

Walker Township Board of Supervisors

Minutes of October 17, 2023

Regular Meeting

The Walker Township Board of Supervisors held its regular monthly meeting Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at the Walker Township Municipal Building. The meeting was called to order by chairman, Joseph Harford at 6:00p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ryan Fisher.

Present: Joseph Harford, Chairman; Matt Johnson; Steve Felton; Kirk States, Roadmaster; Larry Lashinsky, solicitor; Julie E. Johns, Secretary; and Jim Morris, Zoning officer.

Absent: none

Guests Present: Tom Gruber, Melanie Norris, Don & Kim Spickler, Ryan Fisher, Belinda Morris, and Rebecca Berdar, TDN.

Additions/Changes to agenda: *a motion was made to add report on Act 537 plan update to Old Business. Johnson/Felton, motion carried.*

Public Comment on Agenda Items: No public comment on agenda items

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2023, meeting with changes to the comments that were made by Melanie Norris under new business regarding the signs for trick or treat night. She said that she didn't say the Fire Company needs to get new signs, but that they should investigate new signs, and that she would be willing to help, but not be responsible for the creation of signs that would better delineate trick or treat rather than an incident. (Felton/Johnson, motion carried).

Treasurer's Report/Payment of Bills:

The Treasurer's Report and monthly bills were reviewed. *A motion was made to pay the presented invoices in the amount of \$9,226.12 from general fund & \$8,232.13 from the fire tax account. (Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

A C.D. at Mid Penn bank matured at the beginning of October. It was cashed in and placed in the general fund until a discussion and decision on where to place the money moving forward. The best rate available from the local banks was a money market account at Kish Bank with a variable rate of 5.33%. Julie also mentioned that there were excess funds in the general fund right now that could be transferred with the matured CD amount of \$31,945.75 so that more interest could be earned. She suggested moving an additional \$25,000 - \$40,000 into the money market. It is still available as needed, but will just earn more interest. *A motion was made to transfer a total of \$75,000 from the general fund into the new money market account at Kish Bank. (Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

Guests: none

Park & Rec Committee:

Chris Linn was not in attendance but sent correspondence to the Supervisors to discuss ongoing issues with the park.

Chris reached out to the vo-tech school to see if they would be willing to construct some team benches for the basketball court area of the park. They have not gotten back to him yet, but if they will, the Township

Park & Rec Committee (con't.):

would need to supply the materials for the benches. We could then move the bench that is currently there down to replace the damaged one near the pond.

Chris spoke with the sales rep at Parks Security, and after questioning him about the quality of the camera resolution, the possibility of additional cameras if necessary, and the length of time that the video is saved, the committee has recommended moving forward with the purchase of the new camera system for the park. The total cost is \$4,872.11. *A motion was made to approve the purchase of the quoted cameral system. (Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

Progress Reports:

Kirk reported:

- Continuing work on Orchard Rd to remove the seal coat layer and bring the road back to gravel. – they can do about 100' per day with other commitments
- The old New Holland tractor/mower is ready to be picked up at our shop whenever the other mower is delivered. The last contact with the dealer was possibly the end of October.
- Limestone dust was ordered to work on the path at the park.
- Currently painting the pavilion at the park
- Regular 7 – 3:30 hours started after Labor Day
- The paving and seal coat projects have been completed, and PennDOT rep was down to do final paperwork on the projects. They turned out well, and the residents have expressed their thanks.
- Still waiting on the quotes from Tate's to pave parking lot at park and possibly the path.
- Met with Park's security about updating the camera system.
- Had to remove some sunflowers from a flower bed around the one way and no U turn signs at the top of Bouquet Street. The owner was not pleased, but efforts to keep them behind the signs were unsuccessful. She also has her garbage cans on the road, and Kirk has a concern that when winter comes, this will be an issue.
- The basketball court lines have been repainted.
- Replaced road bonding sign at Trey & Newtown.
- Trim around the pavilion had to be removed to kill the yellow jackets that took up residence under it. Attempts to kill them without removing it were unsuccessful.
- Replaced over ½ the fluorescent bulbs in the office.
- Serviced the vehicles for winter.
- Replaced lights at the park/pavilion.
- Anthony Schmidt contacted Kirk to ask about putting a pipe in the ground to run water underground along Jennifer Drive on his property. They discussed what might be done to accommodate Mr. Schmidt's requests without making it a problem to maintain that ditch line. Kirk wants a plate over a catch basin where the drainpipe will connect that can be accessed to maintain/clean. He told Anthony that he had an old plate at the shop that he could put there and has talked to Jimm Weikert about what our requirements will be to place that drainpipe.
- Cleaning storm drains
- Will start to clean ditches when we get the new tractor with a blade.
- Working on sign maintenance
- APM was discontinuing their rental program and they put the rental items up for bid. Kirk & Bill bid on several pieces of equipment that we rent from time to time, and got an electric cement mixer, a jack hammer, and a 1 ½" submersible pump for a total of \$575 which will be split with the Authority.

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Zoning Enforcement Officers report:

Jim went over the report he submitted for September's permitting.

- There were complaints about the safety of a house at 12055 Station Rd – part of the roof has been missing for some time, and there is a question about the safety of the structure. The home's owner passed away, and the USDA had a mortgage on the property. Larry did a search on the property, and the estate still owns the real estate with the lien from the USDA for around \$35,000, claims for credit card debt, and a municipal authority lien, as well as back taxes for over \$6,000. The discussed the possibility of getting the liens and taxes forgiven and inquire as to whether there might be money available through the County for blight removal. Julie is to reach out to the County P.C.
- There were also complaints about 12061 Station Rd. for junk, junk cars, and the safety of the home. Currently there is no one occupying it either, but Jim did not feel that it was a safety hazard. He is having issues getting in touch with the owner of record. The people living there were his ex and her family. They claim they have no way of getting in touch with Mr. Betres.
- The request for placing a solar farm at the elementary school has been pulled. They are looking at several school sites, some within the Boro, which do not have the rules and regs in place that we do. He thinks Walker is out.

Planning Commission: no meeting in October

Building Committee:

Substantial completion of the project met the contract requirements in September. Penn State & D&M have been tying up loose ends and are planning completion of the final punch lists as of October 20th.

Set the final walk through with the Authority for Friday, Oct. 27th at 1:00 p.m. Will confirm via email.

Old Business:

Julie reported that they have completed enough of the 537 surveys to get the engineers what they need to move forward with the plan update. Because this has taken so long, the original amount agreed upon to pay the people who were conducting the surveys was set at \$18, but the employees who are doing the surveys have been given raises that took their normal hourly pay to \$18.94. Julie asked the Supervisors to approve them being paid their regular wage rate for the last 16 – 20 surveys that were completed recently to finalize the plan requirements. *A motion was made to pay the employees their regular salary amount to do the final surveys. (Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

A resolution, 101723A, setting millage rate for debt service at 3.5 mils, effective January 1st, 2024, was reviewed. It was noted that the resolution requires that this money be kept in a separate account. *A motion was made to accept resolution 101723A. (Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

The LSA grant application for improving Orchard Rd was discussed. They decided to apply for the entire length of Orchard Rd., .91 mile, with the addition of the contractor being responsible for the final prep work on the road before paving, which Kirk thought would add \$10,000 to \$20,000 to the bid. *A motion was made to authorize GDH to prepare the grant for the entire length of the road. (Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

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Old Business (con't.):

Hometown Hero banners were discussed again. Julie reached out to John Cirko, and after talking with him, reached out to Penelec to start the project paperwork. They sent a packet with a substantial amount of work involved to get their approval to put the banners on the poles. Julie asked the Board to consider where they would want to start and stop, did they want to do both sides, did they want pictures/words on one or both sides of the banners?? After discussion, they asked Julie to see if John Cirko would be willing to meet with them, either at a meeting, or otherwise, to discuss the process with them.

New Business:

Joe asked if we could contact Lakes Portable Toilets and get an invoice for the regular portable toilet at the park for Nov. – Feb. He would like to pay that invoice to keep the toilet at the park over winter. Also discussed with this was the possibility of purchasing a toilet or two of our own rather than renting them. Maintaining them was an issue, and costs for vandalism, which are currently done with the contractor that supplies the toilets. This would fall on the Township's employees, and the Township's insurance rather than the contractor.

The budget workshop was scheduled for Monday, November 13th at 6:00. Julie will advertise in the paper. This will allow them to have the tentative budget ready for the meeting on the 21st.

Personnel:

The updates to the personnel policy were reviewed. *A motion was made to approve the changes. Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

A policy on payment if an employee has COVID was discussed. The employee will be asked to go home if they are sick and follow the CDC guidelines for return to work. The employee will need to use their PTO if they wish to be paid while off.

The new employee that was hired to help the Authority did not show up for work. There is no clear date when he will be able to return, and the Authority asked the Supervisors to suspend his employment so that they could start the hiring process to get someone to take his place. *A motion was made to terminate Michael Hoffer's employment and to advertise for the open position. (Johnson/Felton, motion carried)*

They discussed potential dates for the Christmas/appreciation dinner for the volunteers and employees of the Township. December 5th or 6th are the dates that Julie is supposed to reach out and request from the fire department.

Miscellaneous:

None

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Public Comment on non-agenda items:

Melanie Norris questioned why there was no zoning permit issued for the Township's facilities on Fairgrounds Rd. and asked about building in the flood plain on that property. Joe said he would look into it and would let them know what he found out at the next meeting.

Tom Gruber asked again about the drainage issues with the runoff from the State Rd that runs along the backs of the properties bordering the school. He wants to know who is responsible for maintaining that "creek"?? They think it should be the Township and mentioned the Subdivision & Land Use Ordinance (SALDO) which was adopted in 1993, and the development was approved in 1995. It was also discussed that this ordinance should be updated.

Adjournment:

With no further business to attend to, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 PM.
(Johnson/Felton motion carried.)

Respectfully submitted,

Julie E Johns, Secretary/Treasurer