

July 17, 2017

The regular meeting of the Mahoning Township Supervisors was held this evening at the Mahoning Township Municipal Building at 5:30 PM.

Members of the Board present:

Ken Woodruff, Chairperson

Bill Lynn, Vice Chairman

T. S. Scott, Supervisor

Attorney Ben Landon

Police Department Sean McGinley

Zoning Officer Dean VonBlohn

Engineer Dave Walters of Larson Design Group

Lloyd Craig, Street Department

Leslie Young, East End Fire Chief

Brett Levan, Water and Sewer Department

Also attending were Karen Blackledge, Danville News, and Chris Krepich, Press Enterprise, Jean Hagenbuch, Emma Jean Jordan, Molly Shultz, Lori Cromley, Joe Diehl, Glen Cromley Barry Hartman, Joe Diehl, Rose and Bill Pursel, Chuck and Cathy Eyer, Linda Forney, Ryan Troup, Bran Campbell, Leslie Young, Betsy Hack, Robert Snyder, Tom Kessler, Robin Kessler, Henry Eyer, Lloyd Craig, Jackie Fox, John Whelan, John Shaibley, and Larry Feldman.

ALL VOTES ARE UNANIMOUS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

The meeting was opened by Chairman Woodruff leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Minutes of June 5, June 12 and June 19, 2017 were approved after motions by Vice Chairman Lynn and Supervisor Scott.

The Financial Report was given by Ken Houck, Treasurer showing the beginning balance of \$821,499.32, Receipts of \$354,046.27 and the expenses were \$152,049.88 and a transfer of \$523,516.45 to the Invest Accounts. The ending balance was \$499,979.26. Supervisor Scott asked the Treasurer to explain what the Invest Accounts are on the report. Treasurer Houck said the Invest Accounts is run by the Pennsylvania Treasury Department which is a way that municipalities can invest their money into funds that are compliant with regulations, these funds operate much like a money market and are available to the Township and the Township funds can be divided into many accounts.

Solicitor's assistant Ben Landon, reported the PUC approved the Township serving residents of Valley and Cooper Townships with water and sewer without going through regulatory PUC process. He received the order and would provide more details later.

Zoning Officer Dean VonBlohn gave the requested report asked for by the supervisors at last month's meeting and he reported that he will be meeting with Andrew Barton of Larson Design Group on Wednesday to determine how deep to get a core samples of BCBC and base materials of the Woods and Welsh roads. He will then notify Mr. Kissinger the work the Township will require. He was also looking into a noise ordinance relating to resident's complaints of barking dogs, dog leases, feral cats, free ranging chickens, crowing roosters and how to hand the complaints. Dean also has been gathering information about barking dogs from surrounding communities and he will review the ordinances for the Supervisors. He also received complaints about rooster crowing and free ranging chickens in the rural area and he will get the Supervisors more information on those items. Attorney Landon noted regarding barking dogs or crowing roosters, that you need to be able to measure the noise when it is happening and he also stated the specialized equipment to measure the level of noise along with a qualified operator for the equipment. Dean also responded to a question regarding feral cats by saying that several years ago resident's complaints about feeding feral cats and a former Police Chief said the residents could post "no trespassing signs" on their property. Attorney Landon reported this also difficult to deal relating to ownership of the cat. Dean reported the last advice was to trap, neuter and release them and the population would go down. Dean also has a copy of a cat ordinance that Danville is considering. Vice Chairman Lynn noted a cat in Muncy was found to have rabies last week. Supervisor Scott asked for an update on Woodbine. Dean reported that he will see Drew Barton on Wednesday to discuss and if it will affect the catch basin.

Police Sean McGinley had nothing to report.

There was no Engineer's report.

The Street Department also had nothing to report.

Fire Chief Leslie Young gave the report for June which shows 21 responses for the month, (2 Grass/woods, 3 MVA, 6 structure fires, 7 false alarms, 1 public service and 2, other. In house training was 66 hours and, 3 hours Fire Prevention. Copies of these reports are placed in the Mahoning Report Book. Chief Leslie Young also reported the Fire Company had two fire-fighters recently completed the certified course which is very extensive and the Fire Company will have a Youth Day for the youth from ages 6 to 9 years old, then 10 to 15 years old Fire Safety Training.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Woodruff reported that no action can be done regarding the Suncom cleaning contract as nothing was received.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Woodruff talked about the proposal of Larson Design Group to upgrade the software and new hardware for GIS. Larson will review the existing computer systems, prepare an Evaluation report, work with appropriated Township personnel, provide 20 hours of on-site training up to 4 members of the staff and provide Technical support. This would be done within 60 days following Notice to Proceed. The cost of this would be \$5,560. After some discussion Vice Chairman Lynn moved to table the request which was seconded by Supervisor Scott.

On the tree removal and brush removal near the water tanks from the Work Shop, Vice Chairman Lynn reported that Brett Levan could not get another price and he made a motion to accept the bid of Arbory for \$3,400. Supervisor Scott seconded.

Supervisor Scott made a motion to entertain that we authorize our Solicitor to put out for market in regarding intentions to sell the water and sewer department and the solicitor will advertise the bids and time frame will be September and then the supervisors will decide whether to ultimately accept the bids and sell the water and sewer department will be at our regular meeting September 11, 2017. If at the September 11th meeting we should choose to accept a bid, it would be a maximum of 6 months before it would take place as the Public Utility Commission must approve the transaction. If the Township moves in that directions several items would take place (1) the company would be regulated by the PUC which means that any rate increase must come before the PUC for approval, (2) if the new company seeks a rate increase it would only be after 4 years, and (3) it would be an American Company. Looking at rudimentary accounting, we would expect to realize millions from the sale. Our anticipation from the sale is that sufficient enough to where we could invest wisely and there would be no property tax increase for a generation. (4) We also look to execute a one-time refund back to the rate payers who have been paying their bills and the payment history would be the basis for both residential and commercial businesses but Supervisor Scott said now we don't have a figure. Scott went on to say that if the new company starts putting new lines (water and sewer) all over the place using their own funds, that is not a reason recognized by the PUC to grant a rate increase. Scott also reported the company chosen must have a proven track record in what they do and do successfully. There are economic opportunities of the water and sewer with commercial investments like restaurants in the area which leads to jobs and increase of property values. We are told that land which had no sewer and water available to them, will have their land value increase 30 to 40% when such lines are available to them. Employees must be taken care of, Brett and Carolyn must be given an offer of employment at their current salary, benefits and increase career growth opportunities. The Township will ask to have a create citizens advisory council to work with the new company. There must be a local customer service and continued to provide maintenance and nothing would be allowed to change. The residents would still have the secretary of water and sewer available to talk with, as currently done. This organization that we might consider must have some sort of financial assistance program for customers that qualify for these people that have trouble making sewer payments. The whole process will start with the Solicitor putting out the bids and the minimum requirements, if they are interested in meeting the items discussed, then and only then will a decision be made. Supervisor Scott (from a business man's stand point) this is most onerous system of doing business that he has run across that would be tolerated in any other organization and it has existed as far back to 1951. The Authorities were set up to provide a mechanism to secure bonds and not burden the township with the infrastructure of the water and sewer lines.

We have been eating the rate increase with “no explanation ever”, no oversight and depending on where you are in the county you will experience different levels of service on the maintenance. An example is that Danville has had 5 water breaks in the last 2 or 3 weeks and there are other areas that provide their own maintenance like Valley Township, Riverside Borough and here. A question was asked about how many future meetings and Supervisor Scott said there would be several meetings (August 14 and 21 and the September meeting), where the people could ask questions. Scott reported that if a decision is reached before 2018 and Danville wants to again raise the rate, that would be the future company's responsibility. Attorney Landon also reported that once proposals are received, the Township would not have to award the bid and the Township could take time before deciding. Some questions were asked such as “Does the township still owe Danville money”? Chairman Woodruff said yes. Did the Supervisors contact other governments that have done this? Answer was nothing was done because bid have not been sought. Lloyd Craig noted the departments do share equipment and said he also was concerned with the possible loss of a fifth plow driver (Brett). Another question was the Danville plan to raise the levees in Danville and Mahoning Township. Dean VonBlohn reported this was the levees are around the soccer fields then back towards the state hospital near grounds. Some other thoughts were the Township believes the larger company will have more bargaining power. This motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Lynn. Motions passed.

Supervisor Scott and Vice Chairman Lynn moved to have the Solicitor advertise for bids for the September Meeting. Passed.

Joe Diehl said his address only changed to from Avenue to Street and asked if this is correct. He also said it must be visible by August 3rd. Chairman Woodruff is going to check into this.

Bill Pursel said that he didn't get his change of address yet. Chairman Woodruff explained that it's because they are doing this in two phases.

Vice Chairman Lynn made a motion to pay the invoices and approved.

The meeting was adjourned after motions by Vice Chair Lynn and Supervisor Scott.

This meeting was recorded on tape.

Secretary Joe Oberdorf