

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
OF FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

PAGE ONE

CALL TO ORDER TIME: 7:05

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Gerald Yozwiak

ROLL CALL: Peter J. Biscontini, Esq., Ciro Cinti, Robert Sax, Thomas Shubilla, and Gerald Yozwiak.

The Sunshine Act requires that those in attendance be given the opportunity to comment before a vote is taken. Anyone wishing to comment on an issue is encouraged to notify the Board prior to roll call being taken on that issue. The Township policy is to limit comment to five minutes. Anyone requiring additional time is encouraged to make arrangements to meet with the Board at a later date. Additionally, all correspondence read or referred to is available at the North Main Street Municipal Building for public inspection during regular business hours. Note that the meeting is being recorded. At this time please turn off any cell phones to avoid disrupting the meeting.

GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Motion to accept: **Minutes:** Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of January 9, Plains Twp. Sewer Authority Meeting Minutes and the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority Meeting Minutes for December. **Monthly Reports:** of the Police Department; Fire Department, EMA and DPW for January, Zoning Permits and Contractor licenses Issued and Secretaries Report for January. The EMA 2024 annual report **Payrolls** of the Administrative and Zoning Office, Department of Public Works, and Recreation Department. The **Treasurers Report for January:** General Fund Receipts in the amount of **\$703,754.76** General Fund Disbursements **\$718,424.63**; Total Ending Balance in the General Fund as of **01/31/2025 \$1,815,376.32**. **BY: Cinti 2ND: Biscontini All for, motion carried**

CORRESPONDENCE – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

POLICE – We would like to thank the Luzerne County District Attorney’s Office Chief Binker was awarded a grant for a new completely paid for police vehicle. We had another busy month in the department.

FIRE – 145 fire calls with 23 captains’ incidents. We have smoke detectors that we will install free of charge to any Plains Twp. resident. Please see the fire department if you are interested in that.

DPW – Spring is around the corner and I would like to thank the department for keeping up with the latest storms. They have also been out with the cold patch. Recycling center is open on Saturday from 9-12 for drop off. Garbage supply should be here March 5th.

RECREATION – Pavilion rental leases are going out. We still have a few dates available. We will have softball leagues starting on Fridays and Sundays. Thursday and Saturdays the fields are still available. Summer camp will be in its 11th year.

**AGENDA OF THE PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

PAGE TWO

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE – Valentines day is tomorrow hopefully some of you will be recognizing that tomorrow. Eagles fans should be happy. We are happy the Eagles won we didn't want a 3 peat. Even though I know some of the board members are fans of other teams, as I am sure some of you are. Unless you are a Kansas City Chief fan, sorry no 3-peat on that. Which leads me into baseball spring training starts. Philly fans its going to be a 3 peat for Philly. I will address the situation at the flats before the tax payers.

OLD BUSINESS –

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to authorize payment of the **General Fund Bills** consisting of the **Utility Bills \$29,654.05; Regular Bills \$251,007.07; Total \$280,661.12. BY: SAX 2ND: Cinti Cinti abstain for Assured Partners Bill All for, motion carried**

Motion to re-hire Michelle Waslasky as Supervisor for the Summer Camp at a rate of \$14.50 per hour. **By: Shubilla 2nd: Sax Cinti Abstains All for, motion carried**

Motion to re-hire Haley Oliver as Assistant Director for the Summer Camp at a rate of \$12.00 per hour. **By: Biscontini 2nd: Shubilla Cinti Abstains, All for, motion carried**

SOLICITORS REPORT

Motion to enter into an agreement with Luzerne County and the Luzerne County DA's Office as a recipient of the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program Award **BY: Cinti 2nd: Sax All for, motion carried**

Motion to enter into a maintenance agreement with Steward Industrial for Township HVAC services. **BY: Biscontini 2nd: Shubilla All for, motion carried**

ANNOUNCEMENTS – The next regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be held March 13 at 7:00 P.M. The Administrative, Zoning Offices and DPW will be closed on Monday February 17, 2025 in observance of President's Day. Residents with Monday trash pick up will be picked up on Tuesday February 18th. All other schedules will remain the same.

TAXPAYERS (Time limit 5 minutes taxpayers must sign in).

Commissioner Yozwiak: So I would like to give you a couple of notes on what I believe everyone is here for tonight. Its great that everyone is here, this is what government is for. I think that our meeting last month we had 3 people. We all know that there is a cat shelter down

**AGENDA OF THE PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 13, 2025** **PAGE THREE**

in the Plainsville Flats area and back in October of 2018 we sent a letter to Whiskers World, this board did that said: To whom it may concern, this is to verify the fact that Plains Twp. is working with Whiskers World since June of 2018 with their trap and release program for stray cats found within the boundaries of Plains Twp. So, this board has been working with whiskers world for 7 years. Now you have to realize that in 7 years there were a few neighbors down there that helped out WW, and there was the area that we said you could put it (shelter) in where the right away is.

I have seen enough on social media where I'm not on it anymore. People bash people continuously, our police should not have been bashed like this, and neither should this board. I have seen the reports, and I can read them again, they have put up with a lot. This letter, 7 years we have been working with WW and our ordinance says you are not supposed to feed or harbor cats. So a man came to the board back in the fall and said the cats are down in the flats are doing their business on my property, and I said hey I really don't have an answer for you, you can put certain vegetation around your property to keep them away, there is trap and release, we have an article on it you are welcome to have.

Commissioner Biscontini: If I could state just briefly too, neither this board or the police condone the destruction of property, no matter what kind of property it is.

Commissioner Sax: I just want to add too, going forward we are not going to get rid of the trap and neuter program, it is helping the cat population, I have two rescues myself and this program will not be going away.

Commissioner Yozwiak: Right the catch and release program was for stray cats in the boundaries of Plains Twp. because from what I remember going back there were problems with the SPCA. There is nothing in the laws of this Commonwealth that address stray cats, nothing with dogs, nothing with cats. So again this board is here to help everyone.

Michelle Demich – I am the Director of the Rescue Warriors Cat Rescue – Brenda and I about 5 years ago had a meeting with the commissioners about the area of the flats at that time there were about 150 cats in the area. Today there are approx. 14 cats in the area with 7 on the corner where the destroyed shelter is. They have been fed for decades down there. The area where the shelters were destroyed does not affect the person who destroyed these shelters. They pretty much don't leave that corner, there was no reason to destroy the shelters if the cats don't bother him they eat and sleep there so they stay there. We feed them and take care of the shelter area. We work hard at what we do and its very disappointing to be show the amount of disrespect we were shown during this and to be told our property doesn't matter, no matter what was said I was not heard. We work very hard for what we do.

Attny Menn – Please everyone, if we want to have side conversation go outside.

Michelle – There can be no conversation, you get screamed at, obscene gestures, yelling, just overall disrespect. You can not have a civil conversation. It's unnecessary. If a conversation could be had things might have been able to be solved.

Commissioner Yozwiak – If you go back 7 years there were different people in the flats and things were different then and they were more receptive to the program.

Biscontini – We do have video and such?

Michelle – Yes. When the officer asked who we spoke to I was not sure I just knew we had permission to be there, I did not know everyone's names.

Attny Menn – Please try to keep your comments to things that have not been addressed.
Thank you

**AGENDA OF THE PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 13, 2025** **PAGE FOUR**

Brenda Buckler – Whiskers World has fixed hundreds of cats in Plains Twp. and we have taken a lot of cats out of here. My hope tonight is to change this ordinance. TNR is very important, I think if you have a colony of cats and you get them fixed you can shelter and feed them. If you don't get them fixed and don't comply with this rule then you get fined but you can't have TNR without it. People cause these problems by abandoning the animals. They are not all feral, people are throwing them out. Other towns even though they have an ordinance they have agreed with this and they are paying for it, trap the cats get them fixed get their shots and return them to where you got them. Otherwise you give the SPCA the only other option kill them, which is not fair. So, what I am asking is change your ordinance.

Yozwiak-Well I think we can look at it and talk about it, we got examples or other ordinances.

Attny. Menn – the TNR is not precluded by our ordinance

Shubilla – and we already do this with you.

Attny Menn – we are not trying to change anything we have been doing with you

Brenda – I understand that but what I am asking is that your ordinance is saying you can't feed or shelter them.

Attny Menn – with regard to changing the ordinance this just came to the board within the last week, we can't decide on that tonight. There has never been a reason to change this because there was never an issue. If it is changed it has to be beneficial to everyone not just the cats. It has to be beneficial to the neighbors that live in the community also. I am not saying we wont do it but it has to be looked at carefully, and it will take time. As far as the TNR is concerned that does not change at all it is still a program we will continue.

Carrie Lewis – Pittston – Thank you for your time and I know nothing can be changed right now TNR is beneficial – you can't take away their food and shelter you will have sick cats and predator will come, then that creates another issue. Once cats are neutered they do not spray as much, also cuts back on the number of kittens being born. What I think everyone here would like is some protection for the TNR and shelter. These ladies are just asking for a layer of protection for themselves and the program that helps the community. Thank you

Melissa Walker – Pittston I have worked with WW for 8 years I also work with Luzerne Cat Project and I'm a foster Mom and a Cat lover. The TNR program helped me with a situation 8 years ago which is how I got started. By taking the shelters away this person has just forced the cats that used them to look for food and shelter in the neighborhood.

Biscontini – if the shelter is moved so it is out of risk – in the same general area does that work?

Michelle – yes that is fine – if you can guarantee there will be some sort of protection that it will not be destroyed again. Obviously, it cannot be moved too far.

Menn – you can put the shelter on private property if you wish – if it is Twp property you must contact us and we can let you know if it works or not

Yozwiak - With this one we had agreed on the right away because the flats are different – these flooded properties were bought out by FEMA and turned over to us with the intent that they can not be built on nothing , not even a fence. The right away is where the telephone pole sits, the sewer line the gas line goes there etc. in 2018 that is what we agreed on.

Menn – If it is going to go to a different area – let us know where and we will let you know if it is ok

Yozwiak - Go down by Pearl St, Pearl is the first Street on the left, Brenda go over the tracks the land on the left is RR redevelopment property, then its private property and more private

**AGENDA OF THE PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

PAGE FIVE

property, behind that is Green Valley owned, and then you hit Pearl Street, then from Pearl street down is all Twp. property. There is a right away there on Pearl Street.

Sax – Cat Shelters exist on Public Property in other towns?

Brenda - Yes they do

Mary K – I assist Rescue Warriors with grant writing back in 2019 I wrote a grant to the Summer Lee Corp to help with the TNR project. If it is a feasibility issue grants like this do exist in many companies. Managed colonies do exist in many areas and its how many places control the cat population. Sonic deterrent devices can be purchased or I believe the SPCA does have them to keep cats off your property if you do not want them on your property.

Jeff Bartlow – Can we put trail cams on the right away to watch the shelter?

Menn – yes but someone will steal them

Lisa Devlin – I understand your going to review the ordinance – will we still be allowed to feed the cats?

Menn – we have always allowed you to feed the cats – have we ever stopped you from feeding the cats?

Yozwiak – the police have hundreds of other things to do, they are not going to enforce no feeding at the shelters

Menn – its different from someone who is feeding them on their private property. If your feeding them on your private property your neighbors may have issue with it. but for the agency feeding them at the shelter that is different. The agency feeding at a shelter can feed.

Lisa – a resident did receive notice that she could not feed.

Menn – yes that is different she is feeding on her property that is not allowed.

Lisa – ok, so feeding on private property is a no, but feeding at a shelter is ok. TNR at the SPCA we have a contract with WB City. The program does work.

Dolly Wainwright- when we go to feed these cats will we be safe?

Menn – if you are threatened or attacked call 911? Other than that how do I stop someone from threatening you.

Michelle – It is ok for us to make sure these cats have food and shelter?

Menn – Yes

Michelle – what will happen to someone who destroys that?

Menn – The police will determine what to do about that

Biscontini – we don't want property to be destroyed. We want people and property to be respected.

D. Ninotti – Everything they said I'm ok with

Donna Doran – I'm the daughter of Dolores all of this trouble has started with her cats. I am here to plead with you to help my mother, because she is being terrorized by her neighbors. They curse at her, video tape her, take her picture

Menn – but that is not a board issue that is a law enforcement issue.

Donna – I have spoken to everyone, I have talked to cops, everyone, lawyers.

Menn – the DA's office?

Donna – no that may be the next step. Everyday she steps out of the house he takes pictures of

**AGENDA OF THE PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

PAGE SIX

her and tells her visitors they need to leave. He brings her paint and tells her to paint her patio and porch. I was raised in the flats yeah, she feeds the cats, she takes care of them but she shouldn't have to be afraid to leave her house because she feeds cats. I don't know what else I can possibly do, but I need help. He told her I am going to take you out, I'm going to take out the cats and then I'm going to buy your house. There is a police report. Then they said the same exact thing to me. I am asking for direction.

Menn – contact the DA

Donna – he is the next in line then ok Thank you.

Dina C – West Wyoming – Cats It is already been said

Zakaria Amman – This is where the problem started – the cats shelters at my house, I am being discriminated against...Do you want your house to be like this?

Menn – its your house, you can clean it up.

Zakaria – I went to the shelter and they said to feed them at the shelter not at your house by feeding them at the house you cause them to trespass at your house. There are kittens in my shed because she feeds them at her house.

I am asking you to remove the shelter. I am being falsely accused of poisoning the cats.

Menn – We have heard no one accuse you of that. Sir you have to tell us what you are asking for.

Zakaria – I am asking you to remove the shelters

Menn – There are going to be shelters, I am not sure where they may be in the same spot they are now, they may be moved but they will be there. This is a good thing for the neighborhood If we didn't have the program there would be 150 instead of 15. You moved to the flats where this has been a problem for years. You now want to come here to us and say fix this cat problem. We are working on it, it is just not happening the way you want it to happen. There are going to be cats there you will continue to see them there and they may be there for a while, hopefully the population numbers will be reduced to the extent that it won't be an issue. You can go to the SPCA I am understanding that they have devices that will deter cats from your property and we have a list of items that you can plant on your property that will help keep the cats away from your property.

Zakaria – so are you saying that you are giving permission to have shelters there?

Menn – are we talking about on public property? we are going to be allowing the shelters Yes

Zakaria – you are giving permission

Menn – yes

Zakaria – So if I'm going to sue who do I go to

Menn – go to a lawyer

Zakaria – I have one.

Donna Fountain – Cats - I was here 10 years ago to help someone with a cat issue. TNR must accompany feeding. If we can't feed we will not be doing TNR. Homeless animals are protected under Pennsylvania law. I hope you review this.

Annette Hodick Duryea – Rescue Warriors I think what has been missed here is the vouchers and resident reimbursement for getting the animal fixed after it is trapped. The vouchers encourage residents to trap and fix them. The borough gives us the trap and once it is trapped we get a voucher to no nonsense to get the animal fixed and then return the trap.

**AGENDA OF THE PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 13, 2025** **PAGE SEVEN**

Brenda – I’m against the voucher. No nonsense gives the voucher with an expiration date and then they have no appointments available and the voucher expires and they are no good. Once the cats are trapped and fixed they have to be returned to the place they are picked up from so that person can take care of them. They must be allowed and be responsible for them.

Mike Muldonney – Rescue Warriors I just think it may be a lack of education for the two gentleman that left I think they lack sympathy and compassion for animals

Cinti – I have been here for 60 years and you need to have compassion and respect for your neighbor and that is what is lacking here. And that is what is bothering me the most here.

Brenda – He has a patio set on twp. concrete he was throwing the chairs and yelling. He using twp. property and he doesn’t want the cat shelter on twp. property but he wants to use the property.

Shubilla – That is being addressed.

Kim Jobst – Charlies Angels Rescue – Alley Cat Allies world wide org. based in MD. The concept of removing cats from the landscape has never worked, new cats will just move into the vacuum left by the removed cats. We have a list of deterrents – Peppermint oil and water sprayed will keep cats from going on your property. I can leave this list with you. In Mountaintop it is your responsibility to use one of these deterrents to keep the cats off your property

Maria Pelaez – Why do you not provide the vouchers to the residents?

Menn – WW will come and trap the cats for you and they will take care of it for you.

Yozwiak – where do you live

Maria – by the casino

Shubilla – I would rather have the professionals do it, we had never heard of the vouchers before

Menn – eventually you will have an ordinance that will tell you how to proceed with the TNR and then if you don’t follow the ordinance you will have to be responsible to pay for the appointment for the cat.

Ken Stevens – Everyone is talking about feeding the cats but who is cleaning up after the cats? Can I get a copy of the list of things that keep the cats out of the yard. If you want to feed them and shelter them. Take responsibility for them. I don’t like cats but I get they will be there. If this works that helps.

Yozwiak – Yes we will get you a copy now.

K. ADJOURNMENT BY: Cinti 2ND: Yozwiak All for , motion carried TIME: 8:36

Respectfully Submitted By,



Lynell Ent, Secretary

Accepted By,



Gerald J. Yozwiak, Chairman