

Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA October 12, 2023

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, September 14, 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 Township Solicitor), Joe Rogosky (as Township Engineer), Homer Williams (representing the Township Planning Commission), Robert Mountz and Mark Faust (representing Lower Alsace Fire Company), and Carl Weikel (as Township Road Foreman). Residents in attendance were Roger and Mari Luckenbill (Wolter's Lane name change). Other guests in attendance were Christine Dise (Mount Penn Borough) David Anspach and Bethany Ayers-Fisher (City grant application for Skyline Drive guiderails), and Ed and Jennifer Brooks (Petsch Road concerns).

II. PRESENTATIONS

- 1) Robert Mountz discussed the Lower Alsace Fire Company 2024 budget. The Supervisors stated that they will continue to do everything possible to support the ambulance company.
- 2) David Anspach and Bethany Ayers-Fisher spoke on the grant application and asked for a letter of support from the Township. A lengthy discussion of the positives and negatives ensued. The Supervisors agreed to provide a letter of support for the application with the addition that the project could be scaled back depending on the grant funding received.

No other presentations this evening.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

- 1) Ed and Jennifer Brooks spoke on the numerous issues surrounding the residents of Alsace Township and Lower Alsace Township along Petsch Road. They informed the board that they have reached out to the Alsace Township board and state police to see if any relief can be found. They wanted to inform the Lower Alsace Township Supervisors and Central Berks Police Chief of the issues. The Supervisors, the Police Chief, the Township Manager, and the Solicitor will review the situation to see what advice can be offered.
- 2) Roger and Mari Luckenbill spoke on the letter they received from the Township regarding a request for a name change to a private lane known as Wolter's Lane.

They wanted to inform the Board that they do not support the change due to the inconveniences caused with mail, real estate taxed, etc., and that they do not see any reason to make a change based upon a request by one resident. The Supervisors stated that they are not in favor of making the change, and directed the Township Manager to inform the County officials of this.

No additional public comment was made.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 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. Carl Weikel discussed the repairs needed for the zero turn mower and discussed the recent road paving project
- B. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou discussed the progress on the Central Berks Police budget. Supervisor Weikel discussed the roof treatment which will be used to extend the life of the existing roof and explained the cost savings.
- C. Lower Alsace Fire Company – nothing new to report.
- D. Lower Alsace Ambulance Association – nothing new to report.
- E. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – nothing new to report.

VI. SOLICITOR

The Solicitor discussed the progress on dealing with the group home at 703 Brighton Avenue. She is working on using zoning issues as a way to deal with the overall situation.

VII. ENGINEER

- A. The Engineer discussed the status of the application of the new multimodal grant.
- B. The Engineer discussed the construction during the 2023 Road Paving Project. He presented a request for payment # 1 in the amount of \$127,402.79, less retainage. A motion to approve the payment was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.

- C. The Engineer provided a status update on the PennDOT Bridge Replacement project. The bridge has recently been opened. Additional work will continue as long as the weather permits.

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 May 17, 2023. No new meetings of the Zoning Hearing Board have been scheduled at this time..
- C. Antietam Valley Recreation Commission – no report.

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

- A. A motion to approve the September 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 September 2023 report was presented.
- B. **Central Berks Codes Department** – the September 2023 report was presented. A discussion was held on the creation of a “blighted property fund” to help address problem properties where blight issues are located.
- C. **Sewage Enforcement Officer** – the September 2023 report was presented.
- D. **Zoning and Building Code Officer** – the September 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. Some funds may be available for roof work which may be needed at the Township building.
- 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 discussed the availability of the state representatives from DCED to visit the area and make a public presentation. After a brief discussion, it was determined to set a meeting date of November 1, 2023. This will be confirmed by Mount Penn Borough Council.
- E. The Township Manager provided an update on the review of animal control services and all communication with both Safety Net Sanctuary and Animal Rescue League.
- F. The Police Chief spoke on the issue regarding damage to a police vehicle and the insurance proceeds received by the police department. The funds received from insurance will not cover the cost of the replacement vehicle nor the needed equipment. The Police Chief has requested that the remaining \$20,000 of the Township's ARPA fund allocation to the department be paid so the police department can replace the vehicle. A motion was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou to release the funds, and all voted yes to approve.
- G. The Township Manager gave an update on determining the cost of a Yard Waste Collection Program for disposing of grass clippings, flowers, and small shrubs was held. Further research into the matter will be necessary.
- H. The Township Manager provided an update on the process for the development of the Township's 2024 budget. The first draft should be forthcoming shortly.
- I. The Township Manager provided an update on the process for bids for the Township Recycling program. These will be discussed at the next Township meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. There was no new business to discuss.

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 7:45 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on November 9th, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer