

**PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
AUGUST 26, 2021**

The second regular monthly meeting of the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, August 26, 2021 at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, which is located at 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Chairman Randy Heard called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

ROLL CALL:

The following Supervisors answered roll call: Chairman Randy Heard, Vice-Chairman Glenn Borger, Jane Mellert, Stephen Hurni and Joyce Lambert.

Also present was Township Manager, Thomas Petrucci.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

Resident Nolan Kemmerer and Fire Chief Alex Cortezzo were in attendance.

I. TOWNSHIP MANAGER – THOMAS PETRUCCI:

1. Slate Belt Regional Police Commission (SBRPC)/Plainfield Township Lease Agreement for Police Station: Discussion and Possible Official Action:

Tom Petrucci reported that he, Pen Argyl Borough Manager Robin Zmoda, Wind Gap Borough Manager Louise Firestone and Wind Gap Council member Dave Hess had met on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 to discuss the SBRPC Lease Agreement. An overview of the discussion which occurred was provided to the members of the Board of Supervisors and is summarized as follows:

- Pen Argyl Borough and Wind Gap Borough have calculated that Plainfield Township will gain a total of about \$70,000.00 in revenue by the end of 2021 as a direct result of the Police Station Lease Agreement which commenced on January 1, 2018. No grant revenue was factored in to this calculation; the calculation is based on the amount of revenue received minus the stated operating expenses as compiled by the Township. The calculation factors out the funds that the Township paid into the Lease Agreement based on the applicable proportionate share of the Township. The calculated spreadsheet provided to Plainfield Township by Pen Argyl Borough is enclosed for reference. **Chairman Randy Heard reiterated**

that the Township absolutely did not negotiate the agreement based on profit or loss; the intent was to determine a fair price based on the square footage. This was also communicated to the SBRPC by Stephen Hurni and Jane Mellert.

- The sentiment expressed by Pen Argyl Borough and Wind Gap Borough is that they have overpaid the Township for the amount of the Lease Agreement. Pen Argyl Borough and Wind Gap Borough are essentially seeking a rebate on the next Lease Agreement to cover the overpayment. The proposed rebate would include a year-and-a-half credit on the next Lease Agreement where the Slate Belt Regional Police Department/Commission would not be charged anything for the Lease Agreement.
- Following the conclusion of the rebate period of one-half year, Pen Argyl Borough and Wind Gap Borough have proposed a new rent amount of \$10.00 per square foot on the current leased premises total of 3,766 square feet. This works out to an annual total of \$37,660.00. Under the current 2021 proportionate share figures, Plainfield Township would pay \$19,229.12, Pen Argyl Borough would pay \$9,859.39, and Wind Gap Borough would pay \$8,567.65. Ostensibly, the Township's maintenance costs would be more or less covered in this Lease Agreement. The square footage total of 3,766 is not in dispute.

A summary of the discussion which occurred concerning this matter is provided as follows:

- Tom Petrucci stated that the \$10.00 per square foot would more or less cover the Township's ongoing operating expenditures, including mowing, plowing and the time of the Road Department in conducting maintenance activities.
- Future capital projects such as repaving of the parking lot or replacing the HVAC system would be the responsibility of the Township as the landlord. There would be few limited scenarios where the Township would face a fiscal loss as a result of the Police Department occupying the building.
- Jane Mellert expressed the sentiment that no specific community should be profiting from the operation of the Police Department. The communities all understand that the operating revenue surplus received by the Township during the 2018-2021 Lease Agreement was not intentional.

- Stephen Hurni would be inclined to offer a lump sum payment as opposed to a rebate period.
- Jane Mellert questioned whether it would make sense to hold back a portion of the funds for future maintenance costs.
- Tom Petrucci identified that the phone system needs to be replaced, and that the projected cost is \$34,000.00.
- Glenn Borger stated that the Township should consider allowing the SBRPC to make for alternative arrangements concerning the Police Station, as the SBRPC has provided multiple letters to the Township that the Lease Agreement is being terminated. Jane Mellert stated that there are multiple factors to consider in finding alternative arrangements. This type of plan needs to be well-structured and planned for in strategic manner.
- Jane Mellert was of the belief that the rent amount needs to be reduced, but the request to provide the rebate was surprising. There are a number of upcoming costs that should be accounted into the overall situation.
- Jane Mellert stated that there were a number of items at the beginning of the formation of the Department that cost Plainfield Township more funds, but there is no intent to look back on these items. The intent is to move forward.
- Glenn Borger stated that it is not appropriate to fail to include items like the parking lot, the phone system, and the secure bay garage. It is his opinion that the Township may not recover all these expenses.
- Jane Mellert noted that the Township has already agreed to pay for the secure bay garage; however, when that was discussed, the only item on the table concerning the Lease Agreement was the two percent (2%) annual increase. Now the entire Lease Agreement is up for discussion.
- Resident Nolan Kemmerer expressed the sentiment that it is the responsibility of the Township as the landlord to factor in the cost of capital replacements into the Lease Agreement. The Township should not be asking the tenant (the Police Department) to pay for these projects.

No official action was taken on this agenda item.

Tom Petrucci will attempt to schedule a follow-up meeting with the three municipal managers or the three municipal managers (with one Commission

representative- either a primary representative or a delegate- from each municipality in attendance as well) in order to ascertain relevant next steps.

2. Plan Slate Belt: Review of *Where Do You Wish to Grow?* Review of Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) Map:

The Board of Supervisors reviewed the proposed *Where Do You Wish to Grow?* map as prepared by the LVPC. Areas of possible development were identified/confirmed, and this will be communicated to the LVPC. It was agreed upon that the areas of the Township that are currently zoned industrial/commercial were selected for their proximity to existing water and sewer options. The possibility of further development of agricultural areas was discussed in terms of agritourism (ex. wineries, distilleries, brew pubs). Jane Mellert contemplated whether there is a saturation point concerning these types of facilities. The Township needs viable manufacturing jobs in the area so that the residents are able to afford actually to visit these types of uses.

In addition, Jane Mellert stated that it was her opinion that the Township and the LVPC should explore if there are other zoning/planning options for affordable housing in the Township. It was her opinion that building a new home is entirely too costly, and this is both a local and national issue.

CITIZEN'S AGENDA/NON-AGENDA:

The members of the public expressed their viewpoints and provided feedback during the course of the meeting.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REPORTS:

1. *Randy Heard, Chairman*- Nothing to report.
2. *Glenn Borger, Vice Chairman*- Nothing to report.
3. *Joyce Lambert*- Nothing to report.
4. *Jane Mellert*- Nothing to report.
5. *Stephen Hurni*- Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, motion was made by Glenn Borger and seconded by Joyce Lambert to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved. Vote 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Petrucci
Township Manager/Secretary
Plainfield Township
Board of Supervisors