

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

### REGULAR MEETING

October 9, 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 Trone, Director, Comm. & Economic Dev. Director

Joshua Nagy

Steven P. Miner, Township Solicitor

Jennifer Caron

Rebecca Davis, Public Works Director

Charles Brown

David Holl, Public Safety Director

Richard A. Grove, Finance Director

Nathaniel Sterling, Administrative Secretary

Renee' Greenawalt, Recording Secretary

President Villone called the October 9, 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.

Director Holl introduced a new employee, Tom Rigling, Training, and Volunteer Coordinator for the Public Safety Department. President Villone welcomed Mr. Rigling to the Township and the Public Safety Department.

### **PRESENTATION: Fire Department Staffing Analysis**

Mr. Scott Ryno presented the highlights of the draft analysis report. First, he noted that the issue of declining volunteers in for the fire service is a situation that is occurring nationwide. He commended the Township for their foresight to approve the planning projects and engage in the facilities, apparatus, and staffing studies and their efforts to take actions to mitigate the issue. Moving in the right direction towards implementation. He said that ultimately, the goal was to build on past successes while addressing current needs and trends in preparing for the future. Next, Mr. Ryno reviewed each of the recommendations in the report.

### Recommendations:

1. Hire and implement Training and Volunteer Coordinator position. Mr. Ryno mentioned the upcoming requirement for an ISO (Insurance Services Report) and the opportunity for improvement, which could increase the rating and lower insurance rates. He also noted that when transitioning a fire service into a combination system, standardization is key, and the hiring of this position helps to ensure that proper training is in place.
2. Ordinance 2023-06 adoption – Mr. Ryno suggested the ordinance provides good direction for a transition to a combination system. Under the new system there are personnel to direct administrative functions, and volunteers can focus on training and responding to calls.

3. Continue for public safety to continue recruitment and retention of volunteers. Mr. Ryno noted the importance of focusing on current volunteers, encouraging participation, and building the programs. A long-term plan must include volunteers (live-in, home responder and station staffing.) He suggested that there are grant programs and associated funds available to help offset those costs.
4. Consider submitting grant application for career staff funds and volunteer recruitment and retention funds. Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) is a grant administered by FEMA and is a zero-match program.
5. Training standards be developed for command staff personnel. Standards should be the same for career and volunteer appointments based on required training.
6. Staffing model to consist of 1) volunteer home firefighters 2) volunteer live in, 3) career – minimum of 4 firefighters “on duty”. Necessitates volunteer personnel scheduling on duty time to be counted as part of the needed 4 on duty.
7. In addition to 4 personnel available for immediate response, recommend having a qualified incident command office on duty and available to respond. Design it so it can be filled by career or volunteer staff.
8. Recommend cross training like the PSO concept where people are fire and EMS cross trained to help support one another.
9. The Lisburn system seems adequate which is primarily volunteer with career driver PSO support 2 days a week during daytime hour.
10. The combination system creates a career ladder for both volunteer and career staff. Important for the future survival of the department.
11. Leadership teams should meet with automatic and mutual aid partners to discuss box alarms and parameters for usage and response of Township apparatus. Continue to provide an appropriate level of service to help others but avoid being over-taxed by other communities.

In summary, Mr. Ryno commended the Township for their efforts on planning, and noted the staffing piece of the planning components must be prioritized. He noted that the Township was in a good position to demonstrate leadership of a new service delivery model, which will ensure the safety and well being of its volunteers, staff, and residents.

President Villone expressed his appreciation for the presentation and acknowledged the changes occurring statewide in the fire service. He also suggested that the draft report be shared with the fire chiefs at each station for input.

Commissioner Nagy expressed his appreciation for the information provided in the report and the efforts to optimize the existing strengths and current resources. He also noted what seemed to be low hanging fruit in terms of improving the ISO rating, commending the Public Safety Department for implementing recommendations to improve the training program and the hiring of the training coordinator.

#### **MEETING MINUTES:**

President Villone requested a motion to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2023 Regular Meeting. Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner **NAGY** seconding. The motion passed 5-0.

#### **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.

Mr. Joe Swartz indicated intent to possibly speak on Agenda Item #10A – Proposed Ordinance 2023-06

#### **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 September 22, 2023 in the amount of \$559,910.88.

b. Moving Marcus Brandt from probationary to regular full-time status as a Zoning & Codes Administrator in the Department of Community & Economic Development effective September 20, 2023.

c. Moving Hannah Schearer from probationary to regular full-time status as an Advanced EMT in the Department of Emergency Medical Services effective October 3, 2023.

Commissioner **NAGY** moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Commissioner **CARON** seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

#### **PRESIDENT VILLONE:**

##### **Manual Check Register**

President Villone requested a motion to approve a manual Check Register of October 6, 2023 in the amount of \$75.00 for Eckert, Seamans, Cherin & Mellott.

Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion passed 4-0 with 1 abstention by Commissioner **CARON**.

#### **Resolution 2023-R-41**

President Villone requested a motion to adopt **Resolution 2023-R-41**, appointing Jared S. Gorman to the position of Maintenance Specialist in the Public Works Department, effective October 16, 2023.

Commissioner **NAGY** made the motion. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

#### **Resolution 2023-R-42**

President Villone requested a motion to adopt **Resolution 2023-R-42**, approving the Minimum Municipal Obligations payable to the Lower Allen Township Police Pension Plan and the Lower Allen Township Non-uniformed Pension Plan in fiscal year 2024, and appropriating specific sums known as the pension budget for fiscal year 2024.

President Villone noted his gratitude for the extensive narrative provided in advance for explanation.

Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion to adopt **Resolution 2023-R-42**. Commissioner **NAGY** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

#### **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.

Ms. Katie Hall, 1403 Letchworth Road, addressed her concerns regarding incidents of graffiti and other mischief occurring at Highland Park playground. She noted the issues have been ongoing and has yet to observe any concrete actions taken by the Township to make improvements. She asked for an update on plans to address the concerns.

President Villone thanked Ms. Hall for her comments and asked staff to address her questions. Director Holl reported that the Police Department had increased patrol of the area and encouraged the public to call 911 when observing any kind of suspicious activity occurring in the park. Director Davis reported that staff in her department were considering different types of paint that would serve to prevent the permanent marking of graffiti. They are also researching the possibility of adding cameras and resurfacing the tennis courts, subject to budget approval. She also noted there had been more frequent staff patrols of the park to empty refuse cans due to the littering. Ms. Hall thanked the staff for their efforts.

President Villone noted that discussion of the 2024 Recreation and Parks Budget would take place on October 30 and invited participation by the public. He said that Board members would consider the recommendations of the Recreation and Parks Board for budgeting and projects to be implemented.

Mr. Vernau asked Ms. Hall if the people on their Facebook page had specific ideas to suggest. In reply, she said that increased patrols and surveillance would be appreciated. She also suggested the removal of basketball hoops and the addition of pickle ball or some type of reinvestment into the park to attract more participation by neighborhood residents and deter mischief.

Mr. Joe Swartz provided an update on the Fredricksen Library, noting the next meeting would be held on October 11th. He reported that the gala held on September 17<sup>th</sup> was successful and thanked Vice President Black for his sponsorship of the event. Mr. Swartz also mentioned the possibility of adding a book drop off/pick-up service at the Township Municipal Services Center, noting that discussions about the logistics of that effort are ongoing.

#### **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Financial Security Reduction for SALDO #2022-04**

Director Trone presented the item for discussion and possible action to approve Financial Security Reduction No. 1 request for SALDO #2022-04 – Arcona Phase 8.2, with a new amount of \$825,346.82 and a new expiration date of October 9, 2024. She noted that the Township Engineer performed an inspection, found deficiencies, and proposed the new amount as presented.

Commissioner **NAGY** made the motion to approve the extension of financial security as presented. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **Proposed Ordinance 2023-06**

Director Holl introduced for discussion the proposed Ordinance 2023-06 regarding Fire Rescue Services and Standard Operating Procedures. President Villone encouraged Commissioners to review the proposed document and to expect presentations for discussion at an upcoming meeting. Members of the Board expressed consensus.

## **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

President Villone noted that no Executive Session was scheduled.

Director Trone announced that residents whose addresses would be impacted by the upcoming Statewide 911 Plan and GIS mapping project had been invited to the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and that positive feedback had been received.

Director Holl echoed Director Trone's comments and noted that the project would better identify addresses in the area and would serve to resolve conflicts.

Commissioner Nagy recognized Fire Safety Month and noted the recent feature about the fire service on ABC27 News. He expressed thanks to Ms. Barbara Arnold for recently addressing an illegal dumping situation. He also announced that the Lisburn Community Fire Company would host a Fall Community Day Festival on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Caron expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to attend the Municipal Leadership Summit. She also noted that Vice President Black was recognized for 24 years of service with the PA Association of Township Commissioners.

Vice President Black also noted his attendance at the Municipal Leadership Summit, noting that Commissioners can access a great deal of information about new legislation at the federal and state levels.

President Villone echoed the comments about the Municipal Leadership Summit event, and shared his observation that many municipalities share the same issue and concerns in their communities.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 PM.