

**LOWHILL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 5, 2021**

The Lowhill Township Board of Supervisors meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chairman Richard Hughes. Also present were Vice Chairman George Wessner, Jr.; Supervisor Robb Werley; Brian Carl, Administrator; Keith Strohl, Esq., Solicitor; Ryan Christman, Engineer and Secretary Jill Seymour.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Robb Werley made a motion to approve the July 1, 2021 meeting minutes, as written. George Wessner, Jr. seconded the motion. Motion carried. Richard Hughes made a motion to pay the monthly bills, as submitted. Robb Werley seconded the motion. Motion carried. Richard Hughes moved new business to below monthly bills on the agenda.

We do not have our own fire company in Lowhill Township, we have 5 volunteer fire companies who cover different regions within our township. We have paid \$500 per call to each first responder, per fire call since 2007. Robb Werley: For 2021, we paid out our budget amount for the year, split equally between each volunteer fire company. We are trying to come up with a better system. Costs for the fire companies are continuing to rise yearly. We know we have to increase our budget amount. At this time, we are discussing a fire tax. George Wessner, Jr.: As much as he is against another tax, he believes this may be the only solution at this time. Brian Carl: Based on call volume from 2020, if we paid \$1000 per call, it would cost the township about \$68,000, which we do not have to budget for fire calls. A .44 mill fire tax would bring in approximately \$100,000, based on everyone paying, doesn't include the 2% discount or penalty. The \$1000 per call would be for first responder in their district, no hourly amount. Extra money would go into a fire company fund to cover a year that would be a heavy year or to help with apparatus costs. We would get a printout yearly from Lehigh county call center. Robb Werley: We do not have an extra \$45,000 in our budget. We have already cut funding for equipment and assets in 2021. Keith Strohl: Money from fire tax must be kept in a separate account to be used for only fire calls, training, apparatus, paid fire fighters, etc. Brian Carl: There would be a separate line for fire tax on the tax bill, so only one bill would go out. Jay Scheffler: Would like to see others that show up as second or third responder receive \$100. Brian Carl: It becomes a slippery slope when you get into second and third responders. Distance was already looked at as far as if districts should be redone. Keith Strohl: To change or keep fire tax millage, it would be done by resolution on the same as our regular millage at reorganization in the beginning of the year. Robb Werley made a motion to advertise the fire tax ordinance for the September meeting. George Wessner, Jr. seconded the motion. Roll call: All, motion carried. Brian Carl will get the yearly calls from the County and a check will be issued around February. Keith Strohl: The last agreement from 2007 will have to be updated to the current spending. A revision will be adopted. The

Fire Chiefs in attendance thanked the Board for being receptive and Jay Scheffler thanked Brian Carl for all the work he did on making it fair for all the fire companies. The Board thanked the fire chiefs for their service to the Township.

Richard Hughes made a motion to donate an office chair to our tax collector, Carol Betz. Robb Werley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Robb Werley made a motion to review George & Cheree Wessner – Stone Haven – minor subdivision – 7205 Kernsville Rd. Orefield. Richard Hughes seconded the motion. George Wessner, Jr. abstained. George Wessner, Jr. said he is moving lot lines to make a 2 acre subdivision. All issues have been addressed per Ryan Christman and Brian Carl has no additional comments. Richard Hughes made a motion to approve the final plans for the Stone Haven subdivision. Robb Werley seconded the motion. George Wessner, Jr. abstained. Motion carried.

There is no solicitor comment at this time.

Bear Road Bridge: The old bridge is gone. PPL is coming out on August 30, 2021. The bridge should be installed the first or second week of September. New footers are behind the existing right now. Bridge should be opened in October.

Administrator: 4130 E Wyndemere. We had to pay to have the yard mowed. Cannot get a hold of the owner. We may have to issue a lien on the property to get our money back. The road crew needs new radios. Heidelberg and Lynn just ordered new ones. Ours are obsolete. Brian will get a cost for 5 radios and base kits, he thinks it should be around \$6100, with a monthly fee of \$28 per radio, \$140 per month. Weisenberg received a proposal to get all documents scanned into the computer to eliminate the need to have paper copies. Lowhill's price is \$8300 to get all property files scanned. Weisenberg would be \$17,000. Anything new we would scan in ourselves. They will also shred all original documents. There is a minimal yearly fee. Zoning hearing board meeting from July, the vet clinic on Kernsville Rd received a variance to move down the road and for parking. George Wessner, Jr. questions how they advertised for a use variance and when the meeting started the parking variance was added. Brian Carl said the solicitor amended at the beginning of the meeting. Robb Werley: It could be an issue with the warehouses and residents, we need to keep it transparent and advertise exactly what variance is being applied for.

Road Master report: July: Oil and chip was completed. Grass mowing and tiger mowing was done, the roads swept, drain boxes installed on Spooners, tree clean up and the oil pan was changed on the Mack. For August: Mow grass, Valley Road Bridge, line painting, install pipes.

George Wessner, Jr. asked Joe Kalusky if the township has any need for millings. Joe said that he could use the millings. George Wessner, Jr. will have the guy with the millings drop them off at the township. Brian Carl is getting numbers for the salt shed.

Richard Hughes opened the floor for public comment. Lynn Plevin, resident who lives on Aziza Road was present. She drives down Gruber Road every day to get to Route 100. There is a dead branch over the road that more and more pieces keep falling onto the road. Brian Carl: Marshall Mengel is the property owner, there was an issue last year when we cut the tree on his property. Joe Kalusky looked at the tree, he did not call the land owner. We are only allowed to cut in our right of way that is 4' wide. We can't cut peoples trees down. George Wessner, Jr: Can we cut what is hanging over the road? We can't if we don't speak to the property owner. Brian Carl: We need permission from the land owner to cut the branch, which is over 4' diameter per the 2nd class township code. George Wessner, Jr.: Contact the land owner to get permission to trim. We would need a lift, as it's about 40' off the ground. Keith Strohl: Penndot, when they have to trim right of ways, only go as high as a tractor trailer and no higher. Joe Kalusky: It's too high for the Township to cut, we would need to hire someone. Keith Strohl: If you cut in a right of way, you must leave the wood. The Board will get this taken care of as soon as they can. Keith Strohl will let us know our legal options.

Richard Hughes made a motion for Carol Betz to attend the tax collector convention, not to exceed \$500. George Wessner, Jr. second the motion. Motion carried.

Richard Hughes made a motion to adjourn. Robb Werley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Lowhill Township Board of Supervisors meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,