

Ligonier Township Supervisors
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2023

The Supervisors of Ligonier Township met in regular session at 4:30 p.m. Present were Chair, Dan Resenic; Vice Chair, Erik Ross; Secretary/Treasurer, Stephanie Verna; Supervisor, D. Scott Matson; and Supervisor, John Beaufort.

Also present were Manager, Michael Strelac; Solicitor, Dan Hudock; Engineer Ben Faas; Chief of Police John Berger; and Finance Officer, Bethany Caldwell.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Verna – Said there had been some emails exchanged among the board regarding the recently awarded DCNR grant and the grant’s match money that will be provided by the Friends of Ligonier Beach (FOLB). She didn’t participate in the emails, due to concerns they were in violation of the Sunshine Act. She asked that the Board have these discussions in front of the public at the meetings as the Township is trying to enter a relationship with the residents of the community. She supported the decision to grant a 30-day extension, but wanted to discuss the process used to come to that decision.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Scott Matson to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

Correspondence

1. DCNR Ligonier Beach Site Study grant award letter
2. Cindy Brown, thanking Public Works for clearing pine trees off White City Road
3. Ron Davies, thanking Public Works for removing tree from Peters Road bridge

Manager Report

Mr. Strelac reported that he attended a press briefing last Thursday regarding the County’s broadband project. They have identified “early action projects” in the township and will use some of their ARPA money to fund these projects.

Public Works Report

Staff have received complaints from residents upset by the crew cleaning out the ditches designed to channel stormwater. Residents blow leaves into the ditches and don’t want the leaves blown back on their property. There are “unwritten rules,” places where the crew skips cleaning to avoid confrontations. Supervisor Verna asked about the Township’s procedures. She requested the crew report back to the manager so that he can send these residents a letter explaining it is the township’s responsibility to maintain its assets. The crew should not be skipping these areas.

Engineer Report

The Dollar General's contractor has started work. Mr. Faas has asked for a copy of their project schedule.

Solicitor Report

Mr. Hudock said the DEP's lawyer wants to meet again and requested additional information.

Finance Report

The following reports were presented to the board:

2022 Fuel Summary – a breakdown of the fuel usage and associated cost by department; it was noted that Public Works and Fire Department expenses are paid for by the Township, while the LVPD and LTMA reimburse the township for their use.

The General Fund's Budget vs. Actual monthly report for December along with the 2022 General Fund Variance Report.

The 2023 Anticipated Grant Application Summary – a look at the upcoming grant opportunities schedule and potential projects that might be good candidates.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Erik Ross to approve the bills as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business

Mr. Strelie reported the Records Retention ordinance had been duly advertised.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by John Beaufort to approve the Records Retention ordinance. Motion carried.

Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) Discussion

Supervisor Resenic explained he had thought we'd get better rates and service with the EADS Group serving as the township's Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO). He did not realize that it would be difficult to compare rates (apples to oranges) and that Mr. Faas would not be assigned as our SEO. The EADS Group charges by the hour, while APEX charges by the job, and The EADS Group appears to be 15-20% more expensive for other services. Supervisor Verna was willing to pay higher rates if that meant better service. There are a lot of failed septic tanks in the Township and we need to protect our water and residents. While she wanted to research this further, Supervisor Beaufort said the Board needed to make a decision as we cannot go without an SEO. He suggested that staff research SEO options and rates in November, in preparation for next year's appointment.

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by John Beaufort to appoint APEX as the township's Sewage Enforcement Officer and amend the fee schedule to include their fees and rates. Motion carried.

New Business

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by John Beaufort to reappoint Terrell Funk to the Recreation Board for term to expire 12/31/2023. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Scott Matson to revise the motion made at the January 3, 2023 Organization meeting and appoint Mike D'Arrigio and APEX as the Township's Sewage Enforcement Officer. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Stephanie Verna to approve Resolution 2023-R-02 (Investments). Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Scott Matson approving a job offer to Rick Krouse, for the Township's Zoning / Code Enforcement Officer full-time position at \$19 per hour with a tentative start date of February 8, pending successful completion of his background check. Motion carried.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Comments from the Public

Initially, there were no comments from the public (see below).

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Verna – Read two emails aloud (attached), in which Supervisor Resenic said he had been in touch with the DCNR's Adam Mattis. After consulting with Mr. Mattis, he asked how the board felt about giving the FOLB a 30-day extension to turn in the match money to the Township. She cautioned these conversations need to happen publicly, bringing a \$50k match to the table is nothing to sneeze at, these residents should have a say in how the grant is administered. She looked to Mr. Hudock for guidance.

Supervisor Resenic – Said he was trying to adhere to the DCNR's regulations and there was concern about the time crunch, he thought we were to have the money secured back when the grant application was initially submitted. He did not feel he had done anything wrong and based this upon his former experience serving on the school board where it was normal to poll the other board members.

Mr. Hudock said everything about the emails appeared fine, due to the sense of urgency. He said that ultimately it is the township's grant, and the township's responsibility.

Supervisor Beaufort – Asked questions about the roles of the FOLB and Township and if there should be an MOU to give the FOLB input on how their money is spent. He asked who established the deadline to turn in the grant match money (Supervisor

Resenic said he did). He then asked about the Township's past involvement, supporting the DCNR Beach grants.

Supervisor Ross – Clarified when the motion to apply for this grant was made last year, they restricted the use of local taxpayers' money. Since the grant has to be under the Township's name staff will need to process the bills and administer the checks, but that is it.

Supervisor Resenic – Said we will form a committee of representatives, as required by the grant.

Mr. Stewart said the FOLB is still committed to not spending taxpayers money and they would entertain reimbursing the township for any administrative expenses they incur. They're requesting a meeting to discuss this and set up an MOU as they believe the pledge money they've collected so far can only be used as grant match money.

Supervisor Verna – Said we'd need an agreement to spell out the terms for billing.

Ms. Emery – Requested a meeting to discuss and develop an MOU so both parties understand the specifics and responsibilities on each end.

Supervisor Resenic – Said at the end of the day, everyone needs to understand the DCNR dictates the terms we have to follow. He wasn't trying to hide anything or violate anyone's trust, he was acting in the best interest of the community. He had been in direct contact with Ms. Eller and was trying to expedite the process.

Mr. Hudock asked the FOLB to submit an MOU or Cooperation Agreement draft – an outline of who is doing what and he noted the sooner, the better.

Supervisor Matson said he thinks the Township should sell the Beach to the FOLB, he believes we are holding them up. A few years ago, when the idea of buying the Beach was first discussed, the Board was clear it was not their intent to operate a pool. Residents tell him they're concerned about the township operating a pool as they do not want their taxes to be raised.

Ms. Donovan said the DCNR looks favorably at partnerships and collaborations. On a positive note everyone should be proud they secured a competitive state-wide grant. FOLB will share their correspondence with the pledges.

Ms. Emery asked for clarification regarding the 30 day deadline to turn over the \$50k match money (i.e. the exact date and time).

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by John Beaufort to set the deadline to turn in the \$50k in match funds and have an MOU in place by Wednesday, February 15 at 3 p.m. With no opposition, the motion was approved.

The FOLB was directed to send their MOU draft to Township Manager Mike Strelac.

Joe Wells, from the Latrobe Bulletin objected and said there appeared to be violations of the Sunshine law. Citing the Right-to-Know law, he requested a copy of the email(s) that were exchanged by the Board members discussing the FOLB pledge, deadline, etc. Supervisor Resenic agreed to share the correspondence.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Erik Ross to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Caldwell
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

From: [Stephanie Verna](#)
To: [Bethany Caldwell](#); [Michael Strelac](#)
Subject: Fw: FOLB request for a 30 day extension in providing the \$50K match funds
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 2:17:15 PM

email 1 read at meeting

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Dan Resenic <danresenic@yahoo.com>
To: Melissa Eller <meller@diakon-swan.org>
Cc: Michael Strelac <mstrelac@ligoniertownship.com>; Dan Hudock <dhudock@lch-attorneys.com>; John Beaufort <john@beaufortservices.com>; Stephanie Verna <verna_stephanie@yahoo.com>; Erik Ross <erikbross@gmail.com>; Janell Emery <summitperformanceandrehab@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 at 07:42:09 PM EST
Subject: FOLB request for a 30 day extension in providing the \$50K match funds

Ms. Eller, After consultation with our DCNR grant advisor, Adam Mattis, and polling the board of Ligonier Twp. supervisors I am hereby granting the FOLB request for a 30 day extension in providing to the Twp. the required \$50,000 in matching funds. These funds should be provided to the Ligonier Twp. no later than the close of business on Friday, February 10, 2023.

Please be aware that if the Twp. receives the Grant Agreement Package from the DCNR before these funds are provided any work on the agreement review or grant administration process cannot occur. The Twp. will not sign the agreement until these funds are in place. In addition because grant administration activities are considered by the DCNR as ineligible grant funded expenses, the Twp. will be relying on the matching funds to cover the cost of time expended by Twp. personnel in reviewing the grant agreement and setting up an appropriate restricted account for this project as well as other activities as the project commences.

Let's all work together to make great, fiscally responsible, things happen for the Ligonier Township and it taxpayers.

Thank you, Daniel Resenic, Chairman, Ligonier Township Supervisors

From: [Stephanie Verna](#)
To: [Bethany Caldwell](#); [Michael Strelie](#)
Subject: Fw: FOLB 30 day extension on providing the \$50K matching funds for the DCNR grant
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 2:17:39 PM

email 2 read at meeting

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Dan Resenic <danresenic@yahoo.com>
To: Erik Ross <erikbross@gmail.com>; Stephanie Verna <verna_stephanie@yahoo.com>; John Beaufort <john@beaufortservices.com>
Cc: Mike S. <michael.strelie@gmail.com>; Dan Hudock <dhudock@lch-attorneys.com>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 at 05:00:41 PM EST
Subject: FOLB 30 day extension on providing the \$50K matching funds for the DCNR grant


Folks, after a conversation today with Adam Mattis, DCNR grant advisor, I am asking if you object to granting the request from the FOLB for a 30 day extension in providing the \$50K in match funds. Adam Mattis sees no problem in granting the 30 day extension and neither do I. Please respond to me asap if you have a strong and legitimate objection to granting the FOLB request. Thank you, Dan Resenic

Ligonier Township, Westmoreland County, PA

Bill Payments for All Vendors

January 23, 2023

Vendor	Type	Num	Amount
Jan 23, 23			
AA Septic Tank Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25346	500.00
Andrews Sales & Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25347	49.38
Apex Companies LLC	Bill Pmt -Check	25348	1,112.50
Daniel C. Hudock Attorney at Law	Bill Pmt -Check	25349	987.50
Dumbauld's Tire Service, Inc.	Bill Pmt -Check	25350	3,020.00
Groff Tractor and Equipment	Bill Pmt -Check	25351	4,400.00
Guardian Protection Services	Bill Pmt -Check	25352	255.00
High Pressure Component Sales, LLC	Bill Pmt -Check	25353	21.33
Ken Vallino	Bill Pmt -Check	25354	18.00
Laurel Valley Hardware Inc.	Bill Pmt -Check	25355	16.90
Laurel Valley Motors	Bill Pmt -Check	25356	67.68
Ligonier Giant Eagle	Bill Pmt -Check	25357	33.79
LVTech	Bill Pmt -Check	25358	1,661.18
Northwestern Mutual	Bill Pmt -Check	25359	13,993.54
PennPrime	Bill Pmt -Check	25360	7,279.00
PSATS	Bill Pmt -Check	25361	1,491.00
Smith Propane & Oil	Bill Pmt -Check	25362	1,511.59
Springer Communications LLC	Bill Pmt -Check	25363	274.84
SWIF	Bill Pmt -Check	25364	1,081.00
U.S. Municipal	Bill Pmt -Check	25365	144.99
UniFirst Corporation	Bill Pmt -Check	25366	199.74
Unifirst First Aid & Safety	Bill Pmt -Check	25367	45.98
West Penn Power	Bill Pmt -Check	25368	570.46
Jan 23, 23			38,735.40


 SAV
 1-24-23

11:21 AM

01/23/23

Ligonier Township-Liquid Fuels
Bill Payments for All Vendors
January 23, 2023

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Num</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Jan 23, 23				
West Penn Power	Bill Pmt -Check	1304	01/23/2023	56.34
Jan 23, 23				<u>56.34</u>

OR
SR
1-24-23