



# WEST POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP

980 GROSSTOWN ROAD  
STOWE, PENNSYLVANIA 19464-6124

(610) 323-7717  
FAX (610) 323-4124

## **BOARD MEETING AUGUST 4, 2021 7:00 P.M.**

The regular monthly Board Meeting for the Board of Commissioners was called to Order by Board President; Steve Miller.

### **Roll Call**

Board members present were Commissioners; Miller, Palladino, Valentine, La Rosa and Green. Also present was Township Manager; Scott Hutt, Township Secretary; Joanne Herb, Officer in Charge; Tim Roeder and Attorney; Ken Picardi. Also present was Fire Chief; Nick Egan.

### **Swearing In – Chief of Police; Joseph F. Sokolofski**

President Miller commented; after an extensive search for a replacement for our Police Chief, we are proud to announce that tonight Joseph F. Sokolofski will be sworn in as the new Chief of West Pottsgrove Police Department. Mr. Sokolofski took his Oath with Judge Palladino. President Miller noted; on behalf of the entire Board; welcome aboard!

### **Minutes**

A motion by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve the Minutes of the previous meeting. Roll Call: Palladino; yes, Valentine; yes, Green; yes, La Rosa; yes, Miller; yes.

### **Financial Report**

A motion by Commissioner La Rosa, seconded by Commissioner Green to approve the Financial Report. Roll Call: Palladino; yes, Valentine; yes, Green; yes, La Rosa; yes, Miller; yes.

### **Payment of Bills**

A motion by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve paying all bills as listed; in the amount of \$78,594.77 for the *General Fund*, \$47,211.15 for the *Sewer Fund* and \$7,782.25 for the *Grosstown Road Project Fund*; for a total of \$133,588.17 for all funds. Roll Call: Palladino; yes, Valentine; yes, La Rosa; yes, Green; yes, Miller; yes.

### **Citizen's Comments on Agenda Items**

There was none.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**MR. PALLADINO: COG, Public Works, Code Enforcement**

**Code Enforcement – July 2021**

Code Calls – 3	Permits Issued – 10
Code Inspections – 3	Hearings – 0
Use & Occupancy – 5	Complaints Resolved – 2
Rental Inspections – 8 Units	Rental Permits – 8
Rental Registrations – 178	Notice of Violations – 0
Code Notices – 0	Property's Posted – 1
Permit Inspections – 18	Warrants Served- 0
Site Inspections -0	Completed Permits – 8

Rental Registration Fees - \$ 17,815.00

Building Permit Fees - \$ 3,191.00

Construction Costs - \$ 107,500.00

Vice President Palladino stated; the rest of my report will be covered under Old and New Business.

**MR. VALENTINE: RECREATION, TOWN WATCH, REGIONAL RECREATION**

**Town Watch**

Commissioner Valentine noted; we are still on hold and have not had any meetings since COVID.

**MR. GREEN: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, RECYCLING, FINANCE**

**Recycling**

Commissioner Green noted; for the month of July, we had a total of 19.02 tons of recycling collected.

**Emergency Management**

There was no report

**Finance**

The new budget period will be coming up soon and we will be scheduling meetings to review the budget.

**MR. LA ROSA: REGIONAL PLANNING, ZONING, PLANNING COMMISSION**

There were no reports.

**MR. MILLER: POLICE, CIVIL SERVICE, FIRE**

**Fire**

Fire Chief; Nick Egan read from the Fire Report:

For the month of *July*, there were a total of 16 calls in Montgomery County; 12 in West Pottsgrove, 3 in the Pottstown Borough and 1 in Lower Pottsgrove. There were 9 calls in Berks County; 3 in Douglass Township, 2 in Birdsboro and 4 in Amity Township. There was also 1 call in North Coventry Township. There was 103 personnel who volunteered their time for a total of 70.1 hours.

**Police**

Officer in Charge; Tim Roeder reported:

Total Calls (*July*) – 345

Total Citations – 16

Traffic – 13

Non-Traffic – 3

Traffic Warnings – 2

Total Arrests – 5

Assists – 42

Crimes – 21

Investigations – 27

Mileage – 3,009

**Abandoned Vehicle Report**

Vehicles Acted On - 2

Vehicles Tagged Abandoned - 1

Vehicles Pending Action - 1

**Juvenile Report – July**

Calls - 13

Missing Person/Runaway – 1

Community Relations - 1

**Monthly Codes Report – July**

Abandoned Vehicles – 2

Other Code Violations – 6

**Civil Service**

President Miller reported; we administered a written test for a new Police Officer, which was completed. This Saturday will be the Police Entrance Physical Agility part of the test.

Before I end the Committee Reports and while the Chief is here, let me ask you, we understand on Monday night there was supposed to be a Fire meeting and there was not. It turned out our Police Department was called to the meeting. We were wondering what actually happened and why did we have Police intervention? Fire Chief; Nick Egan commented; I was not there for that meeting. Kylee Kollar, who was present and attended the meeting, commented; I don't really understand the back story; it had something to do with the Facebook page. Company meetings have been closed. Understanding they have been closed when the pandemic hit, the State of Emergency came out and the Board of Governors ran the meetings. They haven't been opened back up yet. I know there are members that want to come, and every member deserves to come; they have not motioned them to come back open. The meeting was not held anyway, because there was no quorum to hold a meeting. People were served letters and there was a ruckus about that; so they called the cops. We did not want the cops to come; people shouldn't be acting like children; they're adults and should act like it and have a civilized conversation.

If you are there to start a fight, only cause problems and not have a conversation; then you should not be there. You are not helping anybody; it is not helping the Fire House, it's not helping the community and not doing any good with the Township. We want everyone to work together and have the members come to the Fire House and contribute, but if it turns into a fight at every meeting, then what is the point; you will never get anything accomplished.

President Miller stated, here's our question; were the people that were there members of the Fire Department? Ms Kollar stated; they were. President Miller stated, the second question we keep being asked is; who made the decision to call the Police Department, that it would've escalated to that point? Ms Kollar stated; that I don't know, I can't answer for you Commissioner Miller. Ms Kollar continued; the goal is to have open meetings where everyone can come, but from my understanding, when there were open meetings it turned into three hours of fighting, which is ridiculous. President Miller commented; we went through the COVID procedure and had closed meetings/via Zoom. Then, we had open meetings, but anyone coming in had to be masked up, the seats had to be spread out and the number of people were limited. Then, the Governor lifted all of that and said we could run the meetings as they were supposed to be. Our question then is; why is the Fire Company not opening their meetings and letting anyone that wants to come, come. Ms Kollar stated; that would be a Board of Governors question; I don't know that as of right now. President Miller stated; another question we have is; we were notified today that there is a new President of the Fire Company, which is you I believe. Ms Kollar stated; yes, correct. President Miller commented; our other questions are; what happened to the other President. We understand he resigned, correct? This is no reflection on you, but wouldn't then, the Vice President become the President? Ms Kollar stated; yes. Essentially, according to our bi-laws; the only two positions that ascend when someone resigns is the Deputy Chief to Fire Chief and the Vice President to President, with no vote needed. When Brian handed in his resignation, Benny Updegrove became President. President Miller stated; no reflection, again, on you; but then how did you become President? Ms Kollar stated; I don't know what the story was behind that, apparently he didn't fulfill his duty of what he was asked, so they said if you're not going to do what you need to do, then we're going to need you to go. You will have to talk to the Board of Directors who made that decision, because I can't give you that answer. President Miller then asked; if you're not having any meetings, and I know the regulations because I used to attend the meetings, but the resignation has to be accepted by the company before you can appoint someone else. Then if you're going to remove that person, that would have to come up for a vote in order to remove them. If you remove them because they violated something, then charges would have to be filed, there has to be an investigation committee and they would have to come back to the company and report their findings. President Miller stated; so our question is how did all of this get circumvented and went from; he's out, but no one voted on it, to the next guys in, but we didn't want him in, to now you're the President and there has been no meetings. Ms Kollar stated; I don't know. That would be a question for the Board of Directors, adding; I can pass that along and have them get ahold of you, because I cannot answer that question.

Commissioner Green stated; please ask them and ask them how, once they decided Benny was no good to be President, you have to notify the company that you're going to have an election, you can't just appoint someone to be President; it's an elected position. You have to have a notification go out to all members saying; we're going to have an election and everyone has the right to vote in that election. You cannot bypass that, so you are bypassing all of the Roberts Rules of Order. You keep saying you're trying to fix things, but you keep bypassing all of these rules and things are to be done properly. You want us to have faith in you, but you're not even following your own rules; how can we have faith if you won't follow your own rules.

Commissioner Green stated; I know the by-laws. I'm still a member and they're still the old by-laws, you haven't changed them. Julian Belli commented; the by-laws state that in the event a vacancy becomes apparent, the Board of Directors appoints the role until the elections happen. Commissioner Green stated; you're bypassing the rules just to put someone in and that's not right. I have been there for 20 years and I know how things work. If you want our support, you have to follow the rules and give us the feeling that you're going to do the right thing. What's going on there is not. I understand the President resigned and gave his letter as to why and also said at the AG why he resigned. One of your Steering Committee members resigned for the same reason, adding; I don't want to bring it up here, but I will when we have the next Steering Committee meeting, because it's a very serious allocation and serious issue. Until you get that stuff fixed, you get no support from me because I am not going to support anyone that will destroy that Fire House. I was there 20 years and it ran great when I was there. Now, it's the laughing stock of the County. Ms Kollar noted; it's been that way for quite a few years now. Commissioner Green noted; the people from when I left to now, are the ones that caused all of the problems and yet, are the ones saying we didn't do that and some of them are still on the Board. President Miller stated; for the record, tonight, prior to this meeting would have been the Steering Committee meeting and this would have been discussed with the Board. I'm sure since you took over President with such short notice that it was cancelled, then rescheduled for 6:00 p.m. prior to our Workshop. I just want you to understand, that we understand why the meeting didn't take place and those questions would've been asked at that meeting. Ms Kollar commented; would you like the Board of Director's from the Fire House to be here for that Steering Committee Meeting? That way you can ask them questions. President Miller stated; yes, absolutely. Ms Kollar stated; Ok, I will pass that along. They can answer questions I cannot. President Miller stated; the Board is not reflecting you, but these are the questions we are getting from the community and we do not have answers.

### **Manager's Report**

*Mr. Hutt reported:*

#### *Public Works*

- The salt shed roof has been replaced. Thank you to Alex Butts Roofing for the quick turnaround and great work.
- The power washing of the Township complex has been completed. Many thanks to LWR Services.

- We are working with our Engineers to finalize the post-paving Punch List for the Grosstown Road Sanitary Sewer Project.
- Our Sewer Operator; Drew Lamb, attended a Professional Development Conference recently, where the topic of discussion was I & I; the causes and best practice when addressing the issues. We are looking to implement the most cost effective way to address I & I, hopefully utilizing the ARPA funds.

*West Pottsgrove Police*

- I want to say again; welcome to our new Chief; Joe Sokolofski. We look forward to having your wealth of experience from over 30 years with the State Police.

*School Lane – Phase 2*

- We are aware of the current condition of the road and are taking steps to address the issues. We have our Pre-Bid Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 11 and are looking to award the contract on September 1.

*Old Reading Pike*

- This issue came up today; a disconnected lateral in one location. We are coordinating with our Engineers and contractor who performed the work to fix the situation. It seems the lateral was not connected in a building that was unoccupied at the time.

*Township Website*

- Recently we have updated our website with some key information, including our current Fee Schedule. That item will again be revisited later, under Old Business. We have also included the Zoning Hearing Application, as well as the U & O Ordinance and Application. Please visit our website to download the forms and get the appropriate information.

*PARRC*

- On July 27, I met with the new PARCC Director, Tricia McCloskey, to discuss the remaining funds in our Grant for upgrades to the Howard & Vine Street Parks. Multiple options were discussed, including new signs, upgraded trash and recycling bins, increased number of benches and some pieces of equipment. Depending on how much remains, we might be able to install fences around those parks.
- We also discussed upcoming Grant projects for 2022, which include renovations to the Old Timer Field behind the Township Building. That would be more of a complete overhaul with re-grading the entire field.
- Additionally, we are targeting a Veteran Memorial Park at the old pool property. We will be looking to assemble a committee of residents that want to take part in this process. Please contact me if you are interested.

*Waste Management*

- We are aware and completely understand there have been issues with collection in the Township. We are going to be meeting with Waste Management Representatives to get our service level to where it needs to be.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Update on Grosstown Road Bridge Dedication**

Mr. Hutt reported:

Our Dedication Ceremony will take place on Friday, August 27; at 1:00 p.m. Members of Roger’s family will be in attendance, as well as some Township staff and members of the Board. If members of the community wish to attend and celebrate Roger’s contributions to the Township, that would be great. Further details on the event will be provided at the Workshop Meeting.

**Update Fee Schedule – Zoning**

Mr. Hutt reported; keeping with our practice of identifying and addressing outdated Fees, I am looking for approval to update our Zoning Fees as follows:

Conditional Use Application	\$3,000/plus costs
Re-Zoning/Curative Amendments	\$5,000/plus costs
Zoning Hearing Application	
Variance or Special Exception	\$2,000/plus costs of Transcript and Engineering Fees, if review is required

A motion by Commissioner La Rosa, seconded by Commissioner Green to approve the updated Fee Schedule as mentioned. Roll Call: Palladino; yes, Valentine; yes, La Rosa; yes, Green; yes, Miller; yes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Murgia Park – Philip C. Ullman Tree Service**

Mr. Hutt commented; at our Board Meeting in July, I mentioned we were obtaining quotes for tree removal at Murgia Park. We obtained a few, but the most competitive was from Philip C. Ullman Tree Service, in the amount of \$4,200, for three days work; which is what we anticipate it to be. Due to the company’s schedule, they cannot complete the job until the fall, but we should get on the schedule as soon as possible.

A motion by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve using Philip C. Ullman Tree Service for tree removal at Murgia Park, at a cost of \$4,200. Roll Call: Palladino; yes, Valentine; yes, La Rosa; yes, Green; yes, Miller; yes.

**Property Tax Reimbursement**

Mr. Hutt reported: based upon the re-assessment of properties, we received one request for reimbursement at 400 Old Reading Pike, in the amount of \$1,798.00.

A motion by Vice President Palladino, seconded by Commissioner Green to approve the reimbursement of \$1,798.00 at 400 Old Reading Pike, for re-assessment of the property. Roll Call: Palladino; yes, Valentine; yes, Green; yes, La Rosa; yes, Miller; yes.

**Citizen's Comments**

There was none.

**Correspondence**

There was none.

**Adjournment**

President Miller stated; we are going into an Executive Session. No official action or deliberation will occur during this Executive Session, instead it will be informational purposes and to discuss personnel matters only. With that said, I would ask when we adjourn, to go out to the vestibule or outside, so we can have the room for the second meeting.

A motion by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to adjourn the Board Meeting and head into an Executive Session. Roll Call: Palladino; yes, Valentine; yes, La Rosa; yes, Green; yes, Miller; yes. The Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

*Respectfully Yours,*

*Joanne Herb  
Township Secretary*