

**SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGULAR MEETING**

**August 28, 2023**

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The August 28, 2023, Regular Meeting of the South Strabane Township Board of Supervisors (“Board”) came to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building (550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301).

The following were present:

Board of Supervisors	Bracken Burns, Chair; Mark Murphy, Vice Chair; Russell Grego; Richard Luketich; and Bob Weber.
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Absent	None
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Also, Present	Township Manager Jeff Ziegler; Police Chief Drew Hilk; Fire Chief Jordan Cramer; Finance Director Marie Coffman; Finance Clerk Lisa Carrier; Township Solicitor Dennis Makel; Township Engineer Rob Horvat.
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**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Burns led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

Ms. Judy Panasik, resident of Green Crescent Dr., welcomed Mr. Ziegler as the new Township Manager. She went on to say that she was given false information from the zoning officer. She also asked the Board why the township is catering to Champion Church and added that she thinks they should be required to do a traffic study. Ms. Panasik remarked that in addition to the recognition being done this evening that the township should also recognize some of the local people and smaller businesses. She concluded her comments by urging the Board of Supervisors to listen to the people in attendance this evening regarding the Laboratory school.

Mr. Zack Morgan, resident of Vance Station Rd., addressed the Board about a stormwater water runoff issue. Stormwater being collected by the township system is discharging across his property and onto another property. Mr. Morgan also commented that it is his hope that whatever is going to happen with the sale of the Laboratory school that it benefits the township. He suggested that maybe the township could purchase the property. Russ Grego stated that he would be in touch with PennDOT regarding an end wall that they need to repair in the area.

Mr. George Rowand, resident of Flint Dr., addressed the Board regarding the sale of the Laboratory school. He stated the zoning should be changed from R4 to R2. He asked that the Board reconsider making this change. Mr. Rowand concluded his comments by stating that he submitted a Right-To-Know request on August 3, 2023, and is still awaiting a response.

Mr. Jeff Bull, resident of Main St., welcomed Mr. Ziegler as the new Township Manager. He stated that at a previous meeting he recommended a forensic audit be done of township finances, and he wanted to reiterate this recommendation. Mr. Bull offered, as advice to the new manager, that he should listen to the residents and offered to give him a tour of the township. Mr. Bull asked the Board whether the new rules regarding public comment would apply to the Supervisors as well as the public and then reminded the Board of the situation where a resident took her own life a few years ago. Mr. Bull stated that he thinks the Board should change the zoning at Laboratory school from R4 to R2 to keep a drug rehab from going into that location. Mr. Bull concluded his comments by stating that he heard that Trinity School District does not get along with South Strabane Township.

Colleen Dille, resident of Manse St., addressed the Board to say that she owns four pieces of property in Pancake and stated there is a great history in Pancake and its legacy is important. She stated that Laboratory school is a big part of that story. She commented that the current situation with the school could ruin the whole area.

Theresa Shape, resident of Sunset Blvd., asked the Board what is going on over at the old Patton school. She asked specifically why and how the grass is now being cut on the property. Chief Cramer stated that township code enforcement has been pushing the issue lately with favorable results.

Marcia Deeb, resident on Fox Drive, stated her thought that the Board consider having a meeting to open a public dialog on township issues. Ms. Deeb stated that she believes that Chief Cramer has done a great job as Interim Township Manager. She went on to say that she believes that the township should hire an Assistant Manager because she is concerned that Chief Cramer will be overtaxed in his duties and that may have a negative impact on his duties as Chief.

#### **4. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES**

There were no minutes to approve at this time.

#### **5. FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

The purpose of this memorandum is to transmit the following for consideration by the Board of Supervisors:

• Payroll:	\$ 131,178.00 (pay date of July 28, 2023)
• Payroll:	\$ 152,695.72 (pay date of August 11, 2023)
• General Fund:	\$ 272,149.39
• Liquid Fuels Fund:	\$ 141,402.03
• Capital:	\$ 90,000.00
• Sewage Enterprise:	\$ 75.90
• Escrow:	\$ 9,079.34
<b>Total Expenditure:</b>	<b>\$796,580.38</b>

Overtime costs for the period include:

- Police: \$ 2,098.22
- Fire: \$ 2,352.43
- Public Works: \$ 935.83
- Total OT: \$ 5,386.48 (pay date of July 28, 2023)
- Police: \$ 6,146.22
- Fire: \$ 0.00
- Public Works: \$ 0.00
- Total OT: \$ 6,146.22 (pay date of August 11, 2023)**

General Fund:

- Makel & Associates (February, March and April Billing) \$ 33,772.55
- MRM Trust Worker's Comp Fund (Installment 4 of 4) \$ 64,572.84
- Municipal Employees Insurance Trust \$ 48,663.20
- Zion's Bank (General Obligation Bond Series 2019) \$ 38,878.13

Liquid Fuels:

- Heidelberg Materials (Asphalt for various road projects) \$117,472.97

Capital:

- Glick Fire Equipment (Down Payment for Engine 44-2) \$ 90,000.00

Mr. Murphy moved to approve the payroll for the periods July 9, 2023, through July 22, 2023, and July 23, 2023, through August 12, 2023, and bills for the period July 22, 2023, through August 25, 2023. Mr. Luketich seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

## **6. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECOGNITION**

Mr. Murphy presented Ed Morascyzk and Gary Flannery from the Washington Automall with a plaque for their generous contribution to the South Strabane Police Department's K-9 Unit and continued community partnership.

Chair Burns announced that the Board met in Executive Session on August 10, 2023, and August 22, 2023, to discuss personnel matters and potential litigation.

Chair Burns took a moment to salute township police and fire for holding the Battle of the Badges softball game on August 20, 2023. The game this year benefited a young lady who is fighting cancer. Chief Cramer specifically thanked Officer John Beckus and all the other personnel for their work in making this happen.

## **7. TOWNSHIP REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS**

### **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Report**

Chair Burns stated the Board of Supervisors allocates a period of time during this item for comments regarding the topic of stormwater. Each person addressing the Board of Supervisors is asked to limit their comments to a maximum of three minutes.

There were no comments at this time.

### **Township Manager's Report**

Jeff Ziegler reminded everyone that the township office would be closed on Monday, September 4, 2023, in observance of Labor Day.

### **Secretary/Treasurer's Report**

The following was transmitted to the Board through the Secretary/Treasurer's Report:

#### **Reports and Publications:**

- a) Finance Report - July 2023;
- b) Fire Department Report – July 2023;
- c) Building Department/Code Enforcement Report – July 2023;
- d) Police Department Report – July 2023;
- e) Tax Collector's Report & Interim Collection Only – July 2023;
- f) Animal Control Monthly Report – July 2023;
- g) Township Engineer's Report – August 29, 2023;
- h) DODGE Data & Analytics – August 2023;
- i) OR, Local News article "Stop Sign installed at Berry Rd. Intersection" - August 1, 2023;
- j) OR, Local news article "SS Beautification Awards Nominations Open" - August 8, 2023;
- k) PennDOT, Moving Forward – Summer 2023; and
- l) Costars Connection – Summer 2023.

#### **Correspondence:**

- a) Letter dated July 26, 2023, from Brandon Stanick to Judy Panasik regarding disruptive behavior at the Board Meeting on 7/25/2023;
- b) Letter (w/o attachments) dated July 28, 2023, from Keyrock Energy LLC regarding a permit application to drill the proposed Neel Well in Amwell Township;
- c) Letter dated August 4, 2023, from Theresa Wiedenhofer, recognizing a few members of the fire department for their act of kindness;
- d) Letter dated August 4, 2023, from Comcast regarding extending broadband service to unserved locations in South Strabane Twp.;
- e) Memo dated August 7, 2023, regarding the 2023 annual convention of the Wash. Co. Assoc. Of Twp. Officials on October 12, 2023; and
- f) Email dated August 21, 2023, regarding Kevin Montgomery's act of kindness helping a lady at Community Park get back into her car.

*Copies of those items in italics are not attached, but available upon request.*

### **Township Solicitor's Report**

Solicitor Makel provided an update on obtaining paperwork for sanitary easements.

### **Township Engineer's Report**

Township Engineer Rob Horvat indicated he will be meeting soon with Jeff Ziegler and Jordan Cramer on selecting projects and submitting LSA applications.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

No old business at this time.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **9A: Public presentation for an ordinance to establish billing of fire department services for accidents and other services to non-township residents.**

Chief Cramer explained that in response to the high number of accidents on I-70 and I-79, the ordinance to establish billing of fire department services to non-township residents is being presented. These incidents result in costs associated with the use of equipment and product that the South Strabane Township taxpayer is currently incurring. This ordinance would pass costs along to the insurance company of those involved in the accident. Much of the time these individuals are not South Strabane residents. Chief Cramer confirmed that only the insurance companies of non-residents would be billed. Supervisor Luketich asked if a resident's insurance company would be billed if the resident did something illegal thereby causing the incident. Chief Cramer explained that in a case such as that, the resident's insurance company would be billed. He went on to provide an example of a resident choosing to burn down a structure rather than going through the demolition process.

### **9B: Resolution amending the 2023 comprehensive fee schedule for accident billing fees.**

Mr. Murphy moved to approve a resolution to amend the 2023 comprehensive fee schedule for accident billing fees. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Mrs. Deeb asked where the funds would be allocated that are collected under this ordinance and she hoped that it would result in the fire tax going down. Chief Cramer stated that possibly the funds would stay within the fire arena, but that decision is left to the Board of Supervisors and management.

### **9C: Resolution recognizing South Hills Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram for their safety contributions to the South Strabane Fire Department.**

Chair Burns read the resolution aloud to the public. Mr. Murphy moved to approve the resolution recognizing South Hills Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram for their safety contributions to the South Strabane Fire Department. Mr. Luketich seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9D: Resolution establishing rules and regulations for the conduct of public meetings including public comment period.**

Chair Burns read the resolution aloud to the public.

Mr. Luketich moved to approve the resolution establishing rules and regulations for the conduct of public meetings including the public comment period. Mr. Grego seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued about the form that is now being implemented to give residents a means to direct concerns on township matters to the Board of Supervisors and the Township Manager. Mrs. Deeb stated that she would like to see meeting agendas posted earlier than 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Layne Zipko stated that agendas used to be available five days prior to the meeting. Mr. Bull stated that he believes that limiting public comments to action items only would force people to make their comments on social media. Chair Burns stated that meetings of the Board of Supervisors are for the purpose of conducting township business and that the Supervisors and Township Manager are available to residents to discuss their issues outside of the business meeting. Supervisor Luketich commented that he agrees with the Chair. Mr. Morgan asked of the resolution could be tabled to see how people may choose to limit themselves at future meetings.

Hearing no more comment, the motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9E: Motion approving an agreement with Jeffrey Ziegler for the position of Township Manager.**

Mr. Grego made a motion to approve an agreement with Jeffrey Ziegler for the position of Township Manager. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9F: Motion extending an agreement with Jordan Cramer to assist the Township Manager.**

Mr. Luketich made a motion extending an agreement with Jordan Cramer to assist the Township Manager. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9G: Motion appointing firefighters to fill vacancies.**

Chief Jordan explained that there is one full-time vacancy and that a current part-time employee, Patrick Donley, is being promoted to the full-time position. He went on to say that a current volunteer, Michael Swantek, is being promoted to the part-time position.

Mr. Luketich made the motion to appoint the firefighters to fill the vacancies. Mr. Weber seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9H: Motion authorizing Township staff to conduct an RFP for Township-wide recycling services.**

Mr. Murphy made a motion to authorize staff to conduct an RFP for Township-wide recycling services. Mr. Luketich seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9I: Motion authorizing Township staff to conduct an RFP for gas and diesel fuel.**

Mr. Murphy made a motion to authorize staff to conduct an RFP for gas and diesel fuel. Mr. Luketich seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9J: Motion Approving a 2024 Budget Calendar.**

Mr. Ziegler clarified the date of the meeting to consider adoption of the 2024 budget will be Tuesday, November 28, 2023, and not November 18, 2023.

Mr. Murphy moved to adopt the 2024 Budget Calendar. Mr. Webber seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9K: Resolution amending the conditions placed on Champion Services.**

Solicitor Makel read a motion to authorize the amendment of the Finding of Facts and Conclusions of Lawe regarding the application of Champion Enterprises, LLC. to operate business offices only at 65 Fisher Road, Washington 15301 in the C-3 zoning district parcel ID 600-001-00-0010-05 by changing paragraph (d) as to limiting a maximum of 280 parking spaces and amending paragraph (l) to require the applicant to install a stop sign and left turn only sign on the applicant's property at the expense of the applicant. Mr. Luketich moved that motion. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Chair Burns reminded the public that the Township Property Beautification awards are still being accepted with a deadline of September 8th. He provided copies of program applications along with encouragement to take one and nominate a neighbor that is doing a great job in the community.

Mrs. Deeb asked if the resolution that the Chair read under 9D would be posted on the website. Chair Burns said that it would and asked the Township Manager to have it posted.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

As no further business came before the Board, Mr. Weber moved to adjourn. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey L. Ziegler  
Township Manager