



## Allen Township Board of Supervisors

### Meeting Minutes November 28, 2023 6:00 P.M.

A. General Meeting of the Allen Township Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. at the Allen Township Fire Company Building, located at 3530 Howertown Road, Northampton, PA. Mr. Hassler led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

1. **Roll Call:**

Present: Gary Behler; Jason Frack; Dale Hassler; Paul Link; Tim Paul; B. Lincoln Treadwell, Jr., Esq.; Stan Wojciechowski, PE, CME Engineer (Barry Isett & Associates, Inc.); Ilene Eckhart, Manager; and Tom Gogle, Public Works Crew Leader

Absent: Andrea Martin, EIT (Barry Isett & Associates, Inc.)

2. **Announcements and/or Actions to Add New Items to Current Agenda:** There were no announcements or actions to add new items to the current agenda.

3. **Public Hearings:** There were no public hearings.

4. **Public to be Heard:** There was no public to be heard.

5. **Unfinished Business:**

A. **Stone Ridge Loop Road – Financial Security & Time Extension Request:** Mr. Treadwell explained that in 2022, the Board of Supervisors granted a time extension for the loop road due to the anticipation that the next phase for Stone Ridge Residential would be approved by now. He further explained that currently there is no need for the loop road as the new residential component of Stone Ridge is not at the approval state yet, however, it is close because the security is expiring and the time to complete was December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. He concluded that the expiration being on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, is the reason why it is on the November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023's agenda and that an additional extension is needed.

Mr. Joseph Zator Esq., introduced himself and Mr. Tim Livengood. Mr. Zator indicated that he wished to add to Mr. Treadwell's explanation that there was a provided bond that was valid through December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. He indicated that he believed that Mr. Treadwell indicated that the bond was in acceptable condition. He noted that it would not make sense to tear out the temporary road and replace it with the permanent road. Mr. Zator indicated that last year, Mr. Hassler and a few other gentlemen spoke at last year's meeting, that the Township would like to use the temporary road and the connection to Horwith Drive for construction purposes and to assist with avoiding dirt and traffic on Graystone Circle. He explained that candidly, the temporary road could not be built even if they wanted to because after the storage project moved ahead and the security was posted, the Conservation District indicated

that the BMP's that were planned are now obsolete, and they forced the closure of the MPDS permit. He continued that the NPDS permit for the new Graystone loop road is part of the MPDS application that's been made for the project. Mr. Zator concluded that due to those factors, they are asking for an extension as they hope that next year, Phase III of the residential project will be approved and secured, and the bond would move. Mr. Behler questioned if the financial security is still a sufficient amount. Mr. Treadwell indicated that he believed it was fine. Mr. Behler made a motion to approve the extension for the Stone Ridge Loop Road financial security to December 2024; seconded by Mr. Link. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Supervisors present voted yes.

**B. Authorization to Solicit Bids for Sale of Equipment (Municipal) – 2003 CAT 430D Backhoe with broom/bucket attachments, Trailers, 1987 Case International Tractor and Miscellaneous Liquid Storage Tanks:** Ms. Eckhart explained that in addition to the 2003 CAT 430D backhoe with broom/bucket attachments, trailers, 1987 Case International Tractor, and liquid storage tanks, there are a few other miscellaneous items such as a few plows that are no longer in use and potentially a few very minor pieces of equipment. She indicated that the Township wishes to get these items posted on Municipal during the winter months. Mr. Behler made a motion to proceed to solicit bids for the items discussed, seconded by Mr. Link. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Supervisors present voted yes.

**C. Memo to Personnel Policy Sections 3.1 Hours of Work and 4.14 Inclement Weather:** Ms. Eckhart explained that she gathered a few ideas regarding a minor adjustment to the personnel policy. She indicated that after getting some feedback, she felt that it would be better to leave the unpaid lunch issue out for the administrative staff and just add breaks so that both public works and administrative staff members receive two fifteen-minute break periods per shift. She explained that as for the inclement weather section, she felt that it should be considered that for the coming year, the Township should not be structured with the school closings. She indicated that there could be some limited work duties from home. Mr. Behler questioned if the only proposed change was just adding the two paid fifteen-minute breaks for the administration staff, while everything else remained the same. Ms. Eckhart indicated yes, and in the next few months she would wish to work on newer job description duties, policy for the assistant manager role, and general updates to the policy as a whole with Mr. Treadwell. She indicated that she would return the policy updates to the Board for their approval. Mr. Behler indicated that he will make a motion to approve the update to the personnel policy, specifically for the addition of two paid fifteen minutes breaks for the administrative staff as well as for the Township Manager and Solicitor to work on the personnel policy going forward and coming back to the Board of Supervisors with the proposed adjustments; seconded by Mr. Link. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Supervisors present voted yes.

**D. Fire Incentive Program – Update on Structure for Program:** Ms. Eckhart explained that Northampton County has implemented a program for an incentive for volunteer firefighters and EMS with the County. Ms. Eckhart indicated that she wished to put forth the concept of how to address the Township volunteers that live outside of Allen Township and that it may be something to simply apply to the Township's mileage rate, if they meet all the other criteria. She explained that the Township could apply its mileage rate to the volunteer's assessed value of their property outside of the Township and offer that as an incentive payment along with the fuel. Mr. Behler expressed concern and indicated that the Township needs to be careful with compensation. Mr. Treadwell agreed with

Mr. Behler's concern and indicated that he felt that the Township would need to structure it in terms of incentivizing volunteers that live in Allen Township as well as those who do not live in Allen Township. He explained that the Township could call it a credit or indicate that it is not a payment for services but rather it is an incentive that recognizes the fact that some people who volunteer for the Allen Township Fire Department do not live within the Township. Mr. Treadwell indicated that the Township needs to figure out whether other municipalities were going to do the same thing and give credit to volunteer firefighters, whether they volunteered in the Township or not. Mr. Behler indicated that if the Township has an official way of obtaining the assessment values and Mr. Treadwell appropriately writes it up then he would support it. Mr. Treadwell indicated that Ms. Eckhart and himself will write up and structure the program in way where it is not a payment for services but rather an incentive payment. He further explained that it's an incentive payment that has been modified because there are some volunteers that do not live within the Township.

Mr. Behler questioned Ms. Eckhart if what she and Mr. Treadwell will be working on would be separate from Northampton County's incentive program. Ms. Eckhart indicated that it would be separate, and it would be Allen Township Real Estate Tax credit. Ms. Eckhart explained that she reached out to Northampton County and questioned if there was a policy that was developed, how would they verify if someone is truly volunteering or if the County is taking the word of the local fire chiefs that a volunteer meets the criteria. Mr. Behler expressed concern that if a volunteer had a more expensive home than another volunteer then the owner of the more expensive home would get a larger sum of money than the volunteer with a cheaper home. Mr. Behler explained that he felt that the Board needs to work out the details and that he felt that it is important for the Township to do anything it can to retain and incentivize its volunteers, but it needs to be fair for everybody. Mr. Hassler explained that for him it would not matter if someone had a more expensive house and got more money because to him it is similar to gas reimbursement. Mr. Hassler explained that a volunteer who lives further away will get more money back because they live farther away. Ms. Eckhart indicated that they could try to work out the details for the next meeting. Mr. Hassler indicated that the County took the lead for the incentive program, and now the Township is in the process of doing something as well, so hopefully other municipalities and fire departments will start doing the same. Mr. Hassler foreshadowed that the next move would involve the school district because there is a coalition of fire departments in the Northampton areas that are all from the school district. Mr. Behler asked Ms. Eckhart to incorporate the mileage and if the Township would just utilize the IRS rate. Ms. Eckhart agreed. Mr. Paul indicated that he agreed with Mr. Behler in regard to keeping the incentive fair and expressed concern in regards to someone having an expensive home receiving more money than someone with a lesser valued home. He stated that he felt that there should be a cap on how much someone could receive. Mr. Treadwell explained that he and Ms. Eckhart could work on two proposals where one shows a flat rate while another shows a full amount. Mr. Behler indicated that he does not want to pin firefighters against each other from a program that the Township is initiating. Mr. Link questioned if the Township could follow what Northampton County is implementing. Mr. Treadwell indicated that he and Ms. Eckhart will conduct further research. Mr. Hassler indicated that he would provide any information they may need.

**E. Northampton Bridge #124 (Willowbrook Road) – Status of Planned Utility Relocation and Closure Schedules:** Mr. Wojciechowski explained that Ms. Eckhart meet with the City of Bethlehem on Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, via Microsoft Teams. He indicated that the Township was informed that the City of Bethlehem wished to obtain a waiver from Fish and Boat to

allow them to cross the stream and do an open cut across Catasauqua Creek during the winter season, otherwise, they need to be out of the creek until April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Mr. Wojciechowski indicated that starting December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, there will be a three-to-five-day closure on Willowbrook Road to allow the City to excavate down to the existing pipe, which was cast in place. He explained that the pipe was cast into place, and that the City needs to get specialty fittings for the pipe. He further explained that the City will be putting a sleeve on the pipe while it is exposed on both sides, start chipping away at the inside of the pipe in order to get measurements for when they do the wet taps on both sides. He indicated that those working on the construction site will begin staging at Wayne Grube Park. Mr. Wojciechowski explained that at some point there will be detour signs placed and in January there is an expectation that Willowbrook Road will be closed, and the entire bridge area will be part of the work zone. He explained that starting in January 2024 there will be a two-to-three-month period when the City of Bethlehem water line and UGI's gas main will be relocated. He concluded that the funding for P3 runs out in December of 2024, so in essence the bridge will need be completed by October 2024.

Ms. Eckhart explained that the City of Bethlehem submitted a Highway Occupancy Permit after the conference call and it stated that the Allen Township approved detour will be set in place. Ms. Eckhart indicated that this was not correct, as Allen Township has never approved a detour. She clarified that it is a PennDOT approved detour was designed by Northampton County and their traffic/construction consultants. Ms. Eckhart concluded that Allen Township did not approve the detours and that the Township will notify its neighboring municipalities on what is happening with the construction timeline. Mr. Behler questioned if they finish moving the utilities before the County closes the bridge work in April, is the Township going to just keep the road closed or reopen it. Mr. Wojciechowski indicated that the Township should also look at the condition of the road because if it is in poor condition then there is no reason to reopen it.

Mr. Wojciechowski explained that Northampton County bid the project out as a design build project meaning that the engineer who approved the plans works for the contractor who is in charge of the project. Mr. Behler questioned if the Township knew when the exact start date in January would be. Mr. Wojciechowski indicated that they were waiting on the waiver first.

Ms. Eckhart indicated that an area of concern lies with winter road maintenance. She stated that she had a meeting with the Township's area's PennDOT Maintenance Manager to discuss options for plowing the section of the road that is located in Hanover Township, Lehigh County. She explained that there was a law in place by Governor Shapiro which indicated that FedEx was approved, the maintenance, including winter maintenance, of that portion of the road would go to the Commonwealth. She explained that the Northampton County Maintenance Manager indicated that he was unsure if the law has been communicated with the new person responsible for the Lehigh County maintenance. She stated that she would like to reach out to the Lehigh County Maintenance Manager and request that they work with the Township to see if they are willing to provide winter maintenance up to Wayne Grube Park. She explained that the Township has always done the winter maintenance agreement with PennDOT, and it would make sense for PennDOT to plow that section of the road because the Public Works crew would have to drive outside of the Township just to get to that portion of the road. She explained the other option would be to talk to FedEx and see if their contractor for plowing would be willing to help the Township out.

## **6. New Business**

**A. Authorization Seasonal Call in Road Crew Applicants (Winter Maintenance):** Ms. Eckhart explained that the Township gets these applicants annually for when the Township needs extra help when the Public Works Crew finishes their regular shifts of overtime and backup is needed for heavy snow/storm days. She indicated that there are two applicants that are returning, George Cuchran and Frank Csencsits. Mr. Behler made a motion to go ahead and authorize them to be called in for road crew; seconded by Mr. Frack. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Supervisors present voted yes.

**B. Draft Offer of Employment – Equipment Operator/Utility – Candidate SP:** Mr. Hassler indicated that the candidate's initials are given due to privacy. Ms. Eckhart indicate that this candidate had applied for the last time the position was available however he was not hired, but the Township kept his application on file for the year and since his initial application submission and interview he has obtained municipal experience. Ms. Eckhart indicated that he was re-interviewed, and she believes that he would be a great fit for the Township. She stated that she recommends that the Township proceeds with the offer. Mr. Behler made a motion to go ahead and provide the offer of employment to candidate SP; seconded by Mr. Link. On the motion, by roll call vote, all Supervisors present voted yes.

**C. Traffic Signs (Added to the Agenda):** Mr. Hassler questioned if it would be possible to move the traffic signs for the Township to obtain the data on West Bullshead Road. Ms. Eckhart indicated that they could place the signs on the Catasauqua High School property and or the Fuller Trust property, if the Township needs them on both sides. Ms. Eckhart stated that they could place the traffic signs when the Willowbrook Road Bridge is closed and have a speed setting on the signs. She also suggested that a sign gets moved to Willowbrook Road a day or two prior to it being closed and then put the second one on East Bullshead Road. Mr. Behler questioned if the December 11<sup>th</sup> closure date was confirmed. Mr. Wojciechowski indicated that it is a confirmed date. Mr. Behler indicated that the Township knows the first time period the road will be closed. Mr. Behler suggested that one of the traffic signs gets moved to the Willowbrook Road and Savage Road intersection where people turning onto Willowbrook Road could see a warning about the bridge closure so people will know that it will be closed.

**7. Public to be Heard:** A resident questioned when the bridge would open back up after it is closed on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Mr. Wojciechowski indicated that it is a temporary closure so it should be open by Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023. He concluded that it would close again in 2024, and it could be as early as January and remain closed to at least October 2024.

## **8. Announcements:**

Mr. Hassler announced the upcoming meetings. All meetings and events below will be held at the Allen Township Fire Company unless otherwise indicated. He also explained that all meetings in 2024, will be held at the Township's Municipal Building located on 4714 Indian Trail Road. These meetings and events are as follows:

- Board of Supervisors – Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 6:00 PM
- Planning Commission - Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 6:00 PM

- Board of Supervisors – Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 6:00 PM (TBD)
- Park and Recreation Board – Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 6:00 PM at the Township's Municipal Building

9. **Adjournment:** There being no further comments or business the meeting adjourned at 6:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Averbeck