

RICE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MINUTES
September 1, 2020

The duly advertised regular meeting of the Rice Township Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, September 1st, 2020, with limited attendance capacity due to social distancing requirements. The meeting was also accessible via ZOOM. Copies of the Agenda, Minutes of the previous meeting, and Treasurer's Reports were available to the public at the meeting and electronically by request to the Secretary/Treasurer. Chairman Robert Pipech called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and called for the Pledge of Allegiance. It was announced that the meeting was being recorded for preparing the minutes. Video cameras were also recording the meeting.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - here
Pipech - here
Smith - here

Also present were: Solicitor Dean, Engineer Pasonick, Planning Commission member Mike Manosky, resident Mike Grochowski, Pat Rushton and Rebecca Sodergren all via ZOOM, resident Jude Fritz and non-resident Andy Gegaris physically.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Pipech called for public comment. Resident Jude Fritz complained about road conditions, particularly roads in Woodland Estates, lack of maintained berms, need for road sweeping, lack of work to improve the roads. collapsed drains and speeding issues. Fritz requested a 4-way stop sign at Catalpa or the installation of speed bumps. Supervisor Smith clarified the issues with Fritz concerning Woodland Estates roads. Pipech explained the work that was done on Ice Harvest Drive, the \$600,000 application for LSA grant funds consistent with the road plan and the delay in that grant program due to COVID-19. Secretary Beck confirmed the delay in grant awards this year. Arnold noted that other maintenance which is not always visible has also occurred on roads this summer and noted that grant money is an important source for road repair. Pipech noted that speed bumps were illegal and that the stop sign issue required PennDot study and approval. Pipech also noted that the roads in the development were not primary feeder roads. Arnold responded that the police cannot be everywhere at the same time and cannot spend 100% of their time trying to tamp down speeding. Fritz questioned where money for the road could be found. Fritz and Gegaris, a resident from White Haven, both suggested that police consolidation in Mountaintop would provide the funds for the roads. Solicitor Dean and the Supervisors noted the political headwinds to the consolidation idea since it would take three townships to agree, and no study has been done since it is only theoretical. Smith noted that politics create a major role in this issue. Pipech noted that we remain the lowest tax rate on the mountain which also creates its own impediment to consolidation.

In the interest of time, Dean suggested that the Supervisors could pass a motion to accept all the motions on the agenda.

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Given our award of the grant for the Ice Lake Dam Retrofit project, Pipech asked Vice-Chair Arnold to be the point man on the project. Residents with questions about the project are to direct them to Arnold. This was confirmed by a motion.

MOTION by Pipech, second by Smith, to appoint Arnold as the lead Supervisor on the Ice Lake Dam project.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - yes

Pipech - yes

Smith - yes

MOTION CARRIED.

Fritz asked about the potholes, the debris in the drainage ditches and the berms as more easily addressed items as opposed to paving. Arnold asked Pipech if the Road Crew could check out some of these issues.

Fritz also questioned the source of funds for the demolition of the Rice Township Volunteer Fire Hall. Arnold explained the \$42,000 for the demolition came from a Luzerne County Community Development grant. Arnold noted that the Township has been aggressive seeking funds from a variety of sources for grants. Smith asked Beck to review grant sources who explained that of our grant sources only LSA could be used to fund road work. Smith noted that a grant to be written this fall would address maintenance of the tennis courts and the basketball courts. Arnold also noted that the Township is solvent and that the Supervisors are reluctant to raise taxes. Arnold pointed out the leave drop-off and recycling programs at no cost when recycling programs are being closed all around the Township. Gegaris suggested writing a grant for a master recreation plan and Pipech explained that the park master plan was already in place. Gegaris then suggested the plan as a Mountaintop consolidated plan and Smith reiterated the politics of any consolidation idea. Pipech reported the rejection of the single bid for double tar and chip for Ice Harvest Drive because contractors are so busy. Smith noted that the Supervisors have no personal agenda and their responsibility is to the residents and Township employees. Resident Mark Grochowski noted the motion to authorize the Township Engineer to advertise the project for bid opening on October 6. He offered digital photos and his assistance, and suggested contractors be contacted.

ENGINEER'S REPORT: Engineer Pasonick reported that the fire hall demolition was complete and that Pasonick was recommending payment including the change order to total \$42,600.

BUSINESS MATTERS Con't:

MOTION by Pipech, second by Smith, to accept the Minutes of the Regular meeting held on August 4, 2020.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - yes

Pipech - yes

Smith - yes

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by Pipech, second by Smith, to accept all the following motions on the agenda.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - yes

Pipech - yes

Smith - yes

MOTION CARRIED.

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BUSINESS MATTERS Con't:

Received the Treasurer's Report for August, 2020:

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, and all bills to be paid.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____

MOTION CARRIED.

Received the Roadmaster's Report for August, 2020:

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to accept the Roadmaster's Report as presented.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____

MOTION CARRIED.

Received the Police Report for August, 2020:

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to accept the Police Report as presented.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____

MOTION CARRIED.

Received the Zoning Report for August, 2020:

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to accept the Zoning Report for August, 2020, as presented.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to authorize Engineer Pasonick to advertise for bids for the Ice Lake Dam Retrofit Project 2020 to be opened on October 6, 2020 for consideration at the Board of Supervisors meeting on that date.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to reject the bid from New Enterprise Stone and Lime Company, Inc. for \$157,748 for the 2020 Pave Project as it exceeds available funding.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to adopt Resolution 2020-9 to approve the request for payment from Brdaric Construction for \$28,600 and to accept and approve for payment Change Order #1 for \$14,000 as recommended by the Township Engineer, to apply to Luzerne County for payment of these amounts from the Community Development Grant and to pay Brdaric promptly once the County funds are received.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____

MOTION CARRIED.

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BUSINESS MATTERS:

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to adopt Resolution 2020-10 to permanently close Willowby Street to all public vehicular traffic from its intersection with Nuangola Road and its intersection with Front Street for safety reasons.

ROLL CALL: Arnold - _____ Pipech - _____ Smith - _____
MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to ratify the decision by poll to engage Chemung Supply to strengthen the previously installed guide rail on the south side of the Weyhenmeyer Road bridge and install extensions on the existing guide rail and install a new guide rail on the north side of the bridge as required by PennDOT for a total cost of \$5,495, payable from Liquid Fuels funds.

ROLL CALL: Arnold _____ Pipech _____ Smith _____
MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by _____, second by _____, to ensure use of the recycling center by Township residents only by requiring residents to obtain an annual permit from the Township Secretary at no charge and require the presentation of such permit to the Recycling Attendant for each use. Use without a permit will be prohibited beginning on September 19, 2020.

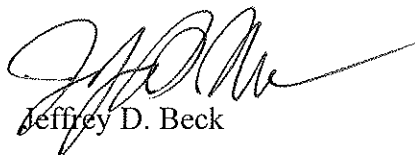
ROLL CALL: Arnold _____ Pipech _____ Smith _____
MOTION CARRIED.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: Dean reported that he received an inquiry from the owner of the Ice House Pub since his parking lease is up at the end of the year and wants to extend for an additional year. Supervisors responded that they are in agreement to extend the lease for another year at the same rate. Dean will proceed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Arnold thanked Fritz for coming to the meeting and raising his concerns.

MOTION by Pipech, second by Smith to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m..

Respectfully submitted:


Jeffrey D. Beck

Secretary/Treasurer