

Branch Communicator

December 2009

Supervisors Meeting Notes

Telephone Numbers

Supervisors:

Joseph Wank 544-3183
John Purcell 544-5890
Robert Yeager

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 Krasinski 544-1764

Police Report

The Police officers traveled 2998 miles in patrolling the townships using 4 police vehicles. 47 Incidents, Assists or Complaints were handled by 3 officers. There were 7 summary arrests made and 3 criminal arrests,

The report covered the period 11/1/09 to 11/30/09

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.

Special Meeting

A special meeting of the Supervisors was held on December 7th. The purpose of the meeting was to appoint a replacement to the BCRSA. John Purcell was appointed to replace David Sekellick on the Authority. The Supervisors also expressed unanimous opposition to a unilateral act by the BCRSA to merge with and into the Schuylkill Municipal Authority.

Dave Sekellick should be commended for his many years of service on the Authority. He served as treasurer since the inception of the Authority and devoted many hours to its operations.

Sewage Authority News

An unusually well attended meeting by the Public on December 17th. About 50 residents of Branch and Cass Townships were in attendance.

The first order of business was the question of an Authority resignation. An e-mail from Authority member Sekellick to other Authority members was deemed to not be a legal notification of resignation. Therefore the appointment by the Branch Township Supervisors to fill the vacancy (see above) was not accepted by the Authority and Sekellick will continue as an Authority member.

The next order of business was the question of the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority's proposal to take over the BCRSA. The SCMA proposal was to take over operations with a monthly edu rate of \$58.00 and the assumption of the Penn vest loan obligation. Branch Supervisor Jack Purcell objected to the take over based on the fact that the sewage system was an asset and a future potential source of income to the BCRSA. He recommended that the monthly edu rate be raised to the \$65.00 or \$70.00 rate the Authority deemed necessary to operate on a sound financial basis. The collection system has some 26 miles of pipe in Branch township and a like amount in Cass. There are pump stations in place and the operating treatment plant all with long term life expectancies beyond the potentially shorter term life of the installed equipment. The loan term goes on for 25 more years and the equipment replacement

times will vary. What replacement costs will be in 20 years is anybody's guess but realistically compare the cost of an automobile 20 years ago and the cost today.

I asked the question of the legal ability of the Authority to unilaterally dissolve itself given that it was created as an agent of Branch and Cass townships with the agreement and consent of both. The Solicitor ruled that it was within the authority of the board as an independent body to do so.

A vote was taken to accept the SCMA proposal and to form an operating committee to work out a final agreement with SCMA. Members Thomas, Cook, Kulpcavage, Sekellick, and Stoppi voted yes. Members Bell and Studlack vote no.

Public comments concerned the delinquency rates and efforts to enforce collection for non-payment by water shut-off, representation on the SCMA, and looked at guarantees that the proposed SCMA rate would not increase. It was pointed out that there are no guarantees that rate will not increase by either authority. A 10% rate increase of \$58.00 would be \$5.80 as opposed to \$7.00 added to \$70.00.

BCRSA will go ahead with the merger given an acceptable agreement with SCMA.

The Authority voted to increase the monthly EDU rate to \$58.00 as of January 2010.

Authority meetings will continue to be held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 4:30 Pm in the Branch Township building, Llewellyn.

Supervisors Meeting

At the December 28th Supervisors meeting actions were taken in response to the decisions of the Sewage Authority. Authority member Dave Stoppi's term ends 12/31/09. He is to be replaced on the Authority by Dave Studlack effective 1/1/10.

Authority member Dave Sekelleck's term was ended in December 2004. He was never officially re-appointed by the Supervisors to an additional term and has served as a carry-over since that time. The Supervisors appointed John (Jack) Purcell to replace Sekellick effective 1/1/10. "continued on back page"

Supervisors note con't

Bob Keifer was appointed as an alternate to the authority to act in the event of a Branch Township vacancy on the Authority.

Garbage Collection

Kreitzer, the new collector will begin serving Branch Township on Thursday, December 31st. Collections will be on Thursday for the future of the contract. The Thanksgiving day pick-up of November 25th will be rescheduled at a later time. The price will increase by \$10.00 semi-annually as presented in tax bills.

As Kreitzer's crews are not completely familiar with the Township there may be instances where garbage is not pick up in the morning as scheduled. If your garbage isn't *picked up on a Thursday morning, call the township office to notify them ASAP.* Kreitzer will be checking with the secretary before the end of each collection day and will arrange pickup of any missed garbage if timely notified.

The Composted Site

The Compost site is closed effective immediately. If there is an emergency need to clear downed trees, etc, call Supervisor Wank at home to have the site opened. **This is for emergencies only.**

Christmas Tree Pick-up

The Township will be picking up Christmas Trees for the next few weeks. If you want to have your tree disposed of by the Township place the tree on the curb. Trees placed on a porch or anywhere else but the curb will not be taken by township workers.

2010 Meeting Schedule

Monthly Supervisors meeting for 2010 will be held on the 3rd Monday of each month starting at 7PM in the township building. The reorganization meeting will be on January 4th at 7PM in the building. Regular meetings will be 1/18, 2/15, 3/15, 4/19, 5/17, 6/21, 7/19, 8/16, 9/20, 10/18, 11/15 and 12/20 during 2010.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission meeting of December 1st reviewed the application for a variance from Mark Snyder. This application was tabled at the November meeting for further review by the board. Questions raised at the November meeting were answered and after review the Board voted to recommend approval to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Zoning Hearing Board

The Zoning Hearing Board met on December 10th to hear the Snyder request for variance. Several questions were directed toward the placement of a garage at the corner of 3rd Ave and Spring Street, the intrusion on set back lines and possible objections from neighbors. These questions were answered to the

satisfaction of the Board and the requested variance was approved.



Happy New Year 2010!!!!

Information on garbage Tax Payments

The township will send a letter to tax collector Gail Bedford to obtain the names of those township residents who have not paid their semi-annual garbage bill. This list will be used by the township to enforce payment of these bills or halting pickup of non payers garbage.

Tax Anticipation Loan

The Annual tax anticipation loan was approved by the Supervisors. The loan will be from the Miners Bank at a rate of 4 & 1/4 of interest. The money will be drawn down as needed for current expenses until tax receipts are sufficient to cover all expense.

2010 Budget

The proposed budget for 2010 as presented was approved by the supervisors.

Plaque Presentation

The township supervisors presented outgoing Chairman Bob Keifer with a plaque in honor of his 24 years of service to the township as a Supervisor and Chairman of the Board. His accomplishments were noted by Supervisor Purcell as well as his courtesy toward the township residents during meetings and in answering the late night calls for assistance or problems.

As one of my old Air Force Colonels would have said, "Ya Did good Bob!!!!" Thanks.

News letter Sponsors

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

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

Patrons:

Jerry Rizzardi

Phoenix Park Happenings

The Phoenix Park fire company will be sponsoring weekly bingo games. The games will be held on **Mondays starting at 6:30PM at the Fire Company.** All are invited to play.

Up Coming Events : The next supervisors meeting will be the reorganization meeting *January 4th 2010 . Regular meeting Jan 18th.* Planning Commission January 5th 2010 . Public meetings start at 7PM . Sewage Authority meeting will be Thursday January 21st, 4:30 PM.

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