

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
MINUTES – JANUARY 3, 2023

The Organizational Meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on January 3, 2023. Dr. Weiss called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Board of Supervisors: Fredric K. Weiss, Chair
Suzanne Blundi, Vice Chair
John B. Lewis, Secretary
James McCartney, Treasurer
Daniel Grenier, Supervisor

Others: Kenneth Coluzzi, Interim Township Manager
David Truelove, Township Solicitor
Andrew Pockl, Township Engineer

ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FOR 2023

The meeting was turned over to Mr. Truelove, Chair Pro-Tem who asked for nominations for Chair of the Board of Supervisors for 2023.

Mr. McCartney moved and Ms. Blundi seconded to elect Dr. Weiss as Chair of the Board of Supervisors for 2023.

Mr. Grenier asked if there can be discussion on this, and Mr. Truelove stated there could be discussion before the vote if the Board wishes. Mr. Grenier stated the tradition with the Board of Supervisors is to rotate and all Board members have been Chair over the last five years. He stated if we were to go in order it would be Mr. Lewis' turn, and given his willingness to participate locally in many events such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, parades, and other openings, and since he is regularly in attendance "for most things," he feels we should follow tradition and "go with Supervisor Lewis."

Motion carried to elect Dr. Weiss with Mr. Grenier and Mr. Lewis opposed.

The meeting was turned over to Dr. Weiss.

REMARKS BY THE NEW CHAIR

Dr. Weiss stated he appreciates the privilege of serving as Chair for 2023. He stated we will be welcoming our new Manager, David Kratzer. He stated we will hopefully be settling up the Township Trust in the next month. He stated we will hopefully be figuring out a plan for our sports fields and parks, more specifically Macclesfield and Snipes. He stated this coming year we will hopefully be developing a Master Plan for Patterson Farm and hopefully finding a use for the structures. He stated lastly we will beginning the discussion on our structural deficit of the last few years which will mean some hard decisions by the Board. He stated Falls Township and Morrisville have instituted EITs, and he feels it is fair to have that discussion to figure out a way that our vast sums in the bank do not disappear in the next few years. He stated hopefully a majority of the Board will agree that these things will be needed, and he looks forward to a productive year.

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS

Election of Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors for 2023

Mr. Grenier moved and Mr. Lewis seconded to elect Mr. Lewis as Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors for 2023.

Motion did not carry as Ms. Blundi, Mr. McCartney, and Dr. Weiss were opposed.

Mr. McCartney moved and Ms. Blundi seconded to elect Ms. Blundi as Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors for 2023.

Motion carried with Mr. Grenier and Mr. Lewis opposed.

Election of Secretary of the Board of Supervisors for 2023

Mr. McCartney moved, Ms. Blundi seconded and it was unanimously carried to elect Mr. Lewis as Secretary of the Board of Supervisors for 2023.

Election of Treasurer of the Board of Supervisors for 2023

Ms. Blundi moved and Mr. McCartney seconded to elect Mr. McCartney as Treasurer of the Board of Supervisors for 2023.

Motion carried with Mr. Grenier and Mr. Lewis opposed.

Election of Assistant Secretary/Treasurer for 2023

Dr. Weiss moved and Ms. Blundi seconded to elect David Kratzer as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer for 2023.

Mr. Truelove stated Mr. Kratzer formally starts his position on January 9, 2023 so this would be effective as of that date.

Motion carried unanimously.

APPOINT CHAIR OF THE VACANCY BOARD

Mr. Lewis moved and Mr. Grenier seconded to appoint Karen Vander Laan as Chair of the Vacancy Board.

Motion did not carry as Ms. Blundi, Mr. McCartney, and Dr. Weiss were opposed.

Mr. Lewis moved and Mr. Grenier seconded to appoint Zach Rubin as Chair of the Vacancy Board.

Motion did not carry as Ms. Blundi, Mr. McCartney, and Dr. Weiss were opposed.

Mr. McCartney moved, Ms. Blundi seconded and it was unanimously carried to appoint Adrian Costello as Chair of the Vacancy Board.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Appoint Solicitor for 2023

Ms. Blundi moved and Mr. McCartney seconded to appoint Hill Wallack, specifically David Truelove, as Solicitor for 2023.

Mr. Lewis stated late last week we received revised terms for our Agreement, and they included binding arbitration as opposed to options for Jury trial. Mr. Truelove agreed to excise that. Mr. Lewis asked what is the rate increase, and Mr. Truelove stated it is \$5 an hour adding that the rate has not been raised for two years. Mr. Lewis asked what happened to the Retainer Agreement, and Mr. Truelove stated that expired a year ago adding that they kept the same rate this last year. Mr. Lewis stated previously Ms. Blundi had negotiated the Agreement with Hill Wallack, and this is different from that. Ms. Blundi stated Mr. Grenier was Chair at that time. Mr. Lewis asked how the Retainer Agreement worked, and Mr. Truelove stated he believes it was the same terms other than the binding arbitration and the rate. Mr. Lewis asked if there were any “minimums,” and Mr. Truelove stated he did not believe so. Mr. Truelove stated it is a blended rate for all work. He stated they do labor work and Right-To-Know work for which other firms generally charge a higher rate, but they do not charge a higher rate for that; and it is a blended rate for all work.

Mr. Truelove stated he will agree to excise the arbitration phase. Ms. Blundi and Mr. McCartney agreed to that change in the Contract.

Motion carried with Mr. Grenier and Mr. Lewis opposed.

Appoint Township Engineer for 2023

Ms. Blundi moved and Mr. Lewis seconded to appoint Remington & Vernick Engineers, specifically Andrew Pockl, as Township Engineer for 2023.

Mr. Grenier stated he understands that this is subject to the terms and conditions in the Professional Services Agreement that we have had with them for the last couple of years with a slight increase this year.

Motion carried unanimously.

Appoint Sewer Engineer for 2023

Ms. Blundi moved and Mr. McCartney seconded to appoint Fred Ebert of Ebert Engineering as Sewer Engineer for 2023.

Motion carried with Mr. Grenier and Mr. Lewis opposed.

Appoint Traffic Engineer for 2023

Mr. Grenier moved, Mr. Lewis seconded and it was unanimously carried to appoint SAFE Engineering as Traffic Engineer for 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Laurie Grey, Township resident, stated she is concerned that there “seems to be something going on with the Board and in the past few meetings everything is three to two.” She stated there seems to be tension amongst the Board of Supervisors which she is concerned about.

Mr. McCartney stated he respects every Supervisor and their opinion; and he feels that over the last year we have grown as far as working together for the best of the Township.

Mr. Grenier stated he agrees with Mr. McCartney and the demeanor of the Board and the general approach has improved a great deal over the last year; and even when they disagree, they can have conversations as a Board during meetings where “you are not getting shouted down” during the meetings. He stated he feels it has been a great improvement over the last few years before that. He stated he hopes the Board over the next year can work toward some common goals. He added he thinks some of the policy items that were mentioned up front will be very difficult for a lot of people in the Township to address; and he specifically noted the mention of potentially an EIT, “pushing Snipes forward and some other things” that have been historically “pretty divisive” in the Township. He stated he feels it will be very important that people “pay attention and take part.” He stated since COVID, we have seen less and less participation by the community at Board of Supervisors’ meetings, and he feels that the more the community participates, the better the Board is because we get to hear the voices of the community and their ideas so that it is not just the Board talking about ideas, rather it is the whole community.

Dr. Weiss stated he hopes that the community always participates in the hard decisions that the Board has to make for the coming year. He stated the tax-payers are the most important as they “pay the bills,” and the Board just allocates the money. He stated he feels the Board has been good at properly planning so that we are “better off now than we were when we came in.” He stated the fact that the Board gets passionate on their views sometimes means that they care about the Township even though they may have different opinions.

Mr. Lewis stated it is disconcerting when not everyone agrees, but that is part of policy making, although it should not become personal. He stated as long as the Board is willing to argue the policy and not the person, we can do better. He stated he tries very hard to work for everyone, and he will take anyone’s call and answer their e-mail. He stated he does not mind taking a loss on a vote, and does not take that personally.” He stated he believes Ms. Grey has valid points and he appreciates her concern.

Ms. Lisa Tenney, 156 Pinnacle Circle, stated she shares the concern of the former caller. She stated the best answers to problems are those that are collaborative and that everyone agrees on. She stated she has seen over the last three years a “constant three voting, two down and that is Lewis and Grenier; and this has to stop and it is not right.” She stated that does not make a good decision, and that makes an “autocratic government.” She stated she feels the Board needs to represent “the wants and wishes of those who will vote for you,” and she does not see that happening. She stated she knows that most people are not aware of what is happening in local government, and “perhaps one day they will.” Ms. Tenney stated the Board is “really important making decisions that affect our every day life.” She stated she hopes the Board will live up to that.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Grenier thanked the Police and Public Works Departments as yesterday a truck took down a power line, and the Township was quickly on the scene making it safe. Chief Coluzzi stated he will convey Mr. Grenier’s thanks to the Police Department and Road Department.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUPERVISOR LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2023

Dr. Weiss announced the Supervisor Liaison assignments for 2023 as follows:

Mr. Lewis – Farmland Preservation, Disability Advisory Board, Historic Commission, Electric Reliability

Mr. Grenier – EAC, Citizens Traffic, Seniors, Trenton-Mercer Airport Review Board

Mr. McCartney – Golf, Electronic Media, Zoning Hearing Board, Special Events

Ms. Blundi – Ad Hoc Property, Emergency Management, Ag Security Board, Board of Appeals, Board of Auditors

Dr. Weiss – Park & Rec, Planning Commission, HARB, Veterans

ESTABLISH THE AMOUNT OF THE TREASURER'S BOND AT \$2,000,000

Ms. Blundi moved, Mr. Grenier seconded and it was unanimously carried to establish the amount of the Treasurer's Bond at \$2,000,000.

ESTABLISH THE AMOUNT OF THE ASSISTANT TREASURER'S BOND AT \$2,000,000

Ms. Blundi moved, Mr. Grenier seconded and it was unanimously carried to establish the amount of the Assistant Treasurer's Bond at \$2,000,000.

DISCUSSION AND TABLING DELEGATE/ALTERNATE TO THE PSATS CONFERENCE

Dr. Weiss stated while this was not listed on the Agenda, the Board should consider appointing the Delegate to the 2023 PSATS Conference.

Mr. Grenier moved and Mr. Lewis seconded to appoint James McCartney as the Delegate to the PSATS Conference.

Ms. Blundi asked if we could also have an Alternate as she knows that there are Supervisors who have not had the opportunity to attend the Conference.

Dr. Weiss stated we can have one voting member, but we can have as many

Alternates as the Board would like. Mr. McCartney has been nominated to be the voting Delegate. Ms. Blundi asked if any other Board members would like to be the voting Delegate as she knows that Mr. Lewis and possibly Mr. Grenier have not had a chance to go to the Conference.

Dr. Weiss asked if the Motion could be amended to have Mr. Lewis as the Alternate Delegate. Ms. Blundi asked Mr. Grenier if he would like to be considered as well, and Dr. Weiss stated there could be two Alternates. Mr. McCartney stated he has never attended PSATS, and Mr. Grenier stated he has not attended either. Dr. Weiss stated there could be an amended Motion to have Mr. McCartney as the voting Delegate and Mr. Grenier and Mr. Lewis as Alternate Delegates. Mr. Lewis stated he would like to check his schedule.

Ms. Blundi suggested that the matter be Tabled to the next Agenda adding that this does involve the spending of money.

Ms. Blundi moved, Dr. Weiss seconded and it was unanimously carried to Table to the next meeting..

ZONING HEARING BOARD MATTER

With regard to Appeal #23-1993 Christine and Robert McLaughlin for the property located at 907 Morgan Drive, Yardley, PA 19067, Tax Parcel #20-025-200 Variance request from Township Zoning Ordinance #200-23.B in order to install a 292 square foot kitchen addition and covered patio over the existing patio which would increase the impervious surface from the existing 18% to 19.7% where 18% is the allowable amount, it was agreed to leave the matter to the Zoning Hearing Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Lewis, Secretary

