

Benezette Township Meeting Meeting Minutes – April 4, 2023

The Benezette Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday April 4th, 2023 at the Benezette School House located at 105 Schoolhouse Road, Benezette, PA. A workshop began at 5:00 PM with the township meeting starting at 6:00 PM. Present were Chairman/Supervisor Doug Ruffo, Supervisor/Roadmaster Mitchell Hanes, Supervisor Pamela Mong and Secretary/Treasurer Krista Meyer. Please see the attached sign in sheet for residents and guests present at the meeting. Supervisor Ruffo called the township meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance and thanked everyone for attending.

FLOW OF THE MEETING: SUPERVISOR RUFFO REMINDED ALL GUESTS ABOUT THE FLOW OF THE MEETING. THE SUPERVISORS WILL SOLICIT QUESTIONS WHEN NEEDED, BUT IF A GUEST HAS ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE HOLD THEM OFF UNTIL THE PUBLIC FORUM PORTION OF THE MEETING.

MOTION TO ACCEPT MARCH 2023 TOWNSHIP MEETING MINUTES:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Hanes YES: 3 NO: 0

MOTION TO ACCEPT MARCH 2023 TOWNSHIP TREASURER'S REPORT:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Hanes YES: 3 NO: 0

SCHOOL HOUSE ROOF BIDS: THREE BIDS WERE RECEIVED AND THEY WERE OPENED BY SUPERVISOR RUFFO.

--A & A CONSTRUCTION OUT OF BROCKWAY WHO CAME IN WITH A BID OF \$48,450 FOR A SHINGLE ROOF AND A 2ND BID OF \$39,500 FOR A ROOF WITH A METAL ROOF.

--BYLER BROTHERS ROOFING FROM PUNXY GAVE THE NEXT SET OF BIDS. \$38,020 FOR A METAL ROOF, BUT IF THERE ARE ANY DAMAGED PLANK SHEETING IT WILL HAVE TO BE REPLACED AT AN ADDITIONAL COST. A 2ND BID FOR A SHINGLE ROOF CAME IN WITH A BID OF \$46,867 AND AGAIN, IF THERE ARE DAMAGED PLANK SHEETING, IT WILL BE REPLACED AT AN ADDITIONAL COST.

--A 3RD BID RECEIVED FROM GARING ROOFING FROM CHICORA, PA WAS RECEIVED. THE BID WAS FOR \$48,460.00 AND AN ADDITIONAL COST OF \$3.00 A FOOT TO REPLACE SHEETING BOARDS.

EACH BID HAD DIFFERENT DETAILS TO THEM. ONE WOULD REMOVE THE DORMERS. ONE HAD LISTED A RIDGE VENT, RIDGE CAPS, DORMERS, ETC. ANOTHER HAD SNOW RAILS LISTED. THEY ALL VARIED IN DETAIL, BUT BASICALLY WERE IN THE PRICE RANGE WE WERE EXPECTING. SUPERVISOR RUFFO STATED THAT WE WILL TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT ALL OF THE BIDS AND THE DETAILS, FIGURE OUT WHAT IS THE BEST MOVE FOR THE TOWNSHIP AND WE WILL HAVE MORE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC AT THE MAY MEETING.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD TO THE TOWNSHIP HANDBOOK THIS MONTH, BUT SUPERVISOR MONG WILL GET CAUGHT UP ON THIS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY: WE WILL HAVE THE ANNUAL ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEAN UP HERE IN BENEZETTE ON TUESDAY APRIL 11, 2023 AT 9:00 A.M. EVERYONE SHOULD MEET AT THE TOWNSHIP OFFICE. THERE WILL BE GLOVES, VESTS AND BAGS PROVIDED AND WE WILL BE PICKING UP TRASH COME RAIN OR SHINE.

DUMP TRUCK BED: JEFF STEFANAK GAVE A BRIEF UPDATE ON WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE REPAIR OF THE TRUCK BED. NEW HINGES AND OTHER PARTS WERE ORDERED, THE TRUCK BED WILL BE REPAIRED, THE FRAME WILL BE "BEEFED UP" AND IT SHOULD BE REPAIRED FAIRLY SOON.

LOCAL SHARES GRANT 2022: JUST AN UPDATE ON THE ON-LINE GAMBLING PIECE. IT'S A PROGRAM THAT THE STATE CAME UP WITH TO AWARD 100 MILLION DOLLARS TO MUNICIPALITIES TO USE FOR PROJECTS OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS. WE PUT IN AN APPLICATION LAST YEAR FOR A NEW SKID-STEER. WE WERE NOTIFIED THAT BENEZETTE TOWNSHIP DID NOT RECEIVE ANY FUNDING. SUPERVISOR RUFFO STATED THAT WE WOULD GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD AND SUBMIT ANOTHER APPLICATION FOR THE SKID-STEER ONCE A NEW ENROLLMENT PERIOD OPENED UP.

WEBSITE: THE LONG AWAITED NEW BENEZETTE TOWNSHIP WEBSITE IS NOW UP AND RUNNING. IF YOU GO TO www.benezettetwp.com OR www.benezettetownship.com YOU CAN SEE THE NEW SITE. THERE ARE A FEW BUGS THAT NEED TO BE WORKED THROUGH WITH THE COMPANY THAT DESIGNED THE SITE SO THAT KRISTA CAN ENTER INFORMATION FROM HERE AT THE OFFICE INSTEAD OF HAVING TO CONTACT THEM EACH TIME WE NEED SOMETHING NEW ENTERED.

SCHOOLHOUSE GENERATOR: THE GENERATOR IS GOING TO BE INSTALLED HERE AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE NEXT THURSDAY. SUPERVISOR RUFFO STATED THAT THE NEXT TIME THE POWER COMPANY TELLS US THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A POWER OUTAGE, WE CAN TELL THEM THAT WE NOW HAVE A PLACE FOR FOLKS TO GO TO GET WARM OR GET OUT OF THE RAIN. WE CAN SEND THEM HERE TO THE SCHOOLHOUSE. IF THE POWER GOES OUT, THE SCHOOLHOUSE WILL STILL HAVE PHONES, INTERNET AND ELECTRICITY.

LANG SURVEYING: JOSEPHIC SUBDIVISION: JUST ROUTINE NOTIFICATION PAPERWORK THAT NEEDS TO BE MADE PUBLIC AND THEN SIGNED OFF ON. IT'S FOR A SEWAGE SYSTEM NEAR DEVILS ELBOW ON THE SWACKHAMMER FARM.

PROPERTY COMPLAINT: WE HAD RECEIVED NOTIFICATION FROM D.E.P. REGARDING A PROPERTY COMPLAINT MADE ABOUT A PROPERTY. CHARLTON LANE ACROSS THE BRIDGE IN GRANT. IT HAS APPROXIMATELY 8 BROKEN DOWN VEHICLES, 40-50 TIRES AND NUMEROUS LAWNMOWERS. THE TOWNSHIP WILL FIND OUT WHO OWNS THIS PROPERTY AND SEND THEM A LETTER TO CLEAN UP THEIR PROPERTY. WE WILL KEEP EVERYONE UPDATED ON THIS.

TAR & CHIP SCHEDULE: THE TOWNSHIP BUDGETED \$15,000 FOR TAR AND CHIPPING OF THE ROADS FOR THE YEAR. EMPLOYEE JEFF STEFANAK MET WITH EMPLOYEES FROM JAY TOWNSHIP AND THEY DISCUSSED WHICH ROADS WILL BE TAR & CHIPPED THIS YEAR. THEY WILL BE DOING THE ROADS THAT WERE COMPLETED LAST YEAR TO GIVE THEM A SECOND COAT OF TAR & CHIP AND THE NEW ROADS BEING DONE WILL BE HULETT, PINE, WALNUT AND DOLLINGER ROADS.

DCED CLOSED OUT: THE DCED PROJECT HAS BEEN CLOSED OUT AND ALL FINAL BILLS HAVE BEEN PAID.

TENNIS COURT / PICKLE BALL: SUPERVISOR RUFFO ASKED SECRETARY MEYER TO LOOK AROUND FOR GRANTS TO TURN THE TENNIS COURT INTO A PICKLE BALL COURT AND ALSO LOOK FOR MONIES TO UPGRADE OR GET SOME NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

SOLICITOR ATTENDANCE: OUR SOLICITOR WILL BE ATTENDING OUR NEXT MEETING (MAY), SO EVERYONE WILL GET A CHANCE TO MEET HER. SHE WAS ALSO ASKED TO PUT TOGETHER LETTERS FOR SEWAGE CUSTOMERS WHO WERE NON-COMPLIANT IN PAYING THEIR SEWAGE BILLS.

TOWNSHIP CREDIT CARD: THE TOWNSHIP DOES NOT CURRENTLY HAVE A CREDIT CARD WHICH MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO MAKE SOME PURCHASES THAT REQUIRE ONE. SUPERVISOR MONG MADE A MOTION TO OBTAIN A CREDIT CARD FROM OUR BANK (FIRST COMMONWEALTH) WITH A MAX LIMIT OF \$5,000. SUPERVISOR HANES SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED.
YES: 3 NO: 0

PAVILION RENTAL: THE CURRENT RATE TO RENT THE PAVILION IS \$35.00 AND WE CURRENTLY HAVE NO CONTRACT WITH THE INDIVIDUALS RENTING IT. THE SUPERVISORS WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE INCREASING THE RENT TO \$50.00 AND HAVE SOME KIND OF CONTRACT THAT STATES IF SOMETHING IS DAMAGED, THEY WILL PAY FOR THE COST TO REPLACE OR REPAIR AND LIST WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE DONE. MAYBE HAVE A RESERVED SIGN FOR WHEN PEOPLE HAVE IT RESERVED SO SOMEONE ELSE DOESN'T COME IN AND USE IT WHILE IT IS RESERVED FOR SOMEONE ELSE. WE WILL GO OVER SOME DO'S AND DON'TS AND MAKE A DECISION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

ROADMASTERS REPORT: SUPERVISOR HANES GAVE UPDATES ON WHAT ROAD WORK WILL BE DONE SOON AND WHAT WORK HAD RECENTLY BEEN COMPLETED.

TOWNSHIP PUBLIC FORUM:

DENISE CHANEY: QUESTION ABOUT WHAT THE NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS IS? EXPLAINED HOW "CERTIFIED MAIL" AT THE POST OFFICE WORKS. DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT ORDINANCES WE HAVE FOR THE AREA? HAD A QUESTION ABOUT PUTTING A SALES TAX ON CERTAIN ITEMS THAT GOES TO THE TOWNSHIP? CAN WE GET A STATE REP HERE TO DISCUSS PUTTING A TAX ON STUFF THAT JUST COMES TO THE TOWNSHIP? HAS THE SCHOOL HOUSE BEEN PLACED ON A HISTORICAL REGISTRY? IS ALCOHOL ALLOWED AT THE PAVILION? QUESTION / COMMENT ABOUT TAXES COMING TO THE TOWNSHIP? THE TOWNSHIP NEEDS TO START GETTING SOMETHING FROM ALL THE TOURISTS THAT COME UP HERE (TAX REVENUE).

BOB DAVIS: WHO INSTALLED THE GENERATOR? (ALLEGHENY ELECTRIC) WHAT WAS THE COST? (\$10,000, BUT \$5,000 WAS A GRANT FROM THE COUNTY). WHAT KIND OF STAFF DO YOU HAVE TO HELP WITH TREE DEBRIS OR DOWNED TREES WHEN A STORM BLOWS THROUGH? HOW OFTEN IS THE PAVILION RENTED OUT? STATION ROAD WILL ONLY GET WORSE AND WORSE IF THE "DIP" ISN'T FIXED (IN RESPONSE TO DONNA MCKAIN'S QUESTION). CAN WE ASK MIKE ARMINANI AND THE ATTORNEY THAT IS COMING TO THE NEXT MEETING, HOW CAN THE TOWNSHIP GENERATE REVENUE FROM THE 100,000+ THOUSAND OF PEOPLE THAT COME HERE EVERY YEAR?

GAIL GERHART: IF SOMEONE HAD A COMPLAINT ABOUT A PROPERTY, BUT DIDN'T KNOW THE NAME OR ADDRESS OR WHO OWNED IT, HOW COULD THEY FIND OUT?

DONNA MCKAIN: WHAT IF THE TOWNSHIP TOOK THE MONEY THAT THEY ARE GOING TO USE TO REPAIR THE "DIP" IN THE ROAD ON STATION ROAD AND USE IT TO HELP FIX THE ROOF. THAT BUMP IS KIND OF LIKE A SPEED BUMP AND SHOULD JUST SLOW PEOPLE DOWN.

TROY REINFORD: HAS THE TOWNSHIP FOUND ANY MONEY TO GET THE ROOF FIXED YET? OF THE 5% HOTEL TAX BUSINESS PAY, CAN THE TOWNSHIP GET ANY OF THAT MONEY? WHY CAN'T WE TAX ATV'S?

DANNY DEVITO: INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO EVERYONE STATING HE WAS A CANDIDATE FOR ELK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION. HE DISCUSSED WHAT HE STOOD FOR AND THINGS HE'D LIKE TO SEE CHANGED IN ELK COUNTY.

JOHN ROUSH: CAN A PERSONAL DONATION BE MADE TO THE TOWNSHIP TO GO TOWARD THE ROOF? SUPERVISOR RUFFO WOULD CHECK THE LEGALITIES OF DOING THIS.

TERRY BRIGGS: DO WE HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNTY BOARD THAT COULD HELP US GET A TAX THAT CAN COME TO THE TOWNSHIP?

TONY COPELLO: HE WANTED TO DISCUSS, COMMENT ON AND MAKE SURE IT WAS IN THE MEETING MINUTES A CONVERSATION THAT HE HAD EARLIER IN THE EVENING WITH SUPERVISOR RUFFO REGARDING SOME RIGHT-OF-WAYS AND PROPERTY LINES THAT THEY OWNED THAT THE TOWNSHIP WAS ENCROACHING UPON. SUPERVISOR RUFFO STATED THAT AFTER DOING SOME HOMEWORK ON THE MATTER, THEY WOULD TAKE CARE OF THE ISSUE.

TRISTEN REINFORD: COMMENT / QUESTION ON TAXING TOURISM ON A SMALLER SCALE. ISN'T THERE A WAY TO GET MONEY DIRECTLY FROM THE TOURISTS?

DENISE WEBER: HOW ARE ATV RIDERS ALERTED OF THE TIMES THAT IT'S OKAY TO RIDE?

JOHN ROUSH: HAD A QUESTION ABOUT A SUB-DIVISION.

TOWNSHIP PORTION OF THE MEETING ADJOURNED:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Hanes YES: 3 NO: 0

SEWAGE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION TO ACCEPT MARCH 2023 SEWAGE MEETING MINUTES:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Hanes YES: 3 NO: 0

MOTION TO ACCEPT MARCH 2023 SEWAGE TREASURER'S REPORT:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Hanes YES: 3 NO: 0

PAMELA CARSON-KELLER: THEY HAVE PROPERTY IN BLUE SKY AND HAVE REMOVED THE TRAILER THAT WAS ON THE PROPERTY LEAVING IT AN EMPTY LOT.

MOTION MADE BY SUPERVISOR HANES TO DISCONTINUE BILLING HER FOR MONTHLY SEWAGE WITH THE STIPULATION THAT IF THEY PLACE ANOTHER STRUCTURE ON THE PROPERTY, A TAP FEE WILL HAVE TO BE PAID TO RECONNECT AND MONTHLY BILLING WILL RESUME. SUPERVISOR RUFFO SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED. YES: 2 NO: 1

GRINDER PUMPS: THE TOWNSHIP CURRENTLY HAS EIGHT GRINDER PUMPS IN STOCK BACK AT THE SEWAGE SHED WITH NO BACK UP GRINDER PUMPS IN STOCK. SUPERVISOR RUFFO WANTED INPUT FROM THE PUBLIC ON WHETHER OR NOT THE TOWNSHIP SHOULD CONTINUE TO CARRY THE GRINDER PUMPS OR JUST LET THEM PURCHASE THEIR OWN FROM EITHER GAMBINO'S OR CHAD LILLEY?

"JOHN SMITH" GRINDER PUMP: HAS PROPERTY IN BLUE SKY WITH A CAMP ON IT SINCE AUGUST OF 2022 AND HAS REFUSED TO PUT A GRINDER PUMP ON THE PROPERTY. HE FINALLY GAVE IN AND PAID \$3,000 TOWARDS THE GRINDER PUMP, BUT NEVER PAID ANYMORE TOWARDS IT AND NEVER GOT TO PICK IT UP. NOW HE IS HAVING MONEY ISSUES AND WANTS HIS \$3,000 BACK. SHOULD THE TOWNSHIP REFUND HIS MONEY OR KEEP IT AND CREDIT IT TOWARDS WHO EVER BUYS THE PROPERTY?

A MOTION WAS MADE TO HAVE THE TOWNSHIP HOLD ON TO THE \$3,000 AND IF HE SELLS THE PROPERTY, THE NEW OWNER WILL HAVE A CREDIT TOWARDS THE GRINDER PUMP. SUPERVISOR MONG SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED. YES: 3 NO: 0

SEWAGE OPERATOR'S REPORT: NO COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS.

SEWAGE PUBLIC FORUM:

BRIAN CHANEY: IF THE (GRINDER PUMPS) JUST HAVE TO MEET A CERTAIN STANDARD, THEN WHY WORRY ABOUT WHERE THEY GET THEM FROM?

TROY REINFORD: SO, WOULD CHAD AND THE OTHER GUY BE CERTIFIED TO INSTALL THE GRINDER PUMPS? QUESTION ABOUT FINDING MONEY FOR GRANTS?

TRISTEN REINFORD: IF THE TOWNSHIP ISN'T MAKING ANY PROFIT OFF OF THE GRINDER PUMPS, WHY CONTINUE TO CARRY THEM?

TONY COPELLO: THE TOWNSHIP MAKES US PURCHASE THE SPECIFIC GRINDER PUMPS. THEY SHOULD HAVE THEM IN STOCK FOR WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED.

DAVE WEBER: WHAT IF GAMBINO DIDN'T HAVE A GRINDER PUMP IN STOCK WHEN ONE WAS NEEDED AND SOMEONE HAD TO WAIT A MONTH OR SO TO GET ONE?

BOB DAVIS: COMMENTS ABOUT THE \$3,000 PROPERTY OWNER AND WHY ISN'T THERE A LIEN ON THE PROPERTY?

JOHN ROUSH: COMMENT ABOUT THE \$3,000 PROPERTY.

SEWAGE MEETING ADJOURNED:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong

COMMENTS: None

SECOND: Supervisor Hanes

YES: 3 NO: 0