

Ligonier Township Supervisors
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2023

The Supervisors of Ligonier Township met in regular session at 7:00 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, Jake Bolby; Chief of Police, Michael Matrunic; and Finance Officer, Bethany Caldwell.

Comments from the Public

1. Terrell Funk – (Rec Board) reported there were 6 in attendance plus 1 call-in at the Ligonier Beach Study committee kickoff meeting on October 6. Introductions were made and the DCNR site management and feasibility study requirements were provided. These requirements to be discussed and a Chairperson to be appointed at the next meeting, tentatively scheduled. The property needs some maintenance and there was a discussion about what can and can't be done now considering the study should take a year. They'd like to organize another volunteer cleanup.

Supervisor Verna asked when this cleanup would happen - this fall, next spring? Are the Rec Board members or the Study Committee organizing the cleanup? There was a discussion about next steps – need township approval and to address liability issues. Supervisor Verna welcomed and encouraged the group to move forward.

2. Vickie Oles – commented on the 2015 Zoning Ordinance (to promote residents health & safety) and the 2018 Comprehensive Plan (to make the Ligonier Valley a better place for seniors & retirees). She asked for a fair and reasonable change to the 1992 fire ban ordinance; if the Board were to add the minimum regulations per the State law, it would give local authorities the ability to respond to issues, instead of working with the DEP.

Supervisor Resenic supported the request and thought it is reasonable.

Supervisor Verna asked if it the Planning Commission need to be involved. (No)

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Dan Resenic directing the township solicitor to draft an updated fire ban ordinance that incorporates state law. Motion carried.

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Matson – no comment

Supervisor Ross – no comment

Supervisor Beaufort – no comment

Supervisor Verna – Comments below:

The Finance Committee and staff prepared a 2024 Budget and 5-Year Plan draft and there are some outstanding items that still need addressed:

The police commission will provide a draft budget at the next township meeting to incorporate into the Township's budget for their next meeting. These numbers will be tentative and pending Commission approval.

The house at the ash pile is on a month to month lease, at \$120 per month. This is well below fair market value and there are several unknowns – the house's condition, maintenance requirements, insurance, lease terms? The Solicitor and Manager will review and report back to the board, providing clarification on these unknown items.

The Public Works foreman submitted a Capital Plan and requested approval to fill the vacant position. The finance committee would like confirmation from the PW committee on what should be incorporated into the budget.

Supervisor Verna asked for clarification related to increasing the Township contribution to the Fire Companies, noting that manpower has been highlighted at past meetings as a pain point with declines in volunteers. Might there be a way to help alleviate some of the burden on volunteers related to downed trees after hours which could potentially be removed by Public Works employees. The Chief reviewed the current process where the officers on duty will respond to these calls, putting up cones to alert drivers. They will then reach out to Public Works to have the tree removed. However, in situations outside of working hours, the Fire Company may still need to be called out.

Supervisor Ross clarified there are still fixed costs, the cost of insurance is going up, and with less volunteers there are less people to fundraise. He urged the public to consider volunteering, especially younger folk – it looks great on a resume, training is free, and certifications help secure well-paying jobs. The companies have a "family" culture. Sixty to seventy percent of volunteer time is focused on fundraising. To keep the doors open, they need \$70-80k to break even. There isn't money left over for capital purchases, they have been lucky to secure grants. Just like the township, costs keep going up and the revenue is not...

Supervisor Beaufort said the public can help out by updating their alarm systems. People say they're too busy, but keep in mind, unpaid volunteers are responding to their false alarms. It is a problem when 80+ false alarms occur and then there is one real alarm. Supervisor Beaufort also suggested revisiting the idea of creating a capital fund for large equipment purchases for the fire companies.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Erik Ross to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

Police Report

Chief Matrunics went over his monthly report. Reminded the public Fort Ligonier Days weekend is coming up, please follow the signs and temporary detours.

Correspondence List (Note these items are not read aloud.)

1. Department of the Auditor General's Notice of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund Audit for the period January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022. The auditor will be onsite this Thursday.
2. Ligonier Valley Library – thanked the township for its 2023 donation
3. Susan McBroom – resigned effectively immediately. Manager Strelic explained that there is another member not interested in serving after their term ends this year. There are two alternates that can fill in for now. Supervisor Verna requested staff seek Letters of Interest now in preparation for next year's appointments.

Manager Report

Mr. Strelic gave a summary of the costs of Ligonier going to a full time fire department. Our crew will be assisting the Borough and putting up signs this week for Fort Days.

Engineer Report

Mr. Bolby reported The EADS group provided some comments on the wind turbine section of the Zoning Ordinance. Orme Road bridge inspection is scheduled for October 23.

Solicitor Report

Mr. Hudock reported the DEP lawyer sent a document for his review (Act 537 appeal) and he continues to work on code enforcement issues with staff.

Treasurer's Report

Fund Balances (month end)	September
General Fund	\$ 546,554
General Fund Reserves	\$1,038,492
Liquid Fuels Tax Fund	\$ 111,913
Capital Fund Reserves	\$ 143,396
Ligonier Beach Park Fund	\$ 122,213
American Rescue Fund	\$ 168,847
Developer's Fund*	\$ 5,748
*Escrow	\$ 4,539
*Mill Creek Memorial Park	\$ 1,209
*Hi Acres Waterline	\$ -
Total Funds	\$2,137,163

*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 Ross noted three CDs will be due in the next month. The General Fund Reserves have been earning 5% returns on our investments. Bond rates are up.

Unfinished Business

1. Ordinance 2023-O-06 Fire Department Recognition Ordinance – the volunteer fire departments provide a community service. To be eligible for government immunity from tort claims, they have to be recognized by the Township via an ordinance.
 - A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by John Beaufort to approve Ordinance 2023-O-06, Fire Department Recognition. Motion carried.
2. Westmoreland County stormwater grant – no action at this time, pending revised agreement.
3. Residential & commercial sewage line inspection testing – no action at this time, waiting on the LTMA to present their plan that outlines what and how they will test.

Supervisor Resenic explained there is a lot of infiltration from groundwater into the system. The testing is necessary as we do not want our residents to be charged by flow.

New Business

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by John Beaufort to authorize the Code Enforcement Officer moving forward with enforcement action (filing with the District Magistrate) for 1222 Old Forbes Road after the 30 day appeal process ends (if no appeal is made). Motion carried.
- A motion was made Erik Ross and seconded by Dan Resenic directing The EADS Group to submit a PennDOT multi-modal grant application (for Carey School Road) on the Township's behalf. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Dan Resenic to approve Resolution 2023-R-23, Tree Removal Notification. Motion carried.

Supervisor Verna asked about the notification process administration. Mr. Strelac has a draft letter prepared and planned to tack them to the tree and/or mail it to the property owner. Supervisor Verna asked if there was a defined period of time that the notice needed to be posted. Mr. Strelac indicated that is not defined in the statute or resolution and suggested 24 hours could be considered reasonable. Supervisor Verna asked Mr. Hudock to review the statute and compare it to the Resolution.

There was a brief discussion about the Witches Bike Brigade special event permit where Mr. Strelac noted that everything was complete with the exception of obtaining DEP approval for porta-john placement. Supervisor Verna asked if we have required this on other applications. Mr. Strelac indicated that the Township has not enforced this requirement related to other special event permits.

- A motion was made by Erik Ross and seconded by Stephanie Verna to approve the Witches Bike Brigade special event permit. Motion carried.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Beaufort – no comment

Supervisor Matson – Stated he doesn't have a problem with the tenant's lease, she's maintained the property and provides an element of security to the Township's ash pile. If the township is addressing trees in the right-of-way (ROW), what about the pillars / fences in the ROW? He agreed with Mr. Funk – the Ligonier Beach property looks bad.

Supervisor Ross – Reiterated the Volunteer Fire Departments need volunteers and funding, please help in any way you can. A donation to the VFDs keeps your taxes low. The Township is projecting to be under budget in 2023, moving into 2024 have a better understanding and how we plan more capital projects, including building renovations.

Supervisor Verna – no comment

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Erik Ross to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Caldwell
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Ligonier Township, Westmoreland County, PA

Bill Payments for All Vendors

October 24, 2023

Vendor	Type	Num	Amount
Oct 24, 23			
Andrews Sales & Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25821	16.06
Bedford Valley & Jacobs Petroleum	Bill Pmt -Check	25822	589.00
Cord Kelly	Bill Pmt -Check	25823	123.50
Fayette Parts Service, Inc.	Bill Pmt -Check	25824	148.08
Glassmere Fuel Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25825	3,685.52
Heidleberg Materials	Bill Pmt -Check	25826	539.89
Judy Ridgway - v	Bill Pmt -Check	25827	114.16
Ligonier Valley Police Department	Bill Pmt -Check	25828	113,778.23
PSATS	Bill Pmt -Check	25829	149.26
Stephenson Equipment, Inc.- Old Walsh	Bill Pmt -Check	25830	27.77
Town & Country Motors	Bill Pmt -Check	25831	66.95
Tresco Paving Corp	Bill Pmt -Check	25832	1,251.78
UniFirst Corporation	Bill Pmt -Check	25833	165.74
Washington National Insurance Company	Bill Pmt -Check	25834	165.36
Wilkins Services	Bill Pmt -Check	25835	326.00
Comcast	Bill Pmt -Check	25836	552.10
Oct 24, 23			121,699.40

12:05 PM

10/23/23

Ligonier Township - Escrow Account
Bill Payments for All Vendors
October 24, 2023

Vendor	Type	Num	Amount
Oct 24, 23			
Thomas Sibal	Bill Pmt -Check	1054	6,666.67
Oct 24, 23			<u>6,666.67</u>