

PENN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
100 Municipal Building Road
Duncannon, PA 17020-1100

Henry A. Holman, Jr., Chairman

Robert E. Shaffer, Sr., Supervisor

Randy Plummer, Supervisor

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2007

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The Penn Township Board of Supervisors (PTS) met on Tuesday November 20, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building. Chairman Henry Holman, Jr., Supervisor Robert E. Shaffer, Sr. and Supervisor Randy Plummer were in attendance. Other personnel present were Helen Klinepeter (Secretary), Susan Long (Treasurer), and Alan Houck (Chief of Police). The meeting was recorded to aid in the preparation of the minutes. A list of visitors is on file in the Township office.

VISITORS

Monte Supko, Chief, Perdix Fire Company (PFC)

Mr. Supko was in attendance to request additional funding for PFC. He presented Profit & Loss statements for the fiscal years 2005-2007, as well as a breakdown of emergency-related expenses for the period January 1 through June 30, 2007. He explained that all donations, rental revenue, and fund-raising profits are used to pay these emergency-related expenses, with the 2007 total thus far at \$43,593.45. Mr. Supko noted that none of these revenue sources is guaranteed from year to year.

Mr. Shaffer asked if PFC went through any type of internal/external auditing process. Mr. Supko responded that at least three individuals conduct an internal audit on a quarterly basis, and that Casey & Associates does the 501-C audit.

Chairman Holman commented on the future connection of the fire house to the sanitary sewer. He stated that the Penn Township Municipal Authority (Authority) had voted in the past to eliminate the tapping fee and the monthly sewer rental charge. He then noted that the Authority now needs that revenue and stated that he was going to ask it to consider billing the PFC for sewer usage. He will also recommend that the PTS increase its contribution to each fire company by \$1,000 to offset utility costs.

Byron Worner, Chief, Duncannon Fire Company (DFC)

Mr. Worner stated that he had already forwarded the 2006 DFC audit to the Secretary. He then presented a breakdown of emergency-related expenses for the period January 1 through October 31, 2007.

Chairman Holman noted the large amount of emergency calls made by DFC to Reed Township and asked how much Reed Township gave to DFC. Mr. Worner responded that that DFC receives only \$250 per year from Reed Township due to the low tax basis. He added that 40-45% of DFC calls are made to Penn Township. Mr. Shaffer asked if any of those calls involve Stonebridge or Kinkora. Mr. Worner stated that the majority of the calls made to the nursing homes involve automatic fire alarms triggered by malfunctions.

Mr. Shaffer commented on the amount of responses made to traffic accidents on SR 11/15. Mr. Worner responded that the majority of calls made by DFC are the result of traffic accidents. Mr. Supko responded that PFC has responded to 5 house fires in the Township, with the remainder of the calls being the result of traffic accidents.

Chairman Holman noted that there is a petition against a fire tax circulating through the Township. He stated that he would like to see a breakdown of the types and number of calls made in the Township. He noted that, in addition to the annual donation, the PTS provides a donation towards the truck purchase, a donation to offset fuel costs, worker's compensation, vehicle insurance, future sewer reimbursement, and rental from the scale house property, for a total of \$44,188.32 given to PFC and \$27,020.14 given to DFC. Mr. Supko then noted that those donations would be a savings to the Township if a fire tax was enacted, in that the PTS could keep the donations for its own expenses.

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The Profit & Loss statements were reviewed, with the note that revenue dropped significantly between 2005 and 2007, primarily due to the loss of grant money and the decline in bingo revenue.

Chairman Holman asked what the Borough's contribution to DFC was, with Mr. Worner responding that it was \$15,000 and adding that the total contributions from Penn and Wheatfield Townships and the Borough was \$80,000. He stated that DFC has already exceeded that amount in expenses to keep its apparatus ready. He explained that DFC is requesting additional funding in an attempt to prevent financial trouble and continue its level of service to the Township.

Chairman Holman offered his opinion that the fire companies did not make an effort to have a public relations meeting in the Township building to inform the tax payers about why they felt a fire tax should be enacted. Mr. Supko responded that the public meeting was scheduled for the high school auditorium because of the anticipated number of people attending. Chairman Holman stated that he was not willing to go against what he feels is the consensus of the taxpayers and to enact a fire tax. He stated that he had a meeting with Larry Smeigh, the Perry County emergency coordinator, to have calls for Township roads blocked by fallen trees and downed power lines to be forwarded to Township employees and thus relieve the fire companies of the expense of those calls. He added that there was room for discussion whether the fire companies would want to be responsible for opening PennDOT-maintained roads. Mr. Supko stated that, according to the PFC solicitor, volunteer fire companies are not required to respond to downed trees and wires or provide traffic control. He stated that he had a meeting with his volunteers and they will not respond to downed trees and wires, nor would they help police with traffic control on SR 11/15. He added that they would respond if there was vehicular entrapment. Mr. Worner stated that he could not answer for his volunteers at this time. Mr. Supko then stated that PFC would take care of PennDOT-maintained roads, but that he wants to be notified by Mr. Smeigh that the Township will handle all downed trees and wires and traffic control on Township roads.

Discussion then centered on establishment of a fire tax. Chairman Holman offered his opinion that a fire tax should be enacted, instead of increasing the real estate tax. He explained that Township residents would be upset over a real estate tax increase and blame the supervisors. Mr. Supko disagreed, saying that when the real estate tax was raised the last time, the people blamed the fire companies. Mr. Worner stated his opinion that a \$10,000 increase for each fire company would equal a .2-mill tax increase. Ms. Rissinger asked when the decision was made to raise the funds through a fire tax. She stated that, during the fire study meetings, alternate means to fund the increase in donations was discussed, one of which was the re-named local services tax (LST).

Chairman Holman noted that 25% of the LST revenue must be, and already is, given for emergency services and presented his idea that it should be split equally between DFC, PFC, and Duncannon EMS. Mr. Worner offered his opinion that division was not fair because fire companies can not be compared to the EMS because EMS workers are paid and EMS expenses are only one-fourth that of the fire companies. Chairman Holman further explained that, after 25% of the LST was given out, additional funding would have to be obtained from either a fire tax or from the general fund. Mr. Worner again asked how much taxes would have to be raised to give the fire companies and additional \$20,000 and surmised that it would raise property taxes by \$20.

Mr. Shaffer offered that, by the PTS's calculations, it is giving PFC all but \$45,000 out-of-pocket. He stated that he felt an increase was justified, possibly \$10,000 or \$15,000, but that it would need a .25-mill fire tax. He added that, as a result, the PTS would require regular financial reports from the fire companies.

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Mr. Supko stated that, if a fire tax is enacted, the fire companies would not be allowed to solicit for funds inside the Township. If the real estate tax is increased for additional funding, the fire companies will request an agreement with the PTS to insure that the increased donations continue after any changes with the makeup of the Supervisors.

Chairman Holman offered this proposal for 2008 – split 25% of the LST revenue equally between the fire companies and the EMS, add additional funding to the fire companies to bring each up to the \$20,000 specified in the current agreement, and add an additional \$2,500 to offset fuel costs plus another \$2,500 for each fire company to continue the truck donation. He offered that he felt it was a fair contribution. He stated that the fire tax issue would be discussed further in 2008, for enactment in 2009.

Mr. Supko asked the PTS to remember that, if there were no fire companies, residents would have to pay additional fire insurance premiums. He also requested that the PTS inform PFC of what responsibilities it is going to take over regarding downed trees and wires.

Chairman Holman told the fire company representatives that, whether or not they believed it, he appreciated their attendance this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

PA Capital City (PACC) Resolution

The Secretary presented a resolution to allow the PTS to participate in the PACC Automotive and Equipment Contract. She explained that membership in PACC would allow the PTS to purchase a tar buggy at PACC contract prices without having to solicit bids. After discussion, and upon a Shaffer/Holman motion, the PTS voted unanimously to approve Resolution 2007-06, authorizing Penn Township to participate in the PACC Automotive and Equipment Contract.

Mountain Street Traffic Sign Study

After discussion, and upon a Shaffer/Holman motion, the PTS voted unanimously to approve the traffic sign study for Mountain Street.

Fritz Drive Ordinance, 2007-09

After discussion, and upon a Shaffer/Holman motion, the PTS voted unanimously to accept the speed study for Fritz Drive and to advertise Ordinance 2007-09, establishing a speed limit of 30 mph for Fritz Drive.

After further discussion, it was the consensus to advertise a special meeting for December 6, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. to adopt Fritz Drive Ordinance 2007-09 and PACC Resolution 2007-06.

Radocha Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) Appeal

The Secretary reported that the ZHB met on October 11, 2007 and granted the zoning variance requested by Bernard Radocha. She stated that Grey Berrier has filed an appeal of that decision in the Perry County Court of Common Pleas. She asked if the PTS would like to be a party to the appeal. Chairman Holman recommended that the PTS be a party in that it had recommended to the ZHB that the zoning ordinance be upheld. After discussion, and upon a Holman/Shaffer motion, the PTS voted unanimously to be a party in the appeal filed by Mr. Berrier.

Grey Berrier Letter Dated November 8, 2007

The Secretary presented a letter from Mr. Berrier requesting information for use in his appeal of the above-mentioned ZHB ruling. It was the consensus that the Secretary should forward the letter to Dennis Shatto, solicitor for the ZHB, and request his direction in handling of the letter.

OLD BUSINESS

Cove Road Bridge Replacement

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Mr. Shaffer noted that PennDOT would start work to replace the Cove Road bridge on December 1, 2007. He asked if PennDOT had applied for a permit to install the guiderails in the Township right-of-way, or if PennDOT was told a permit was needed. Mr. Plummer stated that the contact number provided to him was not valid, and he had been unable to talk to any PennDOT representative. Chairman Holman noted that PennDOT had already set up its construction trailer and stated that he would talk to someone about the permit. Mr. Shaffer offered his concern over who would be responsible for maintenance of the guiderails after installation. He stated that he did not feel the Township should be responsible, since it was PennDOT's decision to install guiderails.

Philip Heller Driveway Permit Application

Mr. Shaffer referred to a request submitted by Phillip Heller along with his driveway permit application in which he asked the Township to inform him of necessary changes to his proposed driveway. Mr. Shaffer asked if the Township was responding to the request. Mr. Plummer stated that he had performed a site visit and had answered Mr. Heller's questions. Chairman Holman added that the site distance requirement was met.

2008 BUDGET

The proposed 2008 budget was reviewed, with several changes made. The amount given to each fire company will be increased by \$1,000. Each fire company will now receive \$26,000 - \$20,000 as per the 2002 agreement, \$2,500 as a continuation of the truck donation, \$2,500 as an offset for fuel costs, and \$1,000 as an offset for utility bills. \$10,000 will be added as an expenses to the Capital Reserve budget for equipment leasing.

After discussion, and upon a Shaffer/Plummer motion, the PTS voted unanimously to advertise the proposed 2008 budget for adoption on December 26, 2007, subject to the changes discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:00 p.m. the PTS entered into executive session to discuss personnel issues. At 10:24 p.m. the PTS reconvened the meeting, with no action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be conducted, and upon a Shaffer/Holman motion, the PTS voted to adjourn at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan E. Long
Recording Secretary