

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

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Monday, October 7, 2024

Present at the Meeting

Anthony Prudenti – Chair
Glenn Hummel – Vice Chair
James Akins – Supervisor

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

I. General

A. Tony Prudenti called the meeting to order at 6:05PM with the Pledge of Allegiance & Introduction.

B. Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

Michael Jachowicz – Dairy Rd. – said he appreciates the 25MPH speed limit on Dairy Rd. However, he feels that it should be enforced more. Mr. Jachowicz spoke to some neighbors that are willing to have the Police Dept. paint line and sit on their properties to run speed.

C. Review of the Minutes – September 3rd & 17th, 2024.

Chairman called for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from September 3rd, 2024. Glenn Hummel made the motion to accept the minutes from September 3rd. Jimmy Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0 Chairman called for a motion to accept the meeting minutes for September 17th. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jimmy Akins seconded the motion. Chairman did not vote because he did not attend that meeting. All in favor. Motion was carried. 2-1

D. Treasurer’s Report – September 2024 – Chairman called for a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Jimmy Akins made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Chairman called for a motion to dispense the Fire Relief Money of \$32,205.37 to the West Penn Township Fire Co. #1 Relief Association. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jimmy Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

E. Approval of Bills – September 2024

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

F. Solicitor’s Report

Attorney Datte said his report involves police issues. Attorney Datte read a brief statement on behalf of the Board. Attorney Datte said The Board of Supervisors intend to consider disciplinary action against James Bonner, Township Chief of Police, including possible termination. Chief Bonner has been on suspension with pay for the last three weeks. The Township has conducted an investigation and Chief Boner has been informed of the results of that investigation and has been given the opportunity to respond to the results of that investigation. In July of this year, Chief Bonner’s wife instated suit against the Township based on allegations unrelated to the matters currently involving Chief Bonner. The Township wasn’t to stress unequivocally and in the strongest possible terms that any action taken this

evening by the Board of Supervisors is based strictly on consideration of the facts and circumstances determined after investigation of Chief Bonner and his response and is not a result of or in retaliation for the suit commenced by his wife. Since this is a personnel matter, the Board will have no further comment on this matter. Attorney Datte said at this point the Board conducted their investigation and heard Chief Bonner's side of events, it is appropriate for the Board to take action. Jimmy Akins made the motion to terminate the contract of Chief Bonner. Chairman seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

II. Land Use - NONE

III. Operations

A. Engineer/Zoning Monthly Report – September 2024

Chairman asked Mike Begis from ARRO Consulting, Inc. if he had anything to report for the month of September. 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. Jimmy Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0. Jimmy Akins asked if we took care of the conversation we had with Mr. D'Angelo. Attorney Datte said he still has a side letter to prepare but we did receive the title work on the property. Chairman asked if Mike Begis was in touch with the person that was going to do the Technical review. Mike Begis said he has not but the secretary said she has been and gave him everything that he requested.

B. Code Enforcement Monthly Report – September 2024

Chairman called for a motion to accept the Code Enforcement Officer's monthly report for September 2024. Jimmy Akins made the motion to accept the code report. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

C. Sewage Enforcement Officer's Monthly Report – September 2024

Chairman read the sewage enforcement officer's report. The report consisted of 3 New Permit App., 6 Test Probes, 6 Interim Inspections, 1 General Field Inspections, and 2 Subdivision Plan Review. Well Report there were 1 new Well Permit, 1 Design Review and 1 Site Evaluation. No Malfunctions were reported. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Sewage Enforcement Officer's Report. Jimmy Akins made the motion to accept the Sewage Enforcement Report for September 2024. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

D. Road Department's Monthly Report – September 2024

Chairman read the Road Department's Monthly report. The report consisted of General Maintenance to the Township Building & Equipment, Fixed street signs along Township Roads, Cleaned up trees and limbs along Township roads, Paved Arrow Rd. (Low Volume Project), Installed Shale on Arrow Rd. (Dirt & Gravel Grant), Mowed grass along Township Roads, Paved bad spots on Archery Club Rd., Installed Bridge Weight Limit Signs on Pine Hill Rd., and Widen Mill Drive for paving. Chairman also read the Maintenance Report. Jimmy Akins said someone contacted him about Ridge Cup Rd. The Road is deteriorating especially on the back end of the rd. Jimmy Akins asked if the Road master could look at it. Jimmy Akins made the motion to accept the Road Dept.'s monthly report. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Chairman wanted to respond to Ron Wehr's request to lower the speed limit from the September 3rd meeting. Ron Wehr's asked to lower the speed limit on Cold Spring Rd. between Pine Hill Rd. and SR443. The Road Master said it does meet the criteria to reduce it to 25MPH. It would take 10 signs, posts and hardware. The cost per sign is \$130.00 each. The total cost would be \$1300 not including labor to install. That is about 5 miles of road. Chairman said we are currently working budget numbers and we will need a little time.

E. Police Department Report – September 2024

Chairman called for a motion to accept Richton Penn's Resignation. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jimmy Akins seconded the motion to accept Richton Penn's Resignation. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Chairman read the Police Report. The Police Dept. had 4,195 miles patrolled 87 total citations & warnings, 8 motor vehicle accidents and 120 Total calls. Our PD Truck inspector did 11 Inspections. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Police Report. Jimmy Akins made the motion to accept. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

F. Fire Company Monthly Report – August & September

Chairman read the Fire Report for August. The report consisted of 19 Total Calls answered. The calls were 2 Motor Vehicle Accidents, 6 Wires/Trees Down, 1 Medical Assist, 2 Landing Zones, 2 Fire Police Calls, 1 Carbon Monoxide Alarm, 2 Vehicle Fires, 1 Brush Fire & 2 Automatic Alarms. They held their monthly business meeting. Their Training consisted of Brush Fire Techniques, Vehicle Extraction, Building Maintenance and Tanker Operations.

Chairman read the Fire Report of September. The report consisted of 20 Total Calls answered. The calls were 7 Motor Vehicle Accidents, 4 Wires/Trees Down, 1 Pole Fire, 1 Landing Zones, 3 Fire Police Calls, 2 Structure Fires, & 2 Chief Requests. They held their monthly business meeting. Their Training consisted of Driver Training, Hand lines and Air Packs, Equipment Maintenance and Hydraulic Rescue Tools.

Chairman called for a motion to accept both reports, August & September. Glenn Hummel made the motion. Jimmy Akins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motions were carried. 3-0

Chairman thanked the Fire Company, Fire Police and the West Penn Township Police Department for the gas price reduction event that was held by Congressman Musser at the Pantry Quik Mart. They took care of traffic and the event ran smoothly. The Congressman reached out to Our Chairman personally and wanted him to relay the message back to our crews.

G. Ambulance Monthly Report – September 2024

Chairman read the Ambulance Monthly Report. The Ambulance Report consisted of 354 calls year to date. September had 41 total calls. 36 West Penn, 3 Tamaqua, 1 East Brunswick Twp. and 1 Walker Twp. The outcomes of the calls were 17 Treated and Transported BLS, 4 Cancelled, 1 Dead at Scene, 1 Lift Assist, 1 Refused Treatment, 2 Treated & Released, 1 Treated but not Transported, 14 Treated, Transported, with ALS. Receiving Hospitals were 13 St. Luke's Miners, 4 St. Luke's Carbon, 7 Lehigh Valley Carbon, 2 LVHN-Cedar Crest & 5 St. Luke's Geisinger. The calls consisted of Assault, Abdominal pain, breathing problems, chest pain, cardiac arrest, falls, convulsions/seizure, fire, stroke, sick, heart problem, laceration, traffic accident injury, fainting and psychiatric problems. Chairman said 4 calls were missed in September. Two were because we were busy. One was they were called off and the other was because they had an issue with the Ambulance and could not continue the call. The BOS thanked the Ambulance Association for their Service. Chairman discussed a new Ambulance truck. Chairman said the bank contacted us and they are asking for a letter from our Board stating that we give the Ambulance X

amount of Money per year and we would be willing to put that towards the Truck Payment. Chairman said we need to understand that we will not exceed the amount we a lot for the Ambulance in the current year. Chairman asked the Board if they would agree to allow our Solicitor to speak with Mike Prock from MCT Bank. The Board agree to do that. Glenn Hummel asked the approximate cost of the new truck. Karen Crostley said approximately \$188K for just the truck. Chairman called for a motion to accept the Ambulance report for September 2024. Jimmy Akins made the motion. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

IV. Old Business - NONE

V. New Business

A. The Board of Supervisors announced Time & Date for Trick or Treat will be held Thursday, October 31st from 5PM -8PM. Jimmy Akins made the motion to designate Halloween to be held on Thursday, October 31st from 5PM to 8PM. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0 The Penn Mahoning Ambulance will have hotdogs and light refreshments 4PM-5PM.

VI. Correspondence

A. Reminder: Andreas Parade will be held on Wednesday, October 16th at 7PM (Rain date October 17th)

B. License Plate Replacement Event will be held October 17th, from 3PM to 6PM at the Municipal Building.

VII. Business from Anyone on the Board

A. Jimmy Akins made a motion to post the open position of Chief of Police. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0 Board agreed to advertise.

B. Sgt. John Kaczmarczyk announced national drug take back day is scheduled for Saturday, October 26, 2024, technical hours are 10AM-2PM, but if someone cannot make that let him know and he could make an arrangement.

VIII. Public Comments on General Items

Jackie Selitto – asked about the lawsuit against the Township and if it is coming out of taxpayer’s dollars to pay for the litigation. Chairman said we do not pay for it out of our General Fund. The Township has a Liability Insurance Policy, which we pay the premium every year if we use it or not, which that would cover the lawsuit. Jackie Selitto asked currently how many active police officers we have in our department. The Board and Officer Kaczmarczyk said 5 officers.

Karen Crostley – said the Penn Mahoning Ambulance passed their inspection and they have their regular 3 Year License again.

Gayle Mateyak – she expressed her concerns about streams drying up by Pin Oak Lane. She understands that the DRBC and DEP are the ones that regulates Water Extraction. She asked if they contact the Township when they do a site visit or any regulatory action. She said there was a site visit from David Kovach of the DRBC on September 6, 2024. Ms. Mateyak said he did a walk around Pin Oak Lane Area and above. She feels it was inconclusive. It is currently exceedingly dry for our area. Mr. Kovach is having a geologist look into it because her stream is very dry. She feels Water Extraction plays a part in damage to wells and the environment. She encourages people if they feel there is a problem to measure their wells and keep data. Chairman asked Ms. Mateyak if her well is dry. Ms. Mateyak said no but it is down. Chairman said it could be because of the drought. She agreed. Her fear is that her well does not come back up after rain. Chairman asked her to keep the Township informed. She said she also spoke with the Fish & Game Commission. Chairman asked if she would provide the Board with contact numbers to the

organizations she has been in contact with. Glenn Hummel recommended her to speak with people over the mountain/New Tripoli area to see if they have any data for her.

Michael Jachowicz – Dairy asked the Road Master to start repairing some of the dents/potholes in the road. He said when truck traffic goes by his wife and his seven-month-old child is getting up. Chairman said that our Road Dept. is paving right now. They have projects they need to complete before the quarry shuts down for the season. Chairman asked secretary to remind Jeremy Frable to get that taken care of that area.

Ernie Daubenspek – Wertmans Hollow Rd. wanted to let the Board of Supervisors know that he took care of a fallen Ash Tree, cut it up and fixed up the swale.

Burdell Snyder – asked the Board of Supervisors, when was the Township served with the paper for the lawsuit. Mr. Snyder said Bonner was suspended in September. The Board said yes. Mr. Snyder questioned if it was retaliation. Jimmy Akins said they are no way, shape or form retaliation. Chairman said no they are two different animals/situations. Attorney Datte said absolutely not. Mr. Snyder feels differently. Attorney Datte said Mr. Snyder could believe whatever he wants but they did not have anything to do with each another.

Terri Knoedler – asked the board if she is aware that what she is doing, by putting mail in people's mailboxes, is illegal without postage on it. Chairman said he does not know that she is doing that. Terri Knoedler believes she is because she is caught on camera. Neighbors went to Ms. Knoedler and told her about it. Chairman asked Gayle Mateyak if she is putting notes in people's mailbox. Ms. Mateyak said she is putting notes in there to call DRBC. Terri Knoedler asked her in mailboxes correct. Ms. Mateyak said yeah. Chairman asked if Ms. Knoedler would like to make a complaint to the police. Office Kaczmarczyk said that goes to postage inspection. Terri Knoedler said she filled out a complaint online for the postal inspector and she would like to fill out a police report also. Chairman said the Officer would send you to the Postal inspector anyway.

Delroy Haas – feels the response about the Police Department on what is going on is insufficient. Delroy has said there are many rumors and questions going around. He feels the public should know what is going on. Chairman said he understands what Mr. Haas is feeling however, he cannot comment on a lawsuit and the other was disciplinary action, had nothing to do with the lawsuit, it had something to do with the actions of our police chief. Attorney Datte said the disciplinary action was the termination. Delroy Haas asked if there was going to be a hearing. Attorney Datte said we had a Laudermill Hearing. Attorney Datte said the Chief was provided with notice of the results of the investigation. He was given an opportunity to present his side of the story. Which he choose to do so. Attorney Datte said that tonight we took action. Attorney Datte said based on the investigation and based on the statements and opportunity the Chief had to discuss those and represent his side. Delroy Haas asked if there would be more information coming out about this situation. Attorney Datte said there could be but not at this time. Delroy Haas asked if that was finalized. Jimmy Akins said yes it is finalized and now we are looking for a new Chief of Police. Delroy Haas expressed his concerns about Police coverage. Jimmy Akins expressed his feelings about the situation. He said that 8yrs. ago there was a culture here. There was a culture of responsibility, accountability and ownership. Everyone got along. There was a trust between the Board of Supervisors and the Department. When he came for his second term that was not here. He tried effortlessly to try to get that back. Jimmy Akins said the lawsuit was totally separate from what happened. He said keep in mind the Township was not asked to comment or be interviewed when you read the newspaper, which was frustrating. This Township historically has been so supportive of the

police department. We have a ton of support for our department. We agreed to hire another full time officer for our department. We will get our culture back. There were performance issues, disciplinary stuff that was a very serious matter and a Lauderhill hearing was given to our Chief. Which he was able to come in, represent and defend himself. The Board acted appropriately and properly, as you would want us too. Jimmy Akins said if you do not feel safe; please erase that from your memory. You are safe! There is a lot of support here. Jimmy Akins said we have officers on call, part time officers and we will have full time officer. If something happens in the Township, our officers will be there if they are on duty or not. They ride with their vest always on. We are as safe as we ever been! We have a strong department, they have the strongest support possible, and it will never fade. Glenn Hummel said we would never cause any liabilities to the Township to hurt someone. We are protecting the Township all of the time. In a case that something like this has to come up and happens, we do not sleep well at night. We are protecting the Township. If it is serious enough for a contract to be terminated, you have to look between the lines and say there is something wrong. Something needed to be corrected to protect the Township. Jimmy Akins said we would reassess and be stronger than ever. Delroy Haas asked if there is a court hearing would that be announced to the public. Jimmy Akins said absolutely. Jimmy Akins said we will rectify our culture. Chairman said we are all striving for the same thing to better West Penn Township and protect our Township.

Ronald Wehr - asked what we are doing to entice a new Police Chief. Mr. Wehr spoke about wages and increases. Chairman said we are prepared to increase the Police budget for salaries.

Shawn Phillips – feels that Sgt. Kaczmarczyk being the Officer in Charge should be compensated for his extra hours of services he has been doing. Chairman said as of right now he has not been compensated. Chairman said however, we agreed we would be compensating him but we do not know how long we would need to compensate him yet. Chairman said but Sgt. Kaczmarczyk will be compensated. Jimmy Akins said before all this happened, the Board was in negotiations for a significant raise for the Chief. Chairman said yes, his contract was up at the end of the year and we were going give him a nice raise.

Valerie Coombe said she agrees with Shawn Phillips, that he deserves to be compensated. The Board said he would be compensated appropriately.

Attorney Datte said it is not appropriate to be discussing the Sgt. bonus at an open meeting.

Thomas Wellington –West Penn Fire Co. President – wanted to remind everyone about the Fire Company's breakfast 8AM-12 Noon and their bingo coming up.

Delroy Haas wanted to clarify that the Chief of Police has been terminated as of today. Chairman said yes.

Glenn Hummel reminded everyone that Wreaths Across America has started if anyone is interested in sponsoring a wreath. Sponsorships will not be accepted after November 29, 2024. The Wreaths will be place on a Veteran's Grave at Sky View Memorial Park.

IX. Executive Session – NONE

X. Adjournment

Chairman called for a motion to adjourn at 7:05PM. Jimmy Akins made the motion to adjourn. Glenn Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried. 3-0

Transcribed By:

Katie Orlick - West Penn Township Secretary