

**Ligonier Township Supervisors
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 28, 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, Zoning / Code Enforcement Officer, Rick Krouse; and Finance Officer, Bethany Caldwell.

Comments from the Public

1. Tom Brown, a resident who owns four properties in the Township. He is not in favor of the township owning/operating a pool at the Ligonier Beach.
2. Ken Vallino, a resident and Recreation Board Member, agreed with Mr. Brown. He is running for Supervisor. He acknowledged it is a challenge to oust an incumbent, but wanted the Board to know that every vote he gets is a vote from people that don't want the Township to own a pool. He is not against a pool if it is privately owned.

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Matson – Agreed with Mr. Brown and Mr. Vallino and said he didn't want to vote for purchasing the property, the issue was poison. He was told the Township was using McKenna Foundation money to clean up the property and that the Township wouldn't get involved with the pool; that was a lie and it's turned into a controversy.

Supervisor Ross – Said his hat is off to all the fire departments that responded to a trailer fire last night in the wind and rain, the community would be hurting without them.

Supervisor Verna – Requested an executive session be held to discuss the Public Works union contract.

Supervisor Beaufort – Agreed with Supervisor Ross and mentioned 12 other calls besides the trailer fire came in yesterday, at 4:25 p.m. today there was another call. He reiterated that while the fire departments need our financial support, they could really use some more volunteers.

Supervisor Resenic – Thanked the FOLB, there was approximately half a dozen volunteers at the Ligonier Beach this past Saturday clearing fallen pine trees and their efforts saved the Township money. He noted the swimming pool's diving board was removed, eliminating it as a liability. Hopefully, the county will get a crew out there to move the waterline, but things get backed up with supply and labor shortages. It's on the calendar.

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Scott Matson to approve the minutes from the February 14, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

Manager Report

Mr. Strelac reported after finding no legal requirement(s), he opted to remove Correspondence from the agenda in favor of passing the information along quicker via his weekly emails. Should correspondence requiring action be received he would place it on the agenda under "New Business."

There was a discussion about the public's perception that if an item is placed on the agenda under Correspondence that means it will be read aloud at the meeting. The consensus was to keep Correspondence on the agenda, despite these items not being read aloud at the meeting, they are available to public should they request them.

Engineer Report

Mr. Faas reported Dollar General is moving forward with the first stage of stormwater installation and he has not received any complaints.

Supervisor Resenic thanked Assistant Chief Mike Matronics for quickly handling a report that a large truck was physically blocking 271 and the line of sight near the construction site. He got the truck moved and prevented an accident.

Solicitor Report

Mr. Hudock deferred his report.

LTMA Report

Mr. Griffith reported that the LTMA's projects are three quarters complete:

- The Robb Road-Wilpen Road loop is waiting for a permit back to come back from DEP and they estimate it will be completed in the next 3 weeks.
- The Fort Palmer line that will feed Outside In has been put in and filled, it needs to sit 3-4 days to complete its bacteria test and then West Penn can turn power on at the booster station.
- The Youngstown Ridge line is also waiting for West Penn to restore power to its booster station.
- Mid-Atlantic has poured 80 yards of concrete footer, still need to pour a second layer of 50 yards, then tank can go up in about a month.
- The Waterford Plant – LTMA line is half way dug, they've hit a lot of rock.

Supervisor Resenic asked if the tank is built, No. Is there a supply issue? No.

Staff Reports

Zoning / Code Enforcement – Mr. Krouse introduced himself and said he's been busy familiarizing himself with the Township's ordinances and procedures.

Finance – Mrs. Caldwell reported:

- The Treasurer's report has been updated, the General Fund Reserves were underreported by \$659 as there was no January statement due to a lack of activity. The report was updated to include more details regarding the Township's CDs (General Fund Reserves).
- The Township received notice its Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume grant applications were not selected for funding. Staff will meet with Conservation District in the fall to go over their selection process notes, in preparation for the 2023 applications.
- The 2023 Liquid Fuels allocation (\$372,422) and Turn-back money (\$3,840) will be deposited tomorrow, this aligns with the budgeted amount.
- The General Auditor's office is conducting an audit of the Pension Plan, audit period covers 2018-2022.

Treasurer's Report

Fund Balances (month end)	January
General Fund	\$ 505,920
General Fund Reserves	\$ 689,181
Liquid Fuels Tax Fund	\$ 55,822
Capital Fund Reserves	\$ 71,682
Ligonier Beach Park Fund	\$ 72,213
American Rescue Fund	\$ 341,075
Developer's Fund*	\$ 54,757
*Escrow	\$ 4,500
*Mill Creek Memorial Park	\$ 1,209
*Hi Acres Waterline	\$ 49,048
Total Funds	\$1,790,651

General Fund Reserves	January
Synchrony Bank CD (5/11/23)	\$ 99,622
Discover Bank CD (10/3/23)	\$ 114,917
Sweep Account	\$ 474,643
Total General Fund Reserves	\$ 689,181

Payroll	January
Administrative	\$ 10,006
Public Works	\$ 21,598
Elected	\$ 923
Employer Tax	\$ 2,431
Deductions	\$ (1,069)
Payroll Billing	\$ 217
Total Payroll	\$ 34,107

*denotes funds are restricted

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

Supervisor Matson asked what the Town & Country invoice was for – Truck 8 suspension.

Old Business

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by John Beaufort to approve 2023-OR-2, E-bike Trail Ordinance. Motion carried.

Supervisor Verna asked who and how it will be enforced? By the Ligonier Valley Police Department.

New Business

Debbie Grass, Tricia Levander, and Jason Daily from Grass Roots presented the Strategic Management Planning Program (STMP) Executive Summary, highlights include:

- Brief overview on the process and a reminder that the study was completed one year ago. The study reviews the organization's priorities, identifies projects and potential funding for Phase II, there is emphasis on projects that build capacity and financial stability.
- The focus is on implementation and process renewal, they don't want plans that sit on a shelf, their recommendations are implementable. (They are here to talk about the first 4 steps and will come back to discuss steps 5-6, implementation.)
- Page 4 gives definitions, the township's financial condition is good and stable, but there are some challenges in the future.
- The summary on page 7 analyzes revenue and expenses, ending balance at \$1M is good for the township's size. Lower tax rate in 2018 created a structural deficit, may be able to make it up since millage rate was raised from 4 to 5 in 2019. Expenditures go up with compensation, benefits, gas prices and inflation, unfortunately revenue does increase with expenses.
- Page 8 observations – overall pretty healthy situation, generating \$2 to \$2.1 million, with very little debt. However, slight population decreases and flat assessments create future challenges.
- The accounting system has been restricted to accommodate the funds. The numbers were adjusted in the audit as they were skewed. Recommend government accounting software.
- Using the unrestricted fund balance to balance the budget year after year is not a good practice. They tested for future solvency, the gaps between revenue and expenses will grow.
- A capital fund improvement plan is not in place, there are 84 miles of road to maintain and no long term plan for Parks & Rec and technology.
- Overall, the township has good operations. There are lots of recommendations in the report because recommendations may be eligible for future DCED grants.
- Highly recommend training because things change every year – new case laws, new technology, etc. Take advantage of professional memberships that offer training opportunities.
- Consider online codifying and digitizing records.
- Continue to use accounting services – this provides additional personnel in place to cover gaps.
- Recommend a fiscal procedures ordinance, a five year capital plan and some oversight / internal controls.
- Implement street opening permit fees – charge degradation fees to recoup expenses from utilities and discourage them from tearing up recently paved roads.
- Develop a formal snow & ice control plan. Salt storage facility is not adequate to store 100% of the need so multiple delivery fees are incurred. Best management practice is to be able to store 120% of annual needs, we are undersized and need a better structure.

- Enterprise software that includes work order integration with a financial module, code enforcement, land management, etc. Consider implementing software to track things from start to finish (best management practice).
- Page 14 – capital improvement plan, lots of miles, limited resources to pay for those roads. There are contractors that do a full assessment of all roads, create a 1-10 rating on every road segment, so the township knows its worst to best conditions of roads. Consider dedicated funding for roads since Liquid Fuels falls short. Roads should be on a 10-12 year maintenance cycle.
- Parks & Rec – Open Space Master Plan will guide where residents want to see investments made and there are opportunities to reduce maintenance – for example, place park benches on pads to reduce mowing / weed whacking. A master plan would also identify where to seek additional funding. Address playground inspections and who is certified to inspect, to avoid lawsuits.
- Adopt a formal blight strategy, parcel by parcel and gives grades, this would include Prevention & Remediation strategies, quality of life tickets, buy pack programs, address vacant lots, etc. The Joint Comp Plan was updated 2018, but a committee is not in place to implement the plans. Code Enforcement keeps property values up and seems to be an after-thought that happens once things start to decline. Code Enforcement is a big load, consider additional staff as it pays big dividends.
- Township website could use a refresher – fillable forms where the data is automatically loaded into a system and doesn't have to be re-entered, do the business on the website.
- Technology – a sophisticated network has been set up and is an ancillary benefit of having PD and LTMA here. Antiquated cable, older server that needs to be replaced, hardware needs to be on replacement schedule. Phone system could be updated.

Note that recommendations in the summary that are highlighted may be funded 50%.

Bethany Williams, DCED Local Government Policy Specialist, said as we close out this grant, some recommendation are eligible for Phase II implementation grants: technology, software, digitizing records up to \$200k will be matched at 50%. Buildings and vehicles are not eligible. The township has five years to implement recommendations.

Supervisor Resenic – asked about public sewage deficiencies and how expanding service might benefit revenue. The LTMA was not in the scope of this study, could apply for a grant to pay for half this specific study.

Supervisor Verna – please replace “Borough” with “Township”

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Scott Matson to approve opening a new First Commonwealth Bank account. Motion carried.

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Scott Matson to approve Resolution 2023-R-04, “Entering into a Land Use Agreement with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association for Community Gardens.” Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Scott Matson to approve Resolution 2023-R05, “EADS Group Trail Study” professional services agreement. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Stephanie Verna approving the Ligonier Country Market’s detour request on Carey School Road. Motion carried.

Supervisor Resenic asked the Chief of Police about the detour. He thinks it is a step in the right direction, making the popular event safer.

There was a discussion about the possibility of charging the LVPD rent. Supervisor Ross said the Charter specifies the Township could charge the Department rent after the first year and has not charged rent the four years they’ve been operating. He asked the Chief to take the subject to the LVPD Commission. Supervisor Verna asked for clarification – the Board needs to specify what they are asking for: a set amount, a percentage of utilities, does that include capital expenses?

Executive Session

The Supervisors went into executive session at 5:53 PM to discuss public works personnel and union contract negotiations. The regular meeting was resumed at 6:24 p.m.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Erik Ross directing Mr. Strelac to draft an ordinance that would reduce the non-union health insurance employee contribution from 20% to 10% and research alternate Health Insurance Plans that would provide a cost savings to the Township for both the union and non-union employees. Motion carried.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Matson – Thanked the fire departments.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Erik Ross to adjourn the meeting at 6:26 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Caldwell

Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Ligonier Township, Westmoreland County, PA
Bill Payments for All Vendors
February 28, 2023

Vendor	Type	Num	Amount
Feb 28, 23			
Comcast	Bill Pmt -Check	ACH	199.89
AA Septic Tank Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25408	275.00
AFLAC	Bill Pmt -Check	25409	102.92
Fayette Parts Service, Inc.	Bill Pmt -Check	25410	93.54
Glassmere Fuel Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25411	3,787.22
JSB Holding, Inc.	Bill Pmt -Check	25412	402.00
Laurel Valley Hardware Inc.	Bill Pmt -Check	25413	79.70
Ligonier Giant Eagle	Bill Pmt -Check	25414	33.79
Ligonier Township Municipal Authority	Bill Pmt -Check	25415	240.00
Ligonier Valley Police Department	Bill Pmt -Check	25416	113,542.83
Luther P. Miller	Bill Pmt -Check	25417	90.38
LVTech	Bill Pmt -Check	25418	1,661.18
Napotnik Welding Supplies	Bill Pmt -Check	25419	47.00
Smith Propane & Oil	Bill Pmt -Check	25420	1,761.33
SWIF	Bill Pmt -Check	25421	1,081.00
The EADS Group	Bill Pmt -Check	25422	270.00
Town & Country Motors	Bill Pmt -Check	25423	1,446.77
ULine	Bill Pmt -Check	25424	127.34
UniFirst Corporation	Bill Pmt -Check	25425	116.24
West Penn Power	Bill Pmt -Check	25426	693.41
Wilkins Services	Bill Pmt -Check	25427	650.00
Feb 28, 23			126,701.54

OK
JAV
2-28-23

2:24 PM

02/27/23

Ligonier Township-Liquid Fuels
Bill Payments for All Vendors
February 28, 2023

Vendor	Type	Num	Amount
Feb 28, 23			
West Penn Power	Bill Pmt -Check	1309	44.04
West Penn Power	Bill Pmt -Check	1310	251.91
Feb 28, 23			<u>295.95</u>

OK
SAV.
2-28-23