

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Chairman Grey Godshall called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Franconia Township to order on Monday, November 17, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Building, 671 Allentown Road, Franconia, Pennsylvania 18969.

Present were 1st Vice-chairman David B. Fazio and Supervisors Curtis N. Kratz; Township Manager Jon A. Hammer; Assistant Township Manager Jamie P. Worman; Chief Joseph S. Kozeniewski; Township Solicitor Frank R. Bartle, Esquire; Township Engineer Cindy VanHise, P.E.; Building and Code Inspector Jerry Rittenhouse and Roger M. Koffel, Finance Officer Ami L. Tarburton, and interested residents and non-residents of Franconia Township. Supervisor Steven P. Barndt was absent (excused).

OPENING MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Due to the large number of people in attendance for this meeting, Mr. Godshall read a prepared statement informing the crowd that the BOS will provide an opportunity for any resident or taxpayer of Franconia Township to make a public comment regarding anything currently before the board or within the jurisdiction of the board. He continued that due to the police union's filed grievance, charge to the PA Labor Relations Board, and a complaint to the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas regarding action taken by the BOS last month, the Township Solicitor has recommended that the members of the board and the Chief of Police not make any comments regarding the pending litigation. Comments are welcomed but to the extent that they relate to litigation, the BOS will not be able to respond. Mr. Hammer then requested that everyone wanting to make a public comment sign a sign-up sheet. Mr. Godshall added that public comment would be limited to three minutes per speaker. He then opened the floor to public comment.

Ms. Mary Scalfani, 360 High Street, requested that the BOS change their minds on their decision to layoff police officers. She provided a petition to the BOS and stated that the petition contained 1500 signatures in opposition to the layoffs.

Mr. Gerald Thiel, 808 Allentown Road, commented that the Township did a good job putting the budget together but it is time to do something different. He suggested the BOS extend the breakeven point beyond 2015 to 2016.

Mr. John Cutrone, 228 Diehl Drive, questioned why the venue was not moved and if they determined the 3 minute time limitation prior to the meeting. Mr. Bartle replied that this is the comment portion of the meeting, it is not a question answer period. He instructed Mr. Cutrone to make a comment if he wished. Mr. Cutrone commented that the BOS appears to want to restrict residents from voicing their concern over the police layoffs. He then commented that at the last meeting he asked what the safe number of officers was for the Township. He added that he did not feel 11 officers was safe. He also questioned why a study was not performed and then commented that the decision to layoff officers was based on finances and not safety.

Mr. Joseph Rudner, 102 Forelle Court, commented that the venue was not changed because the BOS wanted to keep the residents at bay. He then questioned why the Township employs an Assistant Township Manager at a \$68,000.00 annual salary. He questioned why this position was necessary and asked why they don't cut this position and save that money.

Mr. Michael Paul, 605 Mininger Road, asked why the Township maintains state roads and why the Township doesn't turn over those responsibilities to the State. He then commented that there should have been a police study done but the BOS didn't bother. He added that no one here likes what they are doing and that no one is in support of the decision to layoff the officers.

Mr. John Conklin, 366 High Street, commented that the BOS needs to reconsider the decision to layoff police officers.

Ms. Mary Cannon, 913 Harcourt Lane, commented that she hopes the BOS takes to the heart the opinion of the residents and reverses their decision to layoff police officers.

Ms. Bonnie Miller, 354 High Street, commented that she was embarrassed to admit that this was the first meeting she had attended. She commented that she was interested in getting a better understanding of the budget. She added that she deals with budgets in her line of work and had her budget gotten to this point she would be out of a job. She then asked what the BOS is doing to bring in industry to the area and wanted to know what else they had up their sleeve to assure residents that the financial planning will take them where they need to go.

Ms. Carrie Horchuck, 122 Packham Court, questioned what happened that made the Chairman admit he should have seen this coming earlier. Why wasn't something done before it came to laying off police officers. She then added that she does not support the layoffs and she commented on the first responders assisting her with her child who has severe allergic reactions to certain foods.

Ms. Peg Hofner, 415 Moyer Road, commented that the BOS had terrible body language and it is a disgrace that they are not answering any of the questions being asked.

Ms. Marianne Vargo-Wright of Lower Road, commented that she was very disappointed about the layoffs as she is married to a retired police officer from Lower Salford Township. She added that come Election Day the BOS will be disappointed as well.

Ms. Nancy Buckler, 285 Kingsfield Drive, commented that she was surprised to see that a plumbing inspector would be paid a \$71,000.00 annual salary and that a part-time building inspector would be paid a \$38,000.00 annual salary and then police officers are being let go. She questioned the need for two inspectors.

Mr. Jarrod Yoder of Cowpath Road commented that the last time he attended a meeting it was when the BOS was considering TDR's. He continued that that was a whacky idea and now this lay off is a whacky idea. He then commented that his biggest issue is that the BOS is not responding to the comments or questions. He

added that this is no different than the Federal Government not giving information during the Vietnam War, it's all about what the government is not telling us.

Mr. Ed Tosten, 165 Kingsfield Drive, questioned the two inspectors and how he would love a part-time job that paid that kind of money. He also said had he known they wouldn't be getting answers to questions he would not have wasted his time. He added that he wanted to know what the line item holiday pay meant and why it was \$55,000.00.

Mr. Mark West, 718 Eisenhower Drive, commented that he came to support the police department. He commented that it is horrendous that the Township is relying on officers from other departments for coverage.

Ms. Sandra West, 718 Eisenhower Drive, commented that she called the office and spoke with Stacey warning her that the venue should be changed because of the people coming out to the meeting.

Mr. Adam Jones, 109 Fox Hunt Drive, commented that he just moved here to be in a nice Township and he questioned where the tax dollars are going.

Mr. Larry Frederick, 103 Church Road, commented that he has lived here his whole life and that the Township has created a borough with all the sidewalk and curbing and can't afford to provide leaf collection. He also commented that the Township has \$800K in open space land that is doing absolutely nothing. He added that it is ridiculous that the BOS did not see this coming.

Mr. Phil Dummel, 582 Oakmont Drive, commented that typically when residents ask questions at a public meeting they receive answers. He continued that if asking questions of your elected officials at a public meeting is not the proper forum, what was the proper forum. He added that he felt it was only fair that the BOS respond. Mr. Godshall replied that this was an appropriate forum but they are unable to address the comments because of the litigation. He added that residents can call and schedule a meeting with the Township Manager. He also suggested giving him a call outside of the meeting as another option. Mr. Dummel commented that he reviewed the budget documents and that the numbers just don't add up. He requested that the BOS take another look at the numbers because they don't match. He also wondered who was manning the store when this all occurred.

Mr. Steve Derer, 182 Rowley Court, wanted to let the police department know that the residents have their back.

Mr. Michael Silverman, 1055 Kingscote Drive, commented that he had only received marginal services from the Township but has always had very positive interactions with the police department. He complimented the department on the work they do. Then he commented how the police have helped keep his children out of trouble. He added that his children play on Harleysville sports teams that never have access to the fields in Franconia.

Mr. Godshall announced a short break. The sign-up sheet was recirculated for people wishing to comment. The meeting was then reconvened.

Mr. Matthew Sirianni, 360 Kempton Court, commented that he has been a resident for 10 years, which means that the budget has been out of whack for half the time he has lived here. He continued that the budget that is posted online shows a balanced budget. Souderton School District continues to raise taxes because they can't live within the confines of the budget. He questioned why the Township was living above its means. He also questioned why the Township is still collecting money for open space.

Ms. Erika Wesch, 429 Smokepipe Road, introduced herself as a resident and a pastor at Little Zion Lutheran Church. She questioned what happens to the patrolling of local roads, of particular concern is the crosswalk outside of the church. She expressed safety concerns of her congregation and children using the crosswalk with no police enforcement.

Pat St. George, 559 Creekside Drive, commented that there are drug deals occurring in the cul-de-sac in Banbury and now that there aren't police to patrol the area that is a major concern. The resident added that the residents need answers.

Ms. Patience Clemens, 147 Bartlett Court, commented that she is concerned about the children in the schools and their safety. She commented that it was not safe to pull an officer out of the school. She questioned why an across the board reduction in salaries was not implemented.

Ms. Kim Engelhart, 231 Harleysville Pike, questioned why the Township was paying severances to people who resign from their positions. She also questioned if the BOS budgeted for litigation since they should have known that a layoff would result in litigation.

Mr. Walt Hulik, 612 Mininger Road, commented that he doesn't get what "structural imbalance" means. He also commented that he does not understand why we need an Assistant Township Manager or a Building Inspector let alone two. He added that the BOS needs to go back to the drawing board.

Mr. Mark Witoslawski, 903 Harcourt Lane, commented that he has always been ecstatic with the police department.

Ms. Tara Gray, 453 Mininger Road, commented that she recently moved to the Township and was having an issue with a neighbor but found herself not wanting to call the police because she didn't want to pull the one officer away from something more serious. She added that she was out to support her stepmother at the meeting tonight and that she rushed from work to get here and cannot believe that the BOS is not providing answers to the residents. She questioned why people who quit received severance payments.

Ms. Teresa Hettel, 327 Elmwood Lane, commented that she wanted a second meeting in a different venue to discuss these issues where there could be questions and answers. She commented on the tight quarters and warm, uncomfortable conditions. She added that the residents are owed answers.

No further comments were heard.

POLICE REPORT – CHIEF JOSEPH KOZENIEWSKI

Chief Joseph Kozeniewski submitted the Police report for October 2014.

ZONING REPORT – JAMIE P. WORMAN

Ms. Worman submitted her report for October 2014.

HIGHWAY REPORT – PAUL R. NICE

Mr. Nice submitted the Highway report for October 2014.

ENGINEERING REPORT – CINDY VANHISE, P.E.

Ms. VanHise submitted his report for October 2014.

TREASURER’S REPORT – JON A. HAMMER

A motion was made by Mr. Fazio and seconded by Mr. Kratz to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented, and to provide authorization for the Treasurer to pay all bills for the respective funds as presented on Voucher No. 14-17-11 dated November 17, 2014 in the amount of \$189,278.31. The motion carried unanimously.

PAYROLL

A motion was made by Mr. Fazio and seconded by Mr. Kratz for the Treasurer to be authorized to pay all employees during the pay period of November 15, 2014 through December 5, 2014 according to the hours worked as listed on the Payroll Journal for the aforesaid period. The motion carried unanimously.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

No action

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Grey Godshall made a motion authorizing the advertising of a Notice of Intent to appoint the firm of Mallie LLP, Certified Public Accountants, to perform an audit of all Township funds for the 2014 calendar year in lieu of elected auditors. Said appointment to be certified by resolution of the Board of Supervisors at the annual organizational meeting scheduled for Monday, January 5, 2015.

The Franconia Township Planning Commission will hold Regular Meetings on Monday, December 1, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Franconia Township Municipal Building, 671 Allentown Road, Telford, Pennsylvania 18969.

The next Regular Board of Supervisors meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, December 8th, 2014 at the Franconia Township Municipal Building, 671 Allentown Road, Telford, Pennsylvania 18969. The Board of Supervisors Work Sessions will be held on Friday, December 5th, 2014 at 7:00 a.m. in the same location.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. Kratz and seconded by Mr. Fazio to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon A. Hammer, Secretary