

Branch Communicator

September 2006

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
Joanne Schultz 544-4283
Sewage
Donna Kroh 544-1764
Township Manager
John Andruchek 544-4283

Police Report

The Police officers worked a total of 385 hours. They traveled 2380 miles using 4 police vehicles. 44 Incidents, Assists or Complaints were handled by 6 officers.

The report covered the period 8/1/06 to 8/31/06

NOTICE

This month's Supervisors Notes is an abbreviated report as I was unable to attend the meeting due to surgery. The items shown are from the copy of the agenda that I received and from open items from previous minutes.

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.

Halloween Night

Halloween **Trick or Treat Night** will be celebrated on Tuesday October 31st from 6PM to 8PM.

FEMA Assistance

FEMA has been contacted for a assistance in repairing the Black Diamond and Church Roads. It is hoped that enough money will be received to repair the washed out shoulders of Church road and repave the section of the Black Diamond road in Branch Township.

Bassininski Development

The Supervisors approved the engineer's recommendation to relocate the cul-de-sac on Bassininski Lane and other changes to the sub-division plan as originally approved.

Supervisor's Convention

Supervisors Keifer and Wank will be attending the annual Supervisor's Convention and will provide a report at the next meeting.

Strossertown Bridge

Nothing new on this bridge or the grant supposedly received for it last year.

Steins Mill Sewage

There has been no action by Reilly Township regarding their Act 537 plan. Nothing has been heard from Mr. Patel from DEP concerning Branch's remaining sewage problem area. The cost of a survey to determine the extent of the problem is beyond the ability of Branch's financial resources and until there is an action plan from Reilly this will hang in the balance.

Police New Hires

No action has been taken to on hiring new part-time police officers. Unnamed sources indicate that none will be hired in the near future. Current part-time officers will have additional hours assigned to cover the blank spots in the schedule.

Here come da Judge

Commonwealth Judges are elected to 10 year terms of office. Unless they decline to serve an additional term of office, they go through a process called "retention election" where they face only a yes or no vote for retention". (this doesn't apply to Magisterial Judges who serve only 6 years and must run for re-election against an opponent). Only once in the past 40 years has a judge been turned out of office and few have refused retention..

The reason for the ten year term is supposedly to insure that judges are independent of political pressures and serve as the constitutional checks and balance against the executive and legislative branches of government.

In the current court, interference in the political process has stepped away from it's independent role acting in collusion with the governor's office and the legislature in securing a pay raise and additional retirement benefits.

When the legislature reacted to the howl from the voters and repealed the pay raise the Courts acted to exempt themselves from the repeal by citing the PA Constitution which states that "the compensation shall not be diminished during their term of office". If they would have read further it also say "unless by law applying to all salaried officers of the Commonwealth."

I'm no lawyer but I can read. The dictionary defines "repeal" to rescind or revoke. Since the pay raise law was repealed that means there never was a pay raise. The revocation affected all salaried officers of the commonwealth who were affected by the illegal act in the first place. Apparently the judges don't accept that.

The election of judges has not to my knowledge lacked sufficient candidates to have anyone run for the office unopposed. Nor has there been any great numbers of sitting judges unwilling to seek retention.

Most voters elect judges with very little knowledge of their qualifications or judicial temperament. In future elections for judiciary office I therefore strongly urge all voters to vote NO on retention. 10 years is long enough!

Sewage Authority News

Donna Kroh, Authority Secretary has returned from medical leave and will resume normal office hours and operations.

John Pritz, Cass Township Supervisor, addressed the Board concerning uncompleted Punch list items from the Doli Contract. He claims that there are 4 major items on the list that have not been completed which Cass Township repaired at a cost in excess of \$15,000.00. This was never reported to the Authority. The Authority had previously withheld payment from Doli for punch list items but had no knowledge of the Cass outlays. It will look into the possibility of adding these additional costs when negotiations continue.

The Board voted to move money from T-Bills which are maturing into the PA Investment program. The money will earn better interest and will be more readily available when need by the Authority.

Annual Audit

The Audit report for the year 2005, completed by Patton & Lettich, was presented to the Authority. The report shows the Authority is operating within the rules of standard Accounting procedures.

Monthly debt payments and operating costs still exceed income by in excess of \$20,000.00 which is being paid from interest and cash on hand.

Operations Report

The plant operations report shows the effluent quality as well with-in specs. The plant processed an average of 178,290 gallons per day.

There were 3 grinder pump problems reported: 1 clogged pump, 1 pump clogged by grease, and 1 problem caused between the home and the pump.

It was noted that about one third of the grinder pump problems have been caused by grease build-up. Home owners with grinder pumps should be aware that the more grease down the drain, the more likely a grease build-up will cause a clogged pump.

Engineers Report

The engineers reported on the cause of flooding where the check valve of a sump pump was reported to have failed. The determination was that an illegal floor drain and century old piping was the cause.

A second investigation of flooding was suspected to be caused by a damaged storm drain. Township workers will excavate the problem area to repair the drain if necessary.

Solicitors report

A brief executive session was requested by the solicitor to discuss legal business.

Planning Commission

A busy meeting for the Commission saw the approval of Subdivision plans from William Appleby for property on Parry Lane and Debra Bosak for property on Willow Street. A subdivision plan from Paul Bassiniski for property on the Phoenix Park Road was reviewed and return to the Developer for corrections. A sketch plan from Harry Close for the subdivision of a lot he owns on Hill Terrace Drive, a portion of which will be annexed to a lot he owns on Maple Street was reviewed.

Concerning the land swap between the Reedy Company and the Good Intent Hose Company on the Silverton Road was discussed. The Engineer suggested a way the transfer could be done without a

subdivision plan. The Supervisors will make a decision on this.

The Commission also reviewed a request for a Variance by Albert Gudinas for intrusion on the set back line on his property on the Old Lewellyn Road.

A plan for correction of the cul-de-sac on Bassiniski Drive was tabled for resolution by the Supervisors.

Zoning Hearing

The Zoning Hearing Board will hear the Gudinas variance request on October 12th at 7PM in the township Building.

News letter Sponsors

Enbee Tax Service, Federal and State E-filing Service available
544-6583

Don's Classis Restoration & Auto Body Inc
544-8209

Up Coming Events : The next supervisors meeting will be *October 23rd*. Planning Commission November 8th. Public meetings start at 7PM . Sewage Authority meeting will be October 19th 4:30 PM.

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

