

**COVINGTON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2024**

The Covington Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 7 p.m. at the Covington Township Municipal building, Moffat Estate, 20 Moffat Drive, Covington Township, PA 18444.

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

Also present were: SRO Brian Layland, Building Inspector David Lamm, and Engineer Mary Lou Butler.

Agenda: *A brief discussion was held on the recent ruling advising that agendas can't be changed unless the change meets one of three exceptions. Those exceptions are: (1) emergency business; (2) de minimis business not involving fund expenditure or entering into a contract that arises within the 24 hours preceding the meeting; and (3) de minimis business raised by a resident/taxpayer during the meeting that does not involve fund expenditure or entering into a contract. Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney advised this is being appealed to the Supreme Court. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the agenda as presented.*

Announcements: *Executive sessions were held on December 19, 2023, January 2, 2024, and January 9, 2024 to discuss personnel discipline.*

Public Comment: *No public comment.*

Minutes: *ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the minutes of December 5, 2023 regular meeting and the January 2, 2024 re-organization meeting as presented.*

Bills: *ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Willson) and carried to pay the bills as presented.*

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

Planning Commission: *Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney advised the Planning Commission did not meet in December, but they did re-organize in January. The planners are requesting a bonus or pay raise since they have not had a raise in 24 years. A brief discussion ensued. ON MOTION duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Willson) and carried 4-0-1 to give the five (5) planning commission members and the planning commission secretary a one-time bonus of \$100.00. Chairwoman Kearney abstained because the planning commission secretary is her sister.*

Keystone Steel Erectors, LLC Land Improvement: *Joe Bonacci was present to speak of the land improvement project proposed for 308 Drinker Turnpike. He presented a map of the project to the BOS and answered all questions raised by the board. This project has previously been recommended for approval by the planning commission and a 90-day extension has been granted to the BOS by Keystone Steel Erectors. Mary Lou advised there are still some outstanding contingencies, including a stormwater agreement between Mr. Bonacci and his neighbor, F&L Realty. A brief discussion ensued regarding the developer's agreement and construction guarantee. Mr. Bonacci asked the board to waive the requirement for a developer's agreement and construction guarantee. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to waive the construction guarantee and developer's agreement requirement for the Land Improvement of Keystone Steel Erectors, LLC. The approval of this project was tabled until next month's meeting with the hopes some of the contingencies will be met. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Wilson) and carried to accept the planning commission's monthly report.*

Engineer: *Mary Lou Butler reviewed her monthly report. She will begin working on the (2) road projects to prepare them for advertisement of bids at the February/March meeting. She also printed Glen Meadows plans for Tom Hall as there are stormwater issues within the development. It was recommended that during the NPDES permitting phase, the developer should be made to complete the*

stormwater drainage. There are no detention basins in the development when there are supposed to be three. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to approve the engineer's monthly report.

Administrative Actions:

Traffic Study Township Roads: A discussion ensued on the steps required for the posting and bonding of township roads. Mary Lou Butler has an individual who can complete the traffic studies required by PennDOT. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Willson) and carried to complete traffic studies on Center Street, A.M. Hughes Blvd., and all roads in Glen Meadows.

Grant received from Robert Y. Moffat Family Trust: Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney reported a grant has been received in the amount of \$76,789.00 for upgrades to the Moffat Mansion and the Caretaker's home. This will include repairing the elevator in the mansion, repairing the wall tiles in the 2nd floor bathrooms in the mansion, and upgrading the caretaker's home for the police move.

Land Bank Acquisition: ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Peirce) and carried to allow the Land Bank to acquire one (1) property in Eagle Lake.

Planning Commission members pay: Previously discussed under Planning Commission.

Advertise for Roadmaster's position: Roadmaster Tom Hall has announced he will be retiring on March 31, 2024. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to advertise the roadmaster position. A brief discussion was held regarding changing the retirement plan to allow retirees to continue working on a part-time basis. Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney advised she is awaiting additional information, and it will take a few months before all the information is gathered.

Set mileage for 2024: ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to set the mileage rate for 2024 at \$0.67 per mile, matching the IRS issued mileage rate.

New computers and cybersecurity for township office: A quote in the amount of \$6,238.00 was received to upgrade the (2) township computers (main office and zoning office) to include webcams, speakers, firewall, and licenses. A quote was also received in the amount of \$206.50 for cybersecurity and upgraded email and Microsoft office suites for both computers. Supervisor Willson questioned if the cybersecurity quote was a monthly charge. Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney will verify this. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Williams) and carried to purchase two (2) new computers with the appropriate programs and cybersecurity protection.

Termination of (2) Employees: Chairwoman Kearney advised that Chris Balish and Robert Bastek, Sr. have been placed on paid administrative leave. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Kearney) and carried to terminate Chris Balish effective immediately. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to terminate Robert Bastek, Sr. effective immediately.

Appoint Interim Police Chief: ON MOTION duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Williams) and carried to appoint Brian Layland as the interim police chief in addition to being SRO.

Zoning Officer: Chairwoman Kearney reviewed the monthly report for December 2023. Dave Lamm questioned if the BOS wanted KBA to handle the Eagle Lake permits. It was decided to have KBA handle all zoning permits within the township to include Eagle Lake. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the zoning officer's monthly report.

Building Inspector: David Lamm reviewed his monthly report. ON MOTION duly made (Peirce), seconded (Willson) and carried to accept the building inspectors monthly report.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer: No report.

Solicitor: Nothing to report.

Director of Public Works: Supervisor/DPW Director Peirce reported the new pickup truck has arrived. It will need a few items such as mud flaps, running boards, and a fuel tank for the back to fill equipment on the roads. ON MOTION duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Willson) and carried to accept the Director of Public Works report as discussed.

Roadmaster: Tom Hall, roadmaster, was absent. Chairwoman Kearney reviewed his monthly report. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Peirce) and carried to accept the roadmaster's monthly report as submitted.

Moffat Maintenance: No report was submitted.

Police Department: Interim Police Chief/SRO Layland reviewed the monthly report. Chairwoman Kearney reviewed the year-end report for the police department. ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the police department's monthly report.

Recreation Committee: Re-organization meeting will be held on January 18th at 7:00pm.

Sewage Enforcement Officer: Sewage Enforcement officer report was received. ON MOTION duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the Sewage Enforcement Officer's monthly report.

New Business:

Accept Sewer Authority Financial Statement: ON MOTION duly made (Andreoli), seconded (Williams) and carried to accept the financial statement of the sewer authority.

Accept Covington Fire Company audit 2020-2022: ON MOTION duly made (Williams), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to accept the audit of the Covington Fire Company from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022.

Zoning fees: John Mandarano of KBA Engineering, PC, was present to discuss the zoning and code enforcement fees. It was verified that the cost of the Zoning Officer/Code Enforcement officer will be \$85.00 per hour. KBA has someone who is willing to come to the office and process the zoning permits as well as work on the code enforcement violations. A brief discussion ensued on the fees charged for the zoning permits/hearings. Chairwoman/Secretary Kearney will speak with Dawn, zoning secretary, to schedule a meeting with KBA to discuss a schedule for the zoning/code enforcement officer to have office hours. ON MOTION duly made (Willson), seconded (Andreoli) and carried to hire KBA Engineering, P.C. to do the township zoning and code enforcement at the Third-Party Fee Schedule they (KBA) have submitted. The start date will be dependent on the meeting with Dawn.

Old Business:

Tower Lease Agreement: The lease agreement for the tower has been signed by Lackawanna County. This is a 50 year lease that will expire in 2073. The county will be reaching out for the contact information for repairing the tower.

Repeal Ordinance #2005-01 Amusement Tax: A public hearing will need to be held to repeal this ordinance, it may be held the same night as the posting and bonding hearing.

Correspondence:

Invitation to Covington Fire Co. Installation Dinner: An invitation for the Covington Fire Company Installation Dinner was given to all board supervisors.

Supervisor Comments: None.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: ON MOTION duly made (Williams) seconded (Kearney) and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Melissa Kearney, Secretary

Approved:

J. Marshall Peirce