

Branch Communicator

March 2009

Supervisors Meeting Notes

Telephone Numbers

Supervisors:

Robert Keifer 544-2249
Joseph Wank 544-3183
John Purcell 544-5890

Township Offices

Branch Police 544-2901
Township Garage 544-3557
Secretary/Treasurer Joyce Beach
Township Manager 544-4283
John Andruchek 544-4283
Sewage
Tina Williams 544-1764
Kim Karzinsky 544-1764

Police Report

The Police officers traveled 3240 miles in patrolling the townships using 4 police vehicles. 61 Incidents, Assists or Complaints were handled by 3 officers. They attended 2 hearings at District Judges offices. There were 8 criminal arrests.

The report covered the period 2/1/09 to 2/28/09

Wings and things

The Good Intent Hose company of Llewellyn is serving Wings every Tuesday from 6PM until all are gone. They will also serve clams and peel and eat shrimp. Come out and support the Hose company while enjoying a tasty dinner.

The Branch Communicator is a privately published newsletter to provide residents of the Township with information on governance by their elected and appointed Township officials. Opinions expressed are those of the Publisher and do not reflect the opinions of Sponsors nor officials. Questions and comments should be directed to Norm Bertasavage 544-6583.

Its Still Arson

The latest in a series of arson fires struck the Llewellyn Hotel, formerly Pidwa's. This structure has been a nightmare for the Hose Company as its burning could have been catastrophic. Luckily the winds were calm and the night moist or the entire block may have burned. So far it has just been arson. With the number of empty buildings in the town there are several targets for arson. All of these have the potential to become homicides. So far luck and the skills of our volunteer fire fighters has kept the damage to property. The person is still out there. If you have any information, leads, or suspicions, contact the police department. So far it has been property damage. Don't let it become murder!

Speaking of Fires

The Good Intent Hose Company's annual fund raising drive will soon begin. As you receive the information in the mail, your generous contribution would be appreciated.

Compost Site

The compost site is now open for business. Hours of Operation are Wednesdays from 4PM to 8PM, Saturdays from 9AM to 1 PM.

Memorial Day Program

The annual AMVETS Memorial Day celebration will be held on May 25th. A parade will start at 8AM followed by the celebration with a speaker from the National Guard at the Gap. In the event of inclement weather the parade will be cancelled but the celebration will be moved into the school auditorium.

Fire Police Swearing In

Thirty fire police volunteers were sworn in by Magisterial Judge Charles Moran. James Orff was sworn in as Captain with Sheryl Schleg as Lieutenant. There are 17 officers from the Good Intent Hose Company and 12 from the Phoenix Park Fire Company. The need for new "regulation" police badges was discussed. The cost to replace the old badges will be \$1,700.00. Possible source of payment for the badges is the Fireman's Relief fund raised questions of badge ownership.

Timbering Ordinance

The proposed timbering ordinance was greeted by a large contingent of township residents with questions. The questions included the failure of the township to enforce provisions of the current timbering ordinance particularly with road maintenance by the contractors, failure of the land owners to comply with the permitted provisions and poor oversight in general. The Supervisors will order the enforcement officer to investigate the current permitted operations to insure compliance by the current contractors. The repairs necessary to restore the road damage will be monitored in particular the Black Diamond road. After these discussions the revised timbering ordinance was approved.

Outdoor Burner Ordinance

The proposed outdoor burner ordinance was also subjected to comments from attending residents. Comments included the use of fuels to be burned, the stack height requirements and odor control for downwind neighbors. These and other questions were addressed by the solicitor. The ordinance was then approved by the supervisors.

Ordinance Fee Review

The adequacy of the current fee schedules for permits was a question raised by the Supervisors. The engineering, legal and administrative costs incurred in approval of a permit in many cases far exceed the amount of the fees allowed. The Supervisors will institute an ongoing program to review all ordinance fees.

Sewage related Meeting

The Supervisors reported on meetings with Rep Goodman and the Authority members on March 19th and then with American Water officials on the 25th. The problem is that the Authority is on the verge of bankruptcy. This was brought about by gross underestimates by HRG of original operating costs and by delinquencies by more than 10% of the customers. There were 144 customers delinquent for 3 or more months.

Financial Data

Mar 09

Income	
Court Income	583.54
General Receipts	581.68
Other Income	714.10
Permits	97.20
Tax Income	31,206.09
Total Income	33,182.61
Expense	
Auditors	1,494.43
Building Inspector	128.51
Contractors	925.00
Electric	3,646.45
Engineering	843.50
Garbage	7,543.78
Insurance	4,564.97
Misc	426.22
Office Expense	150.75
Payroll Expenses	12,347.67
Payroll Taxes	3,195.65
Police	636.10
postage	43.85
Road Work	1,144.64
Sewage	165.00
Solicitor	4,030.53
Supervisors	220.71
Tax Collections	1,700.25
Telephones	775.36
Truck & Equipment	4,060.06
truck Loan	360.12
Utilities	188.18
Total Expense	48,591.73
Net Income	-15,409.12
Tax anticipation loan	40,000.00

Sewage Authority

No Quorum

Not enough members showed for the meeting to have a quorum therefore no official business was conducted.

SCMA Meeting

Members of the Authority, Township Supervisors and Rep Neal Goodman conducted on-going discussions with members of the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority. SCMA Representative Bob Allen was to attend this month's meeting But he was unavailable.

Banking Matters

Previous conversations with representatives of the Miners Bank concerning scanning of checks and acceptance of credit card payments indicated that the only costs to the authority would be the cost of the equipment. Now the banks position is that a monthly fee would be charged as well as other charges. Scanning of checks would benefit the Bank more than the Authority so this matter was put on hold.

Delinquencies

Letters were sent to 144 account with a delinquency of greater than 3 months or \$300.00 were sent last month. So far, 24 accounts were paid in full and 14 payment plans were established. Actions will be taken with the Minersville and Blythe Water Authorities to begin the water shut off process on the remaining delinquent accounts. A listing of all charges required for shut off of water will be prepared so that every one will be aware of the costs to re-instate water services.

Planning Commission

No business was received for discussion and therefore no meeting was held in March.

Health care thoughts

The economy stinks! Improvement means employment needs to be increased. A major way to do that is to remove the burden of providing health care from employers.

I have advocated a universal health care program based on the principles of the unemployment program, that is a federally mandated program administered by the states using smart card technology. I've approached politicians about health care but their universal mantra is "we can't afford it". I contend we are already spending the money but wastefully and inefficiently.

Senator Dwight Evan's office informed me that the Commonwealth of PA spends 9 bil-

lion dollars on healthcare for state workers, politicians, prisoners, and welfare recipients. Schuylkill County spends \$8,368,553.00 on its workers. The Minersville Area School district pays \$1,435,944.00 for its teachers and workers, and Branch Township spends \$44,183.18 tax dollars on its workers.

Using 2001 census figures, the state population is 12,281,054, County population 150,336, School District population of 8806 and township is 1871. This amounts to \$732.84 per taxpayer for state healthcare, \$55.67 per taxpayer for the county, \$163.06 for the school district and \$23.61 for the township: **a total of \$975.18 for every Branch Twp resident.** Contact congress and demand that my type of plan be looked at. The economy needs action now. The money is there. Lets use it

News letter Sponsors

Enbee Tax Service, Federal and State E-filing Service
available
[544-6583](tel:544-6583)

Don's Classis Restoration & Auto Body Inc
[544-8209](tel:544-8209)

Jerry Rizzard

Wishes for a happy and joy filled Easter.

Up Coming Events : The next supervisors meeting will be *April 27th* . Planning Commission April 7th . Public meetings start at 7PM . Sewage Authority meeting will be Thursday April 16th 4:30 PM.

Note: Branch Communicators are available on line at www.normbert.com/