

BOS MINUTES

Dickinson Township Board of Supervisors

October 21, 2024, Dickinson Township Meeting Room
6:00 pm

Attendance

Board Members:

Chairman Rob Kole, Vice Chair Robert "Bob" Line III, Jen DeGaetano

Absent:

Jason Reichard, Engineer

Staff:

*Lucas Martsof, Marge Bear, Glenn Kelso, Laci Hockenberry, Abigail Miller,
Matthew Boyer, Solicitor*

Visitors: *Judy Brough, Michelle Line, Harold Cooney, Beth Kikla, Marty Williams, Maddie Seiler,
Charley Westcott, Tom Imholte, Elizaeth Grant*

Call to Order

Chairman Kole called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

Opening Announcements

- Trick or Treat Night is set for Thursday, October 31, 2024 from 6-8 PM

Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Supervisor DeGaetano and seconded by Vice Chairman Line and unanimously passed to approve the agenda.

Special Presentation by Keystone Municipal Solutions – Financial Conditions Assessment and Trends Analysis

Dan Connelly of Keystone Municipal Solutions presented a detailed report on the financial condition of the Township, using charts and graphs to emphasize the information. It included assessment of the current financial condition, analysis of multi-year results, recognized trends and developments influencing future revenue and expense patterns, established a baseline five year financial forecast, summary findings, and strategy considerations for the 2025 budget and beyond.

Mr. Martsof expressed the importance of planning to move forward, grant opportunities, partnerships, implementing a capital improvements committee and plan for better management of the revenues and

expenses. Chairman Kole expressed the importance of planning for the park & recreation needs and development, as well as the future of Barnitz Mill, and continued road projects and the financial impact of all these items that need to be considered. He agreed with establishing the capital improvements plan moving forward as a way to set priorities and consideration of the various projects. He questioned if a forecast could be made to reduce or eliminate the real estate tax, which was debated long and hard, and the response was that it would take aggressive cuts to achieve a tax reduction. Vice Chairman Line questioned how much should be maintained in a cash reserve for emergencies and unplanned expenses and Mr. Connelly suggested adopting a fund balance policy with no less than 15%. The Moody rating is 40% and presently the Township is at 93%. He suggested establishing a spending program, strategic use, a fund balance, allocation to the capital fund and grants. Vice Chairman Line mentioned the on-going contributions to the surrounding fire companies who provide a lot of support, and those contributions need to continue and even increase. The \$2 million surplus is a nice buffer that has been used to complete road projects while prices were lower, which allowed for savings for other projects down the road. Supervisor DeGaetano appreciated the projections and was in favor of the capital improvements plan to make sure we are lining up priorities with funding in the best way so we don't have to raise the tax.

Chairman Kole thanked the staff for the support and work that was put into assisting Keystone Solutions with completing the financial analysis, which puts the Board in a better position to work on the 2025 budget and planning for the next 3-5 years.

Public Comment – Agenda Items Only

Judy Brough liked the format of the agenda which is professional and easy to read. She expressed concern with Item "C" of New Business with regard to the meeting agenda and policy. Residents need to hear the discussion and questions on a business item before they are prepared to comment or question because they may not understand the matter until the Board discussion takes place. She asked if residents can comment at the time an item is discussed by the Board, and the response was no. Ms. Brough feels this change will stifle the resident's input and she is not in favor of the change. Residents input is vital for the success of the Township. She also questioned the audios of the meetings not being posted on the website and Chairman Kole said that is not an agenda item. Vice Chairman Line mentioned the audio is part of the public comment policy which was changed and the policy doesn't include making them available to the public. Chairman Kole stated there was no change and the recordings will still be posted on the website.

Elizabeth Grant agreed with Judy Brough with regard to Item "C" of New Business on the meeting agenda and policy. The current policy allows public comment at two opportunities, beginning and when the matter is discussed, and that is a good way to continue it. She also questioned the submission of written comments and how that would be handled because the policy states they would be recognized at the next meeting. Chairman Kole said the current policy did not provide for written comments so that provision was provided for. The Board will note that an email or written comment was received for agenda item #. This allows staff and the Board of Supervisors time for normal business instead of going on for 3 hours.

Marty Williams stated by not allowing residents to comment on a matter as it is discussed will create anxiety and confusion because we may not understand the agenda item until it is discussed.

Tom Imholte echoed the comments made by the other resident speakers. How can a resident have questions or comments on something that has not been reviewed or discussed. The Supervisors are doing a lot of good things but he doesn't agree with this policy. The Supervisors want residents to attend but he questions how this will make meetings more efficient. He questioned whose idea this was and the intent of taking comments only at the beginning? Residents are not involved or have all the information and questions will be sparked by the discussions. It stifles the residents and is a bad idea. He questioned how this will enhance or improve discussion and engagement with residents. Chairman Kole stated he has always been an advocate for

transparency and loves engagement. He encouraged residents to contact the Township office or look on the website or call one of the Supervisors. He mentioned the amount of time the Board spends on reviewing the meeting packets of information to prepare for the meetings. It is not to hide any information but to change the format of the meeting. Mr. Imholte questioned if the meetings are longer than they used to be, and if not, then why the change in policy.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Kole pointed out that himself and the engineer were listed in the minutes as being present at the September 16th meeting but they were not. Vice Chairman Line pointed out that the public comments made at the beginning of the September 16th meeting were for agenda and non-agenda items both.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Line and seconded by Supervisor DeGaetano and unanimously passed to approve the September 16, 2024 minutes as amended; to ratify the bills for October 2, 2024; and to approve the bills for October 21, 2024.

Board Of Supervisors Reports

Chairman Kole attended the Friends of Barnitz Mill meeting. The members are doing a tremendous job as volunteers and will be ready to make a presentation at next months Supervisors meeting on a summary of their findings and work completed to date.

Vice Chairman Line mentioned that the West Cumberland Partners have filed an appeal for the agriculture security area decision so it is something the Township has to deal with now.

Supervisor DeGaetano reported that the legislation on the FPR issue was re-introduced and passed by the House of Representatives and is sitting in the Appropriations Committee. They are hoping to have it sent to the Senate but there are only a few days left for them to be in session. This legislation would provide additional implementation and more regulations for the FPR matter. She thanked Salzman Hughes, and especially Brian Salzman for getting us to this point and hopefully getting to the finish line and having an impact on our community. Chairman Kole mentioned this topic has been brought up at three different county meetings recently and there has been significant progress.

Public Hearings None

Plan Review/Conditional Use Hearings

a. Heishman / Wronski final subdivision plan

Solicitor Boyer recommended the Board make a condition of approval of the plan to have the drainage easement better depicted and made more clear as to where it is located and to add language to the plan that the drainage easement will be owned and maintained by the property owners of those lots. Zoning/Codes Enforcement Officer Miller said that all corrections have been made to the plan except for a few housekeeping items that will be completed prior to recording of the plan.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Line and seconded by Supervisor DeGaetano and passed unanimously to approve the Heishman / Wronski final subdivision plan contingent upon the drainage easement being clearly depicted and a note being placed on the plan stating the drainage easement will be owned and maintained by the property owners of those lots, as well as the staff comments being satisfied.

Boards, Committee, and Authority Reports

- a. Planning Commission – Elizabeth Grant said the Board will be meeting and making a report next month (Friends of Barnitz Mill). Vice Chairman Line noted that deed restrictions are not permitted on a parcel of land that is being considered for agriculture preservation, so that is something to keep in mind as the Township wants to preserve as much land as possible to keep the Township green.

Staff Reports

Managers' Report - Interim Manager Martsof thanked the staff for being helpful with the financial analysis and putting together a comprehensive budget with much more explanation and transparency.

Assistant Manager / Treasurer Report - Nothing additional to report.

Emergency Services Report - Nothing additional to report.

Roadmaster's Report - Nothing additional to report.

Zoning Officer's Report - Nothing additional to report.

Engineers Report – Nothing to report

Solicitors Report – Nothing to report.

New Business/Request for Board Action

- a. Participation in WCCOG Salt Bid (Nov. 1, 2024 – Oct. 31, 2025, from Cargill, Inc. at a price of \$78.86 per ton delivered.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Line and seconded by Supervisor DeGaetano and passed unanimously to approve the participation in the WCCOG salt bid from Cargill, Inc. at a price of \$78.86 per ton delivered.

- b. Resolution 2024-09 amending the order of business for Board of Supervisors meetings

Vice Chairman Line expressed his reinforcement of what has been mentioned by the residents today about keeping public comment with the agenda items as they are discussed. We work as a group and bring all experience together. We haven't had extremely long meetings for some time. It would be limiting residents input by moving the public input to the beginning of the meeting. He is also not in favor of putting the public comment on the non-agenda items at the end of the meeting. He questioned whose idea it was and what the intent was to make these changes. Streamlining is good but this would limit folks. They don't have time to research before the meeting. At the meeting is where most of the information is shared and discussed. He appreciates the time and effort the Board puts into reviewing the packet prior to the meeting but it is a group effort. He suggested keeping the comments the way they have been.

Solicitor Boyer said the idea behind the change is to provide more structure to manage the public comments. Once an item is discussed presumably there would still be comments before the Board votes. It made more sense for the non-agenda items to be at the end. He agreed that Vice Chairman Lines comments are valid.

Chairman Kole said the new policy doesn't preclude the Board to open up for comments if it is a topic that is extraordinary, or is necessary. If something needs more interaction from the public then okay, but he urged residents to get more information prior to the meeting. He gave credit to the staff for what they have done. He used to have to ask questions and now he gets more information and that is being shared with the public. Change is hard. It is difficult to go through change. The professional firm was asked to provide information

on how other municipalities handle this. We want to make sure we are making it better. Don't be afraid of change or create an environment of fear. That is not our intent to box you out. Give us a chance to see how it works and in 6-12 months from now it can be revisited.

Supervisor DeGaetano said if residents need to add comments they can raise their hands and the time will be provided. The comments at the beginning allow the Board to mull it over. She likes engagement and if she was sitting in the audience she would want to ask questions. We can limit comments to a short period of time and don't ask the same question five different ways. She questioned if there is a reason for putting non-agenda public comments at the end.

Solicitor Boyer said it is a structure issue. There is potential to still comment on items as the Board discusses them.

Chairman Kole said the comments at the beginning and end creates separation. We listen to feedback at the beginning for agenda items. General comments on non-agenda items could be anything and that should be at a different place. We have asked for best practices and it is something we are going to try. He is in favor of moving forward with it.

Vice Chairman Line mentioned the other municipal meetings he attends discuss the agenda items and receive comments at that time and don't limit the residents. Receiving comments prior to the discussion is less efficient because a lot of comments may not be made without hearing the discussion first.

Marty Williams expressed her frustration with hearing change is hard, professional service is needed, and being up in arms. She feels she is being chastised. Don't think we are not working on our end trying to figure out what this is all about. Chairman Kole noted the amount of community work Ms. Williams is involved with and she does a marvelous job. His comments were not meant to be condescending.

Judy Brough asked for clarification on whether or not the public can comment at the time of the Board's discussion on an agenda item because her answer at the beginning of the meeting was no, and now she has heard that yes they will be able to. Supervisor DeGaetano said the Board will not stifle comments. Comments will be received at the beginning of the meeting and then discussion at that point in the meeting. She learns a lot from the interaction. We are just trying to consolidate things and make it more clear, but not trying to mess anything up. We welcome your comments as always.

Vice Chairman Line said some times change goes in the wrong direction. The last thing he wants is to stifle the residents. At that point we need to reverse the course. Supervisor DeGaetano likes the engagement and interaction and shame on the Board if we are not doing our job. If it goes bad we can call each other out. Chairman Kole joined in on the concerns and will be as fair as he can in allowing public comment as much as possible.

A motion was made by Supervisor DeGaetano and seconded by Chairman Kole, and passed unanimously to adopt Resolution 2024-09, which amends the order of business for Board of Supervisors meetings.

c. Agenda and Public Comment Policy

Solicitor Boyer mentioned some case law concerning agendas so this change brings us in line with current law. It also takes the Sunshine Law into account for executive sessions for sensitive matters.

A motion was made by Supervisor DeGaetano and seconded by Chairman Kole and passed unanimously to adopt the Agenda and Public Comment Policy.

- d. Application for Final Payment – 2024 Road Improvement Project – New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co. in the amount of \$46,999.56

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Line and seconded by Supervisor DeGaetano and passed unanimously to approve the final payment of \$46,999.56 to New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co.

- e. Ratify Orrstown Bank update for Liquid Fuels Fund to a new Money Market Account

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Line and seconded by Supervisors DeGaetano and passed unanimously to ratify the Orrstown Bank update for Liquid Fuels Fund to a new Money Market Account.

Old Business None

Closing Announcements None

Public Comments - Non-Agenda Items Only

Tom Imholte expressed interest in serving on the Capital Improvements Committee if one is created.

Marty Williams mentioned the stellar staff, and how helpful they have been and how welcoming they are to work with the residents.

Executive Session

The Board of Supervisors recessed at 7:47 PM to hold an executive session on legal matters and reconvened at 7:58 PM.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Supervisor DeGaetano and seconded by Vice Chairman Line and passed unanimously to adjourn at 7:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie E. Bear

Marjorie E. Bear
Asst Manager/Secretary/Treasurer

