

**Harmar Township Municipal Building  
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
Monday, January 4, 2016**

**PRESENT**

Patricia A. Janoski	Chairperson
Robert Exler	Vice Chairperson
Linda Slomer	Supervisor
Emiliano Cresta	Supervisor
Robert Seibert	Supervisor
Chuck Means	Solicitor
Donna Piper	Secretary/Treasurer
Larry Seiler	Engineer

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson called the Board of Supervisor's Regular Business Meeting of January 4, 2016 to order at 8:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Lisa Midla asked if the persons receiving appointments to the various Boards/Commissions are present. The Chairperson asked that newly appointed Board/Commission members stand and be recognized. Those present were: David Buchman – Planning Commission, Lee Biermeyer – Planning Commission, Harry Lenhart – Zoning Hearing Board, and Evie Perrett – Harmar Water Authority.

Mr. Messich stood to state his concern about the condition of his neighborhood. Mr. Messich stated that he gave addresses to the Codes Officer and as far as he can tell, there has been no action taken. Mr. Messich stated that he will submit his complaint in writing.

Paula Hiteshew asked if the business establishment on Guys Run Road had obtained all of the required permits. Discussion ensued. Mr. Seibert: the concrete blocks on-site have been there for years but were recently moved. Ms. Hiteshew asked how a business can be allowed to set-up and sell from the location without obtaining permits. Mr. Seibert asked Mr. Colpo, the former Harmar Township Codes Officer who was present in the room; Mr. Colpo replied that Mr. Panza has been operating a business at that property since prior to 1961. Ms. Slomer: it appears as though Mr. Panza is expanding his operations. Ms. Slomer read aloud, a email that she had sent on December 8<sup>th</sup> to the Township's Codes Officer and the other members of the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Slomer: the Codes Officer and the other members of the Board of Supervisors have not responded to my email. Ms. Slomer: is another Board member advising the Codes Officer to ignore her email? Mr. Seibert: according to the Codes Officer, you (Linda) had forced him to send a letter to the property owner that required the owner to cease operations. Mr. Seibert: the letter as sent by the Codes Officer was later rescinded upon the Solicitor's advisement. Ms Slomer: I did nothing except send an email to the Codes Officer in which I also copied all members of the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Slomer asked, can the Board have the Codes Officer enforce the ordinances? James Slomer: the area has been carved out for many years and the cement blocks have also been there for many years. Mr. Slomer: over the past two months, the property owner began to operate a new commercial venture at the site and has now expanded his operations and is bringing in products for retail sale. Jackie Cain: the issue is that the site is in an R-1 zoning district – not a commercial zone. Ms. Slomer: the property owner needs to obtain the proper permits. Mr. Seibert agreed to drive by the site to take a look at

the activities. Mr. Exler: I asked a couple of months ago for the Board to meet in Executive Session to discuss these issues. Mr. Seibert: the Board needs to obtain the facts and provide the property owner with proper guidance.

Mr. Malak commented, he still does not see portraits of the Denny's in the municipal building. Mr. Malak also asked about the status of the township map publication.

Thelma Jewart reported, the City of Pittsburgh will be honoring Ebenezer Denny as the first Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Chalmers offered to provide the telephone number for Mr. Denny's great grandson.

Mr. Chalmers asked if the Chair would be appointing committees of the Board. The Chair stated that she would prefer that there be no Committees of the Board. Ms. Slomer asked, how will the Board be informed about topics since the Chairperson does not communicate with other members of the Board? Mr. Seibert explained that it is not the responsibility of the Chair to appoint members of the Board to Committees; but it is a Board's decision. Mr. Seibert stated, the entire Board should be involved in all decision processes and that having no Committees would actually encourage communication among Board members. Mr. Exler stated, he was on the Board for two years before he was on a Committee.

Margaret Cook reported, the Valley News Dispatch no longer exists. The Tribune Review has taken over and now has three neighborhood editions. Ms. Cook also said that the Valley edition and the Pittsburgh edition split Harmar Township and she is concerned that only one half of the Township will receive the advertisements placed by the Township. Mr. Means responded, the Township Code merely states that the Township must advertise in a newspaper of general circulation and that the Post Gazette would qualify and satisfy the legal requirement. Discussion ensued. The Secretary will contact the Tribune Review for information.

## **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Seibert reported, he had attended the last budget meeting held in November 2015 and that he has researched the financial statements and financial decisions made by the prior Board. He further explained that it is his understanding, there is a checking account and a savings account for the General Fund and the savings account is named the General Fund Reserve – per the Resolution passed by the Board when \$500k was transferred from the General Fund savings “reserve” to the Capital Improvement Fund. Mr. Seibert stated there was a fund balance of \$700k in the savings account when the transfer of the \$500k occurred. Mr. Seibert cited section 1508.01 of the Second Class Township Code wherein only 25% of a fund balance can be transferred to a reserve account. Mr. Seibert stated, the transfer to the Capital Fund was excessive but he will go along with it. He then said, the real question is “does the Township need to set-up an actual operating reserve fund – as opposed to the saving accounts being called the reserve. Dr. Piper asked the Board if they would want to eliminate the savings account/money market and set-up a reserve fund. Mr. Seibert recommended that the accounts be left as is for current. Mr. Seibert then stated, the point he is trying to make is that the Township was able to accumulate a large reserve and therefore should reduce the real estate tax millage rate from 3.7 mills to 3.45 mills.

Mr. Seibert then made a motion to reduce the real estate tax millage rate by Resolution from 3.7 mills to 3.45 mills. Mr. Exler provided the second. The Chairperson opened the floor for Public Comment on the motion. *[Vote on the motion is recorded on page 4 herein]*

Ms. Slomer asked if the Board's time was wasted in all budget preparation meetings last fall? Mr. Seibert replied, no time was wasted; but simply thinks that taxes should be reduced. He explained, there is no need to open the budget. The reduction in revenues from real estate tax collections can be accommodated by using cash on hand to balance the adopted budget. Mr. Cresta requested clarification of the discussion – the Board is not opening the budget, just reducing taxes. Mr. Seibert explained that the action can be described as a management decision.

Ms. Slomer stated, PSATS management training encourages municipalities to have money set aside for unexpected expenditures. Mr. Cresta reminded the other Board members that there is \$842k in the Capital Improvement Fund and the Board can revisit the planned expenditures for that fund.

Mr. Slomer in the audience, asked how much a typical tax bill will be reduced. He asked, why not maintain the tax millage rate to get ahead of road deterioration? Are there not roads in the Township that can be maintained with the funds? Mr. Seibert answered, there is \$150k designated for road improvements in the Capital Fund.

Ms. Janoski stated, UPARC Drive needs repaired.

Mr. Slomer asked the the Board to look at the roads and develop a paving plan.

Ms. Hiteshew advised that the Board should not get into the position to have to borrow money and thinks that extra monies should be used for road repairs, ballfields, and recreation. A home owner who saves \$5.00 on their tax bill but gets a flat tire because of poor road conditions will pay more to get the tire fixed.

Jackie Cain suggested that the Board evaluate all projects and costs and use the funds for those purposes prior to tax rates being reduced.

Ms. Hiteshew stated, the on-going project at Acme Creek could cost \$150k to repair.

Tom Cain asked the Board if they have documented numbers to back the decrease.

Mr. Seibert answered, .25 mills is a \$96k decrease in annual revenues.

Mr. Slomer asked if the Township has a long range paving plan.

Mr. Seiler answered, every year the Township's roads are looked at. This year, there is talk about doing Chapel Downs depending on available funds.

Ms. Slomer stated, in recent past there is \$0 in budget for road repairs.

Mr. Means explained that what Mr. Seibert is proposing, does not change the expenditure side of the budget.

Mike Hillary stated that the general opinion of the public comments heard tonight is that the Board has not given a tax decrease enough thought. This decision will affect future expenditures and will escalate the need to either raise taxes or borrow money. Mr. Hillary suggested that the Board develop a plan by looking at the needs and costs.

Margaret Cook expressed favor in the tax rate decrease.

There being a motion on the floor and a second, the Chairperson called for a roll call vote on the motion as follows: to reduce the real estate tax millage rate by Resolution from 3.7 mills to 3.45 mills.

Mr. Seibert, Yes. Mr. Exler, Yes. Mr. Cresta, Yes. Ms. Janoski, Yes. Ms. Slomer, No.

### **BOARD COMMENTS - CONTINUED**

Ms. Slomer announced the continuing Union Negotiation Meeting scheduled for January 11, 2016. Mr. Seibert stated, all Board members should be permitted to attend.

Ms. Slomer made mention of the recent newspaper article wherein Springdale is considering a police services merger. Ms. Slomer went on to say that Mr. Hillary spent a lot of time researching this topic a few year ago and that she is in favor of merging police services. She also recalled a newspaper article wherein Mr. Exler stated his favor for merging police services. The merger on the table at the time was rejected by Cheswick Borough. Mr. Exler explained, he received a telephone call from the newspaper and was asked What do you think about the merger of police services for four municipalities? Mr. Exler said, I think it is a good idea and this may be a good time to speak with neighboring municipalities since they are currently having issues.

Ms. Slomer recommends that the new Board begin to email and call each other about issues that arise.

Mr. Seibert said he would like to look at the police merger proposal from a couple of years ago

Someone in the audience asked if the two new Board members were sworn in. Dr. Piper answered yes.

### **REPORTS**

Treasurer's Report - None

Engineer's Report

In addition to the written Report as submitted to the Board, Mr. Seiler also reported the following:

Hulton Bridge Winter Maintenance: Mr. Seiler reported that the Road Foreman was called out to do winter maintenance on the Hulton Bridge. After researching the documents to provide an answer to Oakmont Borough, Oakmont was advised that Harmar does not have a Winter Maintenance Agreement with PADOT for winter maintenance of the Hulton Bridge. Mr. Seibert made a motion to have administration move forward with PADOT in executing a winter maintenance agreement for the Hulton Bridge. Mr. Cresta provided the second and the motion was carried unanimously.

ACME Avenue Culvert Replacement (CD40): The work as proposed on the ACME Avenue Culvert Replacement is complete. Mr. Seiler recommended that the Township make payment on the invoice from Pampina Landscape Company in the amount of \$19,826.40. Mr. Seibert made a

motion to pay Pampina Landscape Company in the amount of \$19,826.40 as recommended by the Municipal Engineer. Mr. Cresta provided the second and the motion was carried unanimously.

Solicitor’s Report – None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Resignation of Emiliano Cresta from Zoning Hearing Board: Mr. Seibert made a motion to accept the formal resignation from Emiliano Cresta from his position on the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Exler provided the second and the motion was carried unanimously.

Appointment of Merge & Hill to provide Audit of CD40 Rich Hill Road Traffic Signal Relocation: Ms. Slomer made a motion to appoint Merge & Hill to conduct the audit of the Rich Hill Road Traffic Signal Relocation project at the normal hourly rate (per the 2016 Engagement Letter) and at a cost not to exceed \$2500. Mr. Seibert provided the second and the motion was carried unanimously.

American Natural Fueling Station – DEP Sewage Facilities Planning Module: Mr. Seibert made a motion to approve by Resolution, the Sewage Facilities Planning Module as submitted by American Natural. Mr. Exler provided the second and the motion was carried unanimously.

Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan: Mr. Seibert made a motion to not adopt the Plan named the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan as submitted to the Township. Mr. Exler provided the second. The motion was carried by a majority vote. Ms. Slomer voted no.

Board of Auditor Vacancies: The Chairperson announced there are two vacant positions on the Board of Auditors. Interested parties should send a letter of interest to the Township Secretary/Treasurer.

Purchase of Police Vehicle: The Board tabled the agenda item

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Slomer asked that the Board meet in Executive Session after the meeting to discuss Personnel matters.

There being no further business before the Board, the Chairperson called for a motion to adjourn at 9:30. Mr. Seibert made the motion and Mr. Exler provided the second. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Donna J. Piper