

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

May 10, 2022

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The May 10, 2022 Non-Legislative Meeting of the South Strabane Township Board of Supervisors (Board) came to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building (550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301).

The following were present:

Board of Supervisors Bob Weber, Chair; Bracken Burns; Russell Grego; and Richard Luketich.

Absent Mark Murphy, Vice Chair.

Also Present Township Manager Brandon Stanick; Assistant to the Township Manager Jim Sutter; Fire Chief Jordan Cramer; Building Official Scott Heckman; Township Engineer Kevin Creagh (via Zoom); and Township Solicitor Dennis Makel.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Weber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Township Board of Supervisors allocates a period of time during this item for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the Board of Supervisors on any matter. Each person addressing the Board of Supervisors is asked to limit their comments to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

There were no comments from the Public.

4. REVIEW & DISCUSSION REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF A STORMWATER EASEMENT AT 90 ENTERPRISE ROAD

Township Manager Brandon Stanick reported on a discussion with Mr. Bruce McCreery, property owner of 90 Enterprise Road, concerning stormwater run off onto his property from Enterprise Road. Establishing an easement in his side yard would allow the Township to better manage this runoff by diverting water through an underground pipe to the rear of the property.

Township Engineer Kevin Creagh stated it is preferable for the Township to have control over stormwater management and the existing pipe is private and in a state of disrepair. He recommended the Township take control through an easement and make it an asset. Mr. Grego stated they have been unable to locate record of an easement or right-of-way. Because of this, Public Works cannot legally enter and repair the pipe. He stated the easement would be twenty (20) feet wide.

Should the Board authorize the Township to move forward, a survey of the easement will be prepared. It was the consensus of the Board for Staff to move forward with preparing this matter for the Board's consideration at the May 24, 2022 Regular Meeting.

5. REVIEW & DISCUSSION OF A QUALITY OF LIFE CODE ENFORCEMENT TICKETING ORDINANCE

Mr. Stanick reported Building Official Scott Heckman and Code Enforcement Officer Troy Lucas had previously presented a proposal for instituting a code enforcement ticketing system for common violations, generally referred to as "Quality of Life" violations. Following this presentation, it was the consensus of the Board to have Staff prepare an ordinance to institute a similar system in the Township. Staff has developed a draft ordinance for the Board's review. Should the Board and Township Solicitor find the proposed ordinance acceptable, a final draft will be prepared for consideration at the May 24, 2022 regular meeting.

Building Official Scott Heckman reported statistics relating to violations for 2022. These statistics revealed approximately 80% of all violations are "Quality of Life" violations. Mr. Stanick stated they had wanted to implement the IPMC for several years before making any changes and the ticketing system will help to create efficiencies with enforcement.

Mr. Heckman provided an overview of the current process and how the new process will expedite the abatement of violations. Currently, Code Enforcement will inspect and determine if a violation exists. If so, a certified letter will be sent to the property owner. The property owner has 10 days to respond, at which time the Township then sends another certified letter and waits a further 10 days. After this, they may then issue a citation to the District Magisterial Judge. It would still be a further four to six weeks once the court is involved for a hearing to be scheduled. During this process it has been the Township's experience that the violation only continues to escalate. Under the new proposal, a ticket fining the violator \$50 would be sent immediately. If the issue still exists following the ticket, the property owner would then be cited which would then proceed through the current process.

Mr. Luketich inquired why swimming pools are included in "Quality of Life" violations. Mr. Heckman stated they will often sit for a lengthy period of time without being cleaned. This will lead to them becoming infested with mosquitos. A discussion ensued on whether decorative ponds or retention ponds are considered swimming pools and must adhere to those existing regulations. Mr. Heckman noted pools are different from ponds as pools are regulated in the Building Code. Mr. Luketich asked if ponds would be regulated in the same manner. Mr. Weber asked for retention ponds to be included in the scope of this ordinance. Mr. Stanick indicated it would be included as garbage and debris. Additionally, he noted Staff will review regulations regarding ponds to see if they are similar to pools.

It was the consensus of the Board for Staff to move forward with preparing the ordinance for the May 24, 2022 Regular Meeting.

6. REVIEW & DISCUSSION OF AN ENABLING ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Mr. Stanick reported, the Board had directed Staff to prepare a purpose statement and operating procedures for a reinstated Parks and Recreation Commission at their June 22, 2021 Regular

Meeting. Since that time Staff has reviewed enabling ordinances from Cranberry Township, Moon Township, North Strabane Township, Peters Township, South Fayette Township and Upper St. Clair Township. In response to this assessment, Staff has prepared the information for the Board's review and feedback prior to a Public Hearing.

Assistant to the Township Manager Jim Sutter reported on the requirements of the Commission as regulated by the Second Class Township Code. Most importantly the Commission would only have those responsibilities specifically delegated by the Board. He stated it is Staff's recommendation this be an advisory commission that would make recommendations to the Board. Mr. Sutter stated reviewing other municipal enabling ordinances, five broad categories of responsibilities emerged: administrative, comprehensive planning, evaluation, public relations and policy recommendations. Examples of potential clauses to include in South Strabane's ordinance were included under each category.

Mr. Grego expressed a desire for members to obtain child abuse clearances. Mr. Luketich asked if Trinity School District had been contacted regarding the ordinance, mentioning Peters Township's ordinance included their school district input on members. Mr. Sutter stated Trinity had not been included in this discussion as South Strabane is not the only municipality comprising the school district, in contrast to Peters Township. Mr. Makel asked if this Commission will have the ability to spend money. Mr. Sutter stated it would not unless the Board desires it.

A discussion ensued on the long-term parks and recreation goals of the Township. It was the consensus of the Board for Staff to move forward with preparing this matter for the May 24, 2022 Regular Meeting. A discussion ensued on the structure of the Commission and it was the consensus of the Board to move forward with drafting an ordinance establishing a 7-member Commission.

7. REVIEW & DISCUSSION CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LAND USE REGULATIONS FOR MEDICINAL CANNABIS DISPENSARIES AND GROWING/PROCESSING FACILITIES

Mr. Stanick reported Staff has received inquiries in recent months from several parties interested in opening a medical cannabis dispensary in the Township. The 2016 Medical Marijuana Act legalized the use of cannabis in Pennsylvania for patients suffering from qualifying medical conditions. While the State heavily regulates these businesses in many ways, the Act provides little guidance concerning land use and zoning. As of now, pursuant to the State Law and Township Zoning Code, a dispensary can operate in Commercial Districts and a grower/processor in Industrial Districts with minimal local oversight and no public process, as long as it is not within 1,000 feet of a school and complies with State regulations. It is recommended the Board authorize Staff to work with the Planning Commission to draft legislation regulating dispensaries and growing/processing facilities.

Mr. Luketich inquired on whether grower/processors could be permitted in the Agricultural Zoning District, as well as the Industrial Districts. A discussion ensued and it was the consensus of the Board for Staff to move forward with drafting an ordinance allowing grower/processors in the Industrial and Agricultural Zoning Districts and to prepare it to be considered by the Planning Commission.

8. REVIEW & DISCUSSION TO PRIORITIZE THE TOWNSHIP'S CODE ACTION ITEMS LIST

Mr. Stanick reported Staff will periodically come across sections of the Municipal Code that may be in conflict, deficient, confusing or simply not yet regulated. A Code Action Item List has been prepared and presented to the Board in order to facilitate a conversation concerning the prioritization of these items. Once a consensus between Staff and Board priorities on these items has been reached, Staff will forward the highest priority items to the Planning Commission (where applicable) to commence with updating the Code.

The Board concurred with Staff's prioritization of the Action Item List and directed Staff to move forward with reviewing the highest priority items with the Planning Commission.

9. UPDATE REGARDING FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLES AND APPARATUS

Fire Chief Jordan Cramer was in attendance to provide the Board an update regarding the status of certain Vehicles and Apparatus of the Fire Department. Chief Cramer reported Rescue 44-2, the Department's primary apparatus, has seen a significant amount of use is quickly approaching the end of its useful life. He stated the Volunteer Fire Department ("VFD") had begun looking into a replacement about two years ago but decided not to take action at that time due to uncertainty about the future purchase and ownership of fire apparatus. Chief Cramer noted he has been transparent with the VFD regarding the Board's view the municipality purchase fire apparatus.

Chief Cramer stated he has driven the apparatus and it is built in the quality of a heavy rescue, not an apparatus that responds to a higher call volume, which has increased over the past 15 years. He stated it is currently housed at the Pancake Station. Mr. Grego, who was driving behind Chief Cramer while dropping it off for repair, agreed with his assessment and reiterated his statement on its safety concerns.

Chief Cramer stated he has a meeting with a representative from Pierce Manufacturing regarding a replacement and recommends obtaining it through COSTARS. He further suggested working with the VFD to inventory the current equipment on the apparatus and prepare to sell it through a third-party reseller. Chief Cramer stated it will be approximately \$600,000 for a new apparatus. The State offers a 2% loan program and a leasing/financing program is available over the useful life of the vehicle for 10% down. Chief Cramer recommended the municipality purchase the new apparatus and stated he would meet with the VFD in hopes they would assist with updating equipment carried on the apparatus. Mr. Grego asked for clarification if the equipment on Rescue 44-2 can be reused on the new apparatus. Chief Cramer confirmed some could be reused and others require updates. The initial replacement process will include Chief Cramer in consultation with vendors. However, a subsequent apparatus-build committee would include representation from volunteer and career firefighters. Chief Cramer displayed optimism a collaborative effort working on the design of the new apparatus will be a success.

A discussion ensued on vehicle replacements in the Public Works Department. Chair Weber told Chief Cramer to move forward with the idea the Township will purchase a new apparatus. Mr. Grego asked if the VFD will collaborate with the Township on this purchase. Chief Cramer expressed optimism this will be the case. A discussion ensued on current VFD recruitment efforts.

Chief Cramer shifted the discussion to the current squad cars used by the Fire Department. He stated Chief 44, a 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe, requires replacement. It has incurred significant maintenance costs and will continue to do so. Additionally, it has no side emergency warning lights and has created a hazard during the response to emergencies when approaching intersections. Chief Cramer stated the current value on the re-sale market is relatively high. He also stated Squad 44-1 (2016 Ford Explorer) should be replaced as well.

Chief Cramer stated he has reached out to Ford and Chevrolet regarding potential replacement options and suggests the Township sign an agreement to purchase two vehicles as replacements. He recommended Squad 44-1 be replaced with a Ford F-150, stating an open bed is a necessity due to the need to often transport equipment and to store carcinogen-laden gear outside of the cab. Chief Cramer stated this item is time sensitive due to the difficulty in obtaining vehicles and significant lead times presently experienced due to supply chain issues. Mr. Burns asked if these vehicles would be purchased through COSTARS. Chief Cramer stated they would be and the lease would be through BBL Fleet, resulting in reduced capital costs.

In response to a question from Chair Weber, Mr. Stanick expressed his agreement with Chief Cramer's assessment. It was the consensus of the Board for Chief Cramer to move forward with replacing the vehicles.

Chief Cramer brought to the attention of the Board the payment of fuel. Chief Cramer commended the fundraising efforts of the VFD and stated they currently pay for the fuel of all fire apparatus with the exception of the municipal apparatus. He stated he believes strongly the Township pay for this cost and stated it is typical in other combination and volunteer fire departments. He stated this is one of the areas of complaint the VFD has and it is especially pertinent at this time with the high cost of gasoline. Additionally, he stated the Fire Department does not currently respond to some critical medical emergencies and expressed his intent to begin responding to all. This decision will result in increased fuel costs. Mr. Grego asked Mr. Stanick how this may affect the budget. Mr. Stanick advised the impact on the budget would be approximately \$12,000 in 2022. Additionally, the Township should receive a significant increase in funds through Act 13 given the current natural gas market. It was the consensus of the Board the Township will pay for the cost of fuel and medical supplies and equipment and expand the medical emergencies to which it responds

10. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:25 a.m. Chair Weber announced the Board will adjourn into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and potential litigation.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon J. Stanick
Township Manager