

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

Thursday May 25, 2023

A meeting of the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, May 25, 2023, at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building located at 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Chairman Borger called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

ROLL CALL: The following supervisors answered roll call; Glenn Borger, Paul Levits, Ken Fairchild, & Don Moore. Supervisor Mellert arrived at 7:03 PM. Also present were Township Engineer, Jeff Ott, Township Manager, Jeff Bartlett, and Township Secretary, Kelly Unangst.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Given by Township Manager, Jeff Barlett. January 26, 2023, BOS Meeting Minutes which were tabled at the last B.O.S. Meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Supervisor Levits and seconded by Supervisor Moore. No comments or questions from the Board of Supervisors or from the audience. Vote: 4-0

PREVIOUS BUSINESS:

1. **SBRPC Lease:** At the last SBRPC Meeting, this topic was discussed, however, Mr. Barlett stated that there was no formal documentation from the Police Commission given to Plainfield Township. The township had been told that a letter was coming from Wing Gap Borough's attorney to our solicitor, but nothing had been received as of this evening's meeting. Supervisor Moore commented that upon reviewing Wind Gap Borough's Meeting Minutes from their May 1, 2023, meeting which was available on their website, that there are discrepancies and false statements in their documentation. Supervisor Moore listed examples of said discrepancies. Supervisor Mellert stated that Wind Gap's Council gave attorney Karasek permission to send Solicitor Backenstoe a letter regarding the lease. Per Solicitor Backenstoe, he has not received anything as of this evening's meeting.

2. **Discussion and Possible Action on Engler Road Project:** Township Engineer, Jeff Ott. Engineer Ott recommended the township go with option 1A which he presented to the Board at the May 10th B.O.S. Meeting. His presentation included replacing the existing culvert and retaining wall for an estimated cost of \$2,015,000.00. Engineer Ott also presented the Board with grant opportunities that can be applied for to assist in paying for, or reimbursing the township for portions of, if not all of the project. He stated that the Multimodal Transportation Grant has been open from March 1 and remains open until July 31, 2023. Engineer Ott stated that if the Board wishes to have him apply for the available grants on the township's behalf, he will need to know soon. He feels it is a good time to move forward with these applications since the Planning Commission hasn't had any recent new submissions. This leaves his staff more available to work on the grant applications. The LSA Grant has not yet opened, Engineer Ott stated when he contacted them to verify an opening date, they informed him that they were

not yet sure if it would be funded for 2023. The Multimodal Transportation Grant has an expiration date that is quickly approaching, and the county LSA Grant will be opening soon. The Multimodal Grant can go up to \$3M. Supervisor Mellert stated that she is in favor of allowing Ott Engineering to proceed with the application processes, especially since the engineering work is already done. Engineer Ott stated that there would be a fee from Ott Engineering of \$3,000.00 per application billed to the township. Ott stated that if the Board would be so inclined to make a motion giving Ott Engineering permission to apply for the Multimodal Transportation Grant and the Counties Wide LSA Grant, on Plainfield Township's behalf for the Engler Road Project, they will begin to move forward. He stated that he will review the finalized applications with Township Manager Bartlett prior to submission. **A motion was made by Supervisor Moore and seconded by Supervisor Mellert to allow Ott Engineering to proceed with processing the grant applications available through the Multimodal Transportation Grant and the County LSA Grant in respect to option 1A. Vote: 5-0**

3. Update on Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority Hower Road Farm Project: The township has been notified that they are applying for their NPDES Permit. (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System). The township is required to submit a reply stating they have received this notification. We have done so and acknowledged that we have an adopted comprehensive plan, and zoning ordinances in place. An audience member asked if Nazareth Authority plans to come to a Plainfield meeting to explain what their plans are, because the Plainfield residents are being left in the dark. Board members and Township Manager Bartlett stated that they are unaware of anything at this time. Supervisor Levits stated that at the Wind Gap Municipal Authority \$1,400,000 for escrow for improvements. Wind Gap gave CRG a conditional will serve letter. Supervisor Levits brought up a topic that has been mentioned in the past by Engineer Ott and the Planning Commission regarding the frequent waivers received by applicants to the Planning Commission for the scale of plans. He stated that it seems to make sense to save time and money on the part of the Board, Planning Commission, Township Engineer, and applicant, that we change our ordinance to allow Mr. Ott to make the decision as to whether an applicant's set of plans and the scale in which they are submitted is sufficient and legible. Engineer Ott stated that he doesn't know if the entire ordinance needs to be re-written. Perhaps some section amendments. He stated he'd be happy to review this section as well as others that seem to be causing frequent waiver requests and make a list of suggestions to present to the Board. **A motion was made by Supervisor Levits and seconded by Supervisor Mellert to have Engineer Ott review the township ordinance regarding the scale to which plans need to be submitted to the Planning Commission. No comments or questions from the Board or audience. Vote: 5-0**

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Resolution 2023-11: A Resolution for Plan Revision for New Land Development for Community Park Pavilion Project. Sewer Planning Module. **A motion was made by Chairman**

Borger and seconded by Supervisor Fairchild. No comments or questions from the Board or audience. Vote: 5-0

RESUME WITH PREVIOUS BUSINESS:

4. Discussion and Possible Action on Environmental Advisory Commission: Supervisor Moore provided information on what the EAC does and some of the Commission's accomplishments. He feels a 7-member commission is beneficial in the event a resident would like to serve their community but may not have as much experience, then there are two vacant seats. Perhaps someone in this situation could be a junior member until they learn more about what the commission does. Supervisor Mellert stated that in the past the EAC was unable to make a quorum because a 7-member commission with 2 vacancies, currently, needs 4 members present to have a quorum. Only 1 member can be absent at a time per meeting. If there is a 5-member commission, then only 3 members are needed to make a quorum. Supervisor Levits stated that a 7-member commission allows 3 people to be absent and still meet quorum, where with 5 members only 2 can be absent. Supervisor Mellert stated that our EAC does not had has not had 7 members for some time now. **A motion was made by Supervisor Moore and seconded by Supervisor Levits, that the Board table this discussion since there is no urgency to make the decision within the next month, and it will give everyone time to think about the resolution. Comments from the Audience:** Nolan Kemmerer asked why applicants are not being accepted and appointed. He stated that even if someone is not as experienced, why are they not able to be taught while they fill the open seat? If they want to serve their community, why are they not being given the opportunity? **No comments from the commission. Vote: 5-0**

RESUME WITH NEW BUSINESS:

1. Resolution 2023-09: A Resolution Authorizing Appointment of Township Manger and setting of Compensation. Supervisor Mellert requested an Executive Session. Supervisor Levits asked Supervisor Mellert if the Executive Session is regarding Resolution 2023-009. She stated regarding background checks. **A motion was made by Supervisor Levits and seconded by Supervisor Moore. Vote: 5-0** The Board of Supervisors proceeded into an Executive Session at 8:06 PM to discuss personnel. The Board of Supervisors completed their Executive Session and Chairman Borger called the meeting back to order at 8:16 PM. **A motion was made by Supervisor Levits and seconded by Supervisor Fairchild to approve Resolution 2023-009 with the stipulation that Mr. Bartlett agree to a background check and drug and alcohol screening. Comments from the Audience:** Nolan Kemmerer asked if this should have been done months ago. Chairman Borger stated that Mr. Bartlett was hired as an advisor to the township, not as a permanent employee. Supervisor Moore stated that Mr. Bartlett was not an employee of the township. Mr. Kemmerer asked if Mr. Bartlett received health insurance coverage. Mr. Bartlett stated, no, he did not. He was purchasing his own. Mr. Kemmerer asked if Mr. Bartlett received a 1099 form for tax purposes. Several Supervisors stated yes. **No further comments or questions from the Board or from the audience. Vote: 4-1 (Jane Mellert-Nae)**

An audience member asked if Mr. Bartlett's compensation had been decided upon and the amount. Supervisor Moore stated, yes it has been, and the amount is \$92,268. Same audience member asked if the salary was based upon what was placed in the township budget for 2023. Supervisor Moore stated that this was also negotiated upon. Mr. Bartlett stated that this is what was in the budget for the Township Manager position.

2. **Resolution 2023-010:** a resolution to approve Plainfield Township Act 537 Plan Revisions. **A motion was made by Supervisor Levits and seconded by Supervisor Mellert. No comments or questions from the Board or from the audience. Vote: 5-0**

4. **Approval of Completion of Probation Period for Grant Rodger as a Public Works Dept.**

A motion was made by Supervisor Moore and seconded by Supervisor Mellert. No comments or questions from the Board or from the audience. Vote: 5-0

5. **Non-Union Employee Personnel Manual:** Discussion and possible action of Section 29 Paid and Unpaid Time Off Policies. Township Manager Bartlett gave information on the current paid time off policies in the Employee Handbook and a comparison of neighboring municipalities policies. Mr. Bartlett stated that there is no additional cost to the township because there are no replacements brought in when non-union members are on vacation. The proposed change to the policy would give an employee roughly 16 days after their 120 days of probation has been reached. This would be a combined Paid Time Off bank rather than sick days, vacation days, and personal days separated. Supervisor Levits presented his reasoning for disagreeing with a change to our current policies. He stated that 16 days is too much for a 1st year employee. Supervisor Mellert stated that based on her research online in the private sector and municipal government, approximately 16 days seems reasonable. Supervisor Levits stated provided information he discovered upon research. An employee at a Fortune 100 Company that Supervisor Levits did not name receives 90 days probation, 1 emergency sick day and 40 paid time off hours in their first year of employment. Year 2; 3 emergency sick days and 80 hours of PTO. Emergency sickness in this company means calling in without notice and are unable to come in to work due to illness. Supervisor Moore stated that some companies have separate categories of vacation, personal, and sick days. With PTO in one time bank, employees can use the time as they see fit. A motion was made by supervisor Moore and seconded by Supervisor Fairchild to approve the new PTO amount for non-union employees. No comments or questions from the board or audience. Vote: 4-1 Paul Levits--Nae

6. **Discussion and Approval of Benecon Benefit Policy Regarding Medical Benefits Eligibility Period.** ACA Compliance, per Supervisor Moore, is 90 days maximum. Currently there is an employee who reaches the 90-day employment on June 6, 2023. According to the instructions we provided Benecon with previously, this employee would have to wait until July 1 to receive health care benefits. According to our Employee Handbook, the staff member would be able to receive health care coverage on June 1. To make the benefit eligibility match what the township offers in the handbook, Benecon needs an updated letter stating when the township employees

can receive their healthcare coverage. Supervisor Moore made a motion and Chairman Borger seconded that a new or revised policy letter be sent to Benecon stating they are to allow medical insurance coverage to begin on the 1st of the month in which the employee will reach their 90th day of employment. No comments or questions from the Board or audience. Vote: 5-0

CITIZEN'S AGENDA:

Brenda and Jeff Stoudt asked what the process was for getting minutes approved and on the website. Board members stated that there is not a formal process and defended the increased length of time it has been taking. Brenda Stoudt stated that if there is going to be a delay in the minutes being posted, could a message be placed on the website stating that minutes are forthcoming and that due to new staff and backlog of meeting minutes, there is a delay. Other audience members agreed with her. Supervisor Levits agreed as well and suggested a website announcement would be helpful and keep the public aware. The Township Manager and Secretary noted this request and will see that a note is made on the website.

Kelly Grim asked if there was a township manager job description, PTO agreement and contract. She made suggestions on how to take minutes and would like her Right-to-Know request completed with financial documentation. She stated she submitted her request on April 20, 2023, and received a letter from Township Manager Bartlett requesting a 30-day extension. It is now May 25, 2023, and she has not received any information.

BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S REPORTS:

1. Ken Fairchild: Glass Street Pipe Update—It is deteriorated and going to impact the road. Supervisor Fairchild was made aware of this by the Plainfield Township Fire Co. He requested that Road Dept. Foreman Larry Sapone, check on this. He stated that he and Solicitor Backenstoe have a Zoom Meeting with the County coming up regarding the Travel Inn options.
2. Don Moore: He was invited by Karen Johnson to look at her property and Church Road. Culverts are impacted with mud. Drains need to be cleaned by the state. He explained what happens when flooding occurs in this area.
3. Jane Mellert: Supervisor Mellert asked if a letter has been sent by Wind Gap to SBRPD to have a grant for a new ambulance? Township Manager Bartlett stated that he is not aware of the request. She asked Mr. Bartlett if anyone had been reviewing and working on Karen Johnson's situation. Mr. Bartlett stated that after he and Solicitor Backenstoe reviewed the property file, they discovered that former Township Manager, Tom Petrucci had an engineer look at this property and evaluate Ms. Johnson's situation. Regulations were not as strict back then as they are now, so things that were permitted at that time when the home was constructed may not be permitted or approved today. A motion was made by Supervisor Mellert and seconded by Supervisor Levits that the Township supports Wind Gap in applying for a grant for a new ambulance. No questions or comments from the Board or from the audience.

Vote: 5-0. Supervisor Mellert announced the Memorial Day Events taking place in Wind Gap, Pen Argyl and at the West Bangor Memorial Site. Supervisor Mellert reported that the Act 111 letter was received from the Slate Belt Regional Police Assoc. notifying the Slate Belt Regional Police Commission of the intent to begin contract negotiations.

4. Glenn Borger: None

5. Paul Levits: Wing Gap Municipal Authority is paying .077 p/kwh for 48 months. Mr. Bartlett stated he found .80 as the average rate in the research he conducted.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further public business to address, a motion was made by Supervisor Levits and seconded by Supervisor Moore to adjourn the May 25, 2023, Board of Supervisor's Meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 PM.

An Executive Session of the Board was held afterward.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Roth Unangst

Township Secretary