

Benezette Township Meeting Meeting Minutes – October 3rd, 2023

The Benezette Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 3rd, 2023 at the Benezette School House located at 105 Schoolhouse Road, Benezette, PA. A workshop began at 5:15 PM with the township meeting starting at 6:00 PM. Present were Chairman Supervisor Doug Ruffo, Supervisor Pamela Mong, Supervisor Brandi Hanes, 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 SEPTEMBER 2023 TOWNSHIP MEETING MINUTES:

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

MOTION TO ACCEPT SEPTEMBER 2023 TOWNSHIP TREASURER'S REPORT:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong COMMENTS: Bob Davis questioned the sewer portion of insurance.
SECOND: Supervisor Hanes YES: 3 NO: 0

JAY TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT: Robert Tyler brought the letter for the 5 year agreement between the Township and the Fire Department. There are no changes. They will need the letter back on the township's letterhead. Agreement will be made & signed at the next meeting.

EMPLOYEE CHANGES: Jeff Stefanak has moved on to Jay Township as their Roadmaster. Justin Arnold from Benezette Township has been hired in Jeff's place. At this time there are no benefits. He will work his 90 days and the new board will have to decide on his benefits. Bob Davis questioned if Justin will be working full-time 40 hours a week, which the answer was yes. Holly Martinchek, our sewage plant operator, has given her notice. She will be done at the end of November 2023. DEP is having their meeting on October 11th to approve applications for plant operators. We will find out if Jeff Stefanak has received his license to be the plant operator for the sewage plant. He has passed his test & background checks, etc. so this is just a formality. John Roush questioned how Justin Arnold is on running equipment. Justin has his cdl license.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: Supervisor Doug Ruffo addressed the section in the handbook in regard to fireman leaving on call. If or employee is a fireman and gets called out during his shift to a "fire" he will be paid up to 4 hours for his service. John Roush questioned what happens if they are in the middle of a "snow storm". Sup. Ruffo stated that the Township comes first. Depending on the situation whether the fireman employee will be able to leave to help the fire department. Sup. Ruffo made the motion to pay the fireman/employee up to 4 hours for his service in the case they are needed. Sup. Hanes made the second motion.

DGVLR: We received 2 grants from the Conservation District. One will be to replace a cross drain on Winslow Hill. The project will cost about \$8,800 and Bill Kinkade will have this done before the end of the year. We also received about \$22,000 that will do some more work on Medix Run Road. Bill Kinkade will be doing this job as well and it will be done by the end of the year. Sup. Ruffo gave a heads up to the new upcoming supervisors that the Township will need people certified for Dirt & Gravel in order to receive future funds.

LOCAL SHARES GRANT: We will be submitting applications for 2 pieces of equipment. One will be for a compact track loader and the other a mini excavator. We are not buying them unless we get grant money. The applications are due at the end of November. Our engineer called and has suggested that we try to apply for LSA grant to pay for the restroom here at Township grounds. Keller Engineer had drawn up the plans quite awhile ago so it would just be a matter of applying for the funds. We have 3 resolutions that need signed to approve applying for these grants. The first resolution is for the mini excavator for \$83,700. Sup. Hanes made the motion to accept it. Sup. Ruffo made the second. The second resolution is for the compact track loader for \$75,594. Sup. Hanes made the motion to accept that. Sup. Mong made the second motion. The last resolution will be for the restroom \$172,500. Keller Engineers are charging us \$750 to submit this application and do the paperwork. The plans are already drawn up. We will not find out until mid-2024. So most likely this project will not take place until 2025. Sup. Hanes made the motion to adopt the resolution for the restrooms. Sup. Mong made the second motion.

BUILDING PERMITS: The building permit went through for the 3,000 square foot, 2 story retail center going up Winslow Hill. John Roush made comment that it would be built on fill. Unknown voice questioned about the requirements for parking. Sup. Ruffo explained that it would all have to go to DEP, the State Code, and Russ Braun's requirements. Sup. Hanes said it would be commercial permits.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE UPDATES: Sup. Hanes said the 2nd Street garage has the roof on, painting is done, & now waiting for the trim to be done around the garage doors. They also will be painting the doors. They also would like to get the weeds cleaned up. It should be done within a week.

Supervisor Ruffo explained issues that are going on with the well. There is a pretty significant leak in the basement. We needed to find out where exactly the well is located. We do not know at this time what all is involved and what exactly is going on. Once the Elktober Fest is over they will have to break up the concrete and try to find the well to see what is going on. Bob Davis asked the supervisors to please not put concrete over the well.

MILITARY BANNERS: Sup. Hanes gave an update on the military banners. They were able to sign an agreement finally with Penelec. We will be able to put banners on 9 utility poles. Sup. Hanes is waiting to find out what are the sizes available and the pricing.

ROADMASTER REPORT: No questions or comments regarding the roadmaster report.

TOWNSHIP PUBIC FORUM:

Donna McKain – questioned whether the picnic tables can be painted before winter.

Sup. Ruffo – Replied that he will get the guys on that. They had pressure washed them & will get them painted. He also commented on how nice the decorations look in the restrooms and thanked Donna.

Dee Chaney – thanked the supervisors for the pedestrian signs going up Winslow Hill and coming down. She said that it does seem to be helping some. Dee also questioned how many positions are open for supervisors. (2 positions - supervisor 4 year & supervisor 6 year)

Sup. Ruffo questioned about the meeting next month. It will be on Wednesday vs. Tuesday due to the elections. (Nov. 8)

Brian Chaney – commented that 2nd Street garage looks really nice. Brian also had questions and suggestions about speed limit signs.

Bob Davis – questioned how often do “you” do a road check on Benzette. Sup. Ruffo answered saying they do a road check daily especially on the main roads. Huston Hill may only be every couple of weeks. They try to get out around all of the roads on a regular basis. Often there are 2 people that go on the road checks in case there is a tree down or something else that needs addressed.

John Roush – questioned about where they are putting the building going up Winslow Hill. Will there be a drainage pipe in between the property and the main road? Russ Braun is handling the driveway permits. John Roush questioned whether “citizens” could call and question Russ Braun about what all is going on with this building.

Brian Chaney – questioned if they would have to go by PennDot rules if it is on a PennDot road. Winslow Hill is a township road. Sup. Ruffo explained that we had LTAP which is a PennDot program come and give us recommendations on what signs were needed on Winslow Hill.

Amanda Maholtz – thinks that the idea for military banners is awesome. She questioned how it will be decided on who is going to get a flag with only 9 poles. Sup. Hanes said that the program can grow this is just the start. Sup. Hanes would like to see it start with the residents first.

Leann Copello – asked if the restrooms would be put in the same location as the outhouses are now. Sup. Ruffo commented that no the plans are to put it on the side of the building where the basketball court is. The sewage lines and the water lines are right there and will be easily accessible.

Donna McKain – told everyone to look for the ghost above the double doors in the window. It has lights on it and flows back and forth.

Sup. Ruffo – commented that Mowrey's fixed Blue Sky and it has been a lot better. Comments were made by Tom Wilson, Brian Chaney & Dee Chaney.

TOWNSHIP PORTION OF THE MEETING ADJOURNED:

FIRST: Supervisor Mong

COMMENTS: None

SECOND: Supervisor Hanes

YES: 3 NO: 0

SEWAGE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION TO ACCEPT SEPTEMBER 2023 SEWAGE MEETING MINUTES:

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

MOTION TO ACCEPT SEPTEMBER 2023 SEWAGE TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

GRINDER PUMP PURCHASE: We received a call from a property owner that is not in the sewage district that they would like to purchase a grinder pump. The cost of the grinder pumps is \$6,391. The township purchases grinder pumps in bulk to save the customer money. We currently have 4 grinder pumps back there. Sup. Hanes made a motion that we allow the property owner purchase a grinder pump from the township. Sup. Mong made the second.

EDU EQUIVALENCY TABLE ADDITIONS: We have an equivalency table that is part of the rules and regulations for the sewage department. The table is a tool that helps determine the amount of EDU's a customer would be charged for the amount of waste. We have 2 new facilities in Benezetze Township that is not listed on the EDU Equivalency table. The Visitor Center just built an education/banquet/event center. Sup. Ruffo talked with Keller Engineers and they recommended 0-10 employees using the center would be 1 EDU. 0-100 attendees would be ½ of an EDU. 100-200 attendees another ½ EDU (1 EDU). 200-300 attendees would be 1 ½ EDU's. In this case, the center will be able to hold 150 attendees along with employees for 2 EDU's. This will help in the future if another case comes up like it, we will be covered. The next one would be Bed & Breakfasts. We have had this in our discussions but it has not been included on the table. The Bed & Breakfast would include the family that live in the establishment at 1EDU & then rented rooms 2-5 will be an additional EDU. Sup. Mong makes the motion that we adopt the additions to the EDU Equivalency table. Sup. Hanes made the second motion.

HOLLY RESIGNATION: As was stated earlier in the meeting, Holly has given her resignation to be done by the end of November. We will update everyone on the status of the sewage operator at the next meeting.

SEWAGE OPERATOR'S REPORT: In the packets.

SEWAGE PUBLIC FORUM:

Bob Davis – asked about the update on the drain pipe that goes to the stream.

Sup. Ruffo – said that PennVest will be discussing the grants at a meeting in October. We will have an update in November.

John Roush – When will we know if Jeff passed his test. (Jeff passed his test. We are just waiting to hear if he gets his license)

SEWAGE MEETING ADJOURNED:

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

Meeting Minutes transcribed by Secretary Krista Meyer