

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

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**Regular Meeting
Monday, February 5, 2024**

Present at the Meeting

Anthony Prudenti – Chair
Glenn Hummel – Vice Chair
James Akins – Supervisor
Jim Bonner – Chief of Police

Karen Wittig – Treasurer
Katie Orlick – Secretary
Jeremy Frable – Road Master
Mike Begis – ARRO
Paul Datte – Solicitor

I. General

A. Tony Prudenti called the meeting to order at 6:03PM with the Pledge of Allegiance & Introduction.

B. Public Comments on Agenda Items Only - None

C. Review of the Minutes – January 2nd & 15th, 2024.

Chairman called for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from January 2nd & 15th, 2024. Jim Akins made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

D. Treasurer’s Report – January 2024

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

E. Approval of Bills – January 2024

Chairman called for a motion to pay the bills. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jim Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

F. Solicitor’s Report

Attorney Datte said he is pleased to report that we have the fully executed donation agreement for the West Penn Pike property. Closing should be by the end of the month. Attorney Datte did speak with Ron Zimmerman from the County about the CDBG funds that would be available for demo on this property. He will forward the agreement to him and inform him when we would take title of the property.

Attorney Datte said he finally made contact with DEP on the Atlas Park property. He is hopeful he may have more information at our next meeting in two weeks.

Attorney Datte said he looked at the Graver Zoning Decision. His initial reaction was without knowing all the details of what they want to do; he feels they should do a new application under the new Zoning Ordinance. Attorney Datte said he does not see the same limitations in the new Zoning Ordinance that caused the permit denial. Attorney Datte said the setback or isolation distance from streams and so forth with the Self-Storage Facilities, are not the same in the New Ordinance. Attorney Datte suggests that they look at the new Ordinance. He said there is a section they would need to comply with, which is Section 602.A.56

He is confident that it is a permitted use of the Self-Storage as a matter of right in that Zoning District. Attorney Datte said he also dealt with some personnel issues in the last month. That said, he concluded his Solicitor’s Report. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Solicitor’s Report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jim Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

II. Land Use - No Plans for review for the month of January.

III. Operations

A. Engineer/Zoning Monthly Report – January 2024

Chairman asked Mike Begis from ARRO Consulting, Inc. if he had anything to report for the month of January. Mike Begis said he provided the BOS a report and he would be happy to address any questions the BOS may have. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Engineer’s Monthly Report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jim Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

B. Code Enforcement Monthly Report – January 2024

Chairman asked the BOS if they had any questions about the Code Enforcement Report. Jim Dean said he is meeting with the ESRC and an Engineer. The Engineer has been drawing plans for us, gratis for the building that might be going on the Atlas Park property. Jim Dean said there is an ESRC meeting on Wednesday, February 7th, 7PM, at the Tamaqua Borough Building. Chairman said we would be looking for a letter of support from them when we go for our next grant. Jim Dean said absolutely. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Code Enforcement Officer’s Monthly Report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jim Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

C. Sewage Enforcement Officer’s Monthly Report – January 2024

Chairman read the sewage enforcement officer’s report. The report consisted of 1 New Permit Applications, 3 Percolation Tests, 1 Site Evaluation, 1 Verification of Prior Testing, and 1 Interim Inspections. No Well Activities. No Malfunctions Reported. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Sewage Enforcement Officer’s Report. Jim Akins made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

D. Road Department’s Monthly Report – January 2024

Chairman read the Road Department’s Monthly report. The report consisted of General Maintenance to the Township Building & Equipment, Hauled in Millings, Plowing & Cindering Township Roads, Received 150 Tons of Salt, Hauled in Anti-skid, Repaired wash out on Archery Club Rd. with #3 stone. Cleaned trees and limbs off Township Roads and Repaired Street Signs on various Township Roads. Jeremy Fable attended the Penn DOT meeting and a Hazard Mitigation meeting in the month of January. Chairman also read the Maintenance Report. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Road Department’s Monthly Report. Chairman said Jeremy Fable asked, if the Board agrees, that he could purchase a Zero Turn Lawn Tractor. Chairman asked Jeremy Fable why he feels we need a new Zero Turn. Jeremy Fable said the Zero turn we currently have is a 2015 with 402 hours on it. It is showing its age. If the Board plans to have the Road Department maintain the parks this year then he recommends we get a new reliable mower. Attorney Datte inquired about the prices of the Zero Turns. Chairman said the prices are all CoStar Prices. Ag Industrial’s quote was \$10,200 for Toro, Eckroth Bros. Cub Cadet quote was \$12,279 with levers and \$12,522 with steering wheel and Deere Country, John Deere was \$11,775. Chairman asked if any of the Mowers had a steering wheel instead of the levers. Jeremy Fable said one of them from Eckroth has a steering wheel. Jeremy Fable said he has a Toro and he really did not have any issues with it however, he like the steering wheel idea because you could steer both front wheels better and you would have more control. Jeremy Fable said we would be taking the money to purchase the mower out of the Equipment Reserve. Glenn Hummel made the motion to go with the Cub Cadet with the steering wheel. Jim Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

E. Police Department Report – January 2024

Chairman read the Police Report. The Police Dept. had 6,227 miles patrolled 100 total citations & warnings, 11 motor vehicle accidents and 274 Total calls. Jim Akins said there were two storms that blew through. All hands were on deck to deal with the storms. Jim Akins thanked the police department & the road department for all their effort to keep things running through the storms. The Chairman and the Board applauded their efforts. Glenn Hummel said he had one question and he has asked previously, he said there were 274 calls and if you minus the 100. Glenn Hummel said are you talking that you had 174 calls. Glenn Hummel asked what kind of calls were there. Ambulance Calls, Fire Calls and Phone Calls or are you talking 174 other incidents. Jim Bonner said he believes there were 185 incidents that needed to be booked. Chairman said there were 11 motor vehicle accidents as well. Glenn Hummel said then there should be 163 criminal calls. Jim Bonner said he did not do the report and he was out but he will find out right away for him. Jim Bonner asked if he wanted him to break it down on how many criminal crimes were committed in West Penn Township. Glenn Hummel said it would be helpful to know. Jim Bonner said he could break it down. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Police Report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jim Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

F. Fire Company Monthly Report – January 2024

Chairman read the Fire Company's report. 15 Total calls for the month of January. The report consisted of 3 Motor Vehicle Accidents, Wire/Tree Down, 1 Automatic Fire Alarms, 2 Medical Assist, 2 Fire Police Calls, 2 Carbon Monoxide, 2 Pump Details & 1 Structure Fires. The department had their Monthly Meeting, did Maintenance on Building/Truck, had Gear & Equipment Drills, Pump Operations, Essentials of Firefighting Prep and Dynamics of Fire State Class. They had their monthly fundraisers such as the monthly Breakfast & Fire Company Cash Bingo. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Fire Department's Monthly Report. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Chairman seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Jim Akins asked the Chairman if he could address something from the Police Report. Jim Akins stated there have been many rumors floating around and he wanted to stress to the public that the West Penn Township Police Department is NOT under any investigations.

G. Ambulance Monthly Report – January 2024

Chairman read the Ambulance Monthly Report. Jim Akins apologized to the President of the Ambulance, Valerie Coombe because he missed their meeting due to having the flu. The Ambulance Report consisted of 42 total calls. 34 calls were in West Penn, 4 Tamaqua, and 2 Walker Township and 2 in East Brunswick Twp. The outcomes of the calls were 21 Treated, Transported BLS, 3 Cancelled, 1 Dead at Scene, 5 Treated, Refused Transport, 1 Treated, Transferred Care and 11 Treated, Transported, with ALS. Receiving Hospitals were 16 St. Luke's Miners, 1 Geisinger St. Luke's, 3 St. Luke's Carbon, 9 Lehigh Valley Carbon, 1 Cedar Cres LVHN & 2 Schuylkill East LVHN. The calls consisted of abdominal pain, breathing problems, cardiac arrest, choking, seizure, falls, traffic accidents, stroke, psychiatric problems, heat/cold exposure & lift assists. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Ambulance Report. Jim Akins made the motion to accept the Ambulance Report. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

IV. Old Business - NONE

V. New Business

A. Township Septic Repair – Chairman said we applied for Emergency Repair from DEP and we will be doing a lot of the work in house. The repairs could be anywhere from \$5000-\$50,000. We are looking at every option and we are working with our Sewage Enforcement Officer. Jeremy Frable said met with Bill Brior our Sewage Enforcement Officer. He feels there may be a crack in the tank.

B. Schuylkill County Tax Assessment – Chairman wanted our residents to know that the County hired a group called VISION Government Solutions, Inc. to do the Tax Assessment. These individuals will be taking pictures of homes, buildings and land. They will be taking measurements of the properties. They will be in our area for about two weeks. They may or may not knock on your door to let you know they are there. The County is asking for your cooperation. Chief of Police is aware of this going on. They will be patrolling. If anyone needs anything, you could certainly call the non-emergency number. (570-668-6100).

C. PennDOT – Chairman said the Board of Supervisors and staff, Senator Argall, Christine Verdier and Representative Jamie Barton met with two representatives from PennDOT. Our informational discussion consisted of the speed limit on SR895, and the intersection at SR309 & SR895 and some blind spots in that area that we feel should be addressed. We spoke about signage, signals and flashing beacons. PennDOT sent an email after the meeting, thanked the Board for having the meeting, and said that they believe it was beneficial for all parties involved. They did drive the four legs of the intersection prior to leaving our area and confirmed that there are some upgrades that could be made on the current signage. They will keep us informed of when the upgrades would happen. They also gave us a contact that would be able to help with additional questions about solar speed signs and intersection flashing beacons. PennDOT also clarified that speed limit sign responsibilities, any speed limit of 35mph or below is the responsibility of the municipality. Glenn Hummel wanted to clarify that the Township would still need PennDOT's permission whether we would do solar speed limit signs or flashing beacons at the intersection. We would have to go with their product availability. PennDOT would dictate to us whether we could do it or not. Glenn Hummel said we would have to use PennDOT approved signage. We would be able to do the Solar Signs in 30-day increments or do a forever sign. Regardless of what needs to be done it would have to be PennDOT approved.

Chairman said Larry Stival who has been very involved with this process was at the meeting as well. He lives and owns a business on SR895. He expressed how dangerous it is with cars speeding and passing in no passing zones. Chairman asked if Mr. Stival has anything else to add. Mr. Stival said he glad we got the attention of Senator Argall and Representative Barton. He said he was satisfied they showed up and that they had the opportunity to listen to our concerns. It will take time but at least they know our concerns. Larry Stival did ask if anyone was able to get in contact with the EZ Mart about letting cars exit out of the middle because that creates a five-point intersection. Glenn Hummel said he would stop and ask if there is anything, they could do to help our situation to make things safer.

VI. Correspondence

A. Eagle Scout – Postponed until next night meeting, March 4, 2024.

B. Chairman read a correspondence from Chris Johnson, Mill Lane – He wanted to let us know, just in case we would get phone calls. He said that due to the unfrozen/ wet conditions of the fields they had to stack the manure on an approved manure stacking location. (Per current manure management plan)

He said the source is from Embrovac. The manure is not for resale it would all be used on their farming operation. When they finished hauling, they did scrap up the road and at the end of their driveway to remove any dirt/mud that would have fallen off the tires of the truck tires.

Ilisa Sacknoff-Hoppes commented that it would be nice if they cover the trucks so the manure does not fly out of the truck when they hit a bump. She also noted there was a traffic jam because of the wide turn the truck had to make. She said she is glad to hear that they contacted the Township. However, she feels that they are burning oats and they have not contacted anyone about that. Katie Orlick, Secretary, said she believes they were burning trash, or shrubs and branches. However, she will confirm it with them. Ms. Hoppes asked if they were allowed to burn trash. Chairman said it depends what they are burning. He said you are not allowed to burn construction debris.

VII. Business from Anyone on the Board

Glenn Hummel – he recommended to the Fire Department and the Ambulance a great fundraiser. He said there is an Olive Oil and Vinegar Store in Jim Thorpe. They would create the bottles and would ship them out wherever they need to go. He was told that the Boy Scouts made \$4/bottle with that fundraiser and made a lot of money. Glenn Hummel said he would get them the contact information if they were interested.

Chairman - spoke about the recycling bin. The Company that hauls our recycling away offered us a temporary bin until our new one was finished. We have been waiting for our new bin for a long time. The company that has loaned us the bin free is now telling us that we need either to buy the bin for \$4500 from them or lease the bin. We contracted with Mark Boyle and put a deposit down for the new recycling bin through his Company. Since then Mark Boyle past away. Jim Akins asked if we could get our deposit back from Mark Boyle's Company to recoup the cost so we could purchase the loaner. The deposit was \$3987. Solicitor asked if we could take it somewhere to have it finished. Glenn Hummel suggested we purchase the loaner and wait to receive the new one. Chairman said then we would have three bins and we could not ask the Fire Company for more land. Glenn Hummel said that maybe we could use the other bin somewhere else. Chairman asked Jeremy Frable if we would be able to load our scrap in there and take it to the local scrap yard. Jim Akins wanted to recommend that the Chairman goes and has a conversation with Mark Boyle's Company and find out if we can put a deadline on it. If the bin is not done within the time frame that we get our money back. Glenn Hummel asked the Solicitor what he feels we should do at a legal standpoint. Attorney Datte asked if we had a contract or an agreement. Treasurer, Karen Wittig, said we got quotes, Mark's Company was the cheapest and then we put a deposit down. That was in August of 2022. Attorney Datte said August of 2022, that sounds like we are on solid legal footing for whatever we do. Attorney Datte said we could go to Mark's company, ask for what they started, and could take it somewhere else or we figure out our other options. Glenn Hummel recommends we do a little more fact-finding and see if we could lease the loaner for 30 days with the intent to buy. Board of Supervisors through around some options. Attorney Datte recommends we find out the status and in two weeks make some decisions. Chairman said he would reach out and try to have an answer for our next meeting.

VIII. Public Comments on General Items

Lisa Sacknoff Hoppes – Mill Dr. – has concerns about Mark Boyle's place and the sandblasting they are doing. Chairman said we did take care of that. Ms. Hoppes said she believes they also do a lot of construction materials burning. She is concerned not just for herself but for her neighbors. She also concerned for her quality of life.

Chairman recommended she contacts our Fire Department when there is burning, to make sure they are not burning construction materials. Jim Bonner said they should contact the Police Department first. Call the Non-Emergency Number #570-668-6100.

Paul Deisbach – Clearview Crossing – Tax ReAssessment said they put a piece of paper on your door letting you know they were on your property. His concern is that they do not put any information on that paper. How do they know that they are at the right property? Mr. Deisbach owns a couple pieces of property. He feels he was home and they did not knock on his door. Jim Akins said you could check the Schuylkill Parcel Locator and it clearly defines boundaries of the parcels and lots broken down. Jim Akins gave his experience of the tax assessment. Glenn Hummel stated they also use the 911 mapping to review the parcel. Attorney Datte said they use a bunch of different tools to review the properties. Attorney Datte said they have access to satellite imagery.

Delroy Haas – said if they could use all those tools to measure properties why they would have to come on people's properties. Chairman said it is more efficient to go out to the physical property.

Carl Greves – gave his experience when he lived in Jersey. He said the assessor wanted to come in the house to see if the basement was finished. He said he was told if his basement were finished his taxes would go up.

Burdell Snyder – St. Peters – has been following the Police Budget pretty closely. He said Lansford has a budget of over \$800K; Mahoning Township is \$1.2 Million at West Penn we are at \$400K. He knows we did not raise taxes but he feels we should because he feels we should increase the Police Budget. Chairman said we had a meeting with our Police Department. We did discuss salaries.

Art Sterling – Pin Oak Lane – he does not know if anyone is aware but a sign appeared coming down the Blue Mountain by where the new home was built. The sign recently appeared stating Jake Brakes are Forbidden in this Area. Jim Bonner said it will be gone by tomorrow. He just wanted to bring it to the Township's attention.

Valerie Coombe – had a concern about the signage by Dollar General. Chairman said that was already discussed with PennDOT.

Deroy Haas – asked about the Septic at the Township. Chairman explained some options on how we may be able to fix the septic issue. Chairman said it is up to Bill Brior our Sewage Enforcement Officer. Chairman said the Chief would like to reinstate Jason Lorah as a Sergeant and John Kaczmarczyk as a Sergeant. Jim Akins said he meant to address this at the Police meeting today but to all fairness to Jim Bonner, we do have some questions for him. Jim Akins would like to table that decision.

Jim Akins expressed that the Board of Supervisors and the Police Department had a great meeting today about dialogue, communication and expectations and the support shown for our Department. The Board and the entire Police Department met to strengthen communication and the paths to good relationships and letting them know about all of our support. Chairman said we are working on having our department have the highest paying part timers in the area. We cannot do it all right away but we are working towards that.

IX. Executive Session – NONE

X. Adjournment

Chairman called for a motion to adjourn at 7:25PM. Jim Akins made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Transcribed By:

Katie Orlick - West Penn Township Secretary