

Michael Stump, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting of the Alsace Township Board of Supervisors to order at 7:01 pm. Also present were Vice Chairman Sam Mallatratt, Member David Barth, Kimberly Mallatratt, and Solicitor Gary Swavely. The meeting was held at the Alsace Township Municipal Building. Mr. Stump led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES: Chairperson Stump asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 5, 2018 meeting. Mr. Mallatratt made that motion, seconded by Mr. Barth and the motion carried.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Chairperson Stump asked for approval for the Township payment of bills. Sam Mallatratt made a motion to approve payment of bills in the amount of \$92,710.28 from the General Fund, \$19,113.87 from the WWTP Operations and Maintenance Fund, \$2,560.53 from the Septic and Sewer Fund, and \$0 from the Liquid Fuels Fund seconded by David Barth, and the motion was approved. Mr. Mallatratt made a motion to pay taxes, payroll and interim bills, seconded by David Barth, and the motion was approved.

There were no questions regarding the financial reports as presented.

ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Stump made a recommendation to appoint Courtney Harris to the full-time position of Assistant Secretary/Treasurer at the rate of \$17.50 per hour. David Barth made a motion to accept this recommendation, seconded by Sam Mallatratt and the motion carried.

Ms. Mallatratt presented a quote received from Lynx Computer System to upgrade the server backup system currently in place. The quote includes a 3-year warranty, upgrades and migration of the existing system and is \$574.00. Mr. Barth made a motion to accept this quote, seconded by Sam Mallatratt and motion carried.

FIRE COMPANY: Mr. Stump made a motion to appoint Steven Rothenberger, Jr. to serve as Fire Marshal/Fire Coordinator for Alsace Township through the remainder of 2018 until the Annual Reorganization Meeting. This appointment would be effective October 17, 2018. This individual would serve as a liaison between the three fire departments. Sam Mallatratt seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mr. Stump opened this topic by stating that the Supervisors would be taking comments but would be limiting comments to 3-4 minutes per individual. He also requested that all individuals please sign in and also to stand when speaking and state your name. Mr. Stump stated that the Board will not be answering questions as there is a current investigation.

Mr. Stump stated that a meeting was held with the ISO regarding insurance rates. The insurance rates for the Township will not be going up per the ISO Representative and will remain at a 4 with a possibility of the rates getting better. The report will be out in 3-6 months.

Mary Lou Kline – Made a request to reinstate the Fire Company. She stated she is concerned about safety and security. She also asked about who the three Primary fire companies are for the Township. She asked about what attempts were being made. Mr. Stump reiterated that there is a current investigation. Mr. Swavely further stated that the Board will not discuss substantive issues at this time.

Phil Kline – Mr. Kline also questioned that the Board cannot comment because of the investigation. Mr. Stump asked Mr. Kline if he was aware of the Attorney General investigation, to which Mr. Kline stated that he was aware. Mr. Kline asked what the Fire Company was being investigated for at this point. Mr. Swavely stated that the Attorney General has not disclosed the full breadth of the investigation. Mr. Swavely stated he has been in contact with the lead attorney and they are not disclosing the details of their investigation. Mr. Stump reiterated that he believes the Township is in good hands with the fire companies currently providing services to which Mr. Kline disagreed. Mr. Kline believes it is impossible for a fire company located miles away from the concentration of population – Alsace Manor – to provide coverage equal to that of the Alsace Manor Fire Company. Mr. Kline believes that the Supervisors are destroying a viable entity and it began by asking for financial information that they did not have a right to receive. The Business Manager stated that during a conversation with the Attorney General it was stated to her that when a non-profit entity is in existence for the purpose of providing a public service for the public good and welfare, that all financial information, whether received through taxpayer funds, donations, fundraisers, or other sources is completely transparent and open for anyone to request. Mr. Swavely added that as of this date the Fire Company and the Fire Chief has not provided the requested documentation that was promised over 30 days ago. Mr. Stump then stated to Mr. Kline that previous Supervisors, including Mr. Kline, have been requesting financial information since 2006. Mr. Kline then responded that he felt a good deal had been reached which is why the Township took over paying bills for the Fire Company from the taxpayer money. Mr. Stump pointed to the Herbein audit for the actual documentation. Mr. Kline stated the Herbein audit was incorrect and believes the numbers they were supplied were incorrect.

Mr. Kline then asked if the Supervisors have the 2017 budget available. He believes the numbers are incorrect.

Darlene Bartsch – Darlene stated that Westfield Insurance will go up. The Business Manager again stated that the ISO representative stated that the insurance rates will not rise.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: Mr. Swavely had nothing to present to the Board.

WWTP, SEPTIC & SEWER: The Business Manager stated that the contract documents have been received regarding the \$125,000 grant for the sewer extension. Mr. Swavely reviewed the contract. The Business Manager asked for a motion to authorize and execute the contract. Mr. Mallatratt made a motion to authorize and execute the contract, seconded by Mr. Barth and the motion carried.

The Business Manager then stated that she is recommending that the Township change the sewer billing period to coincide with a calendar month. The bills will then be sent out on the 1st of the month, due the 15th of the month with a grace period until the 20th. By changing to this cycle it will simplify the financial record-keeping and also work more smoothly with the software. The Board of Supervisors agreed that this is appropriate. The Business Manager then stated that she would like to send a postcard out in advance to those affected residents letting them know about this change in advance.

Patty Moyer – Asked a question regarding the initial cost of the sewer billing software program. She thought that the new company would be taking all of the payments. She is unclear about the cost/benefit of this software and outside vendor. Ms. Mallatratt explained that the initial cost

was approximately \$13,000 for the software, setup, data migration, training and updates. Ms. Moyer then asked if there were on-going costs with this software. Ms. Mallatratt stated that there is an ongoing annual fee and the Township has just received that contract but has not reviewed it as of this meeting. Ms. Moyer then asked how many people are actually using the credit card service to offset the costs. Ms. Mallatratt stated that the decision was not simply credit cards, but other factors including no longer printing, mailing, salary and postage costs for mailing of bills. Additionally, the software utilized previously was no longer supported and had failed numerous times. Four companies were evaluated prior to purchase of this software. The firm that was selected was based on numerous factors including the fact that they were local, the software was expandable, they could take credit cards, process payments on-line, process and send invoices, could take payments through a lock-box if we would choose, among other items at a cost that was appropriate. Ms. Moyer stated that she thought the new company would be taking all the payments and asked why they were not. Ms. Mallatratt stated that the decision was made to transition to this new software and options incrementally so that residents would be able to get used to this new system.

Paul Kalen – Asked if there was a way to provide the sewer pumping slips to the Township rather than dropping them off in person. Mr. Stump stated that they can be emailed at any time.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Mr. Stump discussed that the re-paving of Bull & Baskets Roads has started and is going well. Salt was just ordered off of the state contract.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

Resolution 2018-11 – Hazard Mitigation. Mr. Stump asked for a motion to approve this plan. Mr. Barth made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mallatratt and the motion passed.

Darlene Bartsch, Emergency Management Coordinator stated she has received correspondence from FEMA/PEMA. They are fixing houses from the recent flooding.

SUPERVISORS: Mr. Stump stated that there is tire recycling day with Berks County Conservation District scheduled for November 2, 2018. There are flyers available for the public if they want to participate.

Mr. Stump mentioned that this upcoming year the Township will require some type of identification to show that the people participating live in Alsace Township.

Patty Moyer – Stated that the Township should limit the “out of Township” people that are dumping items into the recycling bins.

Mr. Stump stated that he believes that the recycling program is a good thing, but it is costing the Township a lot of money. The Township does not need to provide this service since the population is less than 5,000. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding recycling disposal. Mr. Jim Oswald, Supervisor from Lower Alsace Township stated that Lower Alsace Township has the same issues with their recycling program as Alsace Township.

Keith Blankenbiller – Confirmed that the Township is paying approximately \$300 per month for recycling services. Mr. Blankenbiller then made a suggestion that since it appears that the

recycling service is simply taking our recycling material to the landfill, that we stop the recycling service and simply have residents handle their trash and recycling privately.

Mr. Stump also stated that trash trucks damage the roads. Mr. Stump is considering one trash collection service for the Township and is watching this situation at other Townships.

Mr. Oswald commented that Lower Alsace Township is looking into a one-hauler system, and through that situation the Township can apply for grants. This allows potentially for less issues with roads, signs, etc., and will come to approximately \$30 per household.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Bonnie Landis – Ms. Landis asked if the sewer extension project would be happening in the Fall. She was told that this project would be happening in 2019. Ms. Landis also asked if the recent hire of Courtney Harris was posted and what are the hours of the position. The Business Manager stated that the job did not need to be posted but that multiple resumes were received and multiple interviews were held. Ms. Landis asked how it was known that the position was available. It was stated that it was word of mouth, there were resumes already on file, and that numerous individuals were also contacted. Ms. Mallatratt further stated that the position is full-time. Ms. Landis then asked why the position was full-time when the previous person in the position was made part-time. Mr. Stump stated that the previous individual was unwilling to perform some of the functions of the position and unwilling to take on additional responsibilities. Mr. Swavely then stated that this is a personnel matter.

Darlene Bartsch – Brought up a situation regarding an uncontrolled burn in Wedgewood Heights. Mr. Barth explained that there is a system currently in place to let us know about uncontrolled burns.

Heath Edwards – Mr. Edwards asked if all activities have been shut down at the Fire Company. He questioned why there is still bingo being allowed at the Fire Company when they are not in operation. Mr. Barry Bartsch stated that it is because the Supervisors are trying to bankrupt the Fire Company and it's the only way to get money. Mr. Swavely asked Mr. Bartsch to clarify who he felt was trying to bankrupt the fire company. He stated that the Township is trying to do it. Mr. Swavely cautioned Mr. Bartsch to not make comments that defame the Board Members.

Darlene Bartsch – Made a statement that there are many individuals in agencies embezzling money and that they didn't close their Townships or their Fire Companies. She also stated that she has worked hard to get the Fire Company where it is. Mr. Swavely asked Ms. Bartsch if she had a comment for the Board. Ms. Bartsch discussed her concerns. Mr. Swavely explained that if she has a concern with the investigation she needs to be in contact with Mr. Shapiro's office in Harrisburg.

Bonnie Landis – Asked a question of Mr. Swavely regarding how this investigation was started. Mr. Swavely stated he would not comment on that question.

Phil Kline – Mr. Kline stated his belief is that the Fire Company was shut down due to a lack of turning over documentation, and that documentation still hasn't been turned over. Mr. Kline asked if the Attorney General has told the Township to keep the Fire Company shut down. Mr. Stump reiterated that since there is an ongoing investigation that the Fire Company will remain shut down.

Wayne Becker, Jr – Mr. Becker asked what the Fire Company can do to continue to move this discussion forward. Mr. Swavely told Mr. Becker to have the Fire Company contact their attorney and he will let them know what is being requested.

Mr. Stump asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sam Mallatratt made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by David Barth, and the motion was approved. Adjournment was at 7:56 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Mallatratt
Business Manager/Secretary/Treasurer