

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

June 27, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 27, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport Pa. 18088. Chairman Mike Jones called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Cindy Miller
David Hess
Phil Gogel
Jerry Pritchard (via telephone)
Mike Jones
Attorney David Backenstoe
Mike Muffley
Alice Rehrig

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. Minutes of June 13, 2023. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these minutes. David Hess seconded the motion. Phil Gogel commented he did not have an opportunity to read the minutes because all of his email files were stretched out and he couldn't read anything that was sent; there must be an issue with his account. Cindy Miller noted on Page 3, under the Engineer's Report, it should state North Granger, not Granger. David Hess, Jerry Pritchard, Cindy Miler, and Mike Jones voted aye. Phil Gogel abstained since he didn't have the opportunity to review the minutes. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF BILLS.

- A. General Fund Checks 26857 to 26891. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these checks. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. State Fund Check 1579. David Hess made a motion to approve this check. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Cherryville Intersection. Alice Rehrig reported she received the final reimbursement from DCED so the grant for the project has been closed out and everything is complete.
- B. Maintenance Building. A preconstruction meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 28th at 2:30 p.m. so the project can start moving forward. In addition to the Architects, all of the contractors, Frank Zamadics, Mike Muffley, and herself will be attending.

A date will need to be set for the groundbreaking ceremony. A date will be determined after the preconstruction meeting.

Jerry Pritchard questioned if all the contracts have been received. Alice Rehrig commented all the necessary documents have been returned.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Manager's Report. Neffs Bank will be holding the building loan rate at 3.99 percent. She will be having a resolution and an extension agreement to extend the draw period until April 2024 for approval the next meeting. This is needed to keep in compliance with the Local Unit Debt Act requirements.

The Police Department digital sign board was hit by a hit and run driver and destroyed. Alice Rehrig has started the insurance claim for reimbursement, but it will take two to four weeks before a replacement will come in. David Hess commented he spoke with the Chief and he believes it was a Dodge Ram that hit the sign.

- B. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe did not have anything specific to report.

- VI. PUBLIC COMMENT. Katherine Mack questioned if the Board received her email regarding the possibility of live streaming the meetings. Cindy Miller commented she personally wouldn't want to live stream a meeting. It is too difficult because you can't read the faces, it's hard to tell what's going on with people calling. We did it during COVID and it was a nightmare. Phil Gogel commented there was a couple who were here a few years ago who videoed the meeting put it on their Facebook page. He wouldn't have an issue with that. Alice Rehrig noted that was just a recording; it was not something that was interactive with the meeting. Katherine Mack commented most of the municipalities around us and the school district do it. People who can't attend the meeting may be interested in what took place. Cindy Miller commented we don't have the technology to do that right now. We are looking to update our technology. Katherine Mack commented she called Allen Township and East Allen Township and they do it; they said it is easy. Cindy Miller commented we don't have the ability to do Zoom for the meetings; she really is not interested in trying to Zoom meetings right now; there are much more important things that need to get done. Katherine Mack commented informing the public is important. Cindy Miller noted the public is informed; all of our minutes are posted on our website. We currently don't have the recording capabilities; we need to work with our technology consultants to set things up. Mike Jones commented people are welcome to our meetings; there are plenty of open seats. Phil Gogel commented if someone is willing to do it on their own, he doesn't have an objection to that. Mike Jones commented he doesn't mind the recording, but to do it live is hard. There is always a delay and trying to have interaction when the meeting is live

while people are trying to comment on the phone or through Zoom, makes it hard to work that way. Katherine Mack commented we have a website; a recording can be put there. Jerry Pritchard questioned where the legal boundaries fall when someone posts the recording of a meeting on a platform that the Township doesn't control. Attorney Backenstoe commented anyone can record a meeting; he doesn't believe it must be announced. It can be done by video, hand held recorder, or phone. Rick Hildebrand commented they use a simple you tube channel where he works so that if they are not able to make a meeting, they can view it. It doesn't seem like the Board is opposed to recording the meetings; they just aren't ready for it. Cindy Miller questioned who would be the technological person who would do this. It was stated that the School does it. They have an entire staff for IT. We don't have that type of staff. With everything we are currently doing, she doesn't believe Zoom meetings are top priority to worry about. If people want to know what is going on, they can come to the meeting or read the minutes. We would need to update the technology in the meeting room, which we are in the process of working towards that. Eventually, we could possibly record the meetings or do it on Zoom, but someone would have to monitor that during the meeting. Mike Jones commented he doesn't see a problem with the recording, but to do something interactive is difficult.

Katherine Mack commented she went through the minutes of the May 23rd meeting and it was commented that the current Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor received \$10,000 more than his predecessor given the same number of hearings and cases. Jerry Pritchard had commented at that meeting there were 20 hearings and 4 appeals under Attorney Caffrey and 20 hearings and 2 appeals under the current attorney, yet the bills were \$10,000 higher. She went into the office and request copies of the bills that were used to generate this information. She went through the bills item by item. It is not close to \$10,000 or 20 hearings. In the information she was given there were only two court cases for each Attorney. Also, included within the bills for Attorney Ettinger were the bills for the UCC appeal which had nothing to do with zoning. If you look at the basic costs for Attorney Caffrey, it came out to \$12,000 and \$17,600 for Attorney Ettinger, a difference of only \$5,600. This included all the pre hearing letters, post hearing letters and attendance at the meeting. Jerry Pritchard commented that he didn't pull these numbers out of their hat. This was information that was given to the entire Board; he just happened to be the Board member who said something. Cindy Miller questioned if Katherine Mack spoke with the office to speak with them about the discrepancy and where the numbers came from. **Katherine Mack commented she did not speak with the office, but will do so.** The Board would be going off of the information that they were given. Regardless of the amount, it was higher than what it previously had been which is why they were looking at the differences. Katherine Mack commented it was different person, different cases. The hearing times were longer for Attorney Caffrey compared to Attorney Ettinger. Mike

Supervisor Minutes
June 27, 2023

Jones commented if the hearings were longer for Attorney Caffrey, then the difference should be greater. Katherine Mack commented Attorney Ettinger spends more time in preparation for the hearing.

- VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Session to discuss a collective bargaining agreement. No action was taken.
- VIII. ADJOURN. David Hess made a motion to adjourn. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.