

Benezette Township Meeting Meeting Minutes – May 2nd, 2023

The Benezette Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday May 2nd, 2023 at the Benezette School House located at 105 Schoolhouse Road, Benezette, PA. An executive session began at 5:00 PM with the township solicitor. A workshop began at 5:30 and the meeting starting at 6:00 PM. Present were Chairman Supervisor Doug Ruffo, Supervisor Pamela Mong, Secretary/Treasurer Krista Meyer and Solicitor Stephanie Fera. 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 & introduced our solicitor, Stephanie Fera. Stephanie informed the audience that there was an executive session prior to discuss legal matters.

REVIEW OF PROTOCOL:

MOTION TO ACCEPT APRIL 2023 TOWNSHIP MEETING MINUTES:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Ruffo YES: 2 NO: 0

MOTION TO ACCEPT APRIL 2023 TOWNSHIP TREASURER'S REPORT:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Ruffo YES: 2 NO: 0

SUPERVISOR RESIGNATION: Mitchell Hanes turned in his resignation for personal reasons last Thursday as a supervisor. He turned in his letter of resignation and it has been filed. Pam made a motion to accept his resignation and Doug made the second motion. Supervisor Ruffo said that if anyone is interested in filling that position for the remainder of the year to turn in a letter of interest by 1pm Monday, May 8th. We will have a special meeting on May 10th at 10am here at the township building to decide on who will fulfill that vacancy. This will make a 6-year term and also a 4-year term that will be on the ballot in the fall for supervisors.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: Supervisor Mong has been working on the handbook. She has added probationary period, fire calls and resignations. Supervisor Mong stated that Stephanie Fera gave her some pointers on what the township needs in the handbook. Once it is completed, we will have a copy for review.

DUMP TRUCK BED: The 550 Truck bed came disengaged. We found a company in St. Marys that fixed it for us. They said it is as good as new if not better. We do not have a final bill on that as of yet.

TAR & CHIP: We will be adding one coat on the same roads as last year; Summerson Road, Dents Run Road, Grant Road (the east end) and Kelly Lane. New roads we added this year will be Hulett Street, Dollinger Road, Pine Street & Walnut Street. We are scheduled for the week of June 12th. We have an intergovernmental agreement with Jay Township that needs signed. Supervisor Mong made the motion to accept the Intergovernmental Agreement between Jay Township and Benezette Township to tar and chip the roads. Supervisor Ruffo made the second motion.

ARMANINI'S FOLLOW-UP: Supervisor Ruffo talked with State Representative Mike Armanini and invited him to come to one of our meetings. He will try to get it in his schedule to come. They talked about different tax options. He is genuinely concerned with what we deal with here including the number of visitors and our limited income. We will talk about some other opportunities we may have here at the township. We would like to be able to stay solvent. Bob Davis question some of the ideas that were discussed.

ROOF / PAVILION RENTAL: Supervisor Ruffo contacted the 3 bidders for the roof. All the bidders were competitive and a decision hasn't been made yet. First, we need to find where the funds will be coming. We also will need to decide when this will take place. Supervisor Ruffo left the contractors know that we will keep them in a holding pattern for the time being until there can be some follow up made. The building and property belong to the township and the board of supervisors should be involved with any decision being made or even suggestions. We had an issue the other day where the Camera Club called because they seen a post advertising a farmer's market scheduled to be at the pavilion on the same day that they were scheduled to use the pavilion. The township maintains a calendar of who rents and pays to use the pavilion. Dee Chaney questioned how do they find this information and understood that they were responsible for "dropping the ball". Supervisor Mong stated that Donna McKain will be picking up a copy of the calendar tomorrow. It was understood that there needs to be better communication.

KECA AGREEMENT: Our agreement is up with KECA. This is for the Expo and their usage of the township grounds during their 2 day Expo. They use the grounds for staging, parking and then bus the people up to the Visitor's Center. Supervisor Ruffo briefed over the agreement that will be good for 5 years. In the agreement KECA agreed to pay to have outhouse sewage pumped out and also make a donation to the township. The dates may change year to year. Jeff Stefanak questioned what happens if there is damage to the property. Brandi Hanes said that any damage or ruts is covered in the agreement. Dee Chaney questioned if people are charged to use the buses and who gets that money. Supervisor Ruffo makes the motion to accept the agreement to sign the agreement. Supervisor Mong made the second motion.

MEDIX GRADE ROAD: Supervisor Ruffo said he pats Jeff Stefanak on the back for meeting with the officials from the Conservation District. We were awarded \$24,000 for replacing 3 of the cross drains on Medix Grade Road. We have been trying to get money for Medix Grade Road for years, but have tried getting larger pieces done. We are hoping this will be a continual process to get Medix Grade Road fixed. We are starting small and trying to get the important pieces done. Bill Kinkade has been asked to do the job and it will be paid by the Elk County Conservation District. It should be started in the next 60 days.

NEW HIRES: Gary Decker has started working for the township again. He has been a great help with whatever he can; whether its running trucks, cleaning the trash area or cutting grass. Aidan Hoffman will be returning to work. Carter Clay from Grant was hired as well. Aidan and Carter will be finishing up their school year. Once they are done with school their hours will increase. All three gentlemen will be making \$14 per hour.

ROADMASTERS REPORT: There have been questions about the pile of gravel in Medix. Penn Dot will be tar & chipping 15 miles of 555 between July and October. They also will be doing Quehanna Highway.

SOLICITOR: Stephanie Fera said she does not have anything to report on. Supervisor Ruffo said that our solicitor has been working on a campground ordinance for us. We have talked about this for several years. We have a rough draft of that and will be reviewing it.

TOWNSHIP PUBLIC FORUM:

Dee Chaney – commented that there has been some police presence in the area during the weekends. He has been up around Winslow Hill. Maybe they will get some of the ones that have been speeding. Secondly, she said the School House Committee will be having a bake sale in the community room not here in the township room.

Gail Gearhart – Said that she is happy to meet the beautiful, new solicitor. She enjoys seeing a young good-looking woman be successful.

Shelby McCluskey said the lines in front of her house looks really nice and she appreciates it. Shelby seen in the Dubois Courier that Waste Management gives \$5,000 a month for collecting the garbage. She asked if the township gets anything for it?

Donna McKain – With the cameras can we not see who is doing illegal dumping at the dumps? Did the bear come back?

Bob Davis – commented that he appreciated the solicitor being present. New development in town; When someone comes into Benezette and wants to A. subdivide or B. build a building on an existing lot, what authority do you supervisors have to impact that issue? For a subdivision do the supervisors have to sign off on it? The topic that has been brought up over a year ago which was What do we want Benezette to look like In 10 years? Let's say you get a notice of possibly a hotel going up somewhere could you notify us of that? We would want to put input on that as that would be a huge deal on all of us. Bob asked about the executive session and if the information could be exposed and what it was about.

John Roush – With the Resignation you want to hear something by next Monday? John spoke as himself if he were interested would he have to resign as an auditor would it be okay to approach current employees to make sure he is not going to be a hindrance to them.

TOWNSHIP PORTION OF THE MEETING ADJOURNED:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Ruffo YES: 2 NO: 0

SEWAGE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION TO ACCEPT APRIL 2023 SEWAGE MEETING MINUTES:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Ruffo YES: 2 NO: 0

MOTION TO ACCEPT APRIL 2023 SEWAGE TREASURER'S REPORT:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Ruffo YES: 2 NO: 0

MOTORS FOR SEWAGE PLANT:

RETRO FIT PUMPS: We ordered some new I9 retro fit pumps and some new motors for the plant that came in today.

PENNVEST MEETING: We need to make some improvements to the plant down to Trout Run. We contacted the County about funds and they referred us to USDA and they suggested a loan. We do not want anymore loans. Supervisor Ruffo went to a meeting with Penn Vest and then we had a conference call with them along with our engineers. We are trying to get on the schedule to get some paperwork done to apply for a grant by August 1st. We are looking at around \$220,000 to \$230,000 to get this new pump station put in. DEP called and wanted to know how we were making out.

SEWAGE OPERATOR'S REPORT: no questions

SEWAGE PUBLIC FORUM:

SEWAGE MEETING ADJOURNED:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: None SECOND: Supervisor Ruffo YES: 2 NO: 0

Meeting Minutes transcribed by Krista Meyer, Township Secretary