

# **CITY OF DUBOIS/SANDY TOWNSHIP JOINT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, May 2, 2022 @ 6 p.m.**

City Council Chambers, City Building, 16 West Scribner Avenue, DuBois, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, May 2, 2022 @ 6 p.m. the DuBois/Sandy Joint Board convened. Board Members present were: Barry Abbott, Jim Aughenbaugh, Bill Beers, Diane Bernardo, Shane Dietz, Shannon Gabriel, Sam Mollica, Kevin Salandra, Mark Sullivan, Edward Walsh. Also present were: City Manager, John "Herm" Suplizio; Township Manager, Shawn Arbaugh; Sandy Township Police Chief, Kris Kruzelak; DuBois Police Chief, Blaine Clark; Redevelopment Authority Director/Assistant Public Works Director, Joe Mitchell; DuBois/Sandy Joint Board Solicitor, Chris Gabriel; 9 Person Consolidation Committee Chairman, Dick Whitaker; and City Secretary, Bobbie Shaffer.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Edward Walsh.

A moment of silence was held for Marcie Diane Brubaker. (Former Mayor's daughter and current City employee's wife.)

## **Public Comments on Agenda Items Only**

None

## **Approval of the Minutes of the April 4, 2022 Meeting**

The motion was made by Sullivan and seconded by Gabriel that the DuBois/Sandy Joint Board approve the minutes from the April 4, 2022 meeting as presented by the City Secretary. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Bernardo, yea; Dietz, yea; Gabriel, yea; Mollica, yea; Sullivan, yea; Salandra, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

## **New Business**

### **Appoint Solicitor Chris Gabriel as Right to Know Officer for the DuBois/Sandy Joint Board**

The motion was made by Gabriel and seconded by Sullivan that the DuBois/Sandy Joint Board appoint Solicitor Chris Gabriel as Right to Know Officer. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Bernardo, yea; Dietz, yea; Gabriel, yea; Mollica, yea; Sullivan, yea; Salandra, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

## **Consultant Update**

### Solicitor Chris Gabriel

Stated that it is important that someone be appointed as point person on both committees and the solicitor is the obvious choice. His contact information can be found on the website and he encourages people to come to the meetings and ask questions.

Mr. Abbott is concerned because the 10 Person Joint Board has not received any write reports on where we stand from the consultants. He has asked that the co-chairs (Mr. Salandra and Mr. Walsh) reach out and request a written report. He would like to see a list of tasks that have been completed, close to being completed and outstanding. He went on to say that the 9 Person Committee and the sub-committees have done a good job but he has heard no feedback from the consultants. He stated that when the 10 Person Joint Board signed the agreement with Eckerd Seamans we were working toward five steps. He'd like to know, where we are on those five steps.

The motion was made by Abbott and seconded by Beers that the Joint Board request that co-chairs Mr. Salandra and Mr. Walsh along with Sandy Township Manager Arbaugh and City Manager Suplizio contact the consultants and request the following:



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- a. A checklist of tasks completed, close to being completed and what's outstanding.
- b. An outline of where we are, where we should be, and what type of direction we need to take.
- c. Where we are in the five steps of the agreement we signed with Eckert Seaman.
- d. The consultants are to appear in person, not by telephone, at the next meeting in two weeks.

Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Bernardo, yea; Dietz, yea; Gabriel, yea; Mollica, yea; Sullivan, yea; Salandra, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

### Update from 9 Person Committee Chairman, Dick Whitaker

Mr. Whitaker apologized for having all recommendation submittals put on the website prior to being voted on. Only two of the items on the website were approved to move forward: Fire and Zoning. He believes by the next meeting all sub committees will have finished their tasks. They have done an outstanding job; nothing but good to say about how well they worked together. He will encourage all of the chairs from the sub-committees to attend the next meeting. He was asking if they would be getting more tasks and who would be giving them to them. Solicitor Gabriel felt that more tasks would be forth coming from the consultants.

Ms. Bernardo stated that she was unable to open the Zoning attachment to the agenda email. Mr. Whitaker told her we had hard copies for just that contingency.

### Paying of Invoices from Eckert Seamans & PA Economy League

Company	Description	Invoice Amt.	5% DuBois	5% Sandy	Total Submit
Eckert Seamans	Service Thru 03/31/22	\$34,840.87	\$1,742.05	\$1,742.04	\$31,356.78

The motion as made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Sullivan that the DuBois/Sandy Joint Board approve paying the invoice from Eckert Seamans & PA Economy League as proposed above. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Bernardo, yea; Dietz, yea; Gabriel, yea; Mollica, yea; Sullivan, yea; Salandra, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

### Fire Sub-Committee Recommendations

Chair Suplizio stated that they have met numerous times and all tasks have been completed. This is a preliminary budget for 2026, please look it over. Ms. Bernardo asked if they were estimating a \$1,200,000 budget? Suplizio stated that it is hard to predict what the budget will be in 2026 given the recent economy. Ms. Gabriel asked if this now goes to the Finance Committee to make up a budget. Suplizio suggested they mull over it a few weeks before voting to send it to Finance. Solicitor Gabriel stated the Board has a few options to consider: Vote on it today and send to Finance, Mull over it for a few weeks vote and send to Finance, or hold on to it and vote to send all recommendations at the same time to Finance. The motion was made by Beers and seconded by Salandra that the Joint Board hold all recommendations and vote to send them all at the same time to the Finance Sub-Committee to make up the 2026 Budget. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Bernardo, yea; Dietz, yea; Gabriel, yea; Mollica, yea; Sullivan, yea; Salandra, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

### Zoning Sub-Committee – Draft of Ordinance Layout

Chair, Dan Kohlhepp, was unable to attend due to recent surgery. Zac Lawhead, stated that they are trying to combine the ordinances from both municipalities; they are finding a lot of the ordinances were outdated. They sent sections to the sub-committees to review and make any changes pertaining to their



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topic. This is the end result; he requests the Board look it over for the next few weeks. Mr. Abbott appreciated that the document was sent by email but he likes the hardcopy that is provided so he can jot his notes down.

### **RFP for Ambulance Services**

Attorney Gabriel stated that Mr. Mitchell prepared the RFP. Mr. Beers doesn't feel that Mr. Mitchell should be allowed to vote on it as he sits on an ambulance board. Solicitor Gabriel stated he would address that issue at the Executive Session at the end of the meeting. The motion was made by Gabriel and seconded by Aughenbaugh to table this item until the next meeting. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Bernardo, yea; Dietz, yea; Gabriel, yea; Mollica, yea; Sullivan, yea; Salandra, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

### **Project Updates from DuBois City Manager**

#### Sewer Plant

We have bid out the new Sewer Treatment Plant, the bids came back \$27,000,000 higher than projected. Our options are to rebid the project or go back to PennVEST to request they raise their offer; we are also hoping to change the loan from a 20 year to a 30-year term. Mr. Beers suggested that the City talk with DEP to push the project out further. The City Manager stated that the plant really needs to be replaced. Mr. Salandra asked if the scope of the project could be changed using newer technology. Suplizio stated that everything is on the table with DEP and PennVEST.

#### Drug Task Force

The City has been talking about this for approximately two years; Suplizio just wanted to update the 10 Person Joint Committee. We will be hiring two people for the force. Mr. Beers asked why we can't use the Tri-County force or have the State Police bring their resources in. Chief Clark stated that Corporal Young has been leading the City's drug force for a long time and the problem with bring in the State Police or Attorney General's office is we have to work on their timeline. Clark went on to say that we are not winning right now, we need to work harder and get ahead of this now. The State Police narcotics team has been gutted because of cuts in staff. He believes if we have two or more officers we wouldn't have to rely on outside entities. Mr. Beers asked what the District Attorney thinks of the plan. Clarks stated he is fine with it. He went on to say it would be beneficial to have an officer from Sandy on the force. Chief Kruzelak agreed to a point. The District Attorney's fund only covers overtime, so the officer has to work his regular 40 hour shift before working on the drug force and being paid for it. It's hard on the officer and his family when he works a lot of additional overtime. But we would have more control over the force if it was local. Kruzelak stated that Sandy is lower on manpower than DuBois so that is another problem, they would need to fill their current deficiency before they could add a new position. Ms. Bernardo asked what is causing the deficiency. Chief Kruzelak stated budget money; Sandy Township has a lower tax rate than the City. Also, finding good candidates, it's hard to find someone interested in being an officer. Ms. Gabriel stated that she will not allow this subject to drop, we need to get it up and running now not four years down the road. Mr. Sullivan asked if we do arrest people will the D. A. just put them back out on the street? He went to say, that it seems to be the norm across the state. Mr. Abbott asked why we aren't contacting communities around us and ask them to join us by sharing manpower and resources. Chief Clark said we do share our manpower and resources especially our K-9 dog. We need two to three officers designated to work narcotics along with Corporal Young (who is considered an expert) and our K-9. Chief Kruzelak said that Sandy Township is overwhelmed with childline cases; it would be nice to have a designated detective just to work the two to three cases they receive a week. Clark stated that designated officers are very important and it's going to take more personnel to make this happen. Mr. Abbott asked if



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we reached out to other communities would we have enough manpower; Clark said we would still be down officers.

### Joint Board Member Comments

Shane Dietz – Thank you 9 Person Consolidation Committee and Sub-Committees for all your hard work, the Community appreciates it.

Shannon Gabriel – Stated that her phone blew up because of the headlines in the newspaper and social media. She asked that the media remind everyone that until an item is voted on by the 10 Person Joint Board it is just a recommendation, it only can be approved by the 10 Person Joint Board. There were a lot of questions about a paid position in the Fire submittal, there are no paid positions in the fire department.

There was some discussion about the proposed budget having a \$5,000 stipend in for the Fire Administrator and \$10,000 Chief stipend. Attorney Chris Gabriel stated that no one would believe those to be paid positions.

Diane Bernardo told Shannon “well spoken”. A lot of rumors are going around. She would like everyone to remember that many of the people working on the committees have jobs to go to. Thank you very much for taking the time to service.

Jim Aughenbaugh complimented the sub-committees “great job”.

Barry Abbott reminded people that until the 10 Person Joint Board votes on an item it is just a recommendation.

### Open Meeting to the Floor

Dick Whitaker – 9 Person Consolidation Committee Chairman

He stated it has been a pleasure working with Mr. Suplizio and Mr. Arbaugh; he feels it is like a marriage proposal and we just got engaged and we’re working on the pre-nup. We need to continue with full disclosure. It’s a three-year process and we want to make sure we are getting good recommendations. Don’t let anyone push you, there will be some easy decision and some hard ones, take your time.

### Close Meeting to the Floor

An Executive Session was called for a Personnel Issue at 6:52 p.m.

DuBois/Sandy Joint Board Reconvened at 8:04 p.m.

### Adjourn

There being no further business to transact; the motion was made by Gabriel and seconded by Sullivan that the Joint Board adjourn. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Bernardo, yea; Dietz, yea; Gabriel, yea; Mollica, yea; Sullivan, yea; Salandra, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

ATTEST:  APPROVED: 