

ATHENS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS
and JOINT BOARD MEETING
January 11, 2017 6 PM

Chairman Cheryl Wood-Walter called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance. Supervisors also present were Susan Seck, George Ballenstedt, Christine Vough and Ronald Reagan. Solicitor John Thompson, Secretary Robin Smith, Treasurer Ruth Casterline and Zoning Officer Edmund Reid were also in attendance.

Voice of the Residents: None

Cheryl welcomed our State Representative, Tina Pickett, to our meeting and thanked her for coming. Representative Pickett presented the Board with a US flag, which was much appreciated.

Cheryl told Susan that the highway department did a nice job on the roads in this last storm.

Arlene Lantz and Meade Murtland were present from the Athens Township Authority. Meade said things are in good shape now. Ron asked where we are with Greene's Landing and Meade said he didn't receive a report from Chairman Musto to give. Ron asked if anything new was coming and he said, to his knowledge, nothing big is coming in the near future.

Cathy Eccker and Meade Murtland were present from the Athens Township Parks and Recreation Commission. (Richard Bean arrived later at 7 PM) Meade said Phase II of the Round Top Park Expansion Project is coming along nicely. The decking and fishing piers are done. Rep. Pickett said she thinks it is wonderful that we have so many Eagle Scout projects done in our parks. Our park commission suggests several projects and the scouts can pick which ones they want to do. Meade said the scouts do a lot that we need done. He said the park commission offers to put a small plaque on each project if the scout would like that, but most don't take them up on that. Cheryl said we had 4 projects last year, and it is nice that the scouts can come back in a few years and see their legacy still in the park. Tina said she appreciates the good working relationship we have with the scouts.

Rita Jo Swingle and Kirstie Lake were present from the Zoning Hearing Board. They only have 2 or 3 hearings a year now that the gas is gone. They do need an alternate and Robin said the Board did appoint William Bresser at the recommendation of the Zoning Hearing Board. She said they should have 2 alternates, so they need to keep looking for one more.

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Scot Saggiomo, Clif Cheeks, Marion Carling and Ron Reagan were present for the Planning Commission. Scot thanked the supervisors for their support, as well as Ed and Cindy preparing them for their workshops. Clif said it has been quiet lately. Ron asked Eddie if there was any more news on Rite Aid. Ed said they need to submit to Zoning Hearing Board, but he hasn't heard anything in about 4 months. Ron said some of the Chesapeake properties have been sold to 77 Energy, but Chesapeake still owns the housing facility and the big office building. We also need to update our zoning ordinance again. Clif said if anyone has any comments regarding any ordinance changes, please see that Planning Commission gets them.

Rita Jo said the red light in Greene's Landing is great. Cheryl said there have been less 'cut-throughs' (at the Dandy) since the curbing was installed. Ron and Cheryl both said they should have a pole light at 199 and signs to help clarify the changes that have been instituted at that location.

Ron asked Rep. Pickett if the KOZ program will continue. She said the Governor opened it for the cracker plant but closed it again. Now they are looking at something called a KEEZ that has something to do with energy. Cheryl asked if there is any oversight on these KOZ zones if a business is granted the tax breaks but leaves before their required timeframe is up – no one seems to follow that. Rep. Pickett said DCED should be overseeing that. The assessment office might also be of help with that.

Ron asked about the gas tax of 32-cents/gal. over 3 years. Rep. Pickett said she was called into the Governor's office before the vote on this. She said she would not vote for this as it's too much money. But, now that it has passed, we have the right to have the infrastructure improvements that these funds are supposed to be used for. Ron asked if this would hurt PA getting new business? Rep. Pickett said the flip side to that is the businesses need roads and good infrastructure to function. Ron said he sees NYSDOT trucks and other trucks filling up at the CNG stations. He asked if she is receiving any flack about the pipelines. She said not from her constituents, but elsewhere. The purpose of the pipeline is exporting gas. Ron asked about the price increase on the PA Turnpike. Rep. Pickett said Interstate 80 was supposed to become a toll road, but that didn't happen. The turnpike is its own Authority and those tolls went up.

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Ron asked if there are any big projects coming up this year and Rep. Pickett said replacing all the little bridges seems small, but it really is a big – and much needed – project.

George asked is there oversight on the revenue from the 32-cent gas tax and where does it go. Rep. Pickett said that all goes into Liquid Fuels. Some of the money is used to fund the State Police.

Rep. Pickett had said she is the Chair of the Insurance Committee in Harrisburg. Ron asked if the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is repealed, what will that do for PA? She said it could possibly be a good thing, because insurance companies are pulling out of the exchanges and that's causing premiums to rise because there are fewer to companies to choose from. Governor Wolf expanded Medicare when he came into office, which took on an additional 600,000 people. Previously, Governor Corbett would not do that because he felt it was too cost-prohibitive.

Rita Jo asked if the Athens Township employees pay anything toward their health insurance. They do not. She asked why? Cheryl said it was a collective bargaining issue and we have contracts.

Meade asked what happens to people who live in a state that has no insurance providers? It's unknown.

With regard to the Athens Bridge lighting, Robin reminded everyone that we had voted to retrofit the existing lighting on the bridge with LED lighting. She was contacted by PennDOT the day after our meeting telling us that we would need to have the lights ENGINEERED before we could do a retrofit – and we would be responsible for that cost. Several phone calls and emails back and forth with PennDOT District 3, Representative Pickett, and Senator Yaw's office had no impact. PennDOT does not have a spec for this. We cannot afford to hire an engineer and accomplish this retrofit, even though it would take us from the current bulbs with a 30-DAY life span and NO warranty to an efficient LED light with a 5-year life span, 5-year warranty and 70% energy savings. On motion of Christine, second by Ron, it was unanimous to accept the quote from Kuharchik to replace the lights with the current style bulbs instead of the retrofit. Representative Pickett said she will continue to fight for us on this issue.

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Cheryl said she has read the Survey of Financial Condition, and Robin can go ahead and file this annual report.

Susan said we need to replace one of our dump trucks. We have put over \$7,000 in it last year and \$2,000 this year. It has leaks everywhere and needs to be retired. She and two of the guys went to Burr Truck in Vestal to look at a 2005 Volvo tandem axle dump truck. She knows we have to bid this out, but this is a great find at \$74,995. She said we put \$50,000 away toward a truck in the budget. She also said they want a box with a conveyor that spreads the material from the front of the box instead of from the back. Discussion was held. Ron said at some point we have to stop buying someone else's problems. She said we have 2 used trucks out there now – the blue truck is running well but has had some maintenance lately. Ron reminded everyone that the funds we have put in the budget for anti-skid and salt are not just for Jan. – March, but also are for Oct. – December. Susan said she thinks we can make our own anti-skid in our pit. Ron told Susan to put together a spec for the end of the month and we'll decide if we can advertise at that point. John Thompson added that we would need to include the trade-in in the bid.

Ron said he's noticed we are missing a lot of road signs lately. Susan has noticed that as well and she has talked to Larry about it. Robin suggested putting a mark on the back of the replacement signs that only the township would recognize so we would be able to identify the sign as ours if it was found.

The Board thanked everyone for coming.

Chairman Wood-Walter took the Board into executive session at 7:50 PM for personnel. The regular meeting reconvened at 9:06 PM, and the remaining minutes were taken by Ron Reagan.

On motion of Cheryl, second by George, it was unanimous to have Susan and John Thompson meet with Ray Brobst to discuss his employment status and options.

There being no further business, on motion of Ron, second by George, it was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,