, as the CDL Liaison.

Planning Commission: No report submitted.

Building Inspector: David Lamm reviewed his monthly report. A discussion was held on solar roof panels. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the building inspector's monthly report.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer: David Hess reviewed his monthly report. He asked for a bill for the man hours to remove the sign on Jubilee Road so he can send it to the property owner. Scott VanFleet questioned the status of the property next to his property. A discussion was held. David Hall is working on this.

Five C's Realty conditional use hearing: Chairwoman Kearney explained an application has been received for the conditional use hearing for Five C's Realty to convert a hair salon into an apartment building. This hearing needs to be held by October 24, 2022. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Willson) and carried to hold the conditional use hearing on Monday, October 24, 2022 immediately following the zoning change hearing, but not before 6:30pm. This will be advertised the same way. Upon questions by Supervisor Peirce, Dave Lamm advised the building in the rear of the property is a single family home that has been permitted and previously inspected so there are no issues with that. The issue is the additional (2) apartments that were put in where the hair salon and former dining room were without the proper permits. A question was also raised about the sewer edu(s) and fees. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the zoning code enforcement officer's monthly report.

Engineer: MaryLou Butler, P.E., township engineer was present.

Langan's Road: The project is progressing. They have about 85% of the trees removed, 50% of the stumps removed, and 35% of the underdrain installed.

LSA grant: The grant was submitted around September 19th. Copies have been given to the secretary for the township files.

Portman Bond: MaryLou advised that she will inspect the project and have a letter prepared for the next township meeting. Portman also questioned the escrow account. We will need to be sure all bills have been paid prior to releasing the escrow.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the engineer's monthly report.

Solicitor: Atty. Wolff, present, had nothing to report.

Director of Public Works:

Lean-to on recycling building: A quote was received from Duane Burkholder in the amount of \$10,500.00 to build a lean-to on the side of the recycling building with a 5 year installation warranty. We will be using the steel from the garage roof. On MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to build a 16'x62'Lx13'H lean-to on the side of the recycling building.

Maintenance building reroof: A quote was received from Duane Burkholder in the amount of \$11,750.00 to remove the existing roof and replace it with brown 40 year warranty painted steel roofing on the maintenance (garage) building to include a 5 year installation warranty. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to replace the roof on the maintenance (garage) building.

Recycling grant: The grant is currently being worked on.

Dave Lamm mentioned he saw an ad on Craigslist for free millings. There is contact information on the website. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the Director of Public Works monthly report.

Roadmaster: Tom Hall was present to give his monthly report. Grading has been completed on Lehigh Road and started on Freytown Road. Bill Willson is mowing shoulders, greatly appreciated. The gate has been installed at the entrance to the recycling center. This gate was donated by Jim Snodgrass of Mid-Valley Contracting. The secretary will send a thank you note. Tom made contact with someone from the railroad who donated railroad ties to the township, free of charge. Supervisor Willson commented on the poor condition of the mower with the tractor. He has been speaking with Tom and Marshall about possibly replacing this machine. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the Roadmaster's monthly report.

Moffat Maintenance: No report submitted.

Police Department: Chief Bastek was present to give his report. He reviewed his report of service calls for the month, but commented the numbers were lower because he missed some time due to illness and Officer Layland is back working in the school as the SRO.

David Burrier, part-time/per diem: Chief Bastek stated David Burrier, who resigned in December, asked to be re-hired as a part-time, per diem officer. Chairwoman Kearney asked why he left in December; Chief Bastek believes it may have been due to his salary of \$13.00 per hour. He is only looking to work, per diem, as needed with no set schedule. No pay rate has been discussed at this time. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to hire David Burrier as a part-time, per diem officer with a pay rate to be determined.

Police secretary increase hours and pay: Chief Bastek stated the secretary is looking for additional hours and pay. Chief Bastek reported she is a great employee and he would hate to lose her. She has gone thru extensive training. She was hoping to increase her hours to 32 hours per week (from 28) with a pay increase. Chief Bastek understands she is still on probation, but feels she is worthy of a raise. Roz Davis questioned whether she would be eligible for benefits by working 32 hours per week, the answer was no, employees need to work 35 hours per week to receive benefits. Her current rate of pay is \$15/per hour and Chief Bastek would like to increase her pay to \$18/hour. A discussion was held regarding holding off on the pay increase until after her probation period ends. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to increase the secretaries work hours to 32 per week, no benefits, and address her raise at the end of her probation period.

Bulletproof vests: Chief Bastek reported that there are two officers in the department who are wearing expired bulletproof vests. He explained the "shelf life" (five years) of a bulletproof vest and how they may not stop a bullet. He reviewed a few vests he researched, asking the board to consider pitching in to help purchase the vests for the officers in the future. If the officers were to use their uniform allowance, they wouldn't be able to purchase any other uniform items. Scott VanFleet advised the Chief to send a letter to the Minisink Lions as they might be willing to help out. David Hall asked for the cost of the vests, approximately \$580 per vest. After a brief discussion, David Hall and Scott VanFleet both informed the Chief that they would each donate the money to the department to purchase the two vests needed. The secretary will send thank you notes to each donor, thanking them for their generous donations. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the Police Chief's monthly report.

Recreation Committee: Chairwoman Kearney reported the recreation committee is planning on meeting on Thursday, October 20th at 7pm. She is hopeful to have a report at the next meeting.

New Business: Supervisor Peirce reported that part time, summer employee Robert VanBrunt would like to continue working on Fridays. He is a student, but his schedule has allowed him to continue working on Fridays only. Tom Hall can use him in the Road dept.

Old Business:

Single Audit: Chairwoman Kearney advised she was in contact with Murphy, Dougherty, and Company regarding the single DCED audit. She is awaiting a call back.

Auditor's report: The auditor's held their meeting on September 22, 2022.

Equipment Operator/Truck (Plow) Driver: The pay recommendation for the Equipment Operator/Truck (Plow) Driver for a supervisor who may step up is \$22.50 per hour.

Interim Secretary: The pay recommendation for the Interim Secretary is \$22.84 per hour. Supervisor Williams will contact the board of auditors to have them set the pay rate for the permanent secretary who is a supervisor. Roz Davis commented that the auditors said the initial \$22.84 pay rate was without benefits. It was noted that interim positions are not eligible for benefits.

Supervisor Comments: There were no supervisor comments.

Public Comment: Roz Davis asked why the office was closed for one and one half days last week. Chairwoman Kearney stated she took unpaid time off. Roz also mentioned that the draft minutes and the treasurer's reports were not on the website prior to the meeting. Chairwoman Kearney stated that she did not get the treasurer's report until the morning of the meeting and that the draft minutes do not have to be advertised until approved. She also questioned the status of the EMA coordinator. Unfortunately, we have no one interested in this position. Atty. Wolff asked if Roz was interested, to which she replied no. She also questioned the number of short term rental properties that have been issued permits with Preferred Management. There is currently a hiccup with the sewer authority, but Preferred Management will have the total numbers.

ON MOTION duly made (Williams) seconded (Andreoli) and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Kearney, Interim Secretary

Approved:

