

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 2004**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Rod Wieder with the Pledge of Allegiance. Members present were Vice Chairman Pete Lamana, Chuck Halderman, Rob Zisko and Jim Brownlow. Solicitor Jim McNamara was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Hans Reimann discussed the flood and the possible impact on the water system in Springtown. He also discussed the flooding in Riegelsville.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Bid Opening – Gasoline/Diesel and Heating Oil. The Township received three bids which were opened this morning at 10:00 a.m. The bids were from Boyle Heating & Cooling, Farm and Home and Altemos/Atlantic Fuel. The low bid was submitted by Altemos/Atlantic Fuel. Jim Brownlow moved to award the bid to Altemos/Atlantic. Seconded by Chuck Halderman. Vote was unanimous.

David Rice – Emergency Management Coordinator – Action Report. David stated on Saturday, September 11th the Springtown Fire Company was surrounded by water and was unable to respond to a fire call which was received at 7:00 a.m. David attempted to contact Supervisors and was successful in reaching Chuck Halderman and Jim Brownlow. The two Supervisors, Township Manager and David met at the Township building at approximately 9:30 a.m. A verbal declaration of a state of emergency was declared prior to the meeting by the Emergency Management Coordinator. After a conversation with the County Emergency Management Office, it was decided not to declare a formal declaration at that time.

Officer Mike McDonald was patrolling the township to pinpoint trouble spots. Chief McLaughlin also made himself available and helped with an assessment of the roads. A temporary operations area was set up at Nockamixon Township. Riegelsville was hit hard and the surrounding townships offered their help.

On September 14th, there was a meeting at the Riegelsville Fire House with PEMA personnel. David and Jeff Mease did a drive by assessment of damage in the Township and reported the following to PEMA. There were 250 houses damaged, 31 major damage. One business suffered a catastrophic loss. There was one home destroyed.

On September 24, Pete Lamana and David went to New Hope for a meeting with PEMA/FEMA Officials to get information about reporting procedures, etc.

Rod Wieder commented the Township is very fortunate to have David as Emergency Management Coordinator.

Designation of Agent Resolution – Jim Brownlow moved to adopt the Designation of Agent Resolution which names the Township Manager as contact point and agent for Springfield Township. Seconded by Pete Lamana. Vote was unanimous.

Bucks County Water & Sewer – The Supervisors received a new agreement from Bucks County Water and Sewer extending the Operations and Maintenance of the system for another year. The contract shows a 4% increase over the 2004 contract.

Pete Lamana moved to approve the Operations and Maintenance Contract for Bucks County Water & Sewer. Seconded by Chuck Halderman. Vote was unanimous.

Probationary Appointment of Brian McLaughlin as Chief of Police – Pete Lamana moved that the probationary appointment of Brian McLaughlin as Chief of Police of the Springfield Township Police Department of December 1, 2003 be revoked, and Officer McLaughlin be reduced in rank to patrolman, effective immediately. Jim Brownlow seconded.

Discussion – Debbie Yerger read a statement supporting Chief McLaughlin.

Chief Bell questioned the motives of the Board and expressed his support for Chief McLaughlin. Chief Bell feels the Board could have been more supportive and helped the Chief.

Helene Bell read a prepared statement supporting the Chief and chastising the Board for their actions. She read a list of demands.

Pete Jones expressed his concern that no one present expected this action.

Many people questioned the Board about disbanding the police department. Apparently there was information circulated that indicated the Board intended to disband.

Len Kramer commented about Frank Rizzo.

Tina Tranaskus supported Chief McLaughlin.

There were approximately 60 people present in the room and the atmosphere was adversarial. Other individuals commented but the Secretary was unable to identify them.

Jim Brownlow stated the probation period ends on November 30, 2004. There is no time to improve. If the Board does not take action before the probation period ends it is very difficult to take action once the Chief has tenure. Chief McLaughlin understood the Chief is responsible for administrative duties. The Board has had several meetings to discuss specific issues with no change. Brian had a different set of priorities.

The Board was clear with Brian; the department would operate down one officer. He knew this when he took the position.

Personnel is a private matter and will not be discussed in front of the public for Brian's protection and the Township's.

Rob Zisko stated he has lived in the Township for 34 years and his personal contacts with Brian make him believe he will make a good chief. Rob would like the Board to keep him as chief.

Chairman called for the vote. Vote was 4 YES to reduce Chief McLaughlin to patrolman. Rob Zisko voted NO.

Chuck Halderman stated this situation has presented a large problem for the Board. No one wanted to have to go through this. If people want more police, Chuck recommended it be put on the ballot so everyone in the township can have input.

Rob Zisko moved to rescind the past motion and table the matter until the last meeting in November. Seconded by Rod Wieder. Vote was Mr. Halderman – Yes, Mr. Lamana Yes, Mr. Brownlow – Yes, Mr. Zisko – Yes and Mr. Wider – Yes.

ADJOURNMENT

Chuck Halderman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Seconded by Pete Lamana. Vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted

Barbara A. Smith
Secretary