

West Penn Township Board of Supervisors
27 Municipal Road
New Ringgold, PA 17960

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Regular Meeting
Monday, October 2, 2023

Present at the Meeting

Anthony Prudenti
Timothy Houser
Glenn Hummel

Karen Wittig – Treasurer
Katie Orlick – Secretary
Mike Begis – ARRO
Paul Datte - Solicitor

I. General

A. Tony Prudenti called the meeting to order at 6:00PM with the Pledge of Allegiance & Introduction.

B. Public Comments on Agenda Items Only - None

C. Review of the Minutes – September 5th & 18th, 2023.

Chairman called for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from September 5th & 18th, 2023. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Tim Houser seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

D. Treasurer’s Report – September 2023

Chairman called for a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Tim Houser made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Chairman called for a motion to disperse the Fire Relief Money of \$31,507.73 to the West Penn Fire Co. #1 Relief Association. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Tim Houser seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

E. Approval of Bills – September 2023

Chairman called for a motion to pay the bills. Tim Houser questioned a bill from the road department. Tim Houser said he must have hired a company to haul for him. Mr. Houser wanted to clarify when, why and what project before paying that bill. Tim Houser made the motion to approve the all the other bills. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

F. Solicitor’s Report

Attorney Datte said nothing to report. Chairman asked the status of the deed for Atlas Park. Attorney Datte said that is one of the things he is working on. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Solicitor’s report. Tim Houser made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

II. Land Use - NONE

III. Operations

A. Engineer/Zoning’s Monthly Report – September 2023

Chairman asked Mike Begis from ARRO Consulting, Inc. if he had anything to report for the month of September. Chairman asked about the status of the J.E. Morgan Park grant. Mike Begis said we are waiting for the CDBG project to connect the pavilions, which was approved by the County. Once that is done we will be able to close out the DCNR Grant. Chairman asked if we were giving up on the walking trail. Mike Begis said no that was approved. Glenn Hummel asked if that was to connect the pavilions

and put the walking trail around. Mike Begis said yes, as far as he knows and that is what he has been told. Glenn Hummel asked when we have to have the DCNR sign up at the J.E. Morgan Park. Mike Begis said he thinks next year. Tim Houser said he spoke to someone from the Lions Club about the Zion Stone Park. Mr. Houser said he knows that they are not interested in selling the park to us, however, he was told they need a water system down at that park for drinking water. Would any of the CDBG money be able to be used for that kind of project and help them get a purified water system. Mike Begis said he doubts it because it will not just benefit low-moderate income. Ron Zimmerman sent the Chairman an email, suggested that we use some of the CDBG money to put into a local food shelter. Tim Houser asked how big of an area do we need for a food pantry. He recommends at the old train station by the intersection old SR895 & SR309. Tim Houser likes the idea of utilizing a piece of history. Chairman was concerned with the size of it. He feels it would not be big enough. Art Sterling said his church has a food pantry and they run it out of a two small rooms. Chairman said a lot of residents go to the church that Art Sterling belongs too and maybe we can donate to that pantry if we would be allowed to donate those funds for that.

Chairman called for a motion to accept the Engineer & Zoning Monthly Report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Tim Houser seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

B. Code Enforcement Monthly Report – September 2023

Chairman asked if the Board had any questions with the Code Enforcement Officer's report. Tim Houser questioned a property across the street from Mauch Chunk Bank. He said there is a number of structures going up. He feels we do not have any permits for that property and he feels we should look into it a little more. Mr. Houser said we have a lot of concerns from our residents about that place. Jim Dean gave an update of that property to Tim Houser. Mr. Dean said that there was an NOV issued by Shannon Darker from ARRO Consulting, Inc. Mr. Dean said we will be addressing the Zoning, uses and the AG issues. Chairman called for a motion to accept the code enforcement monthly report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Tim Houser seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

C. Sewage Enforcement Officer's Monthly Report – September 2023

Chairman read the sewage enforcement officer's report. The report consisted of 1 New Permit Applications, 6 Interim Inspections, 1 Test Probes, 1 Perc Tests, 0 Design Reviews, 1 Site Evaluation, 3 Subdivision Plans & 1 Malfunction Concern. SEO reported that he did an investigation on 9/15/23. His inspection revealed no signs of sewage malfunction. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Sewage Enforcement Officer's Report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Tim Houser seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0.

D. Road Department's Monthly Report – September 2023

Chairman read the Road Department's Monthly report. The report consisted of General Maintenance to the Township Building & Equipment, Paving Redhill Road & Pine Ridge Road, Installed pipes & culvert boxes on High Drive (Low Volume Grant Project), Back up paving on Dogwood Lane, Dairy Rd., Redhill Rd., & Pine Ridge Rd. with 2A Mod., Cleaned trees off Township Rds., Hauled in 2A Mod. for the High Drive Project, Cleaned pipes & Culvert boxes out throughout the Township & Mowed grass along Township Rds. Road Master attended ESM in Scranton for Dirt & Gravel Roads & Low Volume Road Projects. Chairman recognized & thanked Jeremy Frible for all his work that he does throughout the Township and for getting the Township so many grants to help with all the Road Projects. Chairman said if you add up all the grants he got for this Township, it is amazing. Chairman read the maintenance

report. Chairman said that we put in a grant to get a new paver. Chairman said if we do not get the grant he recommends we put money aside in the budget to rent a paver for next years' projects.

Chairman called for a motion to accept the Road Department's Monthly report. Tim Houser made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

E. Police Department Report – September 2023

Chairman read the Police Report. The Police Dept. had 5,356 miles patrolled 226 total citations & warnings as of 9/30, & 16 motor vehicle accidents as of 9/30. Total calls 234. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Police Department's monthly report. Tim Houser made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

F. Fire Company Monthly Report – September 2023

Chairman read the Fire Company's report. 31 Total calls for the month of September. The report consisted of 12 Motor Vehicle accidents, 11 Wire/Trees Down, 0 Automatic Fire Alarms, 2 Medical Assist, 1 Fire Police Call, 0 Structure Fires, 2 Landing Zone, 1 unknown type Fire and 2 Pole Fire. The department had their monthly meeting. They had their monthly fundraisers such as the Fire Company Breakfast & Cash Bingo. They did driver training, CPR/AED and Search & Rescue Training. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Fire Department's Monthly Report. Tim Houser made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

G. Ambulance Monthly Report – September 2023

Chairman read the September Ambulance Monthly Report. The September monthly report is as follows: 48 Total Calls for Unit 935 the month of September. 301 Total Calls Year to Date. Municipalities included 1 New Ringgold, 6 Tamaqua and 41 West Penn Township. The receiving Hospitals included 9 LVHN Carbon, 5 LVHN Cedar Crest, 1 St. Luke's – Carbon, 3 St. Luke's Geisinger and 9 St. Luke's Miners. The calls consisted of Abdominal Pain, Back Pain, Breathing Problems, Chest Pains, Fall Victims, Convulsions/Seizures, Heart Problems, Lift Assist, Medical Alarm, Traffic Accidents, Stroke, Sick, Childbirth/ Pregnancy, Fainting, and Patient Evaluation. Chairman called for a motion to accept the August Ambulance Monthly Report. Tim Houser made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0 Chairman thanked the Ambulance Association for their service.

IV. Old Business - None

V. New Business - None

VI. Correspondence - None

VII. Business from Anyone on the Board - None

VIII. Public Comments on General Items

Jeff Bradford – had an announcement for everyone. He said October is very busy. The October Calendar is as follows: October 8th – Breakfast, October 10th – Fire Prevention @ Station, October 11th – Monthly Meeting, October 13th Fire Prevention @ the Elementary School, October 18th – Andreas Halloween Parade, October 21st Vendor Fair & Cheesesteak Sale, October 22nd – BINGO, October 24th Tamaqua Halloween Parade, October 29th All you can eat Pancake Breakfast for Tamaqua Drama Club, October 31st Trick or Treat Night.

Valerie Coombe – said Penn Mahoning Ambulance will be serving Hotdogs from 4PM-5PM on Halloween before Trick or Treating.

Jackie Selitto – asked about the status of the Police Department. She wanted to know the staffing situation for the Police Department & the future plans. Chairman said right now we have 24hrs/7days.

Chief agreed, unless someone calls off the State Police will cover. Jackie Selitto expressed that she does not want to depend on the State Police. She questioned the budget. She heard that the Department went off budget when they had to respond to some emergencies. Glenn Hummel said that is a false statement. He said they are a little over budget due to some of the emergencies but that is the price of doing business. The Board understands that but there are other reasons that they are over budget. Jackie Selitto asked if his solution was to cut resources. Glenn Hummel said if the price of doing business is having an officer on the street, they will be on the street. If it comes to buying things we do not need right now or trying to cut down on other expenses, we will get it back in line. Jackie Selitto wanted the Board to reassure her that nothing is happening behind the scenes to dismantle the police department. Glenn Hummel said that was a rumor just like closing the CSI camp and D.A.R.E. program. It is not true. They are rumors. The past couple meetings we have addressed it said it is not true. They are rumors and they are still coming up. We are not dismantling the police department. We never wanted to dismantle the police department. We ran into a situation that the budget has an overrun and we need to get it back in control. We put some things in place to bring it back in line. In the past two out of three years we were under budget. Except last year we were \$5K over because of unforeseen emergencies/ circumstances. However, this year we didn't have the unforeseen circumstances at this point and we are on target to be \$50K over budget. Angelo Selitto said what about the price for normal things doubling. He asked if that was accounted for. Glenn Hummel said we did take that into account. Jackie Selitto said, we are still here because two out of three of the Board members we don't have faith in that they are being truthful & honest with us. Attorney Datte said then I guess it doesn't matter what they say. Tim Houser said we are being truthful but you don't like what you hear. Glenn Hummel said you just want to listen to the rumors. Glenn Hummel said he asked the Chief for information about the budget numerous times and he didn't respond. That is when we decided to sit down and look at the budget to see what we can do to reduce it. Jackie Selitto said that the Chief proposed a new budget and she felt it sounded great. Glenn Hummel said the Chief projected to be \$100K under budget. Glenn Hummel said that is absolutely mathematically impossible. Glenn Hummel said we need fiscal accountability. Every department needs to be held accountable. Glenn Hummel said if you don't like the job this board is doing then you should run to be elected. Jackie Selitto said she will absolutely do that. She will go around the community and set up signs and said you will get a lot more publicity than you want. Angelo Selitto asked how much money did the Police Department put into the budget. The Board of Supervisors stated that we cannot have our police department look like a money making process for West Penn Township. Tim Houser asked the Chief how much money does West Penn Township get from a fine. Chief said if you use a Stop Sign Violation, we would get \$12.50/ Citation. The total fine is \$154. Tim Houser said we only get \$12.50 and the State gets the rest.

Art Sterling – asked the Board if they are closing the Impound Lot. His concern was that he donated a lot of time and got the Township a discount on some of the barriers and he just wanted to know what the Boards plans were for the Impound Lot. Chairman said as far as the public, yes the Impound Lot is closed. However, we are still using the Impound Lot in case we have drug busts or chain of custody. Tim Houser said a vehicle with an investigation going on will be up at that Impound Lot. Mr. Sterling just wanted to make sure all of his efforts didn't go to waste. The Board said absolutely not and they thanked him for his help.

Terri Knoedler asked if we could have the budget audited so everyone is aware of what is going on. Tim Houser said it is audited every year. She asked if it was public knowledge. The Board answered, yes and

Attorney Datte said all you would have to do is do a Right-to-Know request. Terri Knoedler also asked why is the Impound Lot closed. Chairman said we had too many that threatened law suits and too many people complaining after their car was impounded.

Valerie Coombe – asked about the budget and how much money did the Impound Lot bring in. Valerie Coombe said she understand that money goes into the General Fund but why can't we pay for the PD admin out of that money. Glenn Hummel stated she was hired up at the PD for 20hrs/week and in the road department for 20hrs/week. It didn't work out at the road department. Chairman said the Chief made our Police Dept. second to none as far as equipment and what we do. Chairman said he feel there should be a secretary or clerk at the PD however he is just not sure how many hours. Glenn Hummel feels if he is going to trade off with an administrator or an officer on the street, he would put an officer on the street. Glenn Hummel said that would allow him to hire two part-timers, which would allow him to cross shift every 4 hours. This way you will have dual coverage.

Lisa Sackhoff Hoppes – she feels the State Police does a great job. Chairman agreed but feels the response time is the concern with the State Police responding. Tim Houser said we do not receive anything additional from the County or the State for providing Police Protection. We provide what we can afford. As long as Tim Houser has lived in the Township it has never operated in the red. And as long as he sits on this Board we will not operate in the red.

Gloria Sheetz– feels the Police Officers are not paid to be secretaries they are paid to be a Police Officer. Tim Houser & Glenn Hummel said there are a lot of Police Officers from different municipalities that do their own paper work. The resident feels that they should be protecting our community. She doesn't want to see us without a police department.

Larry Stival - spoke about Summer Valley Rd. He said he contacted PennDOT, Jamie Barton's office & Dave Argall's office. Barton's office got the same response that he did. Larry Stival contacted PennDOT again and asked them to explain why different roads are 45mph than others that are basically the same kind of road but yet the section he asked to be reduced to 45mph wasn't allowed. PennDOT said he had to submit a Right-to-Know and he did and their response denied his RTK. Larry Stival also asked them about the intersection of SR309 & SR895 and apparently he didn't have the Right-to-Know that either. Chairman said we tried to ask PennDOT for the same and they denied the Township's request too. Glenn Hummel asked the Chief if someone would get their license plate number and testify at the magistrate when they are passing illegally would you issue them a ticket. Chief said if they can identify the person driving the car. Larry Stival said someone knows the answers to my questions and why can't we get answers to our Right-to-Knows.

Brian McQuillen – said the Township Supervisors are doing a good job as far as managing the money. There is a lot of people in the Township that are elderly and cannot afford a tax increase. He feels that the people that feel we have unlimited resources, tell them to put their money together and donate a \$100K to the Police Department. If they want to spend their money that is fine but don't spend his. Lynn Barron asked the Chairman if she could ask the Chief a question. She asked Chief Bonner if he does paperwork in his car currently. Chief said, yes. Are there things that cannot be done in the car. Chief said, yes. Chief believes that the PD secretary is a full-time position.

James Dean – asked the Board if they took an oath of office. Which they did. Mr. Dean asked what were some of the criteria of becoming a Supervisors. Defend, honor, serve and protect the public's safety. Mr. Dean asked if the BOS feels that they have done that. The BOS said, yes. Mr. Dean as a former

Supervisor said he did the same. James Dean said you cannot believe what it is like sitting on the other side. James Dean thanked the Board for everything they do.

Linda Daubenspeck – said she lives on Wertmans Hollow Rd. and they are having a water issue over there. Chairman said we are aware of the issue but unfortunately our Road Master was unable to attend the meeting but he will be in contact with you. Chairman believes we just don't want to put a band aid on something that needs stitches. We have to find the source of where the water is coming from. Chairman said the road master will contact her. They feel like the water is coming from East Penn Township.

Angelo Selitto – he feels some of the BOS is micromanaging the Police Department.

Ilisa Sackhoff Hoppes – said Tuscarora Grain was burning this weekend. She said she does not know what they were burning. She asked the secretary if they notified us about any burning. The Secretary said, no. Ilisa Sackhoff Hoppes stated as per their conditions of the Zoning Hearing they are required to notify us. Chairman asked the secretary if she would get in touch with them and find out what they were burning or roasting.

IX. Executive Session – Chairman called for a motion to go into executive session at 7:25PM for personnel. Tim Houser made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0 Chairman called the meeting back to order. In executive session personnel was discussed.

X. Adjournment

Chairman called for a motion at 7:48PM. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Tim Houser seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Transcribed By: Katie Orlick

West Penn Township Secretary