

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

### **Wednesday, October 16, 2024 @ 6 p.m.**

City Council Chambers, City Building, 16 West Scribner Avenue, DuBois, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at 6 p.m.; DuBois City Council and Sandy Township Supervisors convened at their Joint Board Meeting. Board Members present were: Barry Abbott, Jim Aughenbaugh, Bill Beers, Shane Dietz, Elliot Gelfand, Jennifer Jackson, Sam Mollica, Richard Whitaker, Pat Reasinger and Mark Sullivan. Also present were: DuBois/Sandy Township City Manager, Shawn Arbaugh; DuBois Codes Officer, Zac Lawhead; DuBois Interim Police Chief, Shawn McCleary; Sandy Township Police Chief Kris Kruzalak; and City Secretary, Korbi Slocum.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Co-Chairman Pat Reasinger.

#### **Executive Session**

The board was in executive session prior to the meeting to discuss legal issues, personnel issues and a possible hire.

#### **Roll Call**

All members were present.

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

##### **Gregg Gillaugh – DuBois Days**

Gillaugh read a statement from Dave Glass which began with Glass emphasizing that the opinions are his personally as a resident of DuBois and not in his capacity as County Commissioner. "It is my understanding that the DuBois City firemen have expressed an interest in reviving Community Days. I think their participation is a wonderful idea. The firemen have a wealth of experience and knowledge that will be a great asset when it comes to putting on an event such as this. However, I have also heard the firemen wish to take back financial control of the event. I point out that there are a number of indictments relating to the prior city manager and in those documents the Community Days accounts were mentioned more than once. The citizens' trust was violated, and the AG's investigation continues. My parents taught me that trust takes years to earn and can be lost in a day. I am asking the firemen to recognize that this trust will take time to rebuild. I think they can take steps to rebuild that trust by working hand in hand with City officials and third-party entities such as the folks who ran DuBois Days last year which I believe will enhance the event to the benefit of all. Perhaps, in time, with the investigation and subsequent hearings including verdicts rendered, the time will be right for Community Days to return as it was prior to 2023. The events of the past 18 months have taken a toll and, in my opinion, now is not the time to go back. I urge all parties to work together for the common good of the community in 2024. The last thing we need is more infighting and division. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Dave Glass, DuBois resident, Chestnut Avenue."

Gillaugh stated that Tim Winters, who also could not attend this evening's meeting, agrees with this statement.

Gillaugh then talked about the planning for DuBois Days. "Although we invited many entities, including the fire department, to take part in DuBois Days, we were met with only one entity even bothering to support it which was Leo and his department who handled the fireworks. We were willing to offer free booth space for their participation. Our objective and mission as not to alienate anybody but to pull us back together as a community. Why not all work together as a collective putting on a phenomenal event for the community

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

### Gregg Gillaugh – DuBois Days (continued)

and move together in a positive fashion with both Sandy Township and DuBois. We're going into a merger. Why is there still infighting? Why is there still a division? I don't understand what the hangup is."

TURNABOUT Boxing, his daughter's non-profit, "gave all the money back to the City. We made nothing. As a matter of fact, we lost an enormous amount of money doing this event, which we were well aware of. We're a tiny non-profit. We don't generate a lot of revenue. We want to pull people together. We hope that going forward next year, rather than having two events competing for a limited well of resources, why not pull all the expertise and resources together in one pool, work together and put on a fantastic event the community has never seen before? We have the ability to scale this way up. I hope everyone will at least consider that. Let's just do something that's beneficial to the community, a positive everyone can enjoy. That's all I'm advocating for."

Abbott commented that Gillaugh's desire to reach out and bring the community together is what he discussed at the September Joint Board meeting.

### Deb Mechling – Monroe Street

"I wholeheartedly agree with the comments Gregg made. In my opinion, DuBois Days, in a very, very short period of time stepped up and presented a spectacular event for our community. It was impressive the check that was presented to the City with the leftover funds they collected which was in excess of \$11,400.00. I hope DuBois Days committee is treated with respect they deserve for putting on the event that they did in a very short period of time. To exclude them in the future would really be a slap in the face to them and a travesty."

### **Correspondence**

None to present.

### **Old Business**

#### Managers' Progress Report

- Architect Update
- Special Counsel Update
- Tax Structure, Budget, and Utility User Fee Proposal
- Fire Study Update

The architect did finish the design of the building. It did go out for bids. We did receive bids which we will be discussing later in the agenda.

Our special counsel is still working on numerous things including the pension consolidations. They are expecting to have that information to us by our next meeting.

We are pretty close to entering into a contract to bring these folks (Pennsylvania Economy League) in to start the budget process that we are supposed to have done by February 2025. We are waiting on a few things from the state to enter into that contract. I expect we should have that completed by the end of the week and can start that process.

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

The fire study folks did come back in for a second round of meetings. They did get a chance to get to every firehall and meet with everybody. They are culminating the information, and we are still on target for January to have a final report.

### **Approval of the Minutes from September 18, 2024**

The motion was made by Beers and seconded by Mollica to accept the minutes from August 21, 2024, as presented. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Dietz, yea; Gelfand, yea; Jackson, yea; Mollica, yea; Whitaker, yea; Sullivan, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

### **New Business**

- PUC Abandonment Proposal
- DuBois City and Sandy Township Fire Companies – Community Days
- DuBois City Addition
- Approval of Invoices
  - KTH Architects - \$29,297.25
  - McNees Wallace - \$3,158.53

One of the things the City of DuBois has to do when we consolidate is to look for PUC abandonment. Any time we raise rates to folks outside the City of DuBois, we have to go through a PUC process which is lengthy and typically involves a lot of legal fees to go through that process. Since we are consolidating in 2026, we can start moving forward with the PUC abandonment process now which takes approximately 12-14 months. We did receive a proposal from McNees, Wallace and Nurick who have worked with the City of DuBois in the PUC processes and rate increases for a number of years. The proposal is for \$17,000-\$22,000 for that work. My recommendation would be to move forward and award that to McNees Wallace to get that process started. Reasinger asked if that would be funded by STMP grant money. Arbaugh replied, "No, it would be separate money." The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Gelfand to award the work to McNees, Wallace and Nurick. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Dietz, yea; Gelfand, yea; Jackson, yea; Mollica, yea; Whitaker, yea; Sullivan, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

Leo Brooks, speaking on behalf of the DuBois and Sandy Township fire departments, read a letter announcing their desire to host Community Days in June 2025. "Dear Mayor, Members of DuBois City Council and Township Supervisors. The DuBois Volunteer Fire Department has held our annual Community Days and the park celebration and parade over the course of 31 years for the express purpose of celebrating our amazing community. As you know, this event occurs in conjunction with our Firemen's Week activities that acknowledges the great fire of June 1888 where a significant amount of our fair City was destroyed. For our department, it has become a tradition to remember that tragedy by bringing our citizens together to enjoy our parade and Community Days in the park celebration. As such, it gives us great pleasure to announce that the tradition will continue in June 2025 with your blessing. The DuBois Volunteer Fire Department has partnered with our brothers and sisters of the Sandy Township Volunteer Fire Department to form a joint Community Days Parade Committee to once again bring our annual celebration back to the City of DuBois during June 2025. The theme of our Community Days celebration will be a focus on non-profit organizations in our City as we have done in the past. We are respectfully requesting your permission to utilize the City park from June 12-15, 2025, for Community Days which includes a day to set up and tear down. We also request use of the downtown area on Saturday, June 14,

## CITY OF DUBOIS/SANDY TOWNSHIP JOINT BOARD MEETING MINUTES (continued)

### Leo Brooks (continued)

2025, for our parade which begins on Main Street, onto Long Avenue, down Brady Street and end at Liberty Boulevard as we have done in the past. We are hopeful that we can again make our 2025 celebration an enjoyable experience for the citizens of our DuBois community. We thank you, in advance, for your consideration in this matter and we await your approval. Respectfully submitted, DuBois and Sandy Volunteer Fire Department Community Days and Parade committee.

On October 10, 2024, we received and opened bids for the addition to the City building. The low bid without optional alternatives came in at \$4,538,895. Those bids were:

General Contractor	J.C. Orr & Sons, Inc.	\$1,900,600
HVAC	Pittsburgh Controls and Consulting	\$1,493,000
	(includes Alternate No. 4 for HVAC controls)	
Plumbing	K & K Plumbing	\$ 256,895
Electrical	Hallstrom-Clark Electric	\$ 888,400

The bids did not include work for the Sandy Township building. We are looking for what the Joint Board would like to do in regard to the new City building addition. The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Sullivan to proceed with the addition with the bid of \$4,538,895 as follows: J.C. Orr & Sons in the amount of \$1,900,600; HVAC in the amount of \$1,493,000; Plumbing, K&K Plumbing in the amount of \$256,895; and Electrical, Hallstrom-Clark Electric, Inc., in the amount of \$888,400. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, nay; Dietz, yea; Gelfand, yea; Jackson, yea; Mollica, yea; Whitaker, yea; Sullivan, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 9-1.

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Jackson to approve paying the invoice for KTH Architects in the amount of \$29,297.25. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Dietz, yea; Gelfand, yea; Jackson, yea; Mollica, yea; Whitaker, yea; Sullivan, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

The motion was made by Sullivan and seconded by Aughenbaugh to approve paying the invoice for McNees Wallace in the amount of \$3,158.53. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Dietz, yea; Gelfand, yea; Jackson, yea; Mollica, yea; Whitaker, yea; Sullivan, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

Jason Runyon asked if the Joint Board was going to vote on Community Days. Reasinger replied, "I think we need to talk about it more with you guys." Gillaugh added, "If I also may, it's not only publicly stated on the website that no decisions will be made until after January 1 in relation to usage of the park. That has been stated to me multiple times. I approached the City months and months ago."

### **Joint Board Member Comments**

#### Jennifer Jackson

"I'm going to reiterate what Barry said. This board is really coming together. Our executive session was phenomenal and, really, truly, I think when we all want to work together for the betterment of this community, we will do that. I hope everyone listens to that and we do need to move forward. We do need to be positive. There's going to be some really good things happening, I think, in the next few months."

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

Barry Abbott

"The first thing I'd like to address is the fire company. Thank you for reading that about Community Days. Gregg, I want to come back to you because I did remember two very important things that I think your group could do a phenomenal job. One of the things I pointed out was the celebration of America 250th anniversary. I think you guys would do a phenomenal job putting that all together and bringing that to fruition. I am not a mayor or supervisor chairman, but I would recommend that Gregg's group be appointed to that position and let them run with that. The second thing is the celebration of our consolidation. That's something else I think you would do a phenomenal job with. There are things out there that may be bigger than we may anticipate. I would like to see this group put in charge of these. Mark and Pat, the ball's in your court.

Back to the firemen. I think one of the things we have to understand is these gentlemen have come together for the first time that I can remember working together on a joint venture other than protecting our community through fires. For them to offer their services, I would like to see that as a good shot in the arm and give them all that opportunity. I think it's a great way to kick off our celebration of becoming a joint City, and it will show off our fire departments and how they can work together."

Abbott questioned an unredacted check and concerns that people might have firemen's driver's license. Arbaugh replied, "I am not aware of the driver's license, Barry, but we can certainly look into it. If we did release a record of that nature we shouldn't have. There was a payroll check that was released that should have had a redacted account number on it. We've alerted staff that is not acceptable practice." Arbaugh also noted the bank account has been changed.

"For 38 years, I have fought bullying in sporting events, whether it's running events or officiating events. This behavior and this hatred that is going on in our newly consolidated City just has to stop! I believe that with my whole heart. We can't control what the court system is doing, how fast or how slow the court system goes. All the bickering and complaining in the whole world is not going to change that. It is driving a stake through the heart of our community, and our community is better than that. We have good people here and I think we all agree that we are all on the same page for the betterment of everybody. I think when we start hearing this bullying and this hatred, we need to push back. We can't be afraid anymore. It's time to take the hatred and turn the page. I'm calling for a moratorium to ring a halt and fight for our City, not fight against each other. We have seen it in the Internet and on Facebook. We have a wonderful City, and we need to start getting that word out. We've got to work together. I heard this man (Gillaugh) talk about positivity. I've heard these gentlemen (the firemen) talk about working together. That's probably two of the greatest things I've heard tonight besides a few things that happened in our executive session. For the people who think they are Internet heroes and the gossipers and degraders, I'm going to take you on from now on and tell you to your face I don't approve of your hating. If you've got a problem, call me up and we'll talk about it in a very logical manner. My goal is to move this City forward in a positive manner. I'm going to ask our ministers and religious leaders to start saying a small prayer for our City and talk about getting rid of the demons of the bullying and hatred and bring our City together."

Elliot Gelfand

"I yielded my time to Barry."

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

Richard Whitaker

"I would agree with Barry in there is way too much hatred. It's really hard to pull something together when people are fighting all the time. We've all picked sides. Now, we just need to lay down the weapons and try and find some common ground we can all agree on because it's a big task and we've got just about a year to go. We've got to pull a lot of things together and it's really hard."

Shane Dietz

"I don't have anything more to add to that."

Shawn Arbaugh

"I want to remind everyone about the Brad Wilson bridge dedication tomorrow afternoon at 1:00. The meeting location is Xtremewear." Sullivan noted that Xtremewear is located across the street from the Subway on Brady Street at the bottom of the Sandy bridge.

Pat Reasinger

"I'm going to come back to trees. The trees are coming November 7 and 8. We're going to plant them November 9. I need some volunteers. We have about six crews of three people; probably need another 4-5 crews. A crew would be a pick-up truck, a wheelbarrow, a couple of shovels and three people. If you can, please give me a call here at the City building or email me. We have 70 trees to plant and we're doing it with volunteers so we can plant 70 trees instead of 30 trees and do it for free."

Mark Sullivan

"I also yield my time to Barry. I could not agree more with your comments, Barry."

Jim Aughenbaugh

"Same thing (agreeing with Barry's comments). I want to thank you, Terri (Terri Cunkle from DCED) for your guidance and everything you've provided to us. Very well taken. Thank you."

### **Open Meeting to the Floor**

Avianna Gillaugh – TURNaBOUT Boxing

"I just want to say thank you (to the firemen) for your comments about Community Days and my dad for his comments about DuBois Days and working together. I would like to request that my dad and I could have a meeting with everyone from the fire department and maybe working together, figuring something out. I just wanted to put that out there. Thank you."

Gregg Gillaugh – DuBois Days

"In essence, right now, we are modeling for the youth our community and how to function as adults. The adults in the room are constantly infighting. I'll be honest, whether I like someone or not, I would hope they would feel comfortable coming to a community event not having to face harassment while they were there regardless of what they've done. Where's forgiveness? Where's giving people dignity and respect? People will often pay their debt to society if they've done something wrong. It's not for me to decide; it's for the courts. I'm not going to judge. We need to model that for our community and our youth. We need to bring everyone together and pull together as one giant family. DuBois Days' motto was 'where everyone is family'. That's why my family and I moved here 22 years ago and why we stay. I'd like to see everyone return to that."

## CITY OF DUBOIS/SANDY TOWNSHIP JOINT BOARD MEETING MINUTES (continued)

### Dave Lombardo – Treasure Lake

"I'm not sure what is going on with Community Days and the fire department, but I liked what you (Avianna Gillaugh) said about maybe getting together. It sounds like folks want to know what's going to happen. I know for an event (this size) it takes a year, so you've got to jump on it." Lombardo suggested the City Manager and/or Mayor sit down with a small group of people and hash everything out.

"It sounded like you voted on the extension and development of the new consolidated building. I couldn't do my math fast enough. Where is the money coming from? This consolidation was sold on the idea that we become more efficient, my taxes wouldn't go up in Sandy Township and it won't cost us more money. Are you anticipating tax money to pay for this? Will that affect especially Sandy Township folks? I'm getting hit left and right and am on a fixed income. How is this in line with cost savings?" Lombardo voiced his concern about the combined past debt of the two municipalities.

Reasinger said, "We have a \$2.5 million grant from the state and we're not going to be borrowing any money. We're going to be using some of the savings from both municipalities." Arbaugh clarified, "We have a financing plan in place. We're going to borrow \$2.5 million for a short term, about 2-2.5 years, until we get the money back from the state once we finish the project. The other \$2.5 million we have in capital funds between DuBois and Sandy Township." Lombardo is not comfortable with the big difference in existing debt of the two municipalities. Arbaugh explained, "We are moving forward with the bond issuance to refinance three variable interest loans. The one misconception is, the City owns 6,000 acres of land and we have a very good timber harvest. We're above where we thought we'd be based on those timber harvests, so that's one thing the City brings to the table."

Jackson said, "I want to kind of piggyback on something Barry... I want to let you know there are three of us that ran for this new City that we envisioned. Never in a million years did I think we'd be where we are. I, personally, have been a person who has been bullied through this. I will state it publicly. I had an indiscretion years ago and people thought it would be nice to put it out. You don't realize, I had a child from that indiscretion that you are also targeting. And the Right-to-Knows that I still get... I have three firemen that sit here that would let my building burn to the ground and, you know what, that's OK because I pay insurance. But this is a two-sided story and I hope that your side also sees this, Barry, because it's very hurtful when you've given everything for the betterment of this community. I just want to say that, Barry." Abbott responded, "The only problem with that is, I don't remember taking a side. My side was against bullying, my side was against hatred."

### Jason Runyon – DuBois resident

"I want to circle back to Community Days if we can. The DuBois City Fire Department's mission throughout the years was non-profit based. Our mission moving forward is going to be the same. I want to bring something up to you. How many non-profit organizations was at the DuBois Days? Anybody have a clue? Two. The Boy Scouts and Paint and Play School." Gregg Gillaugh asked, "So TURNaBOUT Boxing isn't a non-profit?" Runyon continued, "Well, you hosted it. How much did they charge each non-profit organization to be part of that? Five hundred dollars." Gillaugh disagreed and stated there was a discounted rate and they were sponsored by a local business. At this point both men started talking over each other. Aughenbaugh said, "This is exactly what Barry is talking about, what we don't want to do."

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

### Deb Mechling – Monroe Street

"I want to say right off the top, I have no bad feelings about the fire department even though I have had threats also because of my actions for the last year or so. They have gone so far as to re-name my business. It's terrible. At any rate, I'm going to put myself out there again with another big target on my back. Am I to understand tonight that this is tabled for right now, with the Community Days and DuBois Days and the fire department. Is that all going to be tabled at this point?" Reasinger and Arbaugh agreed that at this point they'd like to sit down with everyone. Mechling continued, "My question is, 'Before a decision is made, will the public be made aware of how it will be structured, how the funds are going to be handled that are donated because those were issues in the past. I just hope there is a committee of, I guess, people that are able to work with both sides so that it's not dominated by one group over another. And, I would like to know who the committees are. When I've questioned who the committees are in the past I was always given the runaround. We have a right to know who we're giving our money to if we're going to be supporting this endeavor. I just want to make sure we're all in the open and there's transparency as to what's going on before the fact, not once it's set in motion.'" Runyon asked if he could respond to Mechling's comments. "I just want to let you know that the township is now coming into this so there's some new folks that are going to be involved. I get it. Trust is an issue, and it's earned and we've got to earn that trust with you. All I'm asking for is to give us that opportunity now that we're conjoined and doing this together. I think it's going to be better. I will be more than happy to be transparent with you for everything we do in the committee. I'll even give you the committee names of the teams we form." Mechling said, "That would be incredible. I just want to see integrity and respect come back into our community. Our kids are watching us."

### Dave Lombardo – Treasure Lake

Lombardo strongly suggested getting an unbiased, third party to facilitate the meeting between the two groups.

### Mike Federici – DuBois Fire Department

"I'd just like to point out – because this is always said and no one ever corrects it – the fire department funds that were responsible for Community Days, the Parade Committee account, was not part of the indictment for Herm Suplizio. That money was managed by the Fire Department, not Herm Suplizio. So, having mistrust in the Fire Department is misplaced because we didn't do anything wrong, and we weren't indicted. I wish people would actually correct the record on that. It's unfortunate that Mr. Glass believes that's the case, but it's not. The Fire Department didn't do anything wrong, we had nothing to do with the indictment and I think people should probably stop dumping that on the Fire Department. We didn't do anything. As far as Miss Jackson saying there are three firemen in this room that wouldn't put out her fire, are you kidding me? Seriously? That's insulting to the fire department." Jackson responded, "Sorry."

Reasinger said, "I'll try to clear this up. There was a DuBois Volunteer Fire Department Parade Committee fund. Then there was Herm's Community fund." Federici responded, "That the fire department had absolutely nothing to do with." Reasinger continued, "And the City didn't know about it either." Federici agreed. Reasinger said, "That's what tainted the name. It doesn't ring well."

### Leo Brooks – DuBois Fire Department

"As far as Miss Jackson's reference, I think it's insulting. I put in 30 years in this fire department, put out a number of fires in this community, missed time with family and friends and everything. For someone to make a comment like that is absolutely ridiculous, uncalled for." Jackson replied, "I apologized." Brooks said, "You apologized after you were called out on it."



## CITY OF DUBOIS/SANDY TOWNSHIP JOINT BOARD MEETING MINUTES (continued)

Reasinger asked Runyon if he had anything more to say. Runyon replied, "I'm just thankful we have this opportunity to sit around in this room and discuss things that are going on. I hope that we can all move forward." Reasinger responded, "I think we all need to sit down with Gregg and the fire department and see because you guys have done a fabulous job in the past, he did a fabulous job last year. If we come together, it would say a lot about everything. Beers added, "That plan needs to come back to the public, too, to announce that you guys sat down, discussed, come up with a structure, whoever's on there. There's nothing to hide, that's the thing, on either side." Mollica added, "It's such a great event because it brings so many people to the community. I was happy to hear the firemen are back involved in it and make it a success like it has been for 30-some years. I'm looking forward to the next one."

### Supervisor Richard Whitaker

"I just want to say, I think one of the sad things, and I love our community – I grew up here then I moved away for 25 years and came back and have been here for 29 years – we just don't have any grace anymore. We're fighting about everything. We don't seem to give anybody the benefit of the doubt, we don't try to work with people, we already have our preconceived ideas. I just think we need to have a little more grace and say, 'I'll sit down and talk with somebody and see.' And that goes all the way around with everybody. I hate to think that Jenn Jackson is being threatened. I think that's beneath us as a community. Or anybody else being bullied. And I applaud what Barry said. I do think he was just saying 'bullying needs to stop' both ways. We just need to knock it off." Reasinger add, "We're better than that."

### Close Meeting to the Floor

### Adjourn

There being no further business to transact, the motion was made by Beers and seconded by Sullivan that the DuBois/Sandy Township Joint Board adjourn. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Dietz, yea; Gelfand, yea; Jackson, yea; Mollica, yea; Whitaker, yea; Sullivan, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 10-0.

ATTEST: Korbi Slocum

APPROVED: 