



CITY OF DUBOIS/SANDY TOWNSHIP JOINT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, December 18, 2024 @ 6 p.m.

NOTE: Due to construction at the Municipal Building, all meetings will be held at the Third Ward Firehall until further notice.

Third Ward Firehall, 301 First Street, DuBois, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, December 18, 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 Managers, Lisa Hagberg and Benjamin Kafferlin; DuBois Public Works Superintendent, Scott Farrell; 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 personnel issues.

Roll Call

All members were present at the meeting.

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

Melissa Keen – Home Camp Road

Would like to see the board be fiscally responsible when setting elected officials' salaries; no more than \$3,800.00.

Deb Mechling – Monroe Street

Requested those speaking please elevate their voices; people in the back of the room cannot hear.

Diane Bernardo – Tower Lane

Asked if the vote on whether to elect or appoint the Mayor would take place tonight. Kafferlin is recommending the vote be delayed as he is awaiting an answer to a legal question. Bernardo feels the Mayor should be elected, not appointed. She also requested a correction be made to section 16 of the Consolidation Agreement. It should read Controller, not Comptroller. Kafferlin said that is on the list to fix.

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Nancy Moore – Green Ridge Drive

Referred to an article on election procedures that ran in the December 8 Courier Express. She asked the board not to ignore the vote of the citizens. "We want what we had, what we were promised and what was in the agreement."

Harold Webster – E. Logan Avenue

Webster prefers to have the elected council members appoint the Mayor with the appointment being set at the annual reorganizational meeting.

Melissa Keen – Home Camp Road

Believes there are different interpretations of what form of government was voted on in the past that will take effect in 2026. In the 1970s, a vote changed the form of government from Mayor-Council to Council-Manager. On May 29, 1979, an administration organization ordinance was signed into law giving the City Manager authority over all administrative employees. The referendum to consolidate was worded "to elect seven at large, one of whom shall be Mayor". She then questioned the duties and authority of the Mayor if elected, If appointed, could the Mayor be removed and replaced at any time?

Nancy Moore – Green Ridge Drive

Inquired about the specific modifications that have been and/or will be made to the Consolidation Agreement. Kafferlin will be addressing this later in the meeting.

Correspondence

None

Approval of the Minutes from November 20, 2024

The motion was made by Gelfand and seconded by Sullivan to accept the minutes from November 20, 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

Amendment: Consolidation Agreement

To some extent, the Third-Class City code has no bearing as to whether the Mayor is elected or appointed because with the referendum, voters elected to adopt the optional plan model. In Section 3052, a municipality governed by an elected Council, one member who shall be Mayor. Section 3056 of the optional plan model was changed sometime between the referendum and today, so the Joint Board may not have a choice. We are awaiting legal clarification as to whether or not the change applies. For this reason, Kafferlin is asking the board to make a motion to postpone the vote on the Consolidation Agreement amendments until January 6, 2025, and that the board would authorize the Manager to advertise a special meeting on January 6, 2025.

In answer to the agreement modifications:

Section 17B – seems to conflict with Section 3162 which says the Controller will continue his term for another two years, so Mr. Volpe would continue for another two years.

Section 12C – states the 2026 budget should be completed by February 1, 2025, but that is not going to happen. We are asking the board to extend that out to the summer.

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Section 16C – suggests the two municipalities will have a joined Chart of Accounts and accounting system by December 24, 2024. That also is not going to happen, so we are asking that be extended out another few months, maybe to March 31, 2025.

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Sullivan to postpone amending the Consolidation Agreement until the legal questions are answered and to authorize the Manager to schedule a special meeting for January 6, 2025. 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.

2025 Meeting Schedule

This is a request that we continue meeting as a Joint Board once a month. Beers noted two corrections that need to be made to the resolution: 1) it should read Sandy Township and City of DuBois and 2) list co-chairs Mark Sullivan and Pat Reasinger. The motion was made by Beers and seconded by Gelfand to approve the corrected resolution setting the 2025 Consolidated Joint Board meeting dates. 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.

Policy: 10-Hour Workdays

The City Manager is requesting authorization to draft a policy regarding four (4) 10-hour workdays for eligible DuBois and Sandy Township administrative staff on a trial basis. This is something that was being negotiated prior to the current managers coming on board. The Municipal Building will continue to be open five days a week with employees staggering their day off. Employees will work the same number of hours. The public will see no difference in service. The motion was made by Abbott and seconded by Beers to authorize management to implement a policy allowing eligible administrative Sandy Township and City of DuBois employees to work four (4) 10-hour workdays for a three-month trial period to be evaluated in April. 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.

Employment: Full-time Position

With consolidation fast approaching, the City Managers have identified the need for a full-time Human Resources position. As required by the Consolidation Agreement, any new full-time position needs to be approved by the Joint Board. Because there is more work than hands to do the work, the City Managers are requesting authorization to create, post and fill a full-time Human Resources position. The question was raised about having money in the budget to support the position. With everything the managers are exploring, the answer is yes. The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Sullivan to authorize the City to create, post and fill a position within Finance & Administration to handle Human Resources functions. 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.

Bid Acceptance: Exterior Building Repairs

Five qualified bids were received for the repair work to the exterior of the Sandy Township building, mainly the roof. After evaluating the bids, the recommendation is to accept the lowest bid of \$237,000 from Fred L. Burns. The Sandy Township Supervisors have approved that recommendation. The Joint Board also needs to ratify the approval. The motion was made by Gelfand and seconded by Beers to ratify the action taken by Sandy Township to accept the lowest bid of \$237,000 from Fred L. Burns for the exterior improvements to the Sandy Township building. 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.

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Facilities: Audio/Visual System

Due to difficulty hearing during Joint Board and Council meetings at Third Ward firehall, the City Manager has researched mobile audio/visual equipment to be used at Third Ward firehall that can be moved to Council Chambers for future meetings. The price range is \$3,000.00-\$5,000.00. The motion was made by Abbott and seconded by Beers to authorize the purchase of mobile audio/visual equipment up to \$5,000.00 for meetings at the firehall and future meetings in Council Chambers with the cost to be equally shared by Sandy Township and the City of DuBois. 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.

Facilities: 35 W. Scribner Improvements

Due to construction noise at the Municipal Building and for safety reasons, we are seeking authorization to make improvements of up to \$6,000.00 to the old bank building at 35 W. Scribner Avenue where residents can pay their utility bills. The motion was made by Beers and seconded by Jackson to authorize up to \$6,000.00 to make interior improvements to the building at 35 W. Scribner Avenue. 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.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Set Elected Officials Pay for 2026

This is a request to set the pay for Mayor, Council members and Treasurer for 2026. It does not apply to the Controller because that position continues for another two (2) years. Research of the law states that these positions should be paid no more than \$4,375.00 for a city within the population range of 15,000-20,000. After discussion about mayoral responsibilities, hearing pay statistics from other cities of similar size, and the fact that how the mayor will be chosen is still unanswered, the motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Abbott to defer the vote on elected officials' pay to January 6, 2025. 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.

Public Comments

Deb Mechling – Monroe Street

Asked how much the elected officials are currently paid. The Mayor receives \$2,400 which he donates back to the City. Council members and the Controller are each paid \$1,200. Aughenbaugh noted these amounts have been in place since the 1970's.

Dave Lombardo – Treasure Lake

Asked the purpose of the 'Public Comments on Agenda Items Only'. Reasinger explained there are two comment sections. The first on agenda items only allows the board to hear residents prior to discussing and voting. The second is for residents to comment about action taken during the meeting or any other topic.

Lombardo is interested in serving on the Ordinance Committee and feels meetings should begin sooner rather than later. According to the Consolidation Agreement, the ordinances do not need to be recodified until December 31, 2027. Kafferlin pointed out that if there is conflict between the ordinances of Sandy Township and the City of DuBois, there are provisions in the agreement to determine which ordinance is to be followed until the codification is completed. Whitaker stated he would like to see the committee finish the work they previously had started. If interested, email Kafferlin at manager@duboispa.gov.

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

Lombardo voiced concern about the additional costs listed on tonight's agenda because Sandy Township residents were told taxes would not go up. He also questioned why a Human Resources position is being created when there are people in both municipalities already doing that work. He would like to see fiscal responsibility and efficiency. Hagberg explained that currently one person is doing both finance and human resources and, as we move toward consolidation, more work is being required of that person. Kafferlin added that each municipality had one person doing both finance and human resources functions. One

position is now vacant, so adding a Human Resources person fills the vacant position. Whitaker stressed that both municipalities have lost support staff. There are less people to do the same amount of work.

Deb Mechling – Monroe Street

Asked how much the Sandy Township Supervisors and Chairman are currently paid. Each supervisor receives \$3,600.00. Mechling believes the taxpayers are being 'nickel and dimed' and would like to see the board take a smaller bite because many elderly residents are on fixed incomes. Reasinger pointed out that \$4,375.00 is the maximum allowed. Nothing has been decided.

[Board member Gelfand exited the meeting.]

Joint Board Member Comments

Jennifer Jackson

She ran for the Council position to serve her community and is against being paid more than she currently is paid. Lisa and Ben are doing a fantastic job. There are so many things they are changing and implementing. Ben talked to us in Executive Session about rebuilding trust and making mistakes. Looking forward to a good year in 2025. Merry Christmas.

Barry Abbott

His Christmas wish is for the new consolidated City, citizens and Consolidation Joint Board to work together in harmony and quell the animosity stirring in our community. We need a change of tone, peace and goodwill. He encouraged those on the Internet to change the narrative and bring us closer together instead of creating division and pushing their own agendas. Christmas is about the birth of Jesus. Merry Christmas and have a safe holiday.

Richard Whitaker

Clarified that no one on the Joint Board is asking for more money. The figures you heard tonight are just research. Merry Christmas.

Shane Dietz

He does not want to see costs increase. Merry Christmas.

Bill Beers

He would like to see our community grow together in 2025. There will be hard decisions to make. He would like to see the tax structure determined prior to the 2025 election. Expressed his disappointment that Oklahoma Fire Company went against the decision of the four Sandy Township fire companies to hold off with soliciting and assured everyone that Sandy, Adrian and North Point companies are all fully functional. Merry Christmas.

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

Jim Aughenbaugh

There is a lot to Consolidation. Lisa and Ben are doing a good job guiding us. Merry Christmas and have a safe holiday.

Sam Mollica

The reason he brought up the Mayor being elected or appointed is he had done research and wants to make sure it is done right and legally. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanza and all the other holidays.

Scott Farrell

Merry Christmas.

Mark Sullivan

Thanks to Lisa and Ben who are doing a great job. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Pat Reasinger

He appreciates having Ben and Lisa to guide us. Merry Christmas.

Lisa Hagberg

She has been able to get out into the community and meet with people. This is an historic time, and she is excited to do this with you.

Ben Kafferlin

As a nation, people are trusting less in our institutions (churches, fire departments, government). We are at an all-time low. The single greatest thing we can do is reinstitute trust. Quoting from the book Speed of Trust, "In a high trust relationship, you can say the wrong thing and people will still get your meaning. In a low trust relationship, you can be very measured, even precise, and they'll still misinterpret you." That's because people like to hear what they're telling themselves, not what you're saying. We need to double-down on trust. We need to lean into good intentions, assuming good intentions of other people. In talking with people, everyone has the best intentions here. If you start with assuming good intentions we can work through just about anything." He would like the community's New Year's resolution to be to assume good intentions until proven otherwise. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Adjourn

There being no further business to transact, the motion was made by Sullivan and seconded by Whitaker that the DuBois/Sandy Township Joint Board adjourn. Roll call was as follows: Abbott, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Beers, yea; Dietz, yea; Jackson, yea; Mollica, yea; Whitaker, yea; Sullivan, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 9-0.

ATTEST:

Korbi Slocum

APPROVED:

Lisa M Hagberg