

LOWER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Monday February 6, 2023

The Board of Commissioners of Lower Pottsgrove Township held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday February 6, 2023, at the Lower Pottsgrove Township Building, located at 2199 Buchert Road, Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Board of Commissioners: Raymond W. Lopez, Earl E. Swavely, Robert Mohollen, Michael McGroarty, and William Keohane were present.

Edward C. Wagner: Manager, Richard Bell: Police Chief, Lew Babel: Fire Marshal, Nick Perilli: Township Engineer, Jamie Ottaviano: Solicitor, and Nicole Varady: Secretary, were also present.

The regularly scheduled meeting was called to order by President Raymond W. Lopez at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioner Lopez stated that the meeting will be recorded, and he asked any speakers to give their names and address for public comments.

Mr. Ottaviano announced that since the last public meeting on January 19, 2023, the Board of Commissioners conducted two executive sessions: January 26, 2023, at 11 A.M. and today before this meeting at 5:30 P.M. The sessions were for informational purposes only to discuss real estate. No deliberations were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Keohane made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2023, Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner McGroarty seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

REPORT FROM THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER:

Mr. Wagner provided an update regarding the streetlight installation on Pebble Beach Lane. The Township is currently waiting for the Cut Card from PECO. Once that is received, they can install the meter in order to activate the light.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS:

Tom Troutman - 2469 E. High Street Pottstown PA 19464

Mr. Troutman requests that the public be permitted to give input regarding the money being spent on plans for a new Police Department and Township Building. Commissioner Lopez assured him that the public will continue to be given all updates that are available, thanked him for his comments and took his suggestions under advisement.

REPORTS OF OFFICIALS AND COMMISSIONS:

Police:

Police Chief Bell presented the Police report for the month of January 2023.

CALLS FOR SERVICE	926
Directed Patrols / Extra Patrols	920
ASSISTS:	
Given by Lower Pottsgrove PD	10
Received by Lower Pottsgrove PD	1
TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT:	
Violations Indicated	129
Traffic Citations Issued	105
DUI Arrests	3
Accident Investigations	30
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS:	
Violations Indicate	23
Adults Arrested	8
Juveniles Handled	2
Youth Aid Panel/Reprimand Release	0
Juvenile Court	0
Adult Court/Citations (Juvenile)	0
MH/Involuntary Commitment	1

Chief Bell reported that a drug investigation was conducted that stemmed from observations and community complaints. A search warrant was issued and one individual from the home was arrested for drug sales.

Chief Bell informed the Commissioners that one of the Officers participated in a Roving DUI Checkpoint funded through the Highway Safety Grant. He also announced that over the past month, all Lower Pottsgrove Police Officers completed a mandatory active shooter training through Montgomery County. The intent is for all Police Departments to have the same training for instances when there is a uniformed response for mutual aid. Commissioner Lopez thanked Chief Bell for his report and for the work of the Police Department.

Emergency Management:

Commissioner Lopez reported there were no Emergency Operations Center activations during the month of January. He and Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator, Amy Henderson, attended a virtual meeting on January 18, 2023, presented by Montgomery County continuing the Hurricane Ida After Action Report and Improvement Plan. That same day, six (6) Township staff members attended a virtual training session on the Everbridge notification software and received their login to the application.

Commissioner Lopez provided an update that the County is currently reviewing our emergency operations plan. An in-person meeting will be scheduled with the Plan Reviewer to discuss the next steps. The Township is also preparing for the Limerick Exercise to be held in September by assigning staff members to Emergency Operations Center positions and arranging training specific to the exercise which will be federally evaluated. A Hostile Action Based Scenario will be added to this year's exercise.

Fire Marshal:

Fire Marshal Lew Babel presented the January 2023 report:

Station	Total Calls	Total Hrs. of Service	Total Personnel Hrs.	Total Personnel Training Hrs.	Total Fundraising Hrs.
Sanatoga (Station 58)	49	43 hrs. 28 mins	165 hrs. 43 mins	64 hrs. 0 mins	18 hrs. 30 mins
Ringing Hill (Station 59)	44	38 hrs. 40 mins	163 hrs. 23 mins	none	none

Fire Marshal Lew Babel presented the 2022 year-end report:

Station	Total Calls	Total Hrs. of Service	Total Personnel Hrs.	Total Personnel Training Hrs.	Total Fundraising Hrs.
Sanatoga (Station 58)	409	251 hrs. 17 mins	1046 hrs. 47 mins	1132 hrs. 15 mins	140 hrs. 15 mins
Ringing Hill (Station 59)	375	219 hrs. 32 mins	912 hrs. 51 mins	780 hrs. 45 mins	165 hrs. 0 mins

He also discussed and compared the fire loss totals for the previous years:

2021 \$242,000.00

2022 \$226,000.00

\$16,000.00 less than 2021

Fire Marshal Babel reviewed the barn fire from January stating that it was a textbook barn fire. 11 fire companies were called in to help. Everyone worked perfectly together for a successful firefighting job. Commissioner Lopez thanked him for his report and for the job well done.

Highway Public Works Department:

Mr. Wagner presented the January report which includes working on equipment, patching potholes, clearing storm drains, milling the road surface for drainage issues at Diane Court, installation of inlets and pipes on Snell Road, repairing the police station floor, preparing the 2023 Paving Projects for bidding, renewing the Salt contract, shoulder cutting for water issues, street sign work and small equipment repair. Mr. Wagner praised John Fogel and the Public Works Crew for the excellent work done on Snell Road. Commissioner Mohollen added that Mr. Fogel was at the barn fire and was very skilled in using the new equipment to remove debris. All present agreed they are pleased with how the equipment is being utilized and John's expertise in operating it.

Engineer:

Jim McCarthy of McCarthy Engineering Associates provided a written Engineer's Report for the month of January 2023 updating the Board on various ongoing projects in the Township. Nick Perilli was in attendance, he informed the Commissioners that they continue to work on the closeout for the Pruss Hill Road Bridge with PennDOT. The closeout documents were submitted last month so he hopes to have reimbursement back to the Township soon. Also, the revised

resubmission for Royal Farms has been received and will be reviewed over the coming weeks. Commissioner Lopez thanked Mr. Perilli for the updates.

Solicitor:

Solicitor Ottaviano provided a written report with a synopsis of all projects his office worked on for the month of December. Due to the confidential and privileged information he will answer any questions during the Executive Session if necessary.

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Wagner informed the Commissioners that Amy Henderson has ordered and received the eggs for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. It will be held on April 1 at 10 A.M. at Gerald Richards Park, rain date April 8.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Wagner echoed Nick Perilli stating that the Township has received the revised Royal Farms Plans which include a 5,380 square foot convenience store, a drive thru building that is just over 2,000 square feet, and a 25,000 square foot storage facility. They will appear at the March 20 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Wagner has also been informed that Wawa will be submitting revised plans within the next 30 days.

Lower Pottsgrove Township Authority:

Mr. Wagner informed the Commissioners that the Authority will meet on Monday February 13th at 6:00 P.M. Some items on the agenda include lining an 8-inch main on Kepler Road between Pebble Beach Lane and the Sitko Farm. The main will be lined per Fred Ebert's recommendation. Sunnyside Avenue to the Sitko Farm was completed last year so this is the continuation of that work. Several leaks were found including the largest which is on Porter Road. It is a 30-inch main that goes into pump station, approximately 400 feet. The final quote should be available tomorrow. Flows have decreased since Ebert Engineering has taken over, so the Township is pleased with the progress. Mr. Wagner informed Chief Bell that the road will have to be closed during the work on Porter Road.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION:

2023-01 Zoning Hearing Application for Coventry Christian Schools 699 N. Pleasant View Road R-2 Residential District. The Applicant is requesting a variance to 250-32.B to allow the maximum impervious coverage to be increased from 20 to 29 percent. In addition, they are requesting a special exception from Section 250-32 to construct or modify an institutional use within a Residential District.

Mr. Wagner informed the Commissioners that the hearing will take place on Wednesday February 22. The applicant is proposing a 9,700-square foot addition on the school with a playground, athletic field, and additional parking. They also want to construct a stormwater facility and perform grading on the adjacent lot which is owned by the Township. Under Section 250-32. B they want to increase the impervious coverage from 20 to 29 percent. The special exception from Section 250-32 involves seven (7) different requirements including: area, building coverage, height, yard requirement, clustering, nuisance control and requirement plans for Zoning Hearing Board. The Commissioners agreed to allow the decision up to the Zoning Board.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion to grant Officer Mara Smith Fulltime Status with the Police Department

Chief Bell commented that Officer Smith completed her one-year probationary period on January 20th. He said she is a great officer, and he recommends she be moved off probationary status to a full time Officer.

Commissioner Swavely made a motion to grant Officer Mara Smith fulltime status with the Police Department. Commissioner Keohane seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Consideration for Telco, Inc. of Reading, PA to install a Five Section Traffic Signal (left turn arrow) at the intersection of N. Pleasant View Road & E. High Street at a cost of \$7,542.

Mr. Wagner gave some background on the subject that in early fall, a group of residents voiced concerns about the traffic signal at this location. In 2018, the Township approached PennDOT regarding the light but at the time they were unwilling to allow the left turn arrow. The Township approached PennDOT again in 2022 and they were favorable to the change. It was approved on January 24, 2023. The change will allow for approximately 8-9 seconds for the left arrow. It could possibly cause a stacking issue on South Pleasant View Road but will allow traffic to flow more freely during peak hours. John Fogel was able to reduce the cost of the project with the assistance of Chief Bell by having Lower Pottsgrove Police serve as traffic control.

Commissioner Mohollen made a motion to approve consideration for Telco, Inc. of Reading, PA to install a Five Section Traffic Signal (left turn arrow) at the intersection of N. Pleasant View Road & E. High Street at a cost of \$7,542. Commissioner McGroarty seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Joe Zlomek asked for clarification regarding what a Five Section Traffic Signal is. Mr. Wagner explained that in addition to the typical red, yellow, and green lights, there will be a green and yellow left arrow so there will be five lamps on the traffic signal.

Motion to hire Chris Caggiano, Providence Consulting Associates LLC at a rate of \$135/hr.

Commissioner Lopez asked if anyone had questions. Resident Tom Troutman raised his hand. Commissioner Lopez explained that the Township needs a consultant to provide information such as building procedures, requirements, and timelines. Mr. Caggiano had been working with the Township as the Project Manager for the proposed building at High Street and Pleasant View Road but since his former company no longer exists, Mr. Caggiano formed his own company and will continue to work with the Township. Mr. Zlomek inquired about what his previous contract was. Mr. Wagner estimated it to be about \$95,000 to manage the project from start to finish. This contract will likely follow. Mr. Troutman asked if the architects that were previously hired continue to be paid. Commissioner Lopez confirmed that since there is no work for them right now, they are not being paid at this time. Mr. Zlomek asked if there is a deadline for the Township to spend the money that was borrowed. Mr. Wagner informed him there is not. Commissioner McGroarty made a motion to hire Chris Caggiano, Providence Consulting Associates LLC at a rate of \$135/hr. Commissioner Keohane seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Motion to advertise Oil & Chip Bid for consideration at the March 6 meeting.

Mr. Wagner announced that the project will be Brookside Farms including Potter Drive, New Kepler Road, and Overlook Drive.

Commissioner Keohane made a motion to advertise Oil & Chip Bid for consideration at the March 6 meeting. Commissioner McGroarty seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES: NONE

APPROVAL OF WARRANT #929 FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2023

Mr. Wagner announced that Warrant #929 is not yet complete.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Commissioner McGroarty had no comments.

Commissioner Keohane thanked Mr. Wagner and Mr. Joe Groff for anything they had to do with the building at Keim Street and Charlotte Street being torn down because it was a safety hazard as well as an eye sore. He also acknowledged Chief Bell and his department for identifying the drug activity that ended up in an arrest.

Commissioner Mohollen had no comments.

Commissioner Swavely recognized the fire departments and the police department for the fantastic job they did with the recent barn fire.

Commissioner Lopez expressed his pleasure that Officer Mara Smith has gotten to the level she is at. He explained he had the opportunity to speak to her regarding Emergency Management during the cold weather around Christmas. She and Officer Tantorno knocked on doors of residents to ensure their safety.

Mr. Ottaviano announced that it has been one year since he was appointed as Solicitor for Lower Pottsgrove Township. He thanked the Commissioners and stated it has been a privilege.

Mr. Wagner praised Michele Hogrelius, Michele Christman and Chief Bell for the excellent job in completing the retro pay for police officers. He also announced that the auditors will be here next week.

Commissioner Keohane made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner McGroarty seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 in favor. There being no further business, the public meeting was adjourned at 7:01 P.M. The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 23, 2023, at 6:30 P.M. at the Lower Pottsgrove Township Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Varady
Township Secretary