

**COVINGTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS
MONTHLY MEETING
DECEMBER 5, 2023**

The Covington Township Board of Supervisors held their monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7 p.m. at the Covington Township Municipal building, Moffat Estate, 20 Moffat Drive, Covington Township, PA 18444. Chairwoman Kearney called the meeting to order with the Pledge to the Flag.

There were present: Chairwoman/Secretary Melissa Kearney, Vice Chairwoman Vicki Williams, Supervisor Marshall Peirce, Supervisor Wanda Andreoli, and Supervisor William Willson.

Also present: Attorney Joel Wolff, Police Chief Robert Bastek, Building Inspector Dave Lamm, and engineer Mary Lou Butler.

Agenda: ON MOTION, duly made (Willson), seconded (Peirce) and carried to approve the agenda as presented. During public comment, the agenda was revised to add setting the pay rate for the pro-tem zoning hearing board secretary. This was added under Administrative Actions. ON MOTION, duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to amend the agenda to add the zoning hearing board secretary pay wage.

Announcements: There were no announcements.

Public Comment: Roz Davis questioned the pay rate for the acting zoning hearing board secretary. A brief discussion ensued. Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reported the hourly pay rates of the 2 most recent zoning hearing board secretaries. She also reported the number of hours for the current acting zoning hearing board secretary are (9) nine. Roz commented on the minimal number of hours reported. The agenda was amended to add setting the hourly pay rate for the acting zoning hearing board secretary (see Agenda above).

Minutes: ON MOTION duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Willson) and carried to accept the minutes of the November 7, 2023 monthly meeting, the November 14, 2023 Public Hearing minutes for Ordinance #2023-04, the November 14, 2023 Public Hearing minutes for Ordinance #2023-05, the November 28, 2023 Public Hearing minutes for Ordinance #2023-06, and the November 28, 2023 work session minutes. ON THE QUESTION, Roz Davis objected to the motion to accept the minutes commenting it was a violation of the Sunshine and Right to Know Acts.

Bills: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney added the following bills to the bill list for approval: A refund of a security deposit in the amount of \$250.00 for Michelle Orson from the North Pocono Cultural Society from a pavilion rental held in October; PSATS invoice in the amount of \$220.00 for a training class attended by the zoning hearing board; (8) invoices from KBA for SEO work that has been completed in the amount of \$9,190.00. She stated these bills were received earlier today. She also questioned payment of a future bill for heating oil at the Mansion. She is unsure when delivery will take place but would like to have the bill approved for payment when delivery is made. A brief discussion ensued on the past practice of paying bills for utilities and heating fuel when they are received. Vice-Chairwoman Williams opposed the idea of approving a bill prior to knowing how much it would be for. ON MOTION, duly made (Willson), seconded (Peirce) and carried (all in favor) to pay all bills on the bill list, including the added bills and the future bill for heating oil at the Mansion.

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

Administrative Actions:

Resolution #2023-15 ~ Adopt 2024 Budget: Atty. Wolff read Resolution #2023-15, A Resolution to Adopt the 2024 Budget. The 2024 budget amount is \$1,883,431.00. ON MOTION, duly made (Willson), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to adopt Resolution #2023-15, A Resolution to adopt the 2024 Budget. ON THE QUESTION, Auditor Adam Horsky thanked the Supervisors for having an excellent budget.

Resolution #2023-16 ~ Set Tax Rate for 2024: Atty. Wolff read Resolution #2023-16, A Resolution Fixing the Tax Rate for the Year 2024. The 2024 tax rate is 8.25 mills for general purposes

and 2.00 mills for Fire Protection Purposes. ON MOTION, duly made (Williams), seconded (Willson) and carried to adopt Resolution #2023-16, A Resolution Fixing the Tax Rate for the Year 2024.

Resolution #2023-17 ~ Authorize Participation w/commitment of funds for County Comprehensive Plan: Atty. Wolff read Resolution #2023-17, A Resolution Authorizing an Application to the Pennsylvania Municipal Assistance Program. ON MOTION, duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to adopt Resolution #2023-17, A Resolution Authorizing an Application to the Pennsylvania Municipal Assistance Program.

Advertise Reorganization meeting dates: ON MOTION, duly made (Kearney), seconded (Williams) and carried to allow the secretary to advertise the reorganization meeting dates of the Board of Supervisors, planning commission, board of auditors, zoning hearing board, and recreation committee, along with the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors for January 2024.

Sign contract for Bailor Road grant: ON MOTION duly made, (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to allow the secretary to sign the contract for the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Project. The amount of the grant received is \$79,250.00 and will be used for Bailor Road. ON THE QUESTION, Supervisor Peirce extended thanks to Mary Lou Butler for her work on this grant. Mary Lou commented that this is a 50/50 split with the township completing some of the work. She will begin working on the details for this project as the timeline is short.

Land Bank (1) Eagle Lake property: The land bank is looking to acquire a property on Bald Eagle Lane located in Eagle Lake with an intended use of recreational. ON MOTION, duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to allow the Land Bank to acquire this property.

Set date for public hearing for Posting/Bonding Roads: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney advised she and Supervisor/DPW Director Peirce met with PennDOT to speak about the requirements for Posting and Bonding Township Roads. The first step is adopting an Ordinance stating our intention. This will require a public hearing. ON MOTION, duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to set the public hearing date for Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 6:30pm to consider the adoption of the Ordinance to Post and Bond Township Roads.

Repeal Ordinance #2005-01, Amusement Tax Ordinance: A discussion was held regarding Ordinance #2005-01, Amusement Tax Ordinance. No Amusement taxes have ever been collected, and it was advised that the township repeal this ordinance. This will be tabled until after the new year.

Authorize Supervisor(s) to contract with AT&T for cell coverage: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney advised the township recently switched cell phone carriers to AT&T/First Net which is a provider specifically for municipalities and first responders. Supervisor Peirce would like to contract with this same company for his personal cell phone coverage as he is also a first responder. Per our AT&T/First Net salesman, the Supervisors are allowed to contract, personally, with First Net, but it would have to go thru the township. Any Supervisor to utilize the township to receive services from First Net will be responsible for their own billing. ON MOTION, duly made (Kearney), seconded (Williams) and carried to allow any board supervisor to utilize the First Net network through the township.

Estimate from Northeast Signal & Electric Company, Inc.: An estimate was received from Northeast Signal & Electric Company, Inc. for the 2023 Preventative Maintenance of our traffic signals. The total for this estimate is \$67,433.92. A brief discussion was held regarding the estimate. Mary Lou has contacted a few contractors regarding the pavement markings, but the township has not received any information. She will reach out to them once again and cc the township. Police Chief Bastek questioned the emergency sensors utilized by the Fire Company. Adam Horsky commented that he will send the secretary a few names of companies to contact regarding this work. Mary Lou Butler reminded the secretary when speaking with other contractors to be sure they can access the system to enter the updates that are required thru PennDOT. This will be tabled until a later date.

Set hourly salary for the zoning hearing board secretary: ON MOTION, duly made (Peirce) seconded (Andreoli) and carried to set the hourly wage for the current acting zoning hearing board secretary, to \$20.00 per hour. Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney abstained from the vote because the current acting zoning hearing board secretary is her sister.

Planning Commission: The Planning Commission is recommending approval of the Santini/Black project with contingencies of the approval of Lackawanna County Planning Commission and satisfaction of the Engineer's comments. George Parker was present and stated the reason for the (2) names is because Black is the name listed on the deed of the property and Santini is the widow of Mr. Black. He also showed the Supervisors a map of the property in question and commented there were no changes made since the work session. Mary Lou stated the County Planning Commission report has been received and approved and they have satisfied the comments made by the Engineer. ON MOTION, duly made (Peirce), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to approve the Santini/Black minor subdivision. The plans will be signed once they are signed and notarized by the property owners. The Planning Commission also recommends approval of the Davailus Sandpit Project with contingencies of approval by the Lackawanna County Planning Commission and the sewer modules being received by the township. ON MOTION, duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to approve the Davailus Sandpit project with the (2) contingencies. The plans will be signed by the Board of Supervisors once the contingencies have been met. Mary Lou will keep track of the contingencies for both projects. Mary Lou will also contact Mr. Kieselowsky regarding their minor subdivision checking the status of the sewage module, as that has been previously approved, but we are waiting on the sewage module. Mary Lou questioned Atty. Wolff on an extension for the Keystone Steel Erectors land improvement project. Atty. Wolff advised Mary Lou to contact the owners asking them for an extension of 90 days. A brief discussion was held on this lot improvement project and the timeline of the Planning Commission's original recommendation. ON MOTION, duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the Planning Commission's monthly report.

Building Inspector: Dave Lamm reviewed his monthly report. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Willson) and carried to accept the building inspector's monthly report as submitted.

Zoning Officer: Dave Lamm reviewed the zoning officer's monthly report. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Kearney) and carried to accept the zoning officer's report.

Code Enforcement Officer: No report received.

Engineer: ON MOTION, duly made (Willson), seconded (Andreoli) to allow Mary Lou to begin the design of Bailor Road for the grant recently awarded. ON THE QUESTION, Supervisor/DPW Director Peirce asked Mary Lou to walk the road with him and Roadmaster Hall. ON MOTION, duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the Engineer's monthly report.

Solicitor: Nothing to report.

Director of Public Works: Supervisor/DPW Director Peirce reported the F550 dump box is currently being worked on by our Road Dept. By having the road crew work on this truck, the township has saved significant money. ON MOTION, duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the DPW Director's monthly report as submitted.

Roadmaster: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reported Roadmaster Hall was excused from this month's meeting because he had been sick. She reviewed the Roadmaster's monthly report. ON MOTION, duly made (Willson), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the Roadmaster's monthly report.

Moffat Maintenance: No report received.

Police Department: Police chief Bastek reviewed his monthly report. ON MOTION, duly made (Peirce), seconded (Willson) and carried to accept the police department's monthly report.

Recreation Committee: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reported the recreation committee held their Christmas at the Mansion event this past weekend. She stated the event was well received. She thanked Supervisor Peirce and the Boy Scouts for their help. ON MOTION, duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the Recreation Committee's monthly report.

Sewage Enforcement Officer: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reviewed the monthly report. They currently have (12) in progress, (3) pending, (1) on hold and (2) completed. ON MOTION, duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the Sewage Enforcement Officer's monthly report.

New Business:

Land Development on Route 435: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reported she spoke with an engineer who spoke of a Dollar General and Auto Zone to be developed on State Route 435 between the Rite-Aid and the Daleville Cemetery. They are hopeful to go before the Planning Commission in the early part of 2024.

Old Business:

Results of (3) Ordinances: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reported on the results of the (3) public hearings held for the proposed Ordinances. Ordinance #2023-04, the Emergency Response Payment Reimbursement Ordinance has been adopted and is currently in effect. Ordinance #2023-05, the Property Maintenance Code of Covington Township has been adopted and is currently in effect. Ordinance #2023-06, the Driveway Improvement Ordinance has not been adopted because it was decided that the current Driveway Ordinance is sufficient and will cover any improvements with driveways.

Correspondence:

STR Report from Preferred Mgmt.: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reviewed the report from Preferred Management dated November 30, 2023.

Renewal for Employee health insurance: The health insurance for the employees will be renewed with a rate increase. Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reviewed the increases.

Quote for heating fuel, COG rate: Plociniak Fuel Services will charge the rack price plus \$0.04 profit for heating oil and propane for all COG members.

Thank You from NP Library: A thank you letter was received and read from the North Pocono Public Library thanking the township for their donation of \$500.00.

Compliments from resident of Union Mill Road: A phone message was received and requested that it be acknowledged at a public meeting from a resident, Angela Musgrave of Union Mill Road, complimenting the township on the work that is being completed within the township, especially with the tree removal on Union Mill Road.

Supervisor's Comments: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney announced there will be no work session held in December. Supervisor Willson commented on the performance of Officer Frisbie at a recent EMS call. She did a great job and should be commended for the work she performed.

Public Comment: Roz Davis questioned the status of the zoning attorney and the code enforcement officer. A brief discussion was held.

Adjournment: ON MOTION duly made (Williams) seconded (Andreoli) and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Melissa Kearney, Secretary

Approved: 1-9-2024

