

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held on February 2, 2026 and was opened by Chair Ellen Gndt at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Ellen Gndt, present; Natasha Leap, present; Mike Velardi, present; Matt Long, present, Charles Keppler, present.

In Attendance: Leo DeVito-Township Solicitor; Jon Tresslar- Engineer; Patrick Briegel-Public Works Director; Jerrod Belvin-Township Manager; James Wagner, Chief of Police; Erica Tomas-Administrative Assistant, Paul Morgan, SFM Consulting, Jennifer Gambino, Asst. P.W. Mgr.

Announcements

An executive session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel and equipment.

Public Comment

Cheryl Parks – Commented regarding the blasting and how it is effecting her home.

Rebecca Gallagher – Read a letter regarding the TDU fee that was increased in August with Ordinance 2025-29 and requesting it be repealed.

Alice White – Enquired regarding the Butz property and its potential for a data center. Jerrod Belvin stated that the property is currently under contract with a landscape company.

Rebecca Smith – Commented regarding the blasting on the Core5 property. A lengthy discussion was had among the board and engineer.

Presentations

Swearing-in ceremony of two new officers, Dustin Rentschler & Daniel Campagna, by District Magistrate, Honorable Daniel Kresge.

Members 1st Waiver presentation-

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to approve the waiver of 390-50.D.(5)

Maximum slope of basin embankments (3:1). All in favor. Motion carried.

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to approve the waivers of 390-29.J.(1)(c) and 390-31.D.(2) WB-50 Truck Turning Movements. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mike Velardi made a motion, seconded by Natasha Leap, to approve the waiver of 390-+43.A.(6) (e) [2][a] – Maximum Steep Slope Disturbance. Ellen Gndt, nay; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, aye; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, nay. Motion carried. (3-2)

Mike Velardi made a motion, seconded by Natasha Leap, to approve the waiver of 390-55.C.(2)(e) Minimum Parking Planting Island, Required Plantings. Ellen Gndt, aye; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, aye; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, nay. Motion carried. (4-1).

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to approve the waiver of 390-55.D.(3)(a) waiver of street tree location. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to approve the waiver of 390-55.F.(3)(e) Right-of-way Buffer Plantings. Ellen Gndt, aye; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, aye; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, nay. Motion carried. (4-1)

Resolutions

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to approve Resolution 2026-09 LDP 1450 – 116 Hilliard Lane Easement. All in favor. Motion carried. Charles Keppler questioned runoff.

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler, to table Resolution 2026-10 LDP 1445 – Mountain Edge Townhouse. All in favor. Motion carried. Lengthy discussion was had regarding the plan and it being an approved plan from back in the 80's, in leu of fees, and sidewalks.

Ellen Gnandt made a motion, seconded by Natasha Leap, to approve Resolution 2026-11 Monroe County 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan Municipal Adoption. All in favor. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

- Ellen Gnandt made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler, to table all three sets of minutes. Ellen Gnandt, aye; Natasha Leap, nay; Mike Velardi, nay; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, aye. Motion carried. (3-2)
 - Old business consisting of the minutes of the January 20, 2025 regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
 - Old business consisting of the minutes of the January 5, 2025 Re-Organization meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
 - Old business consisting of the minutes of the January 5, 2025 regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Ellen Gnandt made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler to approve the Financial transactions through February 2, 2026 as presented, including ratification of expenditures in the amount of \$398,661.45 for the following accounts: General Fund, Sewer Operations, Gross Payroll, Capital Reserve, Construction Fund. Discussion: Jim Pelegrinni questioned the bills. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Personnel

Commissioner Comments

Ellen Gnandt – President

- Solar Field update – Jon Tresslar gave an overview of the meeting with the DEP and Swiftwater Solar regarding the violations and fines on the new enforcement notices in the amount of \$339,000.
- Historical District Limitations – There is nothing in the Federal Register Statute preempting the zoning of the property. The Federal Government and the Developer would need to handle any violations regarding violations within that funding.
- Ellen Gnandt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to waive the Pavilion fees for Boy Scout Troop 85 for Pavilion #1 on August 16th 2026. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Ellen Gnandt made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler, to adopt Revised Decorum Policy. Ellen Gnandt, aye; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, nay; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, aye. Motion carried. (4-1)
- Discussion: Core5 water test results to residents in the Blast Zone. Jerrod Belvin will reach out to Core5's attorney.

Matt Long – Vice-Chairman

- Amusement Tax Update- Met with Camelback and Great Wolf and it was productive.
- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler, to authorize the Solicitor to advertise the proposed ordinance forming an Environmental Advisory Council. Discussion took place. Roll call: Ellen Gnandt, aye; Natasha Leap, nay; Mike Velardi, nay; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, aye. Motion carried. (3-2)
- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to amend the public comment policy to allow only Pocono Township residents, stakeholders & local businesses to comment on agenda items when deliberating. Discussion took place. Roll call: Ellen Gnant, aye; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, aye; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, nay. Motion carried. (4-1)
- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Ellen Gnandt, to authorize solicitor to advertise a public hearing for the Pocono Township Data Center Ordinance. Discussion was had between the board, solicitor, and engineer. All in favor. Motion carried.

Commissioner Comments

Natasha Leap – Commissioner

- Natasha Leap, made a motion, seconded by Ellen Gndt, to approve the reduction of the construction escrow for Turkey Hill Minit Market, Store #274 in the amount of \$70,465.03. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mike Velardi – Commissioner

- Mike Velardi read a statement regarding the statements expressed by individual board members are their own and do not represent the official position of the board. Actions which have raised questions from the public regarding the board's professionalism and eroded confidence in the board therefor he asked for the resignation of Mr. Keppler.
- Mike Velardi, made a motion, seconded by Natasha Leap, to remove Charles Keppler IV as parliamentarian. Discussion was had among the board. Discussion was had. Roll call: Ellen Gndt, nay; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, aye; Matt Long, nay; Charles Keppler, nay. Motion fails.
- Mike Velardi made a motion, seconded by Matt Long for the purpose of discussion, to declare Pocono Township a 2A Sanctuary Status. Roll call: Ellen Gndt, nay; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, aye; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, nay. Motion carried. (3-2)

Charles Keppler – Commissioner

- Discussion of public option for trash disposal was had.
- Charles Keppler expressed his concern regarding the budget. Charles Keppler made a motion, No second, to maintain the 2025 municipal tax rate of 3.429 Mills for the 2026 tax year. Motion failed.

Reports

Zoning Report-SFM Consulting – Paul Morgan gave the board an overview of statistics for the last two weeks regarding zoning. Matt Long questioned whether any new complaints came in regarding Hotel/Motel. Ellen Gndt asked regarding the dangerous structure at Pocono Manor. Paul gave an overview of his inspection report.

Police – James Wagner, Chief

Township Events Report – Most of the events will be moved to our new location, gearing up for the 2026 season. Also, some events have been condensed.

Manager Report – Jerrod Belvin

- Police Wing Update – architects are working with Rodney on low voltage requirements.
- Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to change the April meeting date from the 20th to April 22nd due to PSATS Conference. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Municipality Commitment for Pick up the Pocono's scheduled for April 25, 2026
- New Grant Award – Small water and sewer in the amount of \$203,000 toward the generator and automatic transfer switch for the building. Much thanks to Rep. Madden and Sen. Brown for their support on this grant.
- Core 5 Blasting Schedule for the week Tuesday between 10-2 and Thursday between 10-2.

Public Works – Patrick Briegel

- Sewer Business Update – PFM Financial will be presenting at the next BOC meeting to review the report on the sewer.
- Current Public Works Projects – spent time digging out fire hydrants and clearing snow banks.
- The Ice rink remains open with the cold weather.
- Rte. 715 project pipe replacement has been completed.
- Co-Streams contract the board approved two weeks ago is up and running.
- Conversation took place regarding salt storage and shortage.

Township Engineer Report- Jon Tresslar

- TLC walking bridge – permit has been received.

Township Solicitor Report-Leo V. DeVito.

- Sewer Business Update
- General legal update – TDU ordinance review
- Charles Keppler made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to authorize Solicitor to advertise Ordinance hearing to repeal Ordinance 2025-03 LERTA. Ellen Gndt Abstained from the vote due to a conflict of interest. All voting members in favor. Motion carried.(Conflict of interest form attached)

Adjournment –Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 p.m. into Executive Session with no return this evening. All in favor. Motion carried.