

Board of Supervisors

MINUTES

December 30, 2008

Supervisors Present: Karen Bedics, Jim Brownlow, Volker Oakey and Rob Zisko. **Absent:** Barbara Lindtner
Also present: Sandy Everitt, Secretary/Treasurer; and Rich Schilling, Township Manager.

Jim Brownlow, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Peter Lamana read a statement related to costs associated with the PPL litigation. In it, he referred to three prior situations where residents were not happy with developments planned on neighboring properties and personally hired attorneys to oppose the planned developments. In these cases, the cost to the township was minimal. The township had to use reserve funds both in the 2008 budget and in the 2009 budget under consideration at this meeting to cover costs related to PPL litigation. Peter feels that the residents directly affected by the proposed PPL line should bear more of the costs related to the PPL litigation. Peter recommends that in the future all constituents be afforded an opportunity to assist in making a decision that involves use of tax funds. He acknowledged that several public meetings took place and the response at those meetings indicated residents did not approve of PPL's proposed route through the township, most likely resulting in the course taken by the Board. However, at no time was there a discussion as to whether Springfield Township should bear the burden of suing PPL to the cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Sandy Berry commented on the cost of cinders and salt that surrounding townships were paying. She feels that some of them are paying up to 66% less for those products from the same company Springfield is using. She suggested that Springfield Township should "shop around" more to ensure we are getting the lowest cost. Rich Schilling is not aware of any townships paying that much less than Springfield. In fact, a number of municipalities were not able to obtain bid quotes on salt and thus needed to purchase their salt from PennDOT. Townships purchasing salt from PennDOT are paying a few dollars more a ton than Springfield is paying. Rich Schilling asked Ms. Berry to provide information to him about townships paying 66% less than Springfield for him to research, which she agreed to do.

Hans Reimann congratulated the Board and the administration for their efforts in arriving at the 2009 budget. He realizes a number of hard decisions had to be made. He feels that dropping the full-time Building & Code Enforcement Officer will place an undue burden on Rich Schilling.

Old Business

1. Adoption of 2009 Budget – Jim Brownlow gave a brief summary of the 2009 budget. It reflects a total expense of \$1,594,840.07, which is markedly down from the 2008 budget expense of \$1,735,500. There are two items included in the 2009 budget that are not normally in the budget. The first is the PPL litigation and the second is completing the revision of the Act 537 plan. In order to balance the budget, there are two items in the revenue that are not normally in a budget. The first is a transfer from the Operating Reserve fund of approximately \$115,000. In addition, the township is considering taking out a loan for \$100,000. The police department will remain at the current four officers. The full-time Building and Code Enforcement Officer position was eliminated for 2009, and the township will contract with an outside inspection agency provide inspections. The permit holders who require inspections will pay most of the expense for the inspection agency.

Volker Oakey **moved** to adopt the 2009 budget as advertised. Rob Zisko **seconded**. Karen Bedics restated her feelings expressed at the prior Board meeting where the budget was discussed. She is not in favor of the elimination of the Building and Code Enforcement Officer position and feels doing so will place a very heavy burden on Rich Schilling and the remaining staff.

Jim Brownlow called for the question. Voting **Yes**: Jim Brownlow, Volker Oakey and Rob Zisko. Voting **No**: Karen Bedics. The motion **passed**.

New Business

1. 2008 PLGIT CD Early Redemption & Transfer of \$15,000 in 2008 from Operating Reserve into General Fund – Because of a cash flow problem in the early months of 2009, it will be necessary to redeem one of the CDs in the Operating Reserve Fund prior to its normal maturation date. There will be no penalty for doing this and 3.6% interest will be earned for the time it was held in the CD. Karen Bedics **moved** to authorize the treasurer to redeem a \$96,000 CD and move those funds from the Operating Reserve in PLGIT to the General Fund in Quakertown National Bank. Volker Oakey **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Rob Zisko **moved** to authorize the immediate transfer of \$15,000 from the PLGIT Operating Reserve fund to the Quakertown National Bank General Fund account to cover 2008 year-end bills. Volker Oakey **seconded**; the motion **passed** unanimously.

Public Comments

Pete Lamana commended the Road Department for the excellent job they did on township roads during the recent ice storms. The Board acknowledged that this was a difficult storm and asked that Rich Schilling share the commendation for their service with the Road Department.

Hans Reimann, spoke to earlier comments made about the PPL litigation and not giving residents an opportunity to express their sentiments about the issue. Hans felt that the public meetings as well as the petition signed by well over 1,000 citizens at the polls did represent how the public felt about the PPL situation. Hans does think that if there is a favorable decision for the township and PPL appeals that decision, there should be some method of soliciting all residents about whether the township should continue to pursue litigation.

Regarding an energy audit of the township building, Hans is hopeful that the EAC will be assigned to doing an energy audit for the township. He feels it is incumbent for the township to take a leadership position in moving ahead in “going green.” Hans also feels that the township should promote green building technologies along the Route 309 corridor, perhaps providing some incentives to developers who utilize “green” building concepts.

Supervisors Comments

Volker Oakey noted that he would be away for the month of January. Second, he suggested that beginning in February the Board could review one or two sections of the draft Storm Water Ordinance each meeting. Jim agreed that this would be the best plan for reviewing this complex document.

Karen Bedics requested that beginning in 2009, payments to UBREMS should be made quarterly instead of once a year. She also requested that for the 2010 budget, the process should begin earlier so that it was not being adopted during the holiday season.

Jim Brownlow feels that the 2009 budget was the best that could have been adopted under the present economic circumstances, even though it was a compromise budget. He is pleased with the process and with the input from the Board during that process.

Adjournment

At 8:00 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: January 5, 2009, Re-organization Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

Approved: January 27, 2009

Board of Supervisors