

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

**February 27, 2024**

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The February 27, 2024, Regular Meeting of the South Strabane Township Board of Supervisors (“Board”) came to order at 6:00 p.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; Mark Murphy, Vice-Chair; Jeff Bull; Russell Grego; and George Rowand.
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Absent	None
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Also Present	Township Manager Jeff Ziegler; Assistant Manager/Fire Chief Jordan Cramer; Police Chief Drew Hilk; Township Solicitor Dennis Makel and Township Engineer Rob Horvat.
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Chair Weber welcomed everyone in attendance to the meeting. He noted that in addition to the Board, the Township Manager, Solicitor, Engineer, and Assistant Manager/Fire Chief, Police.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Weber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Weber asked Chief Jordan Cramer for an update on the fire that had just taken place in the Township. Chief Cramer provided an update on the structure fire that occurred on East Maiden Street. Chair Weber asked if anyone was hurt, and Chief Cramer responded that there were no injuries.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Weber stated the Board allocates a period of time at each meeting 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.

Chair Weber reviewed the rules for Public Comment Period. He stated that Robert’s Rules of Order will apply and those wishing to make a comment are to sign the sign-in sheet before the meeting and that the Township Manager will call them to the podium when it is their turn. Chair Weber reminded everyone that upon taking the podium, they are to state their name and address and be reminded they have up to three minutes. He stated there would be no debating and no question and answer and that most importantly there would be no personal comments permitted. He stated that

once the public comment period is concluded that the comments will not be addressed and that the Board will move on to the next business item.

Chair Weber reminded everyone that should they have questions during the week they can call the office during business hours or fill out the form to bring an issue to the Township Manager's attention. He concluded his comments by pointing out that the Township Manager and Board members remain for a while after the meeting is over and are available at that time and with that he opened the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Marcia Deeb, Fox Drive commented that the developer for Champion Center increased the number of parking spaces that they were putting in at the development and asked why they made this change. She stated she hoped that a representative from Champion Center would address this.

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

Mr. Murphy moved to approve the January 23, 2024, Meeting Minutes Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

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

- Payroll: \$ 156,161.91 (pay date of January 26, 2024)
- Payroll: \$ 139,516.26 (pay date of February 9, 2024)
- General Fund: \$ 369,607.49
- Liquid Fuels Fund: \$ 2,212.24
- Escrow \$ 15,265.68
- Sewage Enterprise: \$ 14,965.00
- Total Expenditure: \$ 697,728.58**

- Overtime costs for the period include:
  - Police: \$ 4,217.64
  - Fire: \$ 1,373.52
  - Public Works: \$ 8,624.73**Total OT: \$ 14,215.89** (pay date of January 26, 2024)

- Police: \$ 4,445.93
- Fire: \$ 578.01
- Public Works: \$ 1,111.74
- Total OT: \$ 6,135.68** (pay date of February 9, 2024)

General Fund:

- Municipal Employees Insurance Trust (Health Insurance March) \$ 59,873.89
- Zions Bank (General Obligation Bond 2019) \$218,578.13

Reports and Documents Attached:

- Expenses by Vendor Summary and Detail for the Period; and
- Police, Fire and Public Works Overtime Analysis for pay January 26, 2024 and
- Police, Fire and Public Works Overtime Analysis for pay February 9, 2024.

Mr. Murphy moved to approve the payroll for the periods January 7, 2024, through January 20, 2024, and January 21, 2024, through February 3, 2024 and bills for the period January 20, 2024, through February 23, 2024. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

## **6. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECOGNITION**

Chair Weber read a portion of an article from the March 2024 edition of the *PA Township News* magazine. The article reviewed the importance of engineers and the vital service they provide to townships across the state. Chair Weber then publicly recognized Rob Horvat and his firm for the work that he does for South Strabane Township and thanked him for his service.

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

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

Chair Weber 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 by anyone in the room or joining the meeting online.

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

Mr. Ziegler reported that the annual Spring Cleanup would be taking place on March 25<sup>th</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>. Residents wishing to participate in this yard waste cleanup should place limbs and branches at the curb. Limbs should not exceed 6" in diameter nor should they exceed 10' in length. Mr. Ziegler stated items should be placed on the curb prior to 7am on collection day and not exceed what the Public Works crew can collect in 10 minutes per stop. Residents are also encouraged to use the recycling center at 253 Zediker Station Road.

Mr. Ziegler reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission has scheduled a Community Easter Egg Hunt for children up to age 12 who are residents of the Township. The event will be held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Pancake Fire Department Pavilion beginning at 10:30am. In addition to the egg hunt, children will have the opportunity to visit with the Easter Bunny and tour a fire truck.

Mr. Ziegler provided an update on a couple of building/development projects in the Township. He provided a brief update on: Washington Hyundai, Dicks Sporting Goods, an EV charging station at Walmart, Starbucks and Victoria's Secret.

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

Mr. Ziegler noted that the following was transmitted to the Board through the Secretary/Treasurer's Report:

### **Minutes and Agendas:**

- a) Planning Commission Reorg. & Regular Meeting Minutes – January 4, 2024;
- b) Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes – January 16, 2024;

- c) Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda – February 1, 2024; and
- d) Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Agenda – February 20, 2024.

**Reports and Publications:**

- a) Finance Report - January 2024;
- b) Building Department/Code Enforcement Report – January 2024;
- c) Fire Department Report – January 2024
- d) Police Department Report – January 2024;
- e) Tax Collector's Report & Interim Collection Only – January 2024;
- f) Township Engineer's Report – February 27, 2024;
- g) Animal Control Monthly Report – January 2024;
- h) OR, Help Wanted, PT Seasonal Park Custodian – February 23, 2024;
- i) Freedom Transit Newsletter – February 2024; and
- j) PennDOT Moving Forward Newsletter – Winter 2024

**Correspondence:**

- a) Audit Engagement Letter dated November 29, 2023, from Cypher & Cypher to do the 2023 audit;
- b) Letter dated January 16, 2024, from Deanne Trent, Manager, External & Gov't Affairs of Comcast, regarding a programming change;
- c) Letter dated January 18, 2024, Andy Gorel, Fell Township Chairperson, regarding SST's assistance with two cases they are fighting;
- d) Letter dated January 23, 2024, from Fred Brant of Andrasko & Brant, Inc. regarding applying for a NPDES permit at 370 Rankin Road related to the proposed to install a SFTF to serve an existing dwelling;
- e) Letter dated January 24, 2024, from Jeff Ziegler to Cypher & Cypher regarding their appointment letter to serve as Township CPA Auditor for 2023;
- f) Letter dated February 1, 2024, from Consolidated Communications informing the Twp. of a change in services;
- g) Memo dated February 6, 2024, from Chief Hilk to Jeff Ziegler regarding the 2023 budget – year end summery;
- h) Letter (w/o attachments) dated February 12, 2024, from Range Resources regarding a permit application/modification to drill the proposed Little Clara Unit 4H, 5H, 7H, and 11H in Chartiers Township;
- i) Card dated February 15, 2024, from Jeff Kotula, president of Chambers of Commerce thanking Jeff Ziegler for meeting him for lunch; and
- j) Letter dated February 21, 2024, to Penny Steggles regarding her failed appointment.

**Township Solicitor's Report**

Township Solicitor Dennis Makel stated he continues to work on a couple of ongoing issues for the Township.

**Township Engineer's Report**

Township Engineer Rob Horvat reported that he has been working with the Township regarding the local match for the \$1 million Covid-19 ARPA H20 PA Grant to upgrade the Quarry Road Pump Station. He also stated there was a slip repair at Burkett Manor that has now been repaired. Mr. Bull asked Mr. Horvat about a comment he made at the December meeting

when he reported that work at Burkett Manor was done until spring. Mr. Horvat clarified the comment he made at that time in that he was referring to site work at the development.

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

**9A: Motion to Accept the Resignation of Troy Lucas from the Position of Code Enforcement Officer Effective January 30, 2024.**

Chair Weber asked Township Manager Ziegler how long Mr. Lucas had been employed with the Township. Mr. Ziegler replied that Mr. Lucas had been employed with the Township for a little more than two years.

Mr. Murphy moved to accept the resignation of Troy Lucas from the position of Code Enforcement Officer effective January 30, 2024. Mr. Bull seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote.

**9B: Motion to Accept the Retirement of Jim Barnes from the position of part-time Code Enforcement Employee effective February 29, 2024.**

Chair Weber stated that Mr. Barnes was a longstanding employee with the Township and asked if any of the Supervisors wanted to make any comments. Mr. Grego stated that he worked alongside Jim Barnes for a lot of years and thought that he was a hardworking employee that the Township won't easily get along without. Mr. Murphy commented that Mr. Barnes worked with a lot of different employees in all of the Township departments over the years and said that he will be missed. Chair Weber stated that the Township will publicly recognize Mr. Barnes' service at a future meeting.

Mr. Murphy moved accept the retirement of Jim Barnes from the position of part-time Code Enforcement Employee effective February 29, 2024. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote.

**9C: Motion to Approve a Resolution Authorizing the Destruction of Specific Public Records.**

Mr. Bull asked if any of the records being destroyed were financial records. Township Manager Ziegler said that they were not financial records. He stated that the records were 2009-2018 Ethics Statements, 2021-2023 Municipal Lien Letters and 1995-2020 Peddler's Permits. He went on to explain that these records were being destroyed in accordance with the PHRM Records Retention Manual.

Mr. Murphy moved to approve a resolution authorizing the destruction of specific public records. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 4-1 roll call vote with Mr. Bull voting no.

**9D: Motion Authorizing the Execution of a Franchise Agreement Between Comcast Communications Management LLC, and South Strabane Township.**

Township Manager Ziegler explained that this agreement with Comcast is a seven-year renewal agreement of the existing franchise agreement. The Township will receive as a fee an amount equal

to 5% of Comcast's annual gross revenue for the operation of a cable system in the franchise area. Mr. Ziegler noted that this was \$208,582 for the 2023 calendar year.

Mr. Murphy moved to authorize the execution of a franchise agreement between Comcast Communications Management LLC, and South Strabane Township. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9E: Consideration of a Request to Have a Streetlight Installed on Shadyside Avenue.**

Township Manager Ziegler explained that the Township received a petition signed by ten residents living on Shadyside Avenue or the general area requesting a streetlight be installed in the area. Mr. Ziegler reported that the cost of installing a 50W LED streetlight fixture on to an existing pole would be \$1,217.93 and the monthly charge would be around \$20. Discussion ensued on the two alternate locations with the intersection of Shadyside and Fairview Avenue being the preferred location as intersections are where the Township has tended to locate streetlights. Mr. Grego stated historically the Township has located streetlights at bus stops. Mr. Murphy commented that he would like to see an ordinance in the future addressing streetlights.

Mr. Grego moved to approve a request to have a streetlight installed at the intersection of Shadyside and Fairview Avenue. Mr. Murphy Seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**9F: Motion to Authorize the Chairman and the Township Manager to Accept the COVID-19 ARPA H2O Grant.**

Township Manager Ziegler explained that the Township was awarded a \$1,000,000 COVID-19 ARPA H2O PA Grant to do work at the Quarry Road Pump Station. In addition to much needed maintenance, the project involved work to increase the capacity. Mr. Ziegler noted that to get the full \$1,000,000 grant the local match would be \$515,151.52. He noted that at the time of application it was thought that the match could be funded by the sewer capital fund that would see an influx of tap fees from a development that ended up so far, not materializing. A meeting was held with WEWJA to request their participation in the local match. WEWJA indicated they were not willing to participate. Mr. Ziegler noted that the grant needed to be accepted by February 28, 2024 or the grant offer would be withdrawn. He further noted that if accepted the Township would have until September 20, 2026 to expend the funds. Since this grant is a reimbursable grant, the recommendation is to accept the grant and take some additional time to find a way to fund the local match. Mr. Horvat asked the Board to accept the grant and give his office and township staff more time to work through options to change the project scope to see if the Township can find a way to use the grant. Discussion ensued among the Board regarding a possible future Snuffy development and the challenges that would place on the roads in the area of the Quarry Road Pump Station. There was also discussion surrounding the use of tax dollars vs. developer funding for the pump station upgrade.

Mr. Murphy Authorize the Chairman and the Township Manager to Accept the COVID-19 ARPA H2O Grant. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. Chair Weber called for a roll call vote:

Ayes: Mr. Grego and Mr. Murphy

Nays: Mr. Bull, Mr. Rowand and Mr. Weber

The motion failed by a 2-3 roll call vote.

**9G: Motion to Recognize Code.sys Code Consulting, Inc. as the Commercial Plan Reviewer for the Township.**

Township Manager Ziegler explained that Code.sys has been providing limited plan review services for the Township since 1996. He explained that with the retirement of Jim Barnes, Township staff intends to have Code.sys do all commercial plan review services. It was noted that the costs associated with plan review are absorbed by the applicant. Mr. Ziegler stated that residential plan reviews and inspections will continue to be done by Building Code Official Scott Heckman.

Mr. Bull asked if the Township Building Code Official had yet received his certifications for commercial inspections. Mr. Ziegler responded that he had not yet received those certifications.

Mr. Murphy moved to recognize Code.sys Code Consulting, Inc. as the commercial plan reviewer for the Township. The motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote.

**9H: Motion That the Township Will no Longer Provide Low Interest Loans to Owners of Properties Contiguous with Sewer Lines in South Strabane Township.**

Township Manager Ziegler explained that the South Strabane Sanitary Authority offered low interest loans to existing homeowners for required sewer line tap in to the Floral Hill Sewer Extension Project. Recently a building permit was filed for a home to be built at 550 Floral Hill Drive and this home will be required to tap into this sewer line. The previous Township Manager had offered this resident the option for a 5-, 10- or 20- year loan at 2%. At this time the Township no longer wishes to offer financing to new applicants. This applicant is asking that the Township honor the commitment made by the previous Township Manager and authorize a 10-year repayment payment term at 2% for the \$15,607 tap-in fee. Discussion ensued among the Board regarding authorizing this one final loan and then requiring future applicants to pay the fee in full up front.

Mr. Murphy moved that the Township will no longer provide low interest loans to owners of properties contiguous with Sewer Lines in South Strabane Township and grandfather in the Robinson property at 550 Floral Hill Drive based upon the commitment made by the previous Township Manager. The motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote.

**9I: Motion to Approve Resolution for Preliminary and Final Land Development Approval for Champion Center Enterprises, LLC at 65 Fischer Road.**

Chair Weber asked the Township Manager to read the Request for Board Action that was included in the packet. Township Manager Ziegler read the document. Chair Weber asked Mr. Lonich if he had any comments. Mr. Lonich noted that he would be filing a Right-to-Know request for the video of the meeting in the morning. He went on to say that he is asking that Mr. Bull recuse himself from voting on the land development plan based upon comments that he had made previously regarding the application. Mr. Lonich stated that the applicant has complied with the ordinance requirements and the comments in the Township consulting engineer's review letter. Solicitor Makel called Mr. Lonich's attention to the section within the Findings of Fact Conclusions of Law that indicated the property is approved for business and professional office use as a conditional use in the C3 district and may not be enlarged or changed by the applicant. Solicitor Makel asked Mr. Lonich if this is something that the applicant understands. Mr. Lonich stated the applicant understands. Solicitor Makel asked if his client understands that this is something they will have to comply with. Mr. Lonich stated that his client understands. Solicitor Makel showed Mr. Lonich a copy of *The Legacy Project* document that indicates the property is planned for use as a church. Mr. Lonich said the Township has mechanisms in place if the

Township does not believe the applicant is fulfilling the terms of the application. He stated this is understood by his client and that he has been authorized by his client to state that they understand. Chair Weber asked if there are future plans to use this property for a church. Mr. Lonich stated the applicant is seeking approval for business offices and that is what the Board granted approval for. Marcia Deeb asked why Champion changed their request regarding parking and are asking for more parking than they were originally. Mr. Lonich stated that the original application was for the minimum number of parking spaces required by the ordinance and the current number of parking spaces that were eventually placed in the Findings of Fact Conclusions of Law.

Mr. Weber moved to approve Resolution for preliminary and final land development approval for Champion Center Enterprises, LLC at 65 Fischer Road. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. Chair Weber called for a roll call vote:

Ayes: Mr. Grego, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Rowand, and Mr. Weber

Nays: Mr. Bull

The motion passed by a 4-1 roll call vote.

**9J: Motion to Reappoint Dave DeMotte and to Appoint John Diamond to the Building Construction Appeals Board for 5-year terms.**

Township Manager Ziegler explained that the Township Building Code Official recently reviewed the Township's Building Code Appeal Board and found that one member of the Board had passed away and another's term had expired. Mr. Ziegler reported that Dave DeMotte requested reappointment to the Board and Mr. John Diamond applied to be appointed to the Board. Mr. Ziegler also reported that with these appointments the Board would stand at three members and that two additional openings exist, and the Township has been attempting to fill the openings since 2002.

Mr. Murphy commented that this Board rarely, if ever, is required to meet and in his tenure with the Township doesn't recall that they have ever met. Mr. Bull stated that he believed that Mr. Diamond's profession as a builder would be a conflict and he should not be appointed to the Board. Mr. Ziegler stated that per the Code architects, engineers and experience in the construction industry are eligibility requirements to serve on the Board. He also stated that should an appeal come before the Board in which Mr. Diamond has an interest, he would need to recuse himself.

Mr. Murphy moved to reappoint Dave DeMotte and to appoint John Diamond to the Building Construction Appeals Board for 5-year terms. Mr. Grego seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 4-1 roll call vote with Mr. Bull voting no.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

As no further business came before the Board, Mr. Weber moved to adjourn. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey L. Ziegler  
Township Manager