# MINUTES

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| **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** | **LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP** |
| **REGULAR MEETING** | **November 13, 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, Assistant Township Manager |
| Charles Brown | Steven P. Miner, Township Solicitor |
| Jennifer Caron | Rebecca Davis, Public Works Director |
| Joshua Nagy | David Holl, Public Safety Director |
| | Richard A. Grove, Finance Director |
| | Nate Sterling, Administrative Secretary |
| | Renee' Greenawalt, Recording Secretary |

President Villone called the November 13, 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.

**MEETING MINUTES:**
President Villone requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Vice President **BLACK** made the motion to approve the minutes with one correction. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:** Any item on the agenda.
President Villone advised the audience that if there are any items on that evening's agenda that they wish to comment on, to please indicate as such.

Ms. Katie Hall indicated intent to comment on Agenda Item 8A.

**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, they could do so at that time. There were none.

Items on the Consent Agenda:

a. Check Register of October 20, 2023, in the amount of $888,086.94.

b. Check Register of November 3, 2023, in the amount of $336,981.82.

c. Resolution 2023-R-43 to dispose of specific documents in accordance with the PA Municipal Records Manual.

d. Accept a motion to approve 2023 Infrastructure Repair and Paving Project Payment Estimate No. 2 in the amount of $875,165.43 to Kinsley Construction, Inc.

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

## PRESIDENT VILLONE:

### Manager's Salary Ordinance

President Villone requested a motion to advertise **Ordinance 2023-09**, Manger's Salary. He noted this action runs tandem with the budget process and advertising the ordinance is required to set the salary.

Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion to advertise **Ordinance 2023-09**. Commissioner **NAGY** seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

### Purchase of Street Sweeper

President Villone requested a motion to approve an invoice from U.S. Municipal in the amount of $322,416 for the purchase of a new street sweeper. He noted it is a budgeted item for 2023.

Vice President **BLACK** made the motion to approve. Commissioner **NAGY** seconded. The motion carried 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. There were none.

## PUBLIC WORKS

**Public Works, Parks, and Stormwater 2024 Proposed Budgets**

Director Davis presented the proposed budgets, reviewing the highlights for each department.

Public Works

Director Davis reported that for Yard Waste, there is an increase of $4,300 for rental equipment. The Township borrows equipment from the county to grind brush and screen & turn leaves. The fees are based on the usage hours which have increased with the volume of materials.

Under Highway General, there is an addition of a full-time employee beginning in June 2024 who will be cross training to fill a pending retirement for the Public Works Inspector. A small increase in minor equipment for trailer replacement, an increase of $3,000 to update GIS mapping, and a $1,000 increase for training. Capital expenditures include the radio replacement for $122,900, replacement of large dump truck for $255,000 and an ADA Ramp Installation project in Highland Estates Development for $150,000.

Under Signs and Signals, there is an increase of $21,000 for additional street sign supplies for new and replacement signs, in part related to parking restrictions throughout the Township. There is an RTP Grant for pedestrian improvements with a flashing beacon at the Wass Park entrance in the amount of $32,500. Also, a multi-modal grant application for improvements with school bus flashers to the pedestrian crossing on Rossmoyne Road at the Elementary School. There will be shared matching funds with West Shore School District and Lower Allen Township in the amount of $156,000.

In Highway and Bridge Maintenance, an increase of $500 for pothole patching and in Highway Building, $50.000 for a building feasibility assessment of the existing public works building, $100,000 for replacement of the generator and $7,800 for the fuel island replacement, which is a carryover from 2023.

Parks

Under General Parks, there are increases of $5,250 for a trailer and mower replacement, $3,300 for maintenance and grounds, $3,000 for tree removal, and $4,400 for maintenance and repair of equipment (basketball hoops and nets) and $6,000 for equipment including security monitoring cameras for Highland Park

Capital expenditures in the amount of $620,000 include Phase I of the Beacon Hill Radar Site project and Highland Park tennis court resurfacing and handicap accessibility improvements. Director Davis noted that the Township matches 50% of the Beacon Hill project cost from the Parks Escrow Fund. The other half is funded by a DCNR grant. President Villone made a comment about the type of surface would be applied for the tennis court resurfacing at Highland Park, and suggested that if there is an incremental cost, the tennis players prefer it.

Director Davis also said that recommendations from the Recreation and Parks Board are incorporated through the 5-year capital expenditure plan and some of them are added to the maintenance schedule and are incorporated into the existing maintenance budget.

The proposed budget for Lower Allen Community Park includes $100,000 for the parking lot paving. Director Davis noted it had been budgeted for 2023 but due to time constraints has been carried over to 2024. $26,000 is allocated for buildings and improvements to replace the gazebo by The Barn, air conditioning for The Barn and the UV well water upgrade. $89,000 is included for machine equipment and vehicle to purchase a pickup truck.

Stormwater
Director Davis said there are three accounts in the department, including MS4, Street Sweeping and Storm Sewers and Drains. Increases for MS4 include $1,000 for training and $20,000 to retrofit three basins for the pollution reduction plan. For Street Sweeping and Storm Sewers and Drains there is a $2,000 increase in contract labor for street sweeping and debris removal, $50,000 increase for materials used for the stormwater infrastructure replacements and $15,000 increase for engineering and architecture survey.

Public Comment – Ms. Katie Hall expressed her gratitude to the Board and to staff for their responsiveness regarding the concerns at Highland Park playground, referencing practical considerations and tennis court improvements to help encourage more people to use the park and to improve safety. She noted that the surface does make a difference and that improvements to make the area ADA accessible were appreciated. She suggested that fencing along the street side of the court could be helpful.

**2023 Infrastructure Repair/Replacement and Paving**
Director Davis provided an update on the project, referring to maps and photographs included in the meeting materials. The project is 70% complete and is projected to be finished in December. Photos were displayed to demonstrate areas that have been updated to include installation of new pipe, manholes, inlets, and ADA ramps.

**COMMUY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
**Engagement Letter with Brown Schultz Sheridan & Fritz Certified Public Accountants & Business Advisors**
Director Trone introduced the item for discussion and possible action, to authorize signing of an engagement letter for an estimated $8,000-$15,000 with Brown Shultz Sheridan & Fritz Certified Public Accountants & Business Advisors to perform a state required Single Audit on the Keystone Communities Program Grant received by the Township in 2021 for the renovated Fun Fort.

Commissioner **NAGY** offered the motion. Commissioner **CARON** seconded and asked Mr. Miner for confirmation of review and acceptance of the engagement letter. Mr. Miner confirmed. The motion passed 5-0.

**Permission to advertise Ordinance 2023-07**
Director Trone introduced the item for discussion and possible action, permission to advertise **Ordinance 2023-07**, amending Ch. 73 Buildings, Numbering of, to incorporate necessary changes due to Next Gen 911. Mr. Miner noted the purpose of the revised ordinance is to ensure its compliance with the Next Gen 911 project and to explain the purpose.

Commissioner Nagy asked whether the associated penalties and fines within the ordinance had been updated to match the downgraded adjustments made across other ordinances. Mr. Vernau confirmed that those changes would be made.

Commissioner **NAGY** offered the motion to authorize permission to advertise the ordinance as amended. Commissioner **CARON** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Director Trone prefaced the next three items and explained that they were to apply a standard general increase of 10% to the financial security for those which had not requested a reduction.

**SLD Plan #2014-01**
Director Trone introduced for discussion and possible action, to increase the financial security for SLD #2014-01 – Highpoint Phase 1.1, 1.2 & 1.4 to a new amount of $149,458.88 and a new expiration date of November 13, 2024.

Commissioner **BROWN** offered the motion. Commissioner **NAGY** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**SLD Plan #2016-04**
Director Trone introduced for discussion and possible action, to increase the financial security for SLD #2016-04 – Highpoint Phase 1.3 to a new amount of $11,525.98 and a new expiration date of November 13, 2024.

Commissioner **BROWN** offered the motion. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**SLD Plan #2015-08**
Director Trone introduced for discussion and possible action, to increase the financial security for SLD #2015-08 – Highpoint Phase 1.5 to a new amount of $332,652.10 and a new expiration date of November 13, 2024.

Commissioner **BROWN** offered the motion. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**
**Update on Ordinance 2023-6**
Director Holl provided an update from meetings held with the fire companies regarding the proposed Ordinance 2023-6. He noted that he, along with Mr. Vernau and Commissioner Nagy had met with members of both fire companies, and that

some changes would be made to the ordinance based on the discussions. Mr. Vernau said that many of the changes were related to language and clarifications on certain subjects. New copies of the proposed ordinance would be circulated to Board members and to the fire companies with a goal to have it on a meeting agenda in two weeks. Commissioner Nagy asked if the issues related to timeline and implementation had been addressed. Director Holl said that a roadmap document would be presented along with the revised draft ordinance. Commissioner Caron also asked that information that identifies the changes be presented in a document that is shared with Board members and the interested parties from the fire companies.

## FINANCE

### 2024 Budget Wrap-Up and Impact of Additional EMS/PSO Employee

Director Grove reported that all staff departments had completed their presentations of the 2024 proposed budget with one outstanding item being the potential hiring of an EMS employee. He noted that two versions of the budget had been prepared and were ready for advertising pending decision by the Board. Director Grove presented a recommendation to adopt the proposed budget as presented without the additional hire, noting the need for a study of the issue. If the study justifies the position, amend the budget mid-year to add it. If the Board wishes to proceed with the hire, the recommendation is to fill the position in June 2024. Director Grove also discussed additional options related to the addition of the position. First, to include the position with the stipulation that EMS must keep future budgets under 7.5% sufficiently to recover the full cost within two years, with the intent being to justify the violation of Resolution 2020-R-07 and the impact it might have on the Township's bond rating. Second, he suggested linking the position to the business plan model that aims to dilute fixed costs by expanding the number of billable calls, thus lowering the cost per call.

Board members discussed the options and associated impact on the EMS operations. Captain Deaven said that keeping the budget below 7.5% to recoup the cost was not likely feasible as costs and call volumes increase. A major point of concern was violation of the resolution and the impact on the Township bond rating.

Captain Deaven reiterated that EMS has been restructured and reorganized since the ad hoc report and is constantly seeking to improve efficiency and effectiveness. That improvement resulted in the incorporation of seven of the eight positions proposed in the report through staff professional development and updated deployment models. In the effort to identify areas of weakness and unattainability within the system, overtime utilization has been an area of concern requiring corrective action. The high amount of consistent overtime negatively affects staff longevity and overall well-being. With a goal of ensuring the highest quality of EMS service to the Township's citizens, the recommendation is to add one additional EMS/PSO full time employee to the 2024 budget which will infuse 2,080 hours into the EMS schedule to provide the necessary coverage to have a positive impact on the EMS overtime hours. Doing so will maintain current service levels, reduce the pressure of burnout and unhealthy work-life balance on current staff, stabilize the EMS schedule over the long term and control and/or reduce future overtime expenses.

Board members engaged in significant discussion about each option's impact on bond rating evaluation as well as the needs of EMS to have what is required to provide the necessary services to Township residents, as well as the demand on emergency services to respond to calls outside the Township. Ultimately, the budgetary impact amounts to about $33,000 for a half-year hire. Mr. Vernau reminded everyone that all departments have done very well in maintaining the resolution. He explained the logistical steps that would be required to pass a resolution halfway through the year to add the position. Captain Deaven noted that the position is needed beginning in January 2024.

The Board discussed the possibility of rescinding or amending the Resolution to provide for the level of service needed. Director Grove noted that it was not necessarily required to change the Resolution. President Villone noted that both the Police and Public Safety budgets came in under the cap of the Resolution and expressed his opinion that those savings should outweigh the credit rating audit concern. Commissioner Brown confirmed that one percent of the Police Department budget is $62,000. Captain Crone noted that the Police Department proposed budget was five percent under the Resolution-imposed cap, which leaves them $310,000 under budget. As a comparison, the need for the EMS budget is approximately $66,000.

### Ordinance 2023-08, 2024 Budget – Table for public view and permission to advertise.

President Villone noted the Board has acted with extreme caution and the issue at hand is the provision of a crucial emergency medical services, and to plan so that there is no reduction in service level and to avoid fatigue. Mr. Miner expressed his opinion that adding the position seemed to be a prudent choice.

Commissioner **BROWN** made the motion to approve the advertisement of 2024 proposed **Budget Ordinance 2023-08** with amendment to include a full-time EMT position for the full year. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **NAGY**. The motion passed 5-0.

## MANAGER

### PennDOT Grant Application Letter of Support

Mr. Vernau introduced the item for discussion and possible action, seeking authorization from the Board to provide a letter of support for PennDOT's grant application to the Bridge Investment Program for the Interstate 83 Bridge.

Commissioner **NAGY** moved to grant authorization for the letter to be sent. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

## COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Director Trone announced that Craig Doll was hospitalized and asked everyone to keep him in their thoughts.

Director Holl announced that the county had recalculated the funds available for the radio replacement project and that the Township might be eligible for additional savings.

Commissioner Nagy thanked the  Lisburn Community Fire Company for hosting their recent Community Day event.

Commissioner Brown acknowledged and congratulated the West Shore Marching Band for their accomplishments in wining the Mid-Atlantic Regional competition and placing 2$^{nd}$ at the U.S. Bands National Championships.

Commissioner Caron thanked the staff for their time and efforts in preparing all the materials for the budget presentations.

Vice President Black emphasized the importance of having access to excellent medical staff and equipment, and noted the justification for having to vote against a staff recommendation to do what is best for the citizens of the Township.

President Villone reported that the Auditor General's Liquid Fuels audit report had been received for review. He noted it was a good audit. He also thanked the staff for their diligence in preparing the budget. Lastly, he noted a possible traffic issue on Sheepford Road and Thompson Lane.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:58 PM President Villone announced the Board would recess to Executive Session to discuss several issues and would likely reconvene with one or more action items.

The Board reconvened at 8:54 PM.

Commissioner **CARON** moved to accept the resignation of Erin Trone, with deep regret. Vice President **BLACK** seconded the motion. Board members expressed their regret at the news but wished her the best. The motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner **CARON** moved to authorize advertisement for the hiring of a Director of Community and Economic Development. Vice President **BLACK** seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.