

**TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 6, 2024**

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**I. OPENING PROCEDURES**

- A. Call to Order by President Eccles at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance led by President Eccles.
- C. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Cassandra R. Eccles, Council President; Michael F. Hammill, Vice-President of Council; Richard S. Hughes, First Ward; George H. Stewart (\*), Second Ward; Olivia T. Payne, Fourth Ward; Shamus Petrucelli (\*), At-Large

Absent: Paul L. Cullen, At-Large

Also Present: Greg Caprara (\*), Treasurer; Julie A. Jakubec, CPA, CGMA, Township Manager; Dan Garfinkel, Township Solicitor; Charles W. Steinert, Jr., P.E., Township Engineer; Christopher Komora, Special Projects Coordinator/Code Enforcement Officer; Todd Giammatteo, Public Service Superintendent; Jay Davis, Police Superintendent; Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

(\*) - denotes attended meeting via zoom.com.

**II. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION**

**A. Application for Minor Subdivision – Meinert Estates**

Manager Jakubec stated Denis and Ken Meinert are Executors of the Estate of John and Alice Meinert located along Dorseyville Road. It has been proposed to subdivide the parcel into six lots. The Township Planning Commission reviewed the plan at its December 18, 2023 meeting. Lots 1 through 5 are in the R-2 zoning district, and lot 6 is in the R-4 zoning district. Access to lots 5 and 6, located in the rear of the parcel, is provided by an existing 50-foot right-of-way. An additional 15' will be added to the right-of-way to accommodate any future public road. The Township Zoning Hearing Board approved a variance request for the creation of lots without street frontage at 335 Dorseyville Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15215. The Planning Commission has recommended to Council that the Minor Subdivision Plan be granted subject to one condition as noted in the proposed resolution.

Mr. Steven Victor, of Victor Wetzel and Associates was in attendance to represent Ken and Denis Meinert. He noted four lots would have frontage along Dorseyville Road. Lot one is the existing Meinert house. The additional 15' to be added to the right-of-way is on Alan Meinert's property.

Ms. Payne questioned if the rear lots would be built on. Mr. Victor indicated lots five and six could be built on, as there is access to water and sewage from Saxonburg Boulevard.

Mr. Hughes noted the development is contingent on a Maintenance Agreement. Mr. Victor noted Alan Meinert has asked for a few things but the agreement is nearly completed. He would ask the Township Solicitor to review the agreement.

Vice President Hammill questioned where stormwater would go. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. stated any developed lot would have an on lot stormwater system.

Manager Jakubec questioned if the access road would be gravel or paved. Mr. Victor stated the access road would be gravel until lots five and six are built because there is no stormwater.

Mr. Denis Meinert questioned the need for stormwater controls if the road is solid, which Mr. Victor explained.

Manager Jakubec clarified that access provided to two houses is considered a driveway; access to three or more houses is considered a private road. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. noted it is included in the Developer Agreement just like any other development.

Mr. Denis Meinert asked if the Township requires stormwater management for a driveway, which Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. confirmed.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution for consideration on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda.

### III. CITIZEN COMMENTS CONCERNING NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments.

### III. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION CONTINUED

#### B. Possible Combining of the Blawnox Police Department Under the Township of O'Hara Police Department

The Manager recalled Township staff and Blawnox Borough staff met to preliminarily discuss the possibility of combining the Blawnox Police Department under the Township of O'Hara Police Department, to determine if it would make financial sense. The next preliminary discussion will concern Police pensions, which staff will report to Council. Both the Township's and Blawnox Police pensions are fully funded. Essentially Blawnox Borough would contract with the Township for Police services. The Township's 2024 budget includes the hiring of one Police Officer. If Blawnox were to go with State Police coverage, the Township's Police Officers would have to respond due to the delayed response of State Troopers.

Police Superintendent Davis noted three of the Blawnox Police Officers have five or less years of service to Blawnox. No one would lose their job. One of the Blawnox Police Officers would fill the Township's budgeted position.

It was noted the Township Police Officers are members of the Fraternal Order of Police ("FOP"), and Blawnox Police Officers are self-represented. If the police departments combine, the Blawnox officers would become members of the FOP. Both Police Departments' officers have talked internally. They have questions but Police Superintendent Davis had not heard any negative comments.

Discussion continued pertaining to hiring requirements, having to catch up on some of the training, and policies.

C. Conflict of Interest Waiver for Campbell Durrant, P.C. Regarding Police Services

Manager Jakubec explained the law firm of Campbell Durrant, P.C. has been consulted regarding the potential of combining the Blawnox Police Department into the O'Hara Township's Police Department. The law firm also represents Blawnox Borough. Both municipalities have been asked by Campbell Durrant, P.C. to execute a Conflict of Interest Waiver, outlining measures they will implement to prevent conflicts while representing both municipalities. Campbell Durrant, P.C. just assisted Brackenridge Police Department's merger. There will be separate attorneys representing each department.

Ms. Cindy Harris, 53 Fox Pointe, asked if Blawnox Borough has a Social Services Coordinator. Manager Jakubec answered no, and stated Mr. Byrd is a separate department. The Police work with him but not in the same department.

The consensus of Council was to include a motion on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

D. Discussion of Potential Joint Recruiting, Retention, Training and Capital Purchasing with Township of O'Hara Fire Departments and Blawnox Volunteer Fire Company

Manager Jakubec stated as recommended by the recent Fire Study, staff reached out to local fire departments to inquire about interest in working toward a merger of fire departments. It has been suggested that the Township volunteer fire departments work with Blawnox Volunteer Fire Company in areas of recruiting, training, and capital purchases, as well as ideas for retaining volunteers. She indicated the fire departments will begin meeting on a regular basis. State Representatives have been asked for assistance with training and capital purchases. She noted one truck needs a new computer.

President Eccles asked if the Blawnox Borough Manager would meet with the Fire Committee. The Manager indicated the Blawnox Manager and Mayor would be meeting with the committee next week.

Mr. Mike Daniher, Chief of S.A.V.E.S., recalled meeting in 2021 with municipalities and the school district about possibly merging fire departments. Municipalities were given three months

to consider a potential merger and he believes now would be a good opportunity for all the fire departments to join together. Members would respond to the closest fire station to make the best use of resources. Mr. Daniher stated Attorney Ken Houser wrote the By-Laws for S.A.V.E.S., which he provided copies for Council and staff to review.

Mr. Daniher continued reviewing the number of calls responded to in 2023, and training hours which eight members of Pleasant Valley participate. He was willing to meet to discuss and continue to grow through public outreach to fire departments and the school district.

Eric Schmidt, 130 Oakhurst Road, questioned why Parkview EMS was not included in the discussions since they are part of Parkview Volunteer Fire Department. President Eccles stated right now the Township is just discussing the fire departments.

- E. Requesting Authorization to Jointly Bid the 2024 Road Improvement Program with Fox Chapel Borough

Manager Jakubec referenced a memo from Township Engineer Chuck Steinert requesting authorization to request bids jointly with the Borough of Fox Chapel for the 2024 Road Improvement Program to realize economies of scale. The roads to be paved included in the base bid are Alpha, Glengary, Orchard Hill and Woodland Drives, Field Club Ridge Road, and a portion of Ravine Street. Alternates include a portion of River Road, Boyd Avenue, Kerrwood Road West, Greyfriar, and Kirkwall Drives, and Ravine Street. Concrete curbs within the RIDC Park will be replaced as needed. The 2024 budget allocates \$1,300,000 for the program.

Mr. Petrucelli noted the Township will be paving a lot of roads. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. stated the paving will begin before school goes back into session. Manager Jakubec noted liquidated damages are included in the contract.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

- F. Requesting Authorization to Jointly Share Engineering Inspection Services Related to the 2024 Road Improvement Program with Fox Chapel Borough

The Manager referenced a memo from Chuck Steinert recommending joint sharing of engineering inspection services with Fox Chapel Borough for the 2024 Road Improvement Program to realize economies of scale.

Mr. Stewart asked if the inspections are visual or if core samples are collected. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. indicated the inspections are visual of the temperatures and quantities of materials in place.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution for consideration on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda.

G. Requesting Authorization to Advertise to Receive Bids for the Fox Chapel Road / Freeport Road ADA Improvements

Manager Jakubec noted a memo from Chuck Steinert requesting authorization to advertise to receive bids for the Fox Chapel Road / Freeport Road ADA Improvements. The improvements include new ADA accessible ramps and sidewalk along with new traffic markings. A \$50,000 Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC) grant was received for this project. She stated the Township needs to thank State Representative Mandy Steel and Senator Lindsey Williams for their assistance with the grant.

The consensus of Council was to include a resolution on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

H. Requesting Authorization to Purchase Public Service Equipment

The Manager referenced a memo from Public Service Superintendent Todd Giammatteo requesting authorization to purchase a Hotsy Pressure Washer from Cleaning Systems, Inc., Mars, PA under the Pennsylvania CoStars Contract No. 025-019, Municipal Works Vehicles Contract. The total cost of the pressure washer is \$10,075.00 which is \$425.00 under budget.

Mr. Giammatteo stated the pressure washer has 3500 psi and a hot water burner to take off grease and asphalt.

Vice President Hammill asked if the pressure washer is top-of-the-line, noting the cost. Mr. Giammatteo stated the pressure washer is near top-of-the-line. It has a 250 tank that can be mobile. Manager Jakubec noted a spring project that the pressure washer would be used for.

Ms. Payne questioned if the pressure was adjustable, which Mr. Giammatteo confirmed, noting interchangeable nozzles.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution for consideration on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda.

I. Requesting Authorization to Participate in the State Road Salt Contract

The Manager stated staff has recommended the Township continue to participate in the Pennsylvania Department of General Services ("DGS") sodium chloride (road salt) contract. The Township also shares a road salt contract with the North Hills Council of Governments to maximize cost savings and ensure needed tonnage and delivery requirements are met. A new Salt Contract Participation Agreement for the upcoming 2024-2025 winter season must be executed and submitted to Pennsylvania Department of General Services by March 15, 2024. She stated based on the weather outlook, the Township still has lots of salt in storage. The amount of salt requested last year was cut back. Some salt would need to be ordered through the State contract next year. The Township typically orders more salt through the State because of the minimum 60%.

Ms. Payne inquired about the amount of salt used so far this season. Mr. Giammatteo indicated 300 tons were used and he had to order 400 tons of salt under the old contract.

Manager Jakubec stated staff is exploring additional ways to use the liquid fuels money, other than for lights and salt. The current salt dome is undersized. Staff is looking into a bigger salt dome for the rear of the lot and demolish the old dome.

President Eccles questioned the cost for a salt dome, which Mr. Giammatteo stated the cost can vary, but \$200,000 would purchase a dome with concrete walls with steel reinforcement.

The consensus of Council was to include a resolution on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

#### J. Recommending Naming of Township Recreation Partners

Manager Jakubec explained representatives of the Lauri Ann West Community Center and Cooper Siegel Library have requested the Township's partnership to provide summer programs in Township parks in 2024.

The consensus of Council was to include the resolution for consideration on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda.

#### K. Selling 40 caliber ammo to Sharpsburg

The Manager stated the Township Police Department is requesting permission to sell its 40 caliber ammunition to Sharpsburg Borough Police Department at cost. The Township switched to 9-mm handguns in the fall of 2023. She noted ammunition is difficult to purchase. The Township has it; Sharpsburg Police need it. The ammunition would be sold at the same price the Township paid.

President Eccles questioned if the Township would need to inform the State. Police Superintendent Davis answered no, adding the Township would lose money if the ammunition were returned.

The consensus of Council was to include a resolution on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

#### L. 2023 White Tail Deer Management Report

Manager Jakubec referenced the White Tail Deer Management Report, noting it was a very successful season for the bow hunters. White Tail Deer Management is a 501c3 organization. The arrows are all labeled with the hunter's last name and every other deer is donated to the Jubilee Kitchen. The program operates through the Township Police Department and involves rigorous training. Each hunter has \$1,000,000 liability insurance.

Vice President Hammill questioned who decides on the acreage requirements to hunt. The Manager indicated the requirements are determined by the Game Commission.

President Eccles noted the location of a gully with lots of deer. Police Superintendent Davis indicated he would reach out to see about putting more hunters in that area. He stated the Police Department has a list of the hunters and their vehicle identification. He commented that it is a very well run program.

Ms. Payne questioned the number of butchers used by the organization/hunters. The Manager believed one butcher from Butler County is used.

M. Requesting Authorization to Sell Sacco Playground Equipment on Municibid

The Manager explained that a play structure at George Sacco Park needs to be replaced. Staff is requesting authorization to sell the play equipment through Municibid, an online auction company where the Township gets money for equipment no longer used and other municipalities and individuals have an opportunity to purchase needed equipment at a price they can afford. Auctioning equipment through Municibid has been quite lucrative.

Mr. Hughes questioned why the play structure is being replaced and if it is in a condition to sell. Manager Jakubec noted the deck is cracking and the roof is fading. Mr. Giammatteo explained the decking has a rubber coating that is cracking. The roof color is fading, which is cosmetic. The equipment is safe to sell. Mr. Komora stated the equipment would be sold "As Is."

Manager Jakubec recalled the people that bought the community center play equipment came from Lancaster, PA.

President Eccles suggested giving the equipment to a neighboring community. The Manager recalled trying to do that but it did not work out.

The consensus of Council was to include a motion for consideration on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda.

N. Requesting Authorization to Sell Two Police Vehicles on Municibid

Manager Jakubec stated staff is seeking authorization to sell two police vehicles on Municibid. The vehicles to be sold are one 2020 and one 2021 Ford Police Interceptors. She recalled the last vehicle sold for more than \$12,000. The buyer of the last vehicle came from Wisconsin. The Manager commended the job Mr. Komora does to clean the vehicles up for photos.

The consensus of Council was to include a motion on the February 13<sup>th</sup> regular meeting agenda for consideration.

O. Council Goals/Objectives/Priorities for 2024

The Manager stated three chapters of the Long Range Comprehensive Plan were released to the committee for review and comment.

It was noted the update to the Plan had begun in 2020, but the COVID Pandemic delayed the process.

Cindy Harris, 53 Fox Pointe, expressed concern about what has been written for the plan, as it does not provide a process on how to implement the plan. Vice President Hammill stated they are tackling stormwater management. Ms. Harris stated they were already working on that.

Ms. Harris suggested Council review the Township's Island Park ordinance. Manager Jakubec stated the Parks and Recreation Commission and Council reviewed that ordinance and chose to not change the ordinance. The Parks and Recreation Commission is planning to visit the island and review the ordinance this spring. Ms. Harris referenced a similar project is Sycamore Island. The Manager stated Sycamore Island is in Blawnox Borough and maintained under a land trust. She noted Matt Rychordewicz is going to be working with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

President Eccles noted the next Long Range Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting is February 21<sup>st</sup>.

P. Solicitor's January 9, 2024 Invoice

No comments.

Q. Proposed February 13, 2024 Regular Meeting Agenda

The consensus of Council approved the subject agenda.

#### IV. CONCERNS OF COUNCIL

Mr. Stewart stated Betsy Monroe, of Fox Chapel Borough is in the process of looking at the numbers on houses on various streets and noted it may be something the Township should consider doing. Manager Jakubec noted if staff finds something the Township Engineer investigates it.

#### V. CONCERNS OF STAFF

The Manager announced the second bucket of batteries was delivered for recycling and 352 United States Flags were collected for proper disposal. She noted a rack with donated prom dresses in the lobby, as well as shoes and accessories. This is the second rack of dresses.

Manager Jakubec noted upcoming events, including a Spotted Lantern Fly trap making class, a discussion by Haley Hoak from Allegheny Conservation District, and Cookies and Coco with Cops.


Ms. Payne suggested, if possible, video taping the Spotted Lantern Fly trap making class.

President Eccles noted renovation plans for the community center. Manager Jakubec indicated representatives of the community center would present the proposed changes to Council. The community center is not required to bid the project.

The Manager requested Council to remain after the workshop for an Executive Session to discuss labor and legal matters.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 8:15 p.m. and Council entered Executive Session.

  
Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

Attachment: Attendance Sheet

## SIGN-IN SHEET

DATE: 2-6-2024

## TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA

Council Workshop  
Meeting

STEVE VICTOR VWA  
Name Address or Organization

Mike Daniker 300-23rd St. S.A.V.F.S.  
Name Address or Organization

NORMAN G. Auvic 1201 Main St. SHARPSBURG-SAVES.  
Name Address or Organization

Eric Schmitt 130 Oakwood Trl 1  
Name Address or Organization

Mike Divito Trib  
Name Address or Organization

Istne Zoom  
Name Address or Organization

Denis Meinert Zoom  
Name Address or Organization

Ken Meinert Zoom  
Name Address or Organization

Cindy Harris 53 Fox Point Dr  
Name Address or Organization

Name Address or Organization

Name Address or Organization

Name Address or Organization

Name Address or Organization

Name Address or Organization

Name Address or Organization