

Minutes of the Board of Supervisors Meeting Township of Lower Alsace, Berks County, PA November 9, 2023

The Lower Alsace Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Thursday, November 9, 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 Kerry Gergen (no specific comment) and Tom Pinkasavage (parking on Friedensburg Road near 705 Friedensburg Road). Other guests in attendance were Joe Duda, actuary for the Township's retirement plans, Rich Ritzer, investment advisor for the Township's retirement plan investment advisors representing CBIZ, and members of the Lower Alsace Fire Company and members of the volunteer group the Antietam Recovery Team.

II. PRESENTATIONS

- 1) Joe Duda and Rich Ritzer discussed the performance of the retirement plans, most specifically the defined benefit plan, which provides benefits to all former workers who have retired. All current staff are now covered under the defined contribution plan.
- 2) Supervisor Oswald and Lower Alsace Fire Company Fire Chief Robert Mountz presented proclamations signed by the Board of Supervisors to all members of the Lower Alsace Fire Company and to the volunteers organized as the Antietam Recovery Team for their outstanding work in assisting the community during the flood event which occurred on July 9th and through the recovery process which followed.

No other presentations this evening.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

- 1) Tom Pinkasavage spoke on the parking issues in the 700 block of Friedensburg Road. He spoke on the issues which arose after new No Parking signs were put in place in front of the day school. He mentioned that he operates a business out of his home, and the current parking restrictions impact his customers. A discussion ensued on the many options which could be explored to alleviate the issue. The possibility that the Antietam School District may be looking to use this building for

housing school students was also discussed. The Supervisors have instructed the Township Manager to reach out to the school to see if accommodations can be made to provide additional parking to the residents in the area.

No additional public comment was made.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 12, 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 reported that leaf collection is continuing.
- B. Central Berks Regional Police Commission – Supervisor Theodossiou had nothing new to report.
- C. Lower Alsace Fire Company – nothing new to report.
- D. Lower Alsace Ambulance Association – Supervisor Oswald mentioned that the ambulance crew is looking into purchasing a squad vehicle.
- 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 letter received by the Township, which was addressed to the school district regarding the revocation of a Department of Environmental Protection permit. The Engineer and the Township Manager will reach out to the school district administration and school board to get further information on what is occurring.
- B. The Engineer discussed the construction during the 2023 Road Paving Project. He presented a final request for payment # 2. A motion to approve the payment was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.

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 October 31, 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 Weikel, the motion carried.

X. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

- A. Central Berks Police Department – the October 2023 report was presented.
- B. Central Berks Codes Department – the October 2023 report was presented.
- C. Sewage Enforcement Officer – the October 2023 report was presented.
- D. Zoning and Building Code Officer – the October 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 animal control services was presented. The Animal Rescue League sent a proposal which would cost over \$30,000 at \$7 per person. A motion to approve the contract for animal control services with Safety

Net Sanctuary in the amount of \$3,500 was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Theodossiou, and all voted yes to approve.

- D. The Township Manager made a presentation of the details of starting a yard waste collection program in the Township, using a contract which is offered by the Berks County Cooperative Purchasing Council. The terms would be that a dumpster unit would need to be made available for residents to load their yard waste. There is no pick up program at each resident's home. On discussion with several other Townships using the program, the cost is in the tens of thousands of dollars and the use of a dumpster leaves opportunities for illegal dumping. Many municipalities are looking into discontinuing the service. Based upon this information, the Supervisors elected not to pursue starting this program at this time.
- E. A motion to approve the Joint Resolution to begin formal public discussions with the Borough of Mount Penn to entertain a possible merger was made by Supervisor Theodossiou, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Township Manager presented a copy of the 2024 Township budget. A discussion on the budget took place. The Township Manager mentioned the key changes to the budget and stated that a deficit is reflected. The Supervisors discussed that much of the deficit could be funded using fund balance reserves which have been accumulated through good financial management, but a .5 mill increase may be necessary to avoid drawing down on the fund balance too much. These recommendations will be made and a revised budget will be presented for possible approval at the December Supervisors' meeting.
- B. A motion to advertise the 2024 Lower Alsace Township budget was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.
- C. The Township Manager presented a summary of the bids received for the contract for Recycling Services for the Township. A brief discussion took place where the Supervisors expressed their belief that the residents see the benefits of a recycling program and have come to expect the service. Whitetail Disposal was the lowest acceptable bid. They will continue the same format as the previous contractor had used. A motion to award the bid and contract with Whitetail Disposal was made by Supervisor Oswald, seconded by Supervisor Weikel, and all voted yes to approve.
- D. The Township Manager presented information on staffing questions related to both the road crew and the codes department which have been raised by both the Supervisors and the road foreman. The supervisors agreed that more research needs to take place in order to decide what help is necessary.
- E. A discussion took place on the best course of action to take in order to replace the parking area at the Lower Alsace Fire Company station. The Township Manager and Engineer will reach out to the Fire Chief to assess the work needed and to assist in preparing the bid specifications for advertising sometime early in 2024.

- F. A discussion took place on a trailer which had been parked on Angora Road. It was determined that the Township Manager should reach out to the Zoning Officer to see what can be done to eliminate the issue.
- G. A discussion took place on the Stony Creek Auto property which had been identified with problem issues in the recent past. It was determined that the Township Manager should reach out to the Zoning Officer and to the Codes Department to see what can be done to eliminate the issue.

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 8:30 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM on December 14th, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pottiger, Manager, Secretary / Treasurer