

Board of Supervisors

MINUTES

October 13, 2009

(Meeting held at Zion Hill Lutheran Church)

Jim Brownlow, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Supervisors held an executive session prior to the meeting to discuss personnel and land acquisition issues.

Supervisors Present: Karen Bedics, Jim Brownlow, Volker Oakey, Barbara Lindtner and Rob Zisko.

Also present: Terry Clemons, Solicitor; Sandy Everitt, Secretary/Treasurer; Mark Laudenslager, Chief of Police; and Rich Schilling, Township Manager.

Approval of Minutes

Barbara Lindtner **moved** to approve the September 22, 2009, minutes as presented. Volker Oakey **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Bills for Approval

Karen Bedics **moved** to approve the following bills paid from September 18 through October 13, 2009:

1. General Fund	\$ 130,247.25	4. Open Space	\$ 1,233.50
2. Subdivision & Escrow	\$ 10,863.72	5. Farmers Market	\$ 232.97
3. Liquid Fuels	\$ 3,330.29		

Volker Oakey **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Reports (deferred until the October 27 meeting)

Public Comments on Agenda Items – None

Governmental Matters

Natural Gas Drilling – Deferred until the October 27 meeting.

Old Business

1. Township Computer Network – Paul Kiesel, Kiesel’s Computer Services, LLC, attended this meeting to answer the Board’s questions relative to costs associated with maintaining the township’s computers. He provided a written summary and an analysis of costs associated with maintaining systems at various size municipalities and police departments. The average monthly cost for the township/police department’s IT services for the past three years was:

2007 - \$479	2008 - \$197	2009 - \$394
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Average costs for organizations similar in size to Springfield Township were shown on Exhibit A to be \$356 a month.

Mr. Kiesel’s billed services were a combination of routine maintenance, responses to system problems and implementing newer technology in the police department. Barbara Lindtner asked if he thought it would benefit the township to have an annual management agreement. He said we are close to that point; when his company works with a service contract, they reduce their hourly rate by \$10. Karen questioned several issues from the bills over the past two years: firewall breaching, disk failures and clean up of the county information in the police department’s computer. She asked whether new equipment should be budgeted for to eliminate some of these recurring problems. Mr. Kiesel reviewed how these problems were resolved. Jim Brownlow asked Mr. Kiesel to follow up with Rich Schilling as to whether an annual maintenance agreement would be advantageous for the township.

2. Presentation from Penn Renewables Inc. on Township Solar Panel Implementation – Volker Oakey introduced Paul Stepanoff, P.E. MBA of Penn Renewables Inc., whom he had provided with energy usage history for the township building, Springtown Fire Department and the Springtown Water authority. Mr. Stepanoff made a Power Point presentation which covered these key points:

- The system proposed for the township consists of 216 – 210 watt panels, arranged in 12 arrays of 18 panels for a total of 45,000 watts (equates to a large residential system)
- The system would produce about 70,000 kwh/year (73% of the township’s current usage); the production is based upon the actual amount of sunshine in the township’s area.
- The ideal complement to a solar system is a wind turbine system. The solar system produces power in the summer; wind turbines produce power in the winter. Fiscal feasibility of a wind turbine is site dependent.
- The extra power generated in the summertime can be put into the electric company’s grid, which is why the electric company does not charge a fee for solar customers to hook into their grids.
- Of the 4 itemized charges on an electric bill (generation charge [approximately half of the bill], transition charge, transmission charge and a distribution charge) the power companies state that the solar contributor is only generating power. For this reason, electric companies reconcile in dollars, not in kwh’s.
- Low, ground mounted arrays are less than 7 feet high and are easy to visually buffer with an 8’ fence surrounded by plantings.
- There is little erosion from rainwater runoff because the panels are spaced about an inch apart and are at an angle—the water leaks through between panels. Hans Reimann stated that a township resident invited the EAC to view his solar array to verify that he is not experiencing erosion problems.
- There are grants available for PA municipalities. However, many time-consuming documents may be required as part of a grant application. If interested in pursuing a solar energy grant, the township should be proactive by selecting a design and site, reviewing permit implications, etc., ahead of time. Grant preparation can cost up to \$15,000, which was the cost for the preparatory work they did for Richland Township’s grant.
- The cost for the proposed township system is approximately \$325,000. A standard PA rebate of 2.25/watt would provide approximately \$102,000. The electrical savings in the first year would be \$7,600. The Renewable Energy Credits can be sold to the electric company for an annual cash stream flow of about \$18,500 - \$19,000. Currently, one mega watt hour of power = \$320.
- The system would be paid for by year 6 or 7, and the township will save approximately \$14,000 in electric bills annually and will earn about \$30,000 annually from Renewable Energy Credits.
- If maintenance of the system is provided by Penn Renewables, the cost is covered by a 5 – 10% deduction from the Renewable Energy Credit. The township can also provide the system maintenance—checking the panels, ensuring they are running by using an amp meter, and changing the panel angles four times a year.
- The start-up cost of installing solar energy is high, but power costs for the next 50 years are guaranteed to remain stable. (Electric costs are slated to increase by 37% in 2010.)
- There is a 20-year warranty on the system with a 50-year projected life span. There are no moving parts.

Jim Brownlow requested an electronic copy of the Power Point presentation be sent to Rich Schilling for forwarding to the Board of Supervisors.

3. Request for Partial Funding for Agricultural Easement on 130 acres for Jeffrey & Cheyenne Mease; Nevada Mease - 2655 & 2546 Slifer Valley Road - Bucks County offered \$10,000/acre for this easement. Heritage Conservancy offered an additional \$500/acre. Terry Clemons stated that the township cannot pay more for a property than its appraised value. The easement appraisal for these properties was \$11,500/acre. Rob Zisko **moved** that the township contribute \$1,000/acre from the Open Space Fund for the approximate 130 acres owned by Jeffrey, Cheyenne and Nevada Mease (TMP’s 42-12-110, 42-12-111, 42-12-91 and 42-12-112) contingent upon both Bucks County and Heritage Conservancy providing the amounts per acre as committed. Karen Bedics **seconded** the motion. Terry Clemons contacted Rich Harvey from Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program and advised him that the Meases would accept \$11,500/acre. Rob Zisko pointed out that these are beautiful properties and this acquisition will tie together a number of other properties preserved in that area. Jim called for the question. The motion **passed** unanimously.

4. Budget Update – Deferred

New Business

1. Open Space Committee Request – There are two township properties previously monitored by the Bucks County Land Trust agreement, and the OSC learned this organization is no longer in operation. They requested that they be authorized to re-evaluate the baseline documentation for these two properties. The OSC does not feel these easements are being protected at this point. Barbara Lindtner **moved** to authorize the Open Space Committee to do research on

these two properties' easements (TMP 42-021-095 on Freeh Lane of +/-56 acres and the Hottle property +/- 60 acres) and report back to the Board with their recommendation for a Conservancy to monitor the easements. Karen Bedics **seconded**. Rob Zisko owns the Freeh Lane property and offered to provide a copy of the conservation easement to the OSC. He stated that the easement document specifies the assignability factor. Rob is willing to work with the OSC about this. Jim Brownlow called for the question. Voting **yes**: Karen Bedics, Jim Brownlow Barbara Lindtner and Volker Oakey. **Abstaining**: Rob Zisko The motion **passed**.

2. Police Pension Plan Resolution – An amendment to the police pension plan Resolution 2004-005 is required as a finding in the pension audit recently completed by the Auditor General's office. Tom Redmond of Redmond Consulting Ltd., prepared Resolution 2009-020 which includes these changes. Karen Bedics **moved** to adopt Resolution 2009-020 to replace Amendment 2005-005, amending the police pension plan. Volker Oakey **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Public Comment – None

Supervisors Comments

Volker Oakey asked the Board to authorize him to track how the Highlands Project is progressing. Barbara Lindtner **moved** to authorize Volker Oakey to represent the Board to track the approval process of the township's \$600,000 match to the Highlands project. Karen Bedics **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Karen Bedics was authorized by the Board to invite teens who had helped with tire recycling and Community Day to an upcoming Board meeting so that Certificates of Appreciation could be presented to them.

Barbara Lindtner referred to information provided showing township funding of fire departments and the EMS squad for the past 5 years. She is concerned that we missed the date for placing this issue on the November ballot as a referendum. She asked what amount of tax increase could be levied without a ballot referendum. She said that the Fire Company would come to the October 27 meeting with their budget. She contacted UBREMS by email to see if they would be able to come and discuss their 2010 budget with the Board at the next meeting. She would like the topic of a tax dedicated to emergency services placed on the October 27 agenda. Terry Clemons said that up to 3 mils of real estate tax could be levied to maintain a fire company, fire apparatus, and provide appropriations to fire companies servicing the township, both inside and outside the township. Up to ½ mil of real estate tax can be levied to support ambulance, rescue and other emergency services serving the township. Neither tax would require a ballot referendum. Both organizations will be invited to have representatives attend the October 27 meeting to answer supervisors' questions.

Rob Zisko asked Terry about the status of the Farmland Lot amendment. Terry was not certain that the Board has authorized him to begin the process of enactment of this amendment. Barbara Lindtner **moved** to authorize Terry Clemons to process the zoning ordinance amendments as discussed in an earlier Board meeting. Jim Brownlow **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Adjournment

At 9:45 p.m., Jim Brownlow **moved** to adjourn the meeting. Rob Zisko **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra L. Everitt
Secretary/Treasurer

Next meeting: October 27, 2009
Approved: October 27, 2009