

## **MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 21, 2004**

A special meeting of the Conemaugh Township Board of Supervisors was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on January 21, 2004 by Chairman Calvin Gindlesperger. Board members present were Calvin Gindlesperger, Chairman, David Hart, Secretary-Treasurer, and Robert Rouser, Vice-Chairman. Solicitor James Beener was present.

Pledge to the Flag.

### **FLOOR OPENED TO PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

None.

### **MINUTES:**

There was a motion by Mr. Rouser, seconded by Mr. Hart, to accept the minutes of the re-organization meeting of January 5, 2004 and the regular meeting of January 5, 2004. Roll call vote: Mr. Rouser – yes, Mr. Hart – yes, and Mr. Gindlesperger – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

### **BILLS:**

There was a motion by Mr. Rouser, seconded by Mr. Hart, to pay the bills for the month of January 2004 in the amount of \$6,214.26 for the General Fund, and \$5,291.89 for the Liquid Fuels Fund, and \$6,4521.22 for the Sewer Fund. Roll call vote: Mr. Rouser – yes, Mr. Hart – yes, and Mr. Gindlesperger – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

### **PERSONS TO BE HEARD:**

**Mick Jordan** of Jerome Volunteer Fire Company thanked the Supervisors for the opportunity to speak to them. He wanted to inform the Supervisors that the Jerome Volunteer Fire Company along with the Hollsopple Volunteer Fire Company have set up a scuba diving team. Members from both fire companies have completed an eight-week long course with the fire companies paying the \$300.00 fee. Mr. Jordan stated that they felt there was a need for this type of rescue within the Township because of the Quemahoning and North Fork dams, and the Stonycreek River. The fire companies would need to purchase a boat and scuba gear, which would cost approximately \$27,000. Mr. Jordan noted that the boat would have a jet motor for operating in shallow water. He stated that they had applied for a grant in 2003 to purchase this equipment, but received nothing. Mr. Jordan asked if the Supervisors were going to give the fire companies the 1 mill of tax dollars that was voted on by the public to give to them. They were requesting this money to be paid to them as soon as possible in one lump sum because they were not permitted to make payments to purchase the equipment. Mr. Jordan also noted that once this team is under way they want to include the two other fire companies.

Mr. Hart informed Mr. Jordan that the Supervisors are planning to give the fire companies the 1 mill of tax dollars with all getting an even share, but that would not be until April or May after the tax dollars start coming in and it would probably be paid in three month increments. Mr. Rouser explained that the problem with the beginning of the

year was there was not much cash coming into the Township. Chairman Gindlesperger asked Mr. Jordan when they planned to get started with the dive team. Mr. Jordan said it would be in the spring when the weather breaks. Mr. Hart asked that they give the Supervisors another month, until the next meeting, to decide on how the 1 mill would be paid. Mr. Hart reiterated that the fire companies would definitely be receiving the money.

**Nick Panasci** of Jerome Fire Company was listed to speak, but said that that was an error; he did not wish to speak.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **RESIGNATION FROM CTMA BOARD:** Chairman Gindlesperger stated that a letter of resignation was received from Mr. Matthew Sotosky stating that he was resigning from the Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority. There was a motion by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Rouser, to accept the resignation of Mr. Matthew Sotosky from the Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority. Roll call vote: Mr. Hart – yes, Mr. Rouser – yes, and Mr. Gindlesperger – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **APPOINTMENT TO CTMA BOARD:** Chairman Gindlesperger stated that the Township had two individuals on file requesting to be placed on the Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority Board. One was Mr. Mark Blasko who was a Township resident, an engineer, had training in sewage and DEP water treatment plants, and had a vast knowledge of the CTMA water treatment facilities because he had performed control work for the CTMA. The second individual was Mr. Jim Frederick, also a Township resident, and a qualified individual. There was a motion by Mr. Rouser, seconded by Mr. Hart, to appoint Mr. Mark Blasko to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Matthew Sotosky on the Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority Board. Roll call vote: Mr. Rouser – yes, Mr. Hart – yes, and Mr. Gindlesperger – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **AMENDMENT TO SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES LANDFILL CONTRACT:** Chairman Gindlesperger stated that there was a meeting with the Southern Alleghenies Landfill this week. The recycling bins located at the Township building were discussed and it was decided that since they are not used much the landfill would take them back. Also, it was noted at that meeting that three of the four Township fire companies had their garbage hauled free. It was agreed that the Hollsopple Fire Company would also receive free garbage hauling. There was a motion by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Gindlesperger, to amend the contract with Southern Alleghenies Landfill to exclude the three recycling bins at the Township building, and to provide free

garbage hauling to the Hollsopple Fire Company. Roll call vote: Mr. Hart – yes, Mr. Gindlesperger – yes, and Mr. Rouser – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **MINOR SUBDIVISION:** The Somerset County Planning Commission recommended a right-of-way agreement between all landowners using the existing private road in this minor subdivision; however, the Conemaugh Township Planning Commission acknowledged that the private road, the Cable property, and the dwelling upon proposed Parcel 1, all existed prior to the adoption of the Township’s Subdivision Ordinance in March 1974. The Township Planning Commission approved this Cable Subdivision Plan as submitted at its meeting of January 13, 2004. There was a motion by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Rouser, to approve the proposed minor subdivision by Robert D. & Evelyn L. Cable Trust, property owner, (Robert D. & Evelyn, applicants), to subdivide their property containing approximately 20.05 acres situate along Cable Lane into Parcel 1 containing approximately 1.163 acres and having a dwelling and on-lot septic system thereon, and Parcel 2 (residue parcel) containing approximately 19.547 acres and having a dwelling and on-lot septic system thereon, with both parcels accessed from Cable Lane, an existing private road, and both parcels each having existing public water service and existing on-lot sewage system. Roll call vote: Mr. Hart – yes, Mr. Rouser – yes, and Mr. Gindlesperger – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

**FLOOR OPENED TO PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Tom Ravenscraft** of Davidsville wanted to know how the Township got a ten full-man police department, noting that there were at least 20 municipalities that had no police departments and who relied on the State Police. He stated that years ago the Township only had one full-time policeman; the Township has not increased in size and has even lost population and now there were ten full-time policemen. Mr. Ravenscraft stated that the Township’s police budget is over \$600,000 this year, and that was using just about all the landfill money. He wanted to suggest to the Supervisors that for the 2005 budget the police department be cut in half, taking the money left from that to pay down the Township’s loans. Mr. Ravenscraft indicated that the landfill money is only temporary. He wanted to see all the Township’s debts paid off, including the sewer debt and the Municipal Authority’s debt. He further stated that the new sewer system was supposed to bring in growth to the Township, but it has not. Mr. Ravenscraft noted that for a small Township, ten or even six full-time police officers are too many.

**Bob Miller** of Thomas Mills had the following concerns. He asked if the Township paid to have its web site. The answer was no. Mr. Miller stated that he had spent a few days “playing” in it and said that someone needed to fix it—there were a lot of items on the site coming up blank.

Mr. Miller stated that three weeks ago he had sent a letter to the Township requesting a mailing list with names and addresses. He had received a letter from the Township stating that the Township’s attorney would review his request—he was still waiting for a response. Solicitor Beener informed Mr. Miller that he had his letter; the Township’s letter to Mr. Miller had informed him that he would receive a response by January 27<sup>th</sup>,

and he would have an answer to him by January 27<sup>th</sup>. Solicitor Beener also informed Mr. Miller that this procedure was according to a statute.

Mr. Miller stated that he had read in the Somerset Daily American that Benson Borough had asked for the resignation of its two members on the Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority Board. He wanted to know what the Supervisors were going to do—the CTMA Board is useless and is costing the Township residents money now and would continue to do so in the future; it is not going away.

Mr. Miller stated that the sewers were put in the Township and the Township has not grown, and the biggest reason why the Township has not grown is because the sewers were put in the wrong place. He stated that the Supervisors have done nothing on addressing the Township sewers; they still had nothing to say.

Mr. Miller asked if Mr. Hart bothered to look at the Township roads and did he see that sad shape that they are in. Mr. Hart stated that he had reviewed the roads. Mr. Miller also questioned as to whether Mr. Gindlesperger was a full-time or part-time roadmaster. Chairman Gindlesperger stated that he was a part-time roadmaster, only to work as-needed.

**Dan Blough** of Thomas Mills wanted to state that he worked in all the Townships in the area and he felt that Conemaugh Township had pretty decent roads. Mr. Blough also stated that at the Township's reorganization meeting, the Supervisors changed the vehicle maintenance contract from Sleek Trucking to Tri County Motors. Chairman Gindlesperger noted that this was not done at the reorganization meeting. Mr. Blough asked if the every-day maintenance was going to Tri County also. Mr. Blough was informed that every-day vehicle maintenance was done in-house. Mr. Blough stated that the Supervisors were taking business out of the Township, and he heard that the rates at Tri County were much higher than the rates at Sleeks, noting that by going to Sleeks the Township gets the money back in taxes.

**Robert Fatula**, Township resident and Conemaugh Township police detective, wished to respond to Mr. Ravenscraft's comments about the police department. He stated that he was married with a child on the way and he was looking to buy a house in the Township because of the good police force. Mr. Fatula stated that what Mr. Ravenscraft said was his opinion because he would need to show the numbers on the crime rate to make it fact. Mr. Ravenscraft stated that it was not his opinion. Mr. Fatula noted that it would take 20.3 minutes for a State Police officer to respond to a call in the Township. He stated that he wanted to live in the Township because the police department would respond immediately. Mr. Fatula stated that Mr. Ravenscraft had recommended that the police department be cut in half and he was suggesting that the Supervisors keep it the same, do not cut the police department and go to the State Police.

**Tom Ravenscraft** wished to note that he was not saying that the Township did not need a police department; he felt the Township had a good police department. He just felt that that Township could not afford the amount of police it had if the landfill left. Mr.

Ravenscraft indicated that everyone wanted a bigger police force, but could it be afforded. He again stated that he felt the police department was good and he did appreciate it.

**Nick Panasci** of Jerome stated that he had a friend who was a State Trooper who had stopped at the Pioneer Store in Jerome and while he was there he received a call about a man with a shotgun in Addison Borough, which was located in the other end of the County. Mr. Panasci noted that the State Police only run two officers per night, and he would not want to see the Township without police protection.

At this point, Solicitor Beener stated that when Mr. Miller had made the comment about the Township's web site not working properly he noticed some people in the audience nodding in agreement. He wanted to know if they were experiencing the same thing. A few people stated, yes, they were having problems getting information about the meetings. Chairman Gindlesperger stated that he would check into this.

**Ernie Spory** of Ham Road asked if the landfill monies could technically be used for certain areas of the Township and not others. Solicitor Beener answered, yes.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Township Supervisors will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2004 SPECIAL MEETING CONTINUED.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There was a motion by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Rouser, to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Submitted by,

**(signed) David A. Hart, Secretary/Treasurer**