

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 5, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held on January 5, 2026 and was opened by Chair Ellen Gndt at 8:33 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.

**Announcements**

**Public Comment**

Representative Maureen Madden shared that Pocono Township got the money for the TLC park and Adult equipment.

**Presentations**

- MCTI-Zoning Request (**Possible Action Item**) Power Point Presentation  
Natasha Leap made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to send zoning request to Planning Commission & Monroe County Planning Commission and to have solicitor prepare ordinance/resolution. All in favor. Motion carried. Discussion was had between the board and residents.

**Hearings –**

Volare Liquor License – Court Stenographer took Legal Transcript

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to open the Volare Liquor License Hearing. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to close the Volare Liquor License Hearing. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Resolutions**

- Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Natasha Leap, to Approve Resolution 2026-01 Volare Economic Development Restaurant Liquor License. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Consent Agenda**

- Motion to approve a consent agenda of the following items:
  - Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Ellen Gndt, to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2025 regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners. All in favor. Motion carried.
  - Discussion was had with regard to re-opening the budget and how it would affect the financial transactions with in the amount listed below. Leo DeVito explained the process. Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to move the motion for approval of the Financial transactions through January 5, 2026 as presented, including ratification of expenditures in the amount of \$619,704.17 for the following accounts: General Fund,

Sewer Operations, Gross Payroll, Capital Reserve, Construction Fund further down on the agenda within her report. All in favor. Motion carried

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Personnel**

### **Commissioner Comments**

#### **Ellen Gnadtt, Chair**

- Ellen Gnadtt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to advertise for 2026 meeting dates for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 6 p.m. unless it falls on a holiday of which it will then be the Tuesday following the holiday. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Ellen Gnadtt made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler, for the Board to reopen the 2026 budget for the purpose of considering amendments.” A lengthy discussion was had amount the board. Roll call: Ellen Gnadtt, aye, Natasha Leap, nay; Mike Velardi, nay; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, aye. Motion carried.
- Ellen Gnadtt made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to put together and adopt a resolution to provide for the temporary appropriations to authorize ordinary and necessary township expenditures along with new hires, beginning January 1, 2026 but in no event later than February 15, 2026. Discussion was had between the board, Chief of Police and Solicitor.
- Ellen Gnadtt made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to pay the 2025 expenses along with the 2026 expenses according to the resolution, with the exception of capital until the budget is finalized. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Ellen Gnadtt made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, for the Board to advertise and conduct a public budget workshop to review proposed amendments to the 2026 budget on January 15, 2026 at 5:00 pm. Discussion was had among the board and public. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Discussion regarding general “housekeeping” issues to be addressed.
- Discussion of a possible regular scheduled work sessions during the week
- Natasha Leap suggested that minutes be taken at any future workshops along with recordings to make it fair to the public.
- Solar Field update an inspection was done prior to the holidays.
- Warehouse blasting update – Discussion was had by the public and board.

#### **Matt Long – Vice Chair**

- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler, to adjust public comment policy to allow 3 minutes for *both* agenda & non-agenda items. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Ellen Gnadtt, to authorize Township Engineer to draft Data Center Ordinance. Discussion was had between the board, Township Engineer and public. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Ellen Gnadtt, to authorize the solicitor and zoning code office to draft a hotel, motel and annual inspection and licensing ordinance to address health, safety, and welfare issues. A lengthy discussion was had between the board, solicitor and public. Roll call: Ellen Gnadtt, aye; Natasha Leap, nay; Mike Velardi, nay; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, aye. Motion carried 3-2
- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Ellen Gnadtt, to authorize the Township Solicitor to draft a Police Cost Recovery Ordinance. A very lengthy discussion was had between the board, solicitor and public. Roll call: Ellen Gnadtt, aye; Natasha Leap, aye; Mike Velardi, nay; Matt Long, aye; Charles Keppler, aye. Motion carried 4-1
- Matt Long discussed the concerns regarding the amusement tax.

#### **Natasha Leap – Commissioner**

Spoke regarding her desire to have workshops to teach the general public information on the Planning Commission, ZHB, Variances, Special Exceptions.

#### **Mike Velardi – Commissioner**

Suggested declaring Pocono Township a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary Township

Mike Velardi asked the public to consider Pennsylvania adopting an electoral college system

**Charles Keppler – Commissioner**

- Matt Long made a motion, seconded by Charles Keppler, to table this matter. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Discussion regarding Brian Winot's email of 1/5/2026.
- Discussion took place regarding an offer to the Library.
- Discussion was had regarding a post to Facebook by a member of the Pocono Township Planning Commission.
- Natasha Leap asked that the following be put on the record:  
***I would just like to make one comment and that I would like the minutes to reflect that I was not for talking about this and don't agree with it, for when you get sued.***

Ellen Gndt stated that due to the time and situation only items that need to be addressed on the agenda be handled. All members agreed. The balance of the agenda items not covered will be added to the next meetings agenda.

Jerrold Belvin quickly informed the board of the two large grants that the township received.

Natasha Leap made a motion, seconded by Ellen Gndt, to promote Mike Stettler Jr. from Part time to Full time with the DPW Staff. All in favor. Motion carried.

Natasha Leap made a motion, seconded by Matt Long, to accept the Co-Streams proposal for phase 1 in the amount of 18,740.00. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ellen Gndt made a motion, seconded by Mike Velardi, to table the award of the Roundabout Bid Winner through Penn Bid. All in favor. Motion carried.

- *Leo DeVito cautioned the board regarding:* Potential consequences/issues of using township email for non-township business and/or personal disparagement

**Adjournment – 11:43 P.M.**