

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
MINUTES  
JANUARY 25, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Powanda called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Washington Township Board of Supervisors to order at 7:00 p.m., at the Washington Township Municipal Building. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

The following members were present: Supervisors, Tom Powanda, David Moyer, Romnie Long, Solicitor, Joan London, Esquire; John Weber representing LTL Consultants, Tom Unger, Systems Design Engineering, Township Manager, Rich Sichler, Township Secretary, Susan Brown, and fourteen (14) residents in attendance.

Absent: None

**TAPING OF MEETING**

The meeting was recorded as an aid in the preparation of the minutes. It was noted no one other than the Township Secretary taping the meeting this evening.

**SPECIAL REQUEST**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Robert Markowski, PSP Reading**, was present this evening and reported on November 17, 2023 at 4:08 am troopers were dispatched to 1325 Route 100, the Shell gas station, for an alarm. Upon investigation it was discovered the power was cut and stole approximately \$9,100 worth of lottery tickets and cigarettes. The male suspect is currently incarcerated in New Jersey and awaits extradition to Pennsylvania. There were also two similar arrests regarding commercial burglaries in the surrounding area. In the fourth quarter of 2023, October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> the PSP handled 213 incidents in Washington Township which is one of fifteen municipalities covered by four troopers.

**Robin Gardner, 18 Audrey Dr.**, was present to follow up on the speed limit signs. Rich explained a revision of the ordinance was approved at the December meeting to include all subdivisions with a 25-mph speed limit. In spring it will be determined where signs are needed and they will be installed.

**Dan Stauffer, 114 Sycamore Road**, spoke about the proposed solar ordinance. Mr. Stauffer stated the proposed ordinance appears to him to be restrictive/exclusionary zoning. Ms. London stated Mr. Stauffer is referencing section three, districts where principal solar energy systems would be permitted by right, but explained that in the next section there is a change to the proposed set back, to the set back being the same as the underlying zoning district. Mr. Stauffer said at the last meeting the Chairman said he hates nothing more than to see a field full of solar panels, but personally Mr. Stauffer

stated he hates nothing more than to see a field full of houses because the houses are here forever but once the solar panels have run their life of about 20 to 30-year life, they are decommissioned and you have a field again. Mr. Stauffer spoke at length regarding solar and the effect on property values. Ms. London explained that her findings are based on the presumption of validity, the rational basis and the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code. Mr. Stauffer stated what is needed for a potential solar site is a large open area with southern exposure preferred and close proximity to three phase electrical power and close proximity to an existing electrical sub-station with adequate reserved capacity. Mr. Stauffer said he has a twenty-three-acre field fronting on Old Route 100 and Sycamore Road which meets the requirements and stated he has been contacted by several solar companies. Mr. Stauffer said the field is in the WSC zoning district and is asking the Board of Supervisors to consider including the WSC district in the allowable district and to also relax the set-backs.

**David Laxx, 18 Docwill Drive**, said the Roadcrew did a fabulous job plowing during the recent snowstorm.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 21, 2023 & JANUARY 2, 2024 REORGANIZATION MEETING**

A motion was made by David Moyer and seconded by Ronnie Long approving the meeting minutes of December 21, 2023 and January 2, 2024 as prepared.

**All ayes**

**TOWNSHIP REPORTS**

A motion was made by Ronnie Long and seconded by David Moyer to approve the payment of all bills for the General Fund, Highway Aid Fund, Recreation Fund, Street Light Fund, Traffic Impact Fund, Sewer Fund and Building Escrow Funds up to and inclusive of January 25, 2024, and to file the treasurer’s report for audit.

**All ayes**

**TAX COLLECTOR**

Tax Collectors Report for the month of December 2022 presented by Township Manager, Rich Sichler:

Real Estate Tax	\$ 8,978.60
Interim Tax	\$ 152.28
Light Tax	\$ 53.90
Per Capita Tax	\$ <u>973.50</u>
Total	\$ 10,158.28

**FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT**

Report is enclosed.

**ZONING/SEO REPORT**

Reports are enclosed.

## **SEWER ENGINEER'S REPORT**

A copy of the Engineer's Monthly Report is enclosed.

- **Edison Walk**, update on progress with municipal improvements including sewage lift station and sewer lines – no update at this time
- **Camp Camino sewer review** – letter received from their Solicitor withdrawing their attendance for this evenings meeting.
- **Lift station maintenance, Franc Environmental proposal** – there are two proposals for the cleaning, pump out and degreasing of the pump stations. The first proposal, from Franc Environmental, is for Swamp Creek pump station and Weinsteiner pump station with a base price of \$3,275 plus disposal. The second proposal is again from Franc Environmental, for the West Tract pump station with a base price of \$1,750 plus disposal.

A motion was made by David Moyer, seconded by Romnie Long awarding the maintenance bid to Franc Environmental in the amounts of \$3,275 for Swamp Creek and Weinsteiner pump stations and \$1,750 for the West Tract pump station, which will be billed to the developer, plus disposal.

**All ayes**

## **TOWNSHIP ENGINEER**

A copy of the Township Engineer's Report is enclosed. Mr. Weber reported a revised plan was submitted for the Stauffer Road minor subdivision which has been reviewed by LTL and will be on the February 1<sup>st</sup> Planning Commission agenda. A revised Land Development plan has been received for the Eddinger Propane property which will be accepted for review at the February meeting as well.

- **Barto Road straightening project update** – *no update*
- **Edison Walk update on progress with municipal improvements** – the concrete punch list items have been completed and it is believed the paving work will be done in the spring.
- **2024 Road Project** – The 2024 road project will be in Victoria Village. Mr. Weber is working with the township manager on the scope of work and cost estimates. The first option is for an FB3 overlay with fog seal coating from AMS for all the roads in Victoria Village for a cost estimate of \$357,744. The second option is for Cold-in-place recycling from Recon for approximately \$459,000 with a recommended 1.5" wearing course for approximately \$218,000 for a total of \$669,697. Additional options to consider are base repairs, milling and overlay by township crew for \$270,149. Also, the option of renting the necessary equipment and operator to work with the township crew to reduce costs. The Roadmaster stated there is an extreme amount of labor involved with this project and felt renting equipment with operators is a good option. Chairman Powanda stated he would like to do the entire development at the same time.

A motion was made by Romnie Long, motion seconded by Thomas Powanda authorizing the preparation for bids for the Victoria Village road project.

**All ayes**

## **SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

- **Solar energy system ordinance** – A draft solar energy ordinance has been provided to the Board for review and consideration with the recommendation to revise the draft to the set back of the underlying zoning district in Section 131-136 B. Ms. London explained the next steps would be to send the draft ordinance to the township and county planning commissions for recommendations and then authorize for advertisement.

Motion made by Thomas Powanda, seconded by Romnie Long authorizing the Solicitor to proceed with forwarding the draft ordinance to the Township Planning Commission and the Berks County Planning Commission for recommendations.

**Thomas Powanda – aye**

**Romnie Long – aye**

**David Moyer - abstained**

Mr. Dan Stauffer stated he was contacted by solar companies due to the fact that his property, which is located in the WSC zoning district, is in close proximity to the substation and three phase electric.

Mr. Jim Longacre asked if an analysis has been done, if it is limited to just the commercial and industrial zoning area, of areas where the solar farms could be located. Chairman Powanda said an analysis has not been done.

Ms. London stated she will have the Planning Commission and the Berks County Planning Commission comments for the March meeting however the ordinance will not be advertised by next months meeting. Since this is a text amendment the County will require at least 30 days to review.

- **PennDOT Contribution Agreement** – no update
- **Bally Borough Intergovernmental Sewage Agreement** – Agreement has been sent to the Borough of Bally
- **Township review of ordinances and codification project** – no update
- **Public Works garage project** – There is a tentative steel delivery date of April 19, 2024. Mr. Unger stated he sent Gorski the geological report and site plan and will be setting up a meeting next week with Gorski to review drawings.

## **SUPERVISORS**

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- **Gehring Road & Christi Dr/Joy Circle, traffic calming** – Rich reported the traffic study results were provided to LTAP, they revised their report and sent it back to the township. LTAP's recommendation is to install a fog line from the top of the hill coming up Gehring Road toward Joy Circle and carry the lane width through the entire section. Rich will check into the line painting schedule to see when the fog lines could be done.
- **Naming of Township parks** – Mark Bedle verified the park mentioned in Douglas Township is actually the Congo Road open space. The Recreation

Committee is requesting to rename the three parcels of Bally Springs open space, the property at Audrey Lane and the former Rose Gross property Middle Creek Nature Preserve and Woodlands. Supervisor Moyer again suggested the renaming of the park/open space areas as Nagle Park Nature Preserve.

- **Township building pressure washing** – on hold until spring
- **Township building slope stabilization** – on hold until spring
- **Salt shed wall repair** – on hold until spring

Supervisor Moyer asked the Manager to contact PennDOT to inquire as to the status of the Route 100 and Ehst Road project.

Supervisor Moyer also asked about the status of the new trucks and when we will be receiving them. The F-550 will be upfitted by February. Brian said the Freightliner is at Freightliner and needs to be upfitted.

A resident from County Line Road contacted Supervisor Moyer and stated the guiderail at the curve has been hit a few times.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **One Bite Bakery field use request** – The owner contacted Rich requesting to lease or use the township park for a child oriented commercial event. Rich stated the park regulations do not allow for commercial events without the approval of the Board of Supervisors. Ms. London had concerns with allowing this type of event and possibly setting a precedent. Chairman Powanda called for a motion, being there was no motion made, the event will not be allowed.
- **2024-2025 Road Salt contract** – *table until March agenda*
- **2023 Audit reporting options** – Rich explained currently the township does a DCED approved audit format with separate financial statements and disclosures. The separate financial statements and disclosures it's basically the same content as in the DCED format, but it's in a format that banks find more acceptable. The auditors have pointed out the township could save approximately \$4,000 if the second report, the financial statements and disclosures, were discontinued. It is the recommendation of the township manager to trim the audit report to just the DCED requirements.

Motion made by Romnie Long, seconded by David Moyer authorizing the deletion of the separate financial statements and disclosures portion of the audit.

**All ayes**

- **Township hiring, advertisement for openings** – Rich announced his retirement and stated the township is looking to fill his position and also an administrative position.

A motion was made by Romnie Long, seconded by David Moyer to hire Sue Brown, to begin training as of February 5, 2024 for the manager position, provisionally for a period of ninety (90) days.

**All ayes**

Motion made by Romnie Long, seconded by Thomas Powanda authorizing the advertisement for administrative positions.

**All ayes**

- **Township HVAC system compressor replacement** – The large heat pump compressor needs to be replaced. Rich has received one price quote and is waiting for a second price quote and is requesting authorization to proceed with the repair of the HVAC system upon receipt of the second price quote. A motion was made by David Moyer, seconded by Romnie Long authorizing the replacement of the scroll compressor for the HVAC system, not to exceed \$4,000.

**All ayes**

### **SUBDIVISION/PLANNING**

None

### **SUBDIVISION/LAND DEVELOPMENT EXTENSIONS**

Motion made by Romnie Long, seconded by David Moyer granting the following subdivision extension:

**Camp Camino** **01/31/24 to 04/30/24**

**All ayes**

A motion was made by Romnie Long, seconded by David Moyer granting the following subdivision extensions:

**Beverly A. Melcher Minor Plan** **01/30/24 to 04/29/24**

**Stauffer Road Minor Plan** **01/30/24 to 04/29/24**

**All ayes**

As noted in the December 21, 2023 minutes, the executed 1606 Main Street time extension needed to be received by the township prior to January 3, 2024. The extension was received on December 27, 2023 therefore the extension is granted.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- Copy of the ARB Delinquent Account Report is enclosed.
- Recreation Advisory Committee December meeting minutes

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None needed

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Ronnie Long, seconded by David Moyer to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:18 p.m.

**All ayes**

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Brown  
Township Secretary