

LOWER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Monday August 5, 2024

The Board of Commissioners of Lower Pottsgrove Township held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 5, 2024, at the Lower Pottsgrove Township Building, located at 2199 Buchert Road, Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Board of Commissioners: Raymond W. Lopez, Earl E. Swavely, Robert Mohollen, Michael McGroarty, and William Keohane were present.

Edward C. Wagner: Manager, Richard Bell: Police Chief, Lew Babel: Fire Marshal, Nick Perilli: Township Engineer, Richard Almquist: Solicitor and Nicole Varady: Secretary were also present.

The regularly scheduled meeting was called to order by President Raymond W. Lopez at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioner Lopez stated that the meeting will be recorded and asked any speakers to give their names and address for public comments.

SWEARING IN CEREMONY WITH DISTRICT JUSTICE EDWARD KROPP

Chief Richard Bell introduced Mr. Daniel Cook who graduated from Penn State University with a degree in Business Administration and went on to attend Delaware Valley Municipal Police Academy. He graduated this past June, then passed the MOPEC examination. He has successfully passed all phases of the background investigation performed by Lower Pottsgrove Township and accepted the conditional offer of employment. District Justice Edward Kropp swore in Mr. Daniel James Cook as Police Officer for Lower Pottsgrove Township.

Solicitor Richard Almquist announced that the Board of Commissioners met today prior to the meeting for an Executive Session to discuss litigation and personnel matters. No action was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner McGroarty made the motion to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2024, Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Keohane seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

REPORT FROM THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER:

Mr. Wagner announced that he, along with Commissioners Lopez and Mohollen, met last Tuesday with Limerick and PennDOT officials via Zoom to discuss various developments proposed in and around the Sanatoga Interchange. There is residential and commercial development on both the Lower Pottsgrove and Limerick sides, so they asked PennDOT what they recommend for the Interchange. PennDOT recommends construction on the eastbound ramp. Mr. Wagner has reached out to a developer who is adjacent to the ramp as an acre of ground may be needed for the project. He explained that the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission has begun to update their regional comprehensive plan. The last plan had been adopted in 2015. The update will incorporate the latest census data and development trends. There is a meeting scheduled tomorrow with Marley Bice who is a representative of the Montgomery County Planning Commission to discuss how Lower Pottsgrove interacts with the

comprehensive plan including development issues. Mr. Tom Troutman and Commissioner Lopez will attend the meeting.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS:

Ginny Hummel 696 Buchert Road thanked the Township Engineers and Mr. Wagner for the quick help in getting contacts for an elevation certificate for her property. She said everyone was friendly and helpful and she continues to work with them during the process of trying to sell her home. Ms. Hummel stated that she hates to leave the township but thanked the fire departments and police department for all they have done for her over the years. Commissioner Lopez wished her the best.

REPORTS OF OFFICIALS AND COMMISSIONS:

Police:

Chief Richard Bell presented the Police report for the month of July 2024.

CALLS FOR SERVICE	1359
ASSISTS:	
Given by Lower Pottsgrove PD	11
TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT:	
Traffic Citations Issued	89
DUI Arrests	1
Accident Investigations	32
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS:	
Violations Indicate	49
Adults Arrested	19
Juveniles Handled	0
Youth Aid Panel/Reprimand Release	0
Juvenile Court	0
Adult Court/Citations (Juvenile)	0
MH/Involuntary Commitment	1

Chief Bell thanked the Commissioners for having Mr. Cook sworn in stating he will be an asset to the department.

Emergency Management:

Commissioner Lopez reported that there were no Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations for July, however, a Watchdesk Activation occurred on numerous days throughout July due to the extreme heat and high probability of severe thunderstorms. There was no damage to the Township. On July 15, Emergency Management personnel met with consultants to continue working on the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan. On July 16 and July 17, Commissioner Lopez attended two (2) full day training sessions presented by PEMA done by FEMA instructors regarding Volunteer and Donation Management. Commissioner Lopez reported that the township supply of Potassium Iodide (KI) has been replaced by Montgomery County as it had reached its expiration date. Lastly, he provided an update that the Emergency Plans are in the planning stage for approval by Montgomery County. There were no questions.

Fire Marshal:

Fire Marshal Babel presented the July 2024 report.

Station	Total Calls	Total Hrs. of Service	Total Personnel Hrs.	Total Personnel Training Hrs.	Total Personnel Fundraising Hrs.
Station 58 Sanatoga	37	27 hrs. 49 mins	98 hrs. 58 mins	111 hrs. 30 mins	33 hrs. 00 mins
Station 59 Ringing Hill	39	27 hrs. 41 mins	73 hrs. 07 mins	91 hrs. 30 mins	237 hrs. 15 mins

Mr. Babel announced that Thursday August 22 at 6:30 pm there will be the state required drill at the Genesis Health Center. He invited the Commissioner to attend to see the process.

Highway Public Works Department:

Mr. Wagner presented the July 2024 report prepared by Shane Hosier which includes milling, paving, and tar sealing Mervine Street, Randy Drive, Gresh Drive, First avenue and South Sunnybrook Road. They installed a new gas tank at the Public Works garage, pressure washed playground equipment, and repainted a crosswalk on Heritage Drive. Mr. Harry Dewees attended a course and received his flagger certification. The Public Works Department also roadside cut various roads, cut grass weekly for parks and open spaces, cut back intersections for line of sight, cleaned storm grates after rainstorms and patched potholes throughout the township.

Engineer:

Nick Perilli of McCarthy Engineering Associates provided a written Engineer's Report for the month of July 2024 updating the Board on various ongoing projects in the Township. Mr. Perilli gave an update regarding the North Adams Street Bridge that the project passed a preliminary adequacy review by PennDOT. The project is now with the bridge unit for final review. He hopes all reviews will be completed within the next couple weeks so the project can go out for public bid. Mr. Wagner announced that the township got the ninety-four (94) square feet that was needed for a right-of way for the project and the property owner is looking forward to getting the project moving. The NPDES permit for the location at High Street and Pleasantview Road had to be closed with the County Conservation District, so it has been submitted and he is waiting for confirmation that it has been terminated. Mr. Perilli announced that the Wawa project had been on hold while they obtained a permit amendment from DEP and the Conservation District, but his office received confirmation that it was approved so they are proceeding again.

Solicitor:

Solicitor Almquist provided a written report with a synopsis of all projects his office worked on for the month of July 2024. Due to the confidential and privileged information he will answer any questions during an Executive Session if necessary.

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Wagner announced that the final Summer Concert was held last night with the Pottsgrove Community Band. The concert series was well attended, and he thanked the sponsor JP Mascaro for their generosity. Adventure Grove is holding a fundraiser at Sanatoga Park on September 21 for the Inclusive Playground and flyers are available. Community Day will be held September 7 from 11:30am to 1:30pm at Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School. Commissioner Keohane inquired if the \$10,000.00 check on behalf of the Yeck Foundation had been received by the Township. Mr. Wagner confirmed he was notified earlier today that it was received.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Wagner reported the Planning Commission meeting for August 19 has been cancelled as the Township waits for the resubmittal of plans for Sanatoga Land Holdings.

Lower Pottsgrove Township Authority:

Mr. Wagner announced that the Sewer Authority meeting was held on July 25 where a contract for a Sewer Replacement project on Hilltop Road of 1220 linear feet was awarded to Joao Bradley. The amount was \$516,876.00, which is under the \$660,000.00 estimate provided by Ebert Engineering. Joao Bradley has done previous work in the Township and enjoys working with Lower Pottsgrove. \$361,000.00 is being paid by the H2O Grant for the project. The next meeting will be held on September 9.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION:

2024-06 Zoning Hearing Application for Cong Thanh Tran 91 Pinehurst Drive located in the R2 Residential District. He is requesting a variance from Section 250-21. D (1) for the installation of a 420SF carport to be located in the front yard.

Mr. Wagner explained that the homeowner installed a large carport without a permit. He was sent a violation. Mr. Wagner and Mr. Groff met with the homeowner who stated he needs the carport as a place to charge his electric car and because he doesn't want to shovel snow. Mr. Wagner explained that the resident has a two-car garage, and he found the contractor on Facebook. Mr. Wagner and Mr. Groff requested snow loads for the carport but the contractor, who is from North Carolina, is not returning calls. Mr. Wagner is concerned for the safety of the carport, explaining that Pennsylvania weather is different from what construction in North Carolina is made for. Mr. Wagner recommends that he attend the Zoning Hearing Board meeting and oppose the application. Commissioner McGroarty stated that having a carport in front of a garage is an eye-sore and recommends that Mr. Wagner attends the hearing and opposes it. All Commissioners agreed.

2024-07 Zoning Hearing Application for Coventry Christian School 699 N. Pleasantview Road located in the R2 Residential District. They are requesting a variance from Section 250-198.A(5)(a)(1) for a 91SF sign and Section 250-198.A(5)(a)(2) to allow the height of sign to be 6.6 feet.

Mr. Wagner explained that Coventry Christian has an existing digital sign which will be removed and replaced with the proposed brick and masonry sign which reads Coventry Christian School. The ordinance allows for a six (6) foot high sign and twenty-five square feet per face, so the proposed sign is too large. The renderings were provided to the Commissioners and Mr. Wagner stated he had no objections. The sign will be in the same location as the current sign which also required a variance, so it won't pose any obstruction to sight. The Commissioners agreed to leave the decision to the Zoning Hearing Board.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion to advertise Ordinance 369 amending Chapter 228, Vehicles and traffic of the Code of Ordinances

Mr. Wagner explained there were a few concerns from residents. The Police Department did a traffic study for speeding on Bahr Road and the current speed limit is thirty-five (35) miles per

hour (mph). The average speed was twenty-eight (28) mph, so they recommend decreasing the speed limit to twenty-five (25) mph. Another issue was regarding a stop sign at Sunnybrook Road and Mulberry Street. Mr. Wagner explained that there is a stop sign on Mulberry Street in both directions as you approach Sunnybrook Road so the Township would like to put a “stop except right turn” like Kepler Road and Wooded Way. Lastly, he added that there is only one stop sign in the development across from the former St. Pius X Building, so the Township will be adding stop signs based on traffic studies done by Lieutenant Will James and the traffic unit. Commissioner Keohane made a motion to advertise Ordinance 369 amending Chapter 228, Vehicles and traffic of the Code of Ordinances. Commissioner Mohollen seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Motion to advertise a public hearing for an Inter-Municipal Transfer of a Restaurant Liquor License to Wawa, Inc. 157 Evergreen Road on September 3rd at 6:00pm

Mr. Wagner explained that Wawa is assuming the license of 903 North Charlotte Street and transferring it to the new location at 157 Evergreen Road. Commissioner Swavely asked if it will be a full liquor license or if it holds restrictions. Mr. Wagner informed him that it will hold similar restrictions as Redners Market in that they cannot sell liquor or mixed drinks. Commissioner Mohollen made a motion to advertise a public hearing for an Inter-Municipal Transfer of a Restaurant Liquor License to Wawa, Inc. 157 Evergreen Road on September 3rd at 6:00pm. Commissioner Swavely seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Motion to extend a conditional offer of employment to Stacey Ward for the Administrative Support position retroactive to July 29th

Commissioner Lopez announced that Stacey is in attendance and that she started work last week. Commissioner McGroarty made a motion to extend a conditional offer of employment to Stacey Ward for the Administrative Support position retroactive to July 29th. Commissioner Keohane seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor. Commissioner McGroarty welcomed Stacey and informed the Board that he had the opportunity to sit on the interviews and he is confident that she will be an exceptional addition to the Township Staff.

Motion to hire SafeCity Solutions for a Promotional Exam/Interviews for Sergeant at a cost of \$5,660

Chief Bell explained that SafeCity Solutions has worked with Lower Pottsgrove Township in the past for hirings and manpower studies. One of the recent finds was that both Sergeants are working above their span of control for supervisory which is three (3) to six (6) individuals. He went on to explain that in the past, the department had four (4) sergeants, but two (2) spots were left vacant after a promotion and a retirement. There are currently fifteen (15) patrol officers which means both current sergeants are working above the recommended span of control for their shifts. By appointing two (2) more sergeants, there will be a supervisor on each shift. The promotions must come from within the department to an individual who has five (5) years of service with Lower Pottsgrove Police Department after their initial one (1) year probation. Commissioner Keohane asked how many officers in the department would meet that requirement. Chief Bell believes twelve (12). Chief Bell further explained that the cost of the promotions has already been budgeted so this won't cause an additional financial impact for the township. Chief Bell added that this will have to be approved by both the Board of Commissioners as well as the Civil Service Commission. If approved, SafeCity will create a written test and hold oral interviews for officers that pass the promotional exam. Commissioner

McGroarty commended Chief Bell for his long-term plans stating they are good for the safety of our community and his officers.

Commissioner Swavely made a motion to hire SafeCity Solution for a Promotional Exam/Interviews for Sergeant at a cost of \$5,660. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Motion to award the Snell Road Bridge Replacement Project to CMS, LLC of Reading in the amount of \$395,695.50

Mr. Perilli reviewed that last November, there was an on-site meeting with CMS at which time they provided a quote for the repair of the Snell Road Bridge. It was considered an emergency repair and was required to be publicly bid. At that time, the proposal was for approximately \$330,000.00; however, since that time, they could not get their steel supplier to manufacture the new beams without design drawings, so the structural engineer developed the drawings for the bridge replacement. Based on the drawings, CMS submitted a new proposal in the amount of \$395,695.50 based on the drawings and the increased price of steel. Mr. Wagner confirmed that this was the lowest bid. Mr. Perilli agreed that it is a fair price for the scope of work to be done. Commissioner Mohollen made a motion to award the Snell Road Bridge Replacement Project to CMS, LLC of Reading in the amount of \$395,695.50. Commissioner Keohane seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

2025 Township Budget adoption Calendar for your review

Mr. Wagner noted that the calendar was provided in the packet tonight for the Commissioners and explained that the Finance Committee has reviewed it. The calendar has been sent to the department heads and the first meeting is this Thursday to review the revenue.

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES: NONE

APPROVAL OF WARRANT #946 FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2024

Commissioner Mohollen made a motion to approve Warrant #946 for the month of June 2024. Commissioner McGroarty seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

REVIEW OF WARRANT #947 FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2024

Mr. Wagner advised that Warrant #947 will be ready by August 12.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Commissioner McGroarty congratulated and welcomed both Officer Cook and Stacey Ward to the Lower Pottsgrove Township family.

Commissioner Keohane also welcomed Ms. Ward and thanked Chief Bell for his long-term vision for his department and his hard work in recruiting Officer Cook. He wished Officer Cook a long, safe and illustrious career with Lower Pottsgrove. Commissioner Keoone thanked Mr. Wagner for attending the 55th Anniversary Celebration for the Pottsgrove Recreation Board as well as contacting Mr. Joe Zlomek who wrote an article on the event.

Commissioner Mohollen welcomed Ms. Ward and Officer Cook and thanked Chief Bell for his work in getting the Police Department aligned and running in a way that is best for the community. He added that he was invited to visit the new Cube Smart Storage facility on Charlotte Street with representatives from both fire companies. They did a walk through to familiarize themselves with the layout of the two hundred (200) unit facility in case they would

have a call there. He thanked the members of the fire companies as well as Fire Marshal Lew Babel for taking the time to prepared.

Commissioner Swavely welcomed Ms. Ward and thanked Chief Bell for all his proactive work with the Police Department.

Commissioner Lopez welcomed Ms. Ward, welcomed Officer Cook and thanked Chief Bell for his hard work.

Mr. Wagner thanked Ringing Hill Fire Company for removing eight (8) dangerous trees from the roadside.

Solicitor Almquist commented that he gives credit to the Police Department for the longevity of the staff.

Commissioner Lopez announced that there is no scheduled business at this time for the next meeting on August 22. Commissioner McGroarty made a motion to cancel the August 22 meeting. Commissioner Mohollen seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0.

Commissioner Keohane made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mohollen seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The vote was 5-0 in favor. There being no further business, the public meeting was adjourned at 7:23 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, at 6:30 P.M. at the Lower Pottsgrove Township Building.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicole Varady
Township Secretary