

# **Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA July 13, 2023**

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, July 13, 2023, at 6:30 P.M. in the Township Municipal Building, 1200 Carsonia Avenue, Reading, PA.

## ***I. ATTENDANCE***

Board members in attendance included Jim Oswald, John Theodossiou, and Todd Weikel. Other officials in attendance were Central Berks Regional Police Department Chief Ray Serafin, Kelsey Frankowski (as Acting Township Solicitor), Joe Rogosky (as Township Engineer), Robert Mountz (Lower Alsace Fire Company Chief), and Homer Williams (representing the Township Planning Commission). Residents in attendance were Russell and Deborah Hoffman, Alneasa Jordon, Sherry Cook, Tom Orth, Steve Martin, Jessica Ortiz, Amanda Muso, Jessica Williams, Jake Oliver, James Seitz, Elizabeth Cozzone, Brian Horner, Rev. David Duquette, and Jordan Sanger (flood related issues), Dennis and Tracey Lubas, Denton and Barb Quick, Donald Miller, and Todd Folk (group home at 703 Brighton), and Alison Seward (animal control services).

## ***II. PRESENTATIONS***

A moment of silence was requested by Supervisor Oswald in memory of the passing of former Township Solicitor Mike Setley, who passed away suddenly.

Presentations were made by representatives of R. E. Pierson to discuss the work they have done to clean up the area near the creek and prepare for resumption of construction, by Robert Mountz on the outreach done by the fire department and the resident group who collected materials for flood victims, and by Jessica Williams who spoke on the flood outreach conducted by resident volunteers. A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, to approve R. E. Pierson to conduct flood damage restoration work for an amount not to exceed \$30,000, and all voted yes to approve.

## ***III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS***

- 1) Alison Seward inquired about the progress on determining the best entity for the Township to contract with for providing animal control services. The Supervisors expressed their interest in providing the best services for the volume of needs and for the most cost-effective arrangement, The Township Manager will be reaching out to both Safety Net Sanctuary and Animal Rescue League to request information that would be critical to analyze the best option. This information will be considered as part of the decision-making process during the 2024 budget preparation.

- 2) A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, to appoint Kelsey Frankowski as the Township Solicitor, and all voted yes to approve.
- 3) The various residents who spoke concerning the flooding inquired as to what assistance the federal, state, and county officials were looking to provide. They also inquired as to the need for dumpsters. They also inquired as to the damage assessment of the school. Information was provided as to dumpsters, the FEMA and PEMA assessment to be conducted, and other work to be done. A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, to amend the agenda in order to take action on the property at 1460 Friedensburg Road, and all voted yes to approve. A motion to approve the Solicitor to take all legal steps necessary in order to have 1460 Friedensburg Road declared an unsafe structure in order to have the Berks County Court allow for its demolition was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- 4) The various residents who spoke regarding the group home inquired as to the status of reaching out to the operators, as well as to the state, in order to gain compliance with maintaining a safe environment for the children living there as well as for the residents. The Supervisors, as well as the Solicitor and Police Chief, all spoke on the ongoing efforts as well as their desires to resolve the problems, either by finding a suitable way to oversee the property, or by having someone relocate the children to a more suitable location.

No additional public comment was made.

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2023, Lower Alsace Township Supervisors meeting was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.

**V. SUPERVISOR LIASON REPORTS**

- A. Road Department – Supervisor Oswald had nothing new to report.
- B. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou discussed the request of the Commission to the Township Supervisors to provide the funds necessary to replace the roof at the police station. After discussion, it was determined that the Township would prepare the bid specifications in order to obtain pricing for the work. It was also determined that the work did not meet the qualifications for an emergency declaration purchase. A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, to advertise the bid for a roof replacement, and all voted yes to approve.
- C. Lower Alsace Fire Company – Supervisor Weikel had nothing new to report.
- D. Lower Alsace Ambulance Association – Supervisor Weikel had nothing new to report.

- E. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – Supervisor Weikel had nothing new to report.

**VI. SOLICITOR**

The Solicitor provided a status update of the renewal of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board exemption, which will allow the Township to be exempt from compliance with Section 493(34) of the Liquor Code, which is set to expire on August 11, 2023,

**VII. ENGINEER**

- A. The Engineer discussed the application of the new multimodal grant.
- B. The Engineer provided an update on the 2023 Road Paving Project bids. The lowest acceptable bid was from New Enterprise in the amount of \$164,913. A motion to award the bid to New Enterprise was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.
- C. The Engineer discussed the next steps necessary to have New Enterprise provide a cost estimate for the repaving of the Lower Alsace Fire Company lot.

**VIII. BOARD AND COMMISSIONS REPORTS**

- A. Planning Hearing Board – the most recent meeting of the Planning Commission was held on November 2, 2022. No new meetings of the Planning Commission have been scheduled at this time.
- B. Zoning Hearing Board – the most recent meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board was held on October 26, 2022. A meeting is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> to review an application for an addition at 800 Carsonia Avenue..
- C. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – no report.

**IX. MANAGER - TREASURER'S REPORT / LIST OF BILLS**

- A. A motion to approve the June 30, 2023, Treasurer's reports was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, the motion carried.
- B. A motion to approve the payment of the list of bills as presented was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, the motion carried.

**X. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL**

- A. *Central Berks Police Department* – the June 2023 report was presented.
- B. *Central Berks Codes Department* – the June 2023 report was presented.
- C. *Sewage Enforcement Officer* – the June 2023 report was presented.
- D. *Zoning and Building Code Officer* – the June 2023 report was presented.
- E. *Lower Alsace Township Fire Company* – nothing new to report.
- F. *Lower Alsace Ambulance Association* – nothing new to report.

**XI. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. An update on the status of the use and occupancy permit application for 1383 – 1385 Friedensburg Road was presented. No unpermitted activity has been observed.
- B. A discussion on the American Rescue Plan Local Funds occurred. Further talks will be held at future Township Supervisors' meetings.
- C. An update on discussions regarding a suggestion to close off all of Skyline Drive from approximately dusk to dawn took place. The Township Manager provided an update on the status of this discussion.
- D. A discussion on the progress on exploring a merger between Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough was held. The Township Manager is in the process of establishing a public meeting with representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Economic and Community Development, Lower Alsace Township Board of Supervisors, and Mount Penn Borough Council and the Mayor, as well as the general public, to hear information to be considered in this process.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. A motion to approve the Declaration of Disaster Emergency beginning July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- B. The application for a special event for the Aldine Avenue block party scheduled for July 29<sup>th</sup> 2023, was discussed. A motion to approve the application was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.
- C. A discussion of the preparation of bid specifications for the Township's Municipal Recycling program was held.

- D. A motion to approve the replacement of an HVAC unit based on the quoted price of \$9,900 was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.
- E. A discussion of the process to be followed for the development of the Township's 2024 budget was held.

***XII. PUBLIC COMMENT***

No additional comments made.

***XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION***

No executive session was held.

***XIV. ADJOURNMENT***

Hearing no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on August 10th, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer