

**SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS NON-LEGISLATIVE MEETING**

February 8, 2022

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The February 8, 2022 Non-Legislative Meeting of the South Strabane Township Board of Supervisors (Board) came to order at 11:08 a.m. in the Mae C. Reynolds Meeting Room of the Municipal Building (550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301).

The following were present:

Board of Supervisors	Bob Weber, Chair; Mark Murphy, Vice Chair; Bracken Burns; Russell Grego; and Richard Luketich.
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Absent	None
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Also Present	Township Manager Brandon Stanick; Assistant to the Township Manager Jim Sutter; Police Chief Drew Hilk; Fire Chief Scott Reese; Building Official Scott Heckman; Code Enforcement Officer Troy Lucas; Township Engineer Kevin Creagh; and Township Solicitor Dennis Makel.
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2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Weber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Thomas Lonich, resident on Davis School Road, asked if Township Manager Brandon Stanick will respond to the questions he asked during the immediately preceding meeting and when he can expect answers. Mr. Stanick asked for a copy of the questions.

Mr. Jeff Bull, an individual with property interest in the Township, stated there are court documents related to the proposed Meadows Landing development which have defamatory and slanderous comments towards the former South Strabane Township Sanitary Authority. Mr. Bull expressed his opinion it is time for a Washington County-wide Fire Department. He stated it is time to solve the fire service problem long-term.

Ms. Judy Panasik, resident on Green Crescent Drive, expressed concern for prohibiting on-street parking during snow events. She recommended placing signage restricting parking to one side of the street during these times.

4. REVIEW & DISCUSSION OF SEWER SYSTEM TAP-IN FEES AND THE TOWNSHIP'S ACT 537 SEWAGE FACILITIES PLAN

Mr. Stanick reported Mr. Creagh is in attendance to brief the Board on potentially updating the Tap-in fee for the Township and the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. Mr. Creagh provided an overview of the Act 537 Plan. He stated it is a comprehensive plan for sewage and provides a way to plan ahead for facilities and control the Township's future sewage system. He stated the Township last updated their plan in 1998. He stated the cost for doing this is approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 and there is currently a grant available through the Department of Community and Economic Development ("DCED") to pay 50% of the cost. Because of this, now would be a good time to update the plan if the Board is interested.

Mr. Burns inquired on how this plan would be different from the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Creagh advised the update will position the Township to be more proactive when planning for development. This plan will help provide a roadmap for how the Township wants to grow. Mr. Luketich asked if this plan would cover the entire Township. Mr. Creagh stated it is for the entire Township. Mr. Luketich asked how difficult it is to obtain the DCED grant. Mr. Creagh noted these grants are competitive.

Mr. Creagh moved on to discuss updating tap-in fees. He stated doing this is a good course of business practice. He stated their analysis would provide a maximum amount that would be charged. Mr. Makel asked if this is required by law. Mr. Creagh stated it is if the Township wanted to raise their rates.

The Board directed Mr. Creagh to prepare a proposal to the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan and to seek grants for funding, as well as prepare a proposal to evaluate the Township's Tap-in Fee Schedule.

5. REVIEW & DISCUSSION REGULATING ON-STREET PARKING DURING WINTER SNOW EVENTS AND CLEARING SNOW ON SIDEWALKS

Mr. Stanick reported, recent winter storms have highlighted deficiencies in the Code in addressing hazards created or caused by individuals. In response to this, Staff has developed two draft ordinances which seek to promote the health, safety and welfare of residents and visitors. Chair Weber then introduced new Code Enforcement Officer Troy Lucas who noted some of the issues he has seen in the Township related to this matter. Mr. Heckman provided an overview of the two proposed ordinances relating to on-street parking and sidewalks.

The first, a proposed Snow and Ice Emergency Ordinance, confronts the challenges posed by snow and ice being deposited on streets as it impairs the flow of vehicular traffic, particularly emergency vehicles. The proposed ordinance: defines snow and ice emergencies, requires off-street parking where available, regulates the safe operation of vehicles on roads during an emergency and prescribes enforcement and penalties for violations.

The second, a proposed Sidewalk Clearing Ordinance, confronts the challenges posed by snow and ice being deposited on sidewalks as it impairs the flow of pedestrian traffic and creates hazards.

The proposed ordinance: requires the clearing of snow and ice from sidewalks, provides restricted locations for removed snow and ice and prescribes enforcement and penalties for violations.

Mr. Grego provided background information on the challenges Public Works faces with vehicles parked on-street during snow and ice emergencies. He noted it is a longstanding issue. Mr. Luketich inquired why people are parking on the street. A discussion ensued.

Chair Weber inquired of the fine prescribed in the proposed ordinance and stated he is more in favor of a warning prior to issuing a fine. Mr. Grego stated this would likely occur naturally and the best-case outcome is someone from the Police Department knocking on the offender's door, making contact and them moving their vehicle. Mr. Burns suggested a public relations effort instead of jumping straight to legislation. He questioned whether these incidents are due to maliciousness or ignorance. Mr. Stanick stated they have placed reminders in the newsletter. A discussion ensued on the merits of utilizing a Township-wide letter or newsletter article for public relations purposes. It was the consensus of the Board to place a reminder on the website and send a letter to all Township residents. Mr. Luketich suggested having magnets made with emergency contact information to include in the letter.

6. REVIEW & DISCUSSION OF A TICKETING SYSTEM FOR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE VIOLATIONS

Mr. Heckman provided an overview on a proposal to establish an ordinance which would allow the Code Enforcement Department to issue tickets for routine violations. He noted the time involved to resolve a citation is roughly six weeks. This system would allow the Township to streamline the process. Once a violation is reported, a ticket would be issued immediately. It would assess a \$50 fine and provide a certain amount of time for the violation to be brought into compliance. If after the time elapsed the violation still exists and/or the fine has not been paid, a citation to the magistrate would be written and the process would proceed as it does currently. If the violation is brought into compliance, no fine would be collected.

Mr. Heckman proposed tickets to be issued for the following violations: high grass, junk vehicles, trash and debris, animals, swimming pools and the proposed sidewalk snow ordinance. He noted these violations constitute the majority of their citations and they can be handled much more effectively through this type of system.

Mr. Murphy asked for clarification on what the current process entails. Mr. Heckman stated a notice of violation is issued first and then, if compliance is not reached, cited and brought before the magistrate. Mr. Stanick noted this proposal would cut down on time and hopefully motivate toward compliance. Mr. Lucas stated they used this strategy in Canonsburg Borough during his time employed with them as a Code Enforcement Officer and it was effective. He added seeing a ticket for \$50 tends to get one's attention more than a letter and motivate compliance prior to going to the magistrate.

It was the consensus of the Board to have Staff prepare an ordinance authorizing a ticket system strategy for Property Maintenance Code violations.

7. ADJOURNMENT

As no further business came before the Board, Mr. Burns moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Luketich seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon J. Stanick
Township Manager