

**Pocono Township Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2025 | 6:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Pocono Township Board of Commissioners was held on January 6, 2025 and was opened by Chair Richard Wielebinski at 6:07 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Ellen Gmandt, present; Natasha Leap, present; Mike Velardi, present; Brian Winot, present. Rich Wielebinski, present.

In Attendance: Leo DeVito, Township Solicitor; Jon Tressler, Engineer; James Wagner, Chief of Police; Patrick Briegel, Public Works Director; Lindsay Scerbo, SMF Consultants; Jennifer Gambino, Events Coordinator; Jerrod Belvin, Township Manager.

Public Comment

Cheryl Parks (Resident) – Expressed her disappointment in the outcome of the hearing with the district magistrate along with the continued issues on Ruby Lane regarding the ongoing kennel issues.

Announcements

Hearings

- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to Open the hearing to amend Chapter 250 Maintenance of Properties. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gmandt, to Close the hearing. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to approve an Ordinance amending Chapter 250 Maintenance of Properties, adding provisions to its §§ 250-4 Definitions; 250-7 Yards; Open Lots; Parking Areas; and, 250-13 Penalties, and repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent therewith. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by B. Winot to Open the hearing to amend the Pocono Township Code of Ordinances
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to Close the hearing. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by B. Winot, to approve an Ordinance amending the Pocono Township Code of Ordinances, Chapter 470, Zoning, Article III, Zoning Map and Zoning Districts, to change the zoning district classification from Low Density Residential (R-1) to Commercial © on those certain parcels identified as Tax ID Nos. 12.6.2.56, 12.6.2.51, 12.7.1.6, 12.6.1.72, 12.6A.1.4, 12.6A.1.60, 12.94364, 12.94365, 12.6A.1.59, 12.92570, 12.3.1.24, and 12.3.1.25; and Medium Density Residential (R-2) to Commercial (C) on those certain parcels identified as Tax ID Nos. 12.7.1.6-4 and 12.7.1.10; and to revise the official zoning map to reflect the zoning district changes. Roll Call Vote: R. Wielebinski, aye; B. Winot, aye; M. Velardi, aye; N. Leap, aye; E. Gmandt, nay. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to Open the hearing to determine the boundaries of a deteriorated area or areas for a proposed Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (LERTA). All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to Close the hearing.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by B. Winot, to Recommend the approval of the boundaries for a proposed Local Economic Development Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (LERTA). All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to Open the hearing for an Ordinance to amend Chapter 398, Taxation, to add a new Article VII, Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (“LERTA”), and repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent therewith.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by B. Winot to Close the hearing. All in favor. Motion carried.

- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by B. Winot, to Approve the Ordinance to amend Chapter 398, Taxation, to add a new Article VII, Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance ("LERTA"), and repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent therewith. Roll Call Vote: R. Wielebinski, aye; B. Winot, aye; M. Velardi, aye; E. Gndt, nay; N. Leap, aye. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

- Old business consisting of the minutes of the December 16, 2024 regular meeting and the minutes of the December 30, 2024 special meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
- General Fund budget adjustments in the amount of \$31,466.79 for the purpose of providing additional funding for the following line items. To cover deficit.
- Sewer Operating budget adjustments in the amount of \$30,530.62 for the purpose of providing additional funding for the following line items. To cover deficit.
- Financial transactions through December 30, 2024 as presented, including ratification of general fund expenditures, sewer operating expenditures and gross payroll, vouchers payable, sewer operating expenditures, construction fund expenditures, capital reserve expenditures and transfers in the amount of \$591,242.91.

R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to approve the consent agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS –

1. Advertisement of 2025 Township Meetings

- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to set the Board of Commissioners and sewer meetings for the first and third Mondays of each month at 6:00 p.m. When a meeting date falls on a Township holiday, the meeting will be held the following day. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to set Planning Commission meetings for the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. and the fourth Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. for re-zoning workshops. When a meeting date falls on a Township holiday, the meeting will be held the following day. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. 2025 Board, Committee & Other Appointments

- a. R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by E. Gndt, to appoint Tom Felver to the Pocono Township Vacancy Board with a term to expire December 31, 2025. All in favor. Motion carried.
- b. R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to appoint Jerrod Belvin to the Monroe County Tax Committee with a term to expire December 31, 2025. All in favor. Motion carried.
- c. R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to appoint Berkheimer as EIT Tax Collector for Pocono Township. All in favor, Motion carried.
- d. R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by B. Winot, to set the mileage reimbursement rate at the 2025 IRS rate of 70.0 cents per mile. All in favor. Motion carried.
R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to appoint the following Pocono Township Volunteer Fire Department members as 2025 Fire Police as requested by Chief Jordan Merring. Kevin Kresge Sr., Christopher Kinsley Sr., Peter Gallagher, Robert Gupko, Donald Simpson, Christopher Kinsley Jr., Thomas Kresge, Paul Layman, Harry Andres, Ron LaBar, Mike Serria, Stephen Jacobs, Preston Baransky, Robert Kinsley, Angela Tullo, Corey Sayre, Jerry Lastowski. All in favor. Motion Carried.

Personnel – None

Travel/Training Authorizations - None

Commissioner Comments

Richard Wielebinski – President

- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to make a \$500.00 donation to Brodhead Watershed Association. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to purchase Ubiquiti Touch Phone System for NCC Administrative wing in the amount of \$5,146.00 to replace Toshiba PBX Utilizing existing Cat5e wiring. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to advertise new Assistant Public Works Manager Position. E. Gnadts questioned the job description asking for clarification on a number of items listed. L. DeVito recommended that the motion be amended to create the position of assistant public works director. R. Wielebinski accepted his amendment, seconded by M. Velardi. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to authorize a release of the sanitary sewer easement for right-of-way agreement between Pocono Township and Turtle Walk, Ertle Development LP. All in favor. Motion carried.

Natasha Leap – Vice President

N. Leap asked when the speed bumps will be painted on Abeal and Bog. P. Briegel stated that it will be done weather permitting. The signs have been installed.

Discussion regarding a three-way STOP sign at McKay and Shine Hill. N. Leap made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to open the agenda in order to discuss stop signs. All in favor. Motion carried.

N. Leap made a motion, seconded by R. Wielebinski, to authorize the township engineer to conduct a traffic study concerning the intersections of McKay and Shine Hill roads, along with the intersection of Buck Valley and Cranberry roads and Woodland and Cranberry, which would be appropriate for stop signs. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ellen Gnadts – Commissioner

- SBA Cell Tower – Their escrow account is in arrears.
- Solar Field – Plans have been submitted to the Planning Commission and will be accepted next Monday for review. The Solar Project paid a \$2000.00 Fine. A lengthy discussion was had regarding the handling of the project by all entities.
- Kennel – The hearing was held at the district court and ruled in the defendants favor.

Mike Velardi – Commissioner

Brian Winot – Commissioner

Reports

Zoning Report – See report – L. Scerbo updated everyone on the TDU's being followed upon.

Police Report - New Blue ridge fiber optic system has been installed, and the police are already seeing a significant improvement in upload and internet speed. Chief J. Wagner thanked the board for the investment they made. The drones have not been received yet. The pilots are moving forward with their online training for the certification.

Manager Report

- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to purchase a Camera Package for interior & exterior of Administrative wing, from Ubiquiti Inc. in the amount of \$4,934.00. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to appoint Samantha R. Elliott as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator. E. Gnadts asked how it would work regarding Jackson Township. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Update Green Light Go – working on small items.

- NCC Update – Painting is 90 percent complete along with electrical. May is the target date.
- Monroe County 250 kickoff is January 9th at NCC at 5:30 p.m.
- Discussion was had regarding the Planning departments office space.

Public Works

- E. Gnadit made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to pay the final Pump Station 5 Electrical Contract Payment 14 in the amount of \$15,412.60. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by M. Velardi, to hire 10th public works employee. All in favor. Motion carried.
- Sewer Business Update -
- MCTI Sewer Connect – contracts have been awarded. Survey crew will be there within the week.
- Current Public Works Projects – working on the new heating system in the DPW Building. The new truck has made its way to the upfitters and should be delivered within a few weeks.
- Parks Update – Recreation construction came to perform a warranty item for the zip line. Signs have been ordered, as a precaution, to keep off the ice at TLC's pond, to address the people who are not using good common sense. Video has captured a man testing the pond and fell thru.
- Sullivan Trail Expansion – ongoing with staking and alignment.
- Discussion was had regarding the potential for an Ice Hockey rink at Mountain View park.

Township Engineer Report

- Sewer Business Update – survey crew will be out at MCTI tomorrow.
- Learn Road safety enhancement project and roundabout survey work. Right of way is being finalized. Bid package should go out soon.
- TASA Project – working on comments with PennDOT
- TLC walking bridge – working on a concept for the townships review in order to move forward.

Township Solicitor Report

- Sewer Business Update – hoping to circulate dates for a meeting with Tobyhanna Township on the sewer issue.
- Nuisance Ordinance Update – waiting on comments from the board on the language of a private nuisance and public nuisance.
- General legal update
- Pocono Places brief is being submitted.
- Update – Archer Lane fine is approaching \$500K.
- Learn Road Easement Process – working on settlement dates.

Public Comment

R. Peechatka (Resident) – Stated he has lived near McKay for 65 years and does not remember an accident in that area. Munch Drive speeders are terrible.

C. Parks (Resident) – Spoke regarding the Kennel property next door to her and how it is affecting her.

C. Kepler (Resident) – Expressed his concern regarding the fines for residents on litter vs the fines for commercial business's violations and the fact they should be equally pursued.

Adjournment –R. Wielebinski made a motion, seconded by N. Leap, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.