

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

March 14, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport Pa. 18088. Vice Chairman Cindy Miller called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Cindy Miller
David Hess
Phil Gogel
Attorney David Backenstoe
Alice Rehrig
Mike Muffley
Liz Amato
Frank Zamadics

Absent: Jerry Pritchard
Mike Jones
Scott Fogel

David Hess made a motion to add the Fire Company to the agenda as Item F under Section V, Departmental and Organizational Reports. Phil Gogel seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. Minutes of February 15, 2023. David Hess made a motion to approve these minutes. Phil Gogel seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. Minutes of February 28, 2023. Phil Gogel made a motion to approve these minutes. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF BILLS.

- A. General Fund Checks 26574 to 26604. Phil Gogel made a motion to approve these bills. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

- A. Extensions of Time
1. 4209 Lehigh Drive, Bulldog Properties. The developer provided the Board with an extension of time June 30, 2023. Woody Howells was present to represent this plan. Mr. Howells indicated they have received estimates from Kratzer Septic Services for the installation of grease traps for both sides of the business and are

working on their final approval from Chris Noll. Phil Gogel made a motion to accept the extension of time until June 30, 2023. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

2. Riverview Self-Storage, David Wasco Major Subdivision Plan. The Developer provided the Board with an extension of time until July 31, 2023. Jason Buchta of Ott Consulting was present to represent the plan. They have performed the on-site testing and are working with Chris Noll to get the final reports approved. They have also received their special exception approval for the use from the Zoning Hearing Board. They are still working through the approvals from the outside agencies.

Phil Gogel made a motion to accept the extension of time until July 31, 2023, as recommended in the Planning Commission letter dated February 14, 2023. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

B. Waivers for Approval

1. Lehigh Township Municipal Authority Land Development Plan. No one was present to represent the plan. Phil Gogel commented the Authority did not receive a letter so he wasn't sure if they knew they needed to be here. The plan was tabled.

V. DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

- A. Recreation Board. Alice Rehrig reported the Rec Board has been working on setting up a pet inoculation day and will be discussing the details of this program at their upcoming meeting on Monday.

A draft copy of the proposed signs for the Danielsville and Delps Parks was provided to the Board. There are some color adjustments that need to be made to the signs, but they design is basically what is being proposed. Cindy Miller commented she had spoken with Rev Signs and they also have a wooden/rustic looking sign that tends to hold up even better than the standards signs. Phil Gogel commented marine plywood could be used and then have it wrapped and a metal edge installed along the top to hang it. This type of sign would last a long time and be a lot cheaper. David Hess commented he will discuss the options with the Rec Board.

- B. Public Work Report. Frank Zamadics reported they are on schedule to open the yard waste site on April 3. He also has a call into Rev Signs for pricing to make changes to the sign as to what is and isn't accepted. Cindy Miller commented she had a resident question her as to why the yard waste site is not open on a Sunday afternoon.

Frank Zamadics also reported with the change in the weather, the Department has been called out because of the snow and has had several trees come down. They have also been doing some truck maintenance and maintenance in the Police Department because of problems with drains not working properly.

- C. Zoning Report. Liz Amato reported there were 22 permit applications received in February and 23 permits were issued. She also received six or seven new complaints. Permits are starting to pick up with the warmer weather.

The conditional use hearing for the Solar Farm was completed and granted with conditions and the Zoning Hearing Board met last week for a special exception hearing for the David Wasko project. This was also granted with conditions. So far, no applications have been received for April.

- D. Police Report. The Chief had prepared Resolution 2023-5 which is a resolution outlining what records are scheduled to be destroyed. The resolution will be placed on the next meeting agenda.
- E. Municipal Authority. Cindy Miller questioned if we have heard whether someone from the Authority will be attending the meetings. Alice Rehrig commented she had sent a letter, but has not heard back from them. Phil Gogel commented it may have gotten lost because Carl Sharpe indicated he had not received a letter. Alice Rehrig commented the letter would have gone directly to their office. Phil Gogel commented there is not much happening. They are just putting out bids for scoping the sewer lines.
- F. Fire Company. Rick Hildebrand commented the next truck they need to replace is the ladder truck. They have also been trying to keep the current truck running. This past month they received another \$35,000 bill for repairs to the pumper. Over the past six months, the guys have been spending several nights a week developing the specifications for the new truck and have opened it up for bidding. Three vendors have taken interest in the bids and have provided proposals. They are now in the process of reviewing the proposals against their specs to make sure everyone has identified the work that needs to be done. The numbers for the vehicle were high, as the proposal for the grant had indicated. They are looking at bids that range from \$1.7 to \$1.98 million. The build times are 3 years, 8 months from one manufacturer; 2 years, 6 months from another; and 1 year, 10 months from the third. The company with the shortest build time and lowest cost also sent them incomplete specifications and the Fire Company is not very comfortable with their numbers and capabilities at this point. There are also a few cash saving options that include paying the truck in full at signing which can save \$160,000 or paying the chassis at signing would allow a \$56,000 credit on the overall number. There are also deadlines on the proposals

that range from 30 days to 60 days. They have found that these deadlines correspond with corporate price increases that can be as high as 15 percent which can be a substantial amount of money when you are looking at \$2 million if the project is delayed. It was six months ago when we got information for the grant and that number was \$1.8 million. Cindy Miller commented even if the Township was successful in obtaining the grant, we still wouldn't be close to the \$2 million.

About five years ago, the Fire Company had gone over the apparatus plan and made some suggestions as far as putting in an escalator for unit replacement. They suggested a 15 percent escalator annually to keep up with the market trends and costs. He doesn't know if that was ever applied. Cindy Miller commented the Board was never told five years ago that there should be a 15 percent escalator added every year. When the plan was developed, they were never told about adding a 15 percent every year. Rick Hildebrand commented it may not have been when it was created, but they have scrutinized it. Cindy Miller commented even if an escalator was included, at \$2 million, there still would not be enough in the fund. Rick Hildebrand commented if something is not done soon, they will not have a truck left. Cindy Miller questioned if a ladder truck that is as big as what is being proposed is necessary. Rick Hildebrand commented when they met with Brady from the State and he did an evaluation on the Township, the Fire Company is one in 30 square miles. There is no more reducing of their services. He had indicated if anything, they would need a second station. Within the discipline of firefighting, they have one of each type of equipment. They don't have duplicates of equipment. The 100 foot ladder truck is needed because of residential setbacks, not the height of buildings. With the one acre lots and the setbacks, they cannot always get to the edge of the house to put a ladder up. They found in working with manufacturers that 109 is an acceptable length to meet these demands. They purchased the 75 foot ladder as a stop gap to try to fill the shortfall in the apparatus replacement plan by getting the used ladder truck rather than replacing the engine so they could get to replacing the rescue truck. Since they have had the ladder truck, they found that the 75 foot does come up short a lot of times. There has been a question of how much use the community would have for a ladder truck and at the time of purchase, there were several nay sayers within the fire department as well. Since that time, he would believe everyone in the department is now of the opinion as to why they didn't have one sooner because of all the uses and need that has come out of it at fires. They have gotten a lot of use out of it. The surrounding communities are impressed with how much use they have gotten out of it. The reason he brought up the escalation cost is that he doesn't believe the plan is keeping up with current day costs and we are losing ground. Cindy Miller commented this year the amount being contributed to the fund was increased to \$200,000 which is more than what has ever been put in. From the Township's perspective, we are doing what we can. We have applied for a grant and

are waiting to hear if we will get the \$750,000. When we starting talking about the truck, the cost was expected to be around \$1.4 million, when we applied for the grant, it was \$1.8 million and now it is up to \$2 million.

Rick Hildebrand commented they spent about \$50,000 working on the top end of the engine so they could keep the truck running and now are working on the pumper which is also very expensive. The money they have been spending on apparatus maintenance has been hemorrhaging them. Regardless of how much fundraising they do or how well they do at an event, they are hemorrhaging on apparatus repair costs. They are thankful that the community has been supportive of them to keep them going, but to run an organization like that is very, very, costly. They are not paying for labor which is 90 percent of some budgets around here. They are only paying for apparatus, insurance, and fuel. Otherwise, they are providing the 70 persons that are going out on emergencies and everything else. Every other penny that goes into the Fire Company and repairs comes out of their pockets.

Cindy Miller commented the pumper was what was initially being worked towards in the plan. Then last year, it was that the Fire Company wanted the ladder truck instead. Now it sounds like the pumper is taking a lot of money. Rick Hildebrand commented they did that because they received a federal grant to replace a pickup truck and a military vehicle. They received \$300,000 to replace these vehicle and are adding \$100,000 more to it to develop an urban interface pumper that can go down small driveways, up on the mountain and in some of the areas that are inaccessible by the larger trucks. This vehicle will take some of the strain off the pumper which is why they are trying to nurse that one along. Once this vehicle is received, it will take over for the pumper. The down side to this vehicle is that it can only transport four people versus eight. This truck will do all the running to the accidents and some of the more mundane calls that the larger pumper is not needed for. This is why they chose to go for the ladder truck instead.

The Fire Company is currently going through all the proposals to ratify their responses to their specifications. If something isn't right, they need to go back to the manufacturer and make sure they are able to meet them. They may need to go to another round of bidding. At some point, some type of decision will need to be made. Cindy Miller commented she appreciates the Fire Company and what they do. The Board will need to figure out what they can do.

Phil Gogel requested the Fire Company compile all the bids and send them to Alice Rehrig so she can forward them to the Board. Rick Hildebrand commented he can do that. They were just working through the proposals to see who did or didn't meet the specs before putting the information forth. He knows the intent was to be able to pay for the vehicles cash, but it may be necessary to do some creative financing with the

manufacturers. Phil Gogel commented it will be difficult with the rate increases that have taken place and the banking systems being messed up. Rick Hildebrand commented they can look into maximizing as much as they can from the State two percent loans.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Cherryville Intersection. Mike Muffley reported the corrective work that needed to be done has been completed and the close out paperwork has been submitted to PennDOT. Jim Milot is waiting on the final invoice from the contractor so that he can reconcile everything. There was a payroll cert that needed to be corrected. They also needed to adjust the date on their maintenance bond.

Cindy Miller questioned what needed to be done to close out the grant. Alice Rehrig commented she needs to submit a final budget, a certification from the engineer, and the final invoices and canceled checks. She has completed as much of the remaining items as she could. The grant deadline is June 30, 2023.

- B. Maintenance Building. Nothing additional has been received back from the architects. Alice Rehrig will follow up with the architect.
- C. Ordinance 2023-1, Establishing Landscaping Business Definitions and Requirements. The draft ordinance has been updated to include definitions for work truck and work trailer. If there are no additional changes to the ordinance, it can be advertised for adoption at a future meeting. Phil Gogel made a motion to authorize the advertisement of this ordinance for adoption. David Hess seconded the motion. Paul Nikisher questioned how someone could get a copy of the ordinance. Alice Rehrig commented it will be posted on the website now that it has been authorized for advertisement. All voted aye. Motion carried. Phil Gogel noted the ordinance allows people to do more than what the previous ordinance did. The previous ordinance pigeon holed people with equipment. This is better for the small business guy.
- D. Resolution 2023-4, Establishing a Process for Appointment to Boards and Commissions. Attorney Backenstoe provided the Board with a revised draft of this resolution. Phil Gogel commented the previous draft took away people's civil rights. In his opinion, this draft is more in line with what should be the criteria. David Hess made a motion to table this resolution to give all the Board members the opportunity to review it. Phil Gogel seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Manager's Report. Alice Rehrig reminded the Board to continue to think about what project they would like to submit under the 2023 GroNor Co grant. It is a \$1 for \$1 matching grant through Northampton County. The grant funding would need to be used next year. Cindy Miller commented she thinks we should continue moving forward with the next phase of the access and security project. David Hess agreed.

Paul Nikisher questioned what this grant would encompass. Alice Rehrig commented you can submit for most any type of project to the County. The maximum amount of the grant is \$50,000, but it may get reduced. This past year we submitted for the \$50,000, but only received \$14,000. The only thing you can't use it for is labor or operational expenses. Cindy Miller commented they have found over time that the County tends to favor safety items.

B. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe reported he and Liz Amato attended a hearing at the Magistrate regarding an individual operating a commercial landscaping business on his property. He was found guilty.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT. Phil Gogel noted the three new candidates for Supervisor were present and requested they provide information about themselves and what they expect to accomplish if they are elected. Cindy Miller commented the candidates that want to speak usually request to be placed on the agenda. Kristin Soldridge suggested this be placed on the next meeting agenda.

Paul Nikisher commented people need to be aware of what is taking place at the School District. The \$2 million fire truck is nothing compared to the \$74 million building project being proposed.

Paul Nikisher commented the residents need to come out and support our Fire Company at their upcoming fundraiser on March 25 at 4 p.m. This is their largest fundraiser; we need to make this the best one yet.

Marc Kacsmar questioned what the expected date of delivery was for the truck that was ordered through the federal grant. Rick Hildebrand commented there is a certain amount of time that is needed for the upfitting. The problem they are having is getting the chassis. They are into this for a year and still don't have a chassis. The truck is built and the specs are done around the Ford chassis. He was told that Ford is no longer stocking lots with vehicles. Everything is built to order. The chip shortage created a big problem in getting vehicles through Ford.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel and identifiable potential litigation. No action was taken.

Supervisor Minutes
March 14, 2023

- X. ADJOURN. David Hess made a motion to adjourn. Phil Gogel seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.