

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

### REGULAR MEETING

July 10, 2023

The following were in ATTENDANCE:

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Dean W. Villone, President

Thomas G. Vernau, Township Manager

H. Edward Black, Vice President

Erin G. Trone, Community & Economic  
Development Director

Joshua Nagy

David Holl, Public Safety Director

Charles Brown

Rebecca Davis, Public Works Director

Capt. Leon G. Crone, Lower Allen Police  
Dept.

Steven P. Miner, Township Solicitor

Nate Sterling, Administrative Secretary

Renee' Greenawalt, Recording Secretary

President Villone called the July 10, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 6:00 PM. He announced that Proof of Publication for the meeting was available for review. This was followed by a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. He noted that Commissioner Caron was absent with excuse.

President Villone spoke in remembrance of Scott McClintock, who worked as a part-time EMT for many years for the Township.

### **PRESENTATION: Solar Renewable Energy Project Wrap Up**

Mr. Seth R. Berry, Manager with Solar Renewable Energy, LLC (SRE), summarized the project and noted the system was now operational at both the Municipal Services and the Public Works buildings. The Township entered into the agreement in March 2022 and made a \$500,000 prepayment for power as part of the 28-year solar contract. The Township has the option to take ownership of the of the project in year six at a cost of \$787,662.

The project consists of an 879k watt ground mount at the St. John's Road Public Works building and a 201k watt ground mount and parking canopy at the Municipal Services building. These solar projects are estimated to offset about 94% of Township's annual energy usage across all PPL accounts. Mr. Berry noted that at the time of contract signing in 2022, the project was expected to save the Township about \$55,000 per year. Accounting for higher electric prices, the savings are now estimated at more than \$100,000 a year. In addition to benefiting from the financial savings, Lower Allen Township is leading by example on the importance of renewable energy for all municipal entities, businesses, non-profits, and homeowners in the central Pennsylvania region.

### **PRESENTATION: Employee Recognitions and Police Department awards**

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, President Villone presented the following employees with commendation letters to recognize their service to the Township:

Russell Olsen – honored by the Recognition Committee for working above and beyond the parameters of normal duties during a recent stormwater infrastructure project.

Thomas Vernau, Township Manager – honored for his 35 years of service.

Next, Captain Leon Crone presented the Police Department awards on behalf of the Selection Committee.

Unit Citations were awarded to Officers Kim Floyd, Neil Chimel-Freeburn and Michael Lightner for their efforts and assistance to the New Cumberland Police Department in responding to an attempted burglary in May.

Officer Lightner and Officer Katie Justh received Lifesaving Awards.

A Meritorious Service Medal was awarded to Corporal Jeremy Reed for perseverance in the face of great peril and a hazardous environment during response to a theft in the commercial district. Officer Justh, Lt. Doug Foltz, Lt. DJ Sentman, CSO Molly Feldman, Officer Chimel-Freeburn, Officer Floyd, Detective Don Coffee, Detective Kevin Cramer, and Captain Crone all received certificates of Meritorious Service for their response at the same event.

Captain Crone also introduced Chaplain Claudio Consuegra, who has taken on a volunteer position to minister to the staff and volunteers of the public safety departments.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:** Any item on the agenda.

President Villone advised the audience that if there were any item on that evening's agenda that they wish to comment on, to please indicate as such. There were none.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

President Villone stated that any Commissioner, staff member, or anyone in attendance who would like to have an item on the Consent Agenda removed for further discussion, could do so at that time. There were none.

Items on the Consent Agenda:

a. Check Register of June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$343,940.19.

b. Resolution 2023-R-30 to dispose of specific documents in accordance with the PA Municipal Records Manual

Vice President **BLACK** moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

**PRESIDENT VILLONE:**

**Resolution 2023-R-31**

President Villone requested a motion to adopt **Resolution 2023-R-31** appointing Margaret H. Feldman to the position of Police Records Specialist in the Police Department, effective July 17, 2023.

Commissioner **NAGY** made the motion to adopt **RESOLUTION 2023-R-31**. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

**Resolution 2023-R-32**

President Villone requested a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION 2023-R-32** recognizing Thomas G. Vernau, Jr., Township Manager for 35 years of service.

Commissioner **BROWN** moved to adopt **RESOLUTION 2023-R-32**. President Villone read the Resolution into the record:

**THOMAS G. VERNAU, JR:**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners of Lower Allen Township desires to express its recognition and gratitude for 35 years of service provided by Thomas G. Vernau, Jr.; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. first joined Lower Allen Township in 1988 as an Accounting Department Supervisor; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. was appointed as the Finance Director in 1995; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. had successfully met the Board's Association of Government Accountants (AGA) certification requirements as an expert government financial manager, and was granted the designation of Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM); and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. has chaired several offices in the Government Finance Officers Association of Pennsylvania (GFOA) since 1995 and served as President from 2004 to 2008; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. has chaired several offices in the Association of Pennsylvania Municipal Managers (APMM) since 2015 and served as President from 2018 to 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. was appointed to serve as Assistant Township Manager in 1999; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. was appointed to serve as Interim Manager in 2005; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. was promoted to serve as the Township Manager in 2006; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that sincere gratitude and appreciation be and are hereby extended to Thomas G. Vernau, Jr. for his 35 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Lower Allen Township, Cumberland County, and that this recognition be spread upon the minutes and records of Lower Allen Township for perpetuity.

Vice President **BLACK** seconded the motion to adopt **RESOLUTION 2023-R-32**. The motion passed 4-0.

Commissioners all expressed their thanks to Mr. Vernau. President Villone noted Mr. Vernau was the best manager in the state for a township the size of Lower Allen.

### **Personnel Actions**

President Villone requested a motion to move Maintenance Specialist Jordan Sipe from probationary status to regular full-time status, effective July 10, 2023.

Commissioner **NAGY** made the motion. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

President Villone requested a motion to accept the resignation of Gregory Obin, Maintenance Specialist, effective June 30, 2023.

Commissioner **NAGY** made the motion. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

### **ANY BUSINESS PERTINENT TO THE TOWNSHIP:**

President Villone noted that if anyone wished to speak at that time, there would be 10 minutes allotted per person to speak at the podium. There were none.

### **PUBLIC WORKS**

#### **Authorize advertisement for a Maintenance Specialist**

Director Davis introduced the item for discussion and possible action; to authorize advertisement for a Maintenance Specialist for the Public Works Department. The resignation of Mr. Obin will leave a vacancy that needs to be filled.

Commissioner **NAGY** made a motion to authorize the advertisement. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion was approved 4-0.

#### **Beacon Hill Radar Site Grant Application**

Director Davis introduced the item for discussion and possible action, to authorize additional matching funds for the Beacon Hill Radar Site Grant Application to Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in the amount of \$50,000. She explained the Township was contacted by DNCR requesting additional matching funds. The Township originally committed to a 50% match for the project, or \$250,000. This will increase the matching funds for the project to \$300,000. Consultation with the Township Manager and Finance Director have ensured there are adequate funds in the Fee in Lieu of Fund to cover the additional matching request.

Commissioner **BROWN** made a motion to authorize the additional matching funds. Commissioner **NAGY** seconded. President Villone thanked Ms. Davis for sharing the opportunity with the Board and for cultivating relationships with the grant funding organizations. The motion was approved 4-0.

#### **Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project Bids**

Director Davis introduced the item for discussion and possible action to authorize permission to prepare and solicit bids for stormwater basin retrofit projects for project locations at United Methodist Home for Children/Weis Markets, Bethany Village West, and BJs Wholesale Club as part of the Pollution Reduction Plan required by the PA Department of Environmental Protection. It was noted that BJ's Wholesale Club rents the space, and the basin maintenance easement is recorded with the property deed. The Township maintains the basin which is paid for with stormwater fees.

Vice President **BLACK** made the motion to authorize the bids. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

## **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Permission to advertise for a public hearing on floodplain ordinance**

Director Trone introduced the item for discussion and possible action to authorize permission to advertise for a public hearing on August 28, 2023 at 5PM for the update to the floodplain ordinance. She noted that updating the ordinance was required by the state when FEMA updates the flood plain maps. Township staff worked with their engineer and an advisor from the Pennsylvania Municipal League to update the ordinance, which must be advertised, and a public hearing held to proceed. President Villone added that the ordinance must be updated so that affected residents can apply for and be eligible for flood insurance.

Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion was approved 4-0.

### **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Grant**

Director Trone introduced the item for discussion and possible action to authorize additional funds for the Wesley and Royal Drive Crosswalk Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Grant in the amount of \$11,400. She explained that the grant was awarded in 2020 as part of a two-year funding period, with work to be completed by the end of 2024. Since the funding comes from a federal source, an environmental clearance is needed. The clearance for the Wass Park entrance is on hold due to the proximity of the Sunoco pipelines and further investigative work needs to be done. The pipelines have little to no bearing on the crosswalk project, but the project is required to go through a particular federal process to show that. The amount of \$11,400.00 is needed to perform subsurface utility engineering to assist with the preparation of the environmental clearance. It was not budgeted, but using the fee-in-lieu of recreation fund would be appropriate since the project is to improve pedestrian safety to/from Wass Park.

Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion. Commissioner **NAGY** seconded. The motion was approved 4-0.

### **60-Day Extension for Final SLD for Kindt Properties**

Assistant Manager Trone introduced the item for discussion and possible action, to accept a second 60-day extension for the Board of Commissions to render a decision on the Final SLD for Kindt properties, with a new deadline of September 11, 2023. She explained that the property owner has not yet submitted the plans for an existing building that was previously constructed without permits. Commissioners expressed some concern and hesitation in accepting a second extension but agreed to a willingness in good faith to accept the extension once more.

Vice President **BLACK** made the motion to approve the extension. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

## **MANAGER**

### **Ordinance 2023-03**

Mr. Vernau introduced the item for discussion to consider authorizing staff to advertise **Ordinance 2023-03**,

amending the Lower Allen Township Non-Uniformed Pension Plan by redefining Average Compensation. He noted that additional information had been provided since the discussions held at prior meetings and noted survey results from surrounding municipalities regarding the look back date of retirement. The Township's current plan, which calculates average compensation as of December 31 of the prior year, is a competitive disadvantage offering a lesser benefit, causing employees to either work longer or accept a lower benefit amount.

President Villone expressed his support for the change in calculating average compensation and noted the Pension Committee had approved the change. He also said the Township may need to consider a return to a defined benefit plan in the future.

Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion to advertise **Ordinance 2023-03**. Commissioner **NAGY** seconded. The motion was approved 4-0.

## **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

Mr. Miner congratulated Mr. Vernau on his anniversary of 35 years with Lower Allen Township.

Mr. Vernau thanked the Board of Commissioners for the recognition and noted the keystone of the Township's success was having a Board of Commissioners that is supportive of ongoing professional development and training for staff.

Commissioner Nagy expressed appreciation for and congratulations to all award recipients and those recognized for years of service.

Commissioner Brown thanked Captain Crone for sharing the details of the public safety personnels efforts and accomplishments in warranting the awards. He also congratulated Mr. Vernau.

Vice President Black expressed his appreciation for Mr. Vernau, noting he was a highly regarded, wonderful manager.

President Villone also congratulated Mr. Vernau on his years of service, noting his extraordinary care and concern for the Township and its residents. He also congratulated all award recipients and thanked Captain Crone for his leadership.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.