

LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Minutes of Board Meeting held December 9, 2008

A workshop meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Lower Paxton Township was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman William B. Hawk, on the above date in the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Supervisors present in addition to Mr. Hawk were: William C. Seeds, Sr., William L. Hornung, Gary A. Crissman, and David B. Blain.

Also in attendance were George Wolfe, Township Manager; Steve Stine, Township Solicitor; Brian Luetchford, Parks and Recreation Director; Sam Robbins, Public Works Director; Lt. David Johnson, Police Department; and Tim Houck, Finance Director.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Crissman led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Continued review of the proposed 2009 budgets

Mr. Wolfe noted that after several budget meetings and continued efforts to reduce the gap in operations from revenues and expenditures in the General Fund 2009 budget, staff went back to work and came up with the memorandum for consideration for this evening.

Mr. Wolfe noted that the Board originally started with a deficit, and then added a pavement management program to bring the total deficit to \$481,951.00, but after continued discussions, staff was able to reduce that amount to \$183,721.00. He noted that it is the Board's desire to eliminate the deficit, therefore, the pavement management program was delayed until 2010, and additional staff cuts were proposed that reduced the deficit to \$105,171.00. He noted that the Board suggested some additional areas to look into for more cuts, and he would like to review those suggestions at this time.

Mr. Wolfe noted that staff's efforts in balancing the budget was based upon including the Drug Forfeiture Funds which the Police Department was able to obtain through a traffic stop incident in Lower Paxton Township on I-81, and it should result in revenues of \$116,000.00. He noted that those funds are included in the budget proposal. He noted that the Board suggested

that the Administrative employee's compensation of 3.5% to 4% be reduced to 3% across the board with no adjustments or bonuses for production. He noted that that produced a savings of approximately \$16,000.00, and there is the potential to reduce staff in part-time employment bringing that almost to \$23,000.00.

Mr. Wolfe noted that those changes also affect the Friendship Center (FC) Operating Budget and the Sewer Authority Operating Budget. He noted that the affects on the Sewer Authority are minimal, but the affects for the FC could be significant due to the several employees who are not at the minimum level of compensation for their position.

*Parks and Recreation Department*

Mr. Wolfe explained that Mr. Luetchford made positive changes in the amount of \$27,201.00; Chief Bair has proposed a positive change of \$33,850.00; and Mr. Robbins has proposed a positive change of \$45,000.00. He noted that the total amount for these changes is \$125,782.00 which produces a small surplus of \$20,609.00 for the 2009 General Fund budget for operations. He explained that Board members suggested reconsidering the institution of a youth field reservation fee which was included in the budget as a new proposal in the amount of \$34,000.00. He noted, if the Board reconsiders this line item and reinstates it, it would produce a deficit of \$13,389.00.

Mr. Luetchford proposed that he could increase the craft fee of \$.25 to \$1.00 for the summer playground program that would result in an increase of \$551.00. He noted that the summer playground program is free, but most Townships charge a fee for playground programs, and he suggested that he could charge a \$10 fee that would amount to revenues of \$3,000.00.

Mr. Luetchford noted that he reviewed the expenses and proposed that he could cut back on supplies and equipment for the Brightbill Basketball League and save roughly \$11,000.00. He explained that he could delay the deep-tine aeration for three fields at a savings of \$5,400.00, only aerating the field at Koons Park. He explained that he has eight different sites that operate playground programs, and he suggested cutting two at a savings of \$6,500 in payroll costs. He noted that the programs at Centennial Acres and Lingle Park have little over 100 participants. He noted that those two areas were chosen since they have the least amount of participants, however, the children could attend the programs at Brightbill and Koons Parks. He noted that he could delay the construction of the George Park walking trails and purchasing the benches at a savings of \$145,000 from the capital fund.

Mr. Seeds questioned if Mr. Luetchford sent the letter dated November 26, 2008 to all the sports organizations. Mr. Luetchford answered that there are ten youth organizations that use the

Township's fields, and an additional 20 adult sports organizations. He noted that he needed to get the letter out since the organizations were meeting to set the budgets for their 2009 programs. Mr. Wolfe noted that this was part of the budget discussion from the previous meeting as Mr. Luetchford needed to know immediately so he could provide notice since they would be setting their rates for the new year. Mr. Seeds noted that the reservation problem was not mentioned in the letter. Mr. Wolfe explained that the Board specifically instructed Mr. Luetchford not to put that in the letter. Mr. Luetchford noted that there are non-resident youth organizations that pay \$11 per day to use the fields, such as Bishop McDevitt Field Hockey, Soccer and Softball, Keystone National Baseball and St. Catherine Laboure School soccer. Mr. Seeds suggested that many of those children are residents of the Township. Mr. Luetchford noted that the policy states if the organization does not have a majority of Township residents, then it must pay the non-resident fee to rent the fields. Mr. Seeds noted that he was not sure if he was in favor of this. Mr. Crissman noted that the Board made the decision to charge the fee during the last meeting in order for Mr. Luetchford to mail the letter.

Mr. Hornung explained that two people approached him at his business and protested the fee. He noted that they told him that they would come to the meeting to speak to this issue. Mr. Crissman explained that he had one inquiry and after discussing the matter with that person, he was okay with the explanation. Mr. Seeds noted that it is not a lot of money, but it would stop some of the over reserving of the fields for teams that do not use them. Mr. Seeds noted that is the main reason why he agreed to this, not for the money.

Mr. Blain noted that he wished he would have viewed the letter before it was mailed; he suggested that the reason for the protest was due to the way the letter was worded. He noted that the letter states that the Township was forced to charge a fee to produce the needed revenue. He suggested that it was not as much a revenue generation issue as it was to pay for the expense to maintain the property. He noted, in order to continue to provide top quality facilities, the Board needs the resources needed to maintain the facilities, and the users of the facilities should help to pay for it. He noted that the wording in the letter made it appear that the Township was in a budget deficit, therefore, it was going to turn the screws on the youth sports organizations. He noted that that was not quite the message he was trying to get across. Mr. Hornung noted that in the discussions he had with the two people he talked to he was told that the increase amounted to roughly \$5,000 in additional fees for both organizations, and their biggest concern was where they would get that money. He noted that if they divided the increase by each participant, it would cost each one \$15 more. He noted that threats were made that the organizations would not

help out with the maintenance for the facilities. Mr. Wolfe noted, if a team is spending \$5,000 for 300 kids, then they are probably reserving facilities far more than what they are using, which is something staff has suspected that organizations are doing. Mr. Hornung questioned if they had to reserve the fields for games. Mr. Luetchford answered that teams have to reserve the fields anytime they wish to use them. Mr. Hornung noted that they could go out and take their chances that no one would be using the fields. Mr. Hawk noted that the teams would not be able to get the fields anytime they want them. Mr. Luetchford noted that the soccer teams do not schedule practices at any given field, rather they just find a corner to practice on. He noted that the baseball teams reserve fields for use, so they tend to reserve more often for practices and not just games. Mr. Blain noted that some organizations like Capital Area Soccer Association (CASA) tend to overbook, but the Township could control this by saying that an organization could only control an “X” amount of fields for an “X” amount of time. He noted that the costs to maintain the parks increase each year and Mr. Hornung noted that the more parks the Township builds, the more it would cost to maintain the fields. He noted, if the Township wanted to continue to have top quality fields, then there must be a way that the organizations share in the costs to maintain the fields since they use them. He suggested that the reservation issue could be controlled. He suggested that the letter sends the wrong message, since there are costs incurred to maintain high quality fields, and if they want them then they will have to pay for it. Mr. Hornung noted that the Board has tried to maintain a balance between a user tax and an overall tax to try to get the benefits more aligned with the users, so if you are a user, you are paying, in part, some of the costs of using a facility. He noted that the entire Township benefits from having sports organizations, since it impacts the juvenile delinquency rate, as well as home values. He noted that it should be a use tax, and this was the reasoning for the emergency municipal services tax of \$52 per person. He noted that the Township cannot continue to build more fields until it comes up with a way to cover the costs to do this.

Mr. Hornung noted that the team owners had a concern that the cost would increase next year. He stated that he explained that that was not the purpose for implementing the tax, but he stated that he could not guarantee that it would not increase again. Mr. Blain noted that the users should pay for part of the costs to maintain the fields, as opposed to the message that was sent. Mr. Hawk noted that everyone pays usage fees for many things, and he explained that he only received one comment from a citizen. He noted that the Board members only received four negative comments from the letter. Mr. Crissman questioned, if in place of a fee, could an organization perform the work to maintain the fields. He explained the issue of the ongoing

maintenance fees to the person who complained to him, and although he understood, he was not totally happy.

Mr. Seeds stated that he did not know that the letter was sent out. Mr. Hornung noted that Mr. Luetchford explained that he needed to get the letter out at the last meeting.

Mr. Hawk questioned if the Board wanted to keep the fee or drop it. Mr. Wolfe suggested that the Board could wait to see if anyone comes to the meeting to discuss this issue, and then made a decision later in the meeting.

Mr. Crissman questioned if the change in compensation for administrative worker would impact the FC workers who are underpaid. Mr. Wolfe noted that a flat 3% would affect those workers, in that they would maintain status quo, and still remain below minimum level. He noted that it would affect the FC Operating Fund by saving roughly \$5,000.

#### Police Department

Lt. Johnson noted that the Department reached the adjusted budget number of \$33,897.00 using a combination of an increase in revenues and reductions in operating expenses in 13 Police categories. He noted that Chief Bair reviewed the revenues for the past few years and increased the projected revenues by \$16,400. He noted that he made cuts in 13 categories to include \$200 for office supplies, \$500 for printing, \$3,000 for uniforms, \$350 for employment costs, \$4,000 for training, \$1,700 for dues and subscriptions, \$500 for equipment purchases, \$1,300 for computer equipment, \$500 for traffic equipment, \$200 for CI supplies, \$500 for crime prevention supplies, \$200 for staff and inspection supplies, and \$500 for community services, for a total of \$13,450.00.

Lt. Johnson noted that he reduced the Emergency Operations Center expenditures by \$1,000.00.

Mr. Blain questioned if enforcement revenues included tickets for traffic violations. Lt. Johnson answered yes. Mr. Blain noted that the Township plans to increase the budget amount for tickets and violations next year. Lt. Johnson explained that the goal is not to increase the revenues by increasing the number of tickets written, but he plans to work on the 12,000 plus summary warrants that have not been served. He noted that only one officer is doing this now, and he is looking at a means to have additional officers work on this. Mr. Seeds noted, if the additional officer is not hired, it may not be possible for Officer Starr to serve more warrants. Lt. Johnson noted that there are officers in other divisions that could be used to assist in serving warrants. He noted that the School Resource Officers, when not in school, could assist in serving warrants.

Mr. Seeds noted that he is very concerned that no one is on the Drug Task Force. Mr. Wolfe noted that the budget is prepared with a certain number of officers, and the participation in any task force is at the discretion of the Board, and if the Board wants to reinstate a member to that task force, it would be done.

Lt. Johnson noted that Chief Bair is constantly finding ways to make the Police Department more efficient and productive, and he will continue to do the same in 2009 by increasing revenues by serving more warrants. Mr. Seeds noted if an officer is serving warrants he would not be issuing tickets, and doing other police work and that would cut down on other revenues. Mr. Seeds noted that he is talking about the officers who are assigned to the schools. Mr. Hawk noted that the newspapers are filled with articles about the large number of people, who are laid off from their jobs, but the Township is not to the point where it is slashing personnel, only trying to tighten its belt to be responsible. He noted that it is uncomfortable to cut budgets, and he hopes that it won't last forever.

#### Public Works Department

Mr. Wolfe noted that Mr. Robbins provided a reduction of \$45,000.00 for the budget. Mr. Wolfe explained that Mr. Seeds found that one line item was a greater reduction than what was proposed. Mr. Seeds suggested that there was an additional \$10,000 in the repair and maintenance supplies, and also a difference in the State Aid rental category. Mr. Robbins noted that Mr. Seeds was correct, that would result in a total reduction of \$55,000.00.

Mr. Robbins explained that he reviewed his budget, and he trimmed costs in repair and maintenance supplies in the amount of \$10,000.00, mainly in the area of the use of cold patch. Mr. Hornung questioned what would he do. Mr. Robbins answered that he would use a hot mix if it was available, and save the cost of the cold patch. He noted that he now uses a more expensive cold patch and it has paid off as it provides a more permanent repair.

Mr. Robbins noted that he some times uses flaggers for flagging and has also used Highway Supply to sign a project for the Township since he did not have enough flaggers, but he could juggle his staff for flagging. Mr. Robbins noted that flagging is a very dangerous job and they must be alert at all times.

Mr. Robbins explained that Micro Surface B has been applied in several locations in the Township to reduce traffic accidents, such as Fairmont Drive. He noted that he would peel back some of the projects planned for next summer in the mountain area, and not do as much. He noted that the State Aid-Paving rental would cover the cost of the rental of the mill head from Highway Equipment to mill Briarsdale Road. He noted that the road was never designed to

handle the amount of traffic that uses it and the road needs to be rebuilt from ground up. He explained that he planned to mill the road and do a lane at a time, but he would have to trim costs in the rental of that machine, and be more efficient in its use. He noted that he could remove the roadway using an excavator at a lower cost. He explained that that is how he was able to come up with a reduction of \$55,000 in his Department budget. He explained that these are savings that cannot be sustained in future years, but he would be able to do it for this year.

Mr. Seeds questioned the cost for the price of salt as it was much lower than last year. Mr. Robbins noted that buying salt is like trying to determine the price of gasoline. He noted that he has three trucks that could apply anti-skid material at a reduced rate on the roadway and this would require the use of less salt. Mr. Seeds questioned if the Township was cutting down on the use of its salt as a result of the recent weather this past Saturday. He noted that PENNDOT did a terrible job, but the forecasting was not very good either. Mr. Robbins explained that the Township workers were called out between 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., and he had people on the road by 6 p.m. He noted that the storm was different in that it was very cold, and the roads were treacherous. He noted that he now has the means to pre-treat the main roads and arterial streets.

Mr. Seeds noted that Mr. Wolfe's budget has a lesser amount for fuel, and the Police Budget had a higher amount listed for fuel. Mr. Seeds noted that the Police have budgeted \$14,000.00 more and Mr. Wolfe budgeted \$20,000.00 less.

Mr. Hawk suggested that there are two outstanding issues that need to be resolved, the charge for the rental of fields to youth groups and the impact on the FC for the four managers. Mr. Wolfe noted that, at this time, if it was okay with the Board, Mr. Houck and Lt. Johnson need to be excused from the meeting as they have engagements to attend, especially since the two remaining issues concern Mr. Luetchford's department.

Mr. Hornung questioned if there was any way to predict weather conditions to prevent what happened on Saturday. Mr. Robbins explained that Mr. Miller checks the weather, noting that you need to anticipate what temperatures it would be when it snows. He explained that the forecasters on Wednesday called for snow, but they have changed it to rain for Friday and Saturday. He noted that it is very difficult to predict what would occur. Mr. Wolfe noted that the Public Works Department is between multiple functions at this time switching from leaf pickup to snow plowing. Mr. Robbins explained that he loses a day or two in the switching process. He explained that he only had to tear down two leaf trucks and was able to respond with the same amount of equipment for snow removal. Mr. Seeds questioned if the Public Works Department had a pavement sensor. Mr. Robbins answered that he did not have one, but it would be a very

helpful tool to help judge call out time. Mr. Robbins noted that it becomes very critical when trying to pre-treat the roads, and noted that he is slow in getting the proper equipment to do the work. He noted that he would not pre-treat the entire Township; however, pre-treating some of the critical roads certainly helps in a snow or ice event.

Mr. Crissman questioned Mr. Robbins if he was able to sweep the Township twice for the Fall Leaf Pickup program. Mr. Robbins noted that his crews covered several areas twice. Mr. Crissman noted that he has only received positive comments for the program. Mr. Robbins noted that the leaves came down early this year and the Township has not received many complaint calls this year.

Mr. Crissman noted that Mr. Robbins was able to decrease his budget by \$55,000.00.

Mr. Blain noted that if the Township did not charge for youth field reservations, the deficit would only be \$3,389.00. Mr. Wolfe noted, if the rental fees were maintained in the budget, it would be a positive \$30,609.00 for a \$20 million budget.

#### Friendship Center Employees

Mr. Blain noted that there is only one issue to resolve, and he noted that either way, the budget is pretty much balanced. Mr. Crissman noted that the remaining issue concerns the FC employees who are not paid the minimum rate for their job description. Mr. Hawk noted that those four employees should not be penalized because the Board is trying to trim the budget. Mr. Crissman agreed. Mr. Wolfe noted that this is the only Department where employees are not on scale; however, there are other Departments where people are below mid-point by a significant amount. He suggested that it may be best to discuss this in an executive session as it relates to individual employees.

#### Field Reservation Fees

Mr. Seeds suggested that some of the organizations may not have met to set next year's fees. Mr. Hornung explained that he told the one gentleman that if he didn't like his answers, he was welcome to come to the meeting at 7:30 p.m., forgetting that the meeting started at 6 p.m. He suggested that they may have planned to attend the meeting. He noted that he expected a steady stream of people coming into his store but only two showed up to complain. Mr. Hawk noted that Mr. Hornung is much more accessible to the public.

Mr. Crissman noted that during the last meeting with CASA, the Board was very adamant about field reservations, and they are well aware of the situation. Mr. Blain noted that CASA is in a state of transition as Mr. Weidner stepped down as President in December.

Mr. Seeds noted that some non-township organizations use the field, such as Bishop McDevitt High School, and he questioned if they pay to use the tennis courts. Mr. Luetchford noted that the Harrisburg Christian School used the tennis courts, but he was not aware of Bishop McDevitt using the tennis courts, however if they must pay to reserve the courts and fields. Mr. Wolfe noted that Bishop McDevitt does not have to reserve the fields or pay for the fields, but they would be taking a chance that no one else has reserved the fields.

Mr. Hornung questioned Mr. Luetchford what his opinion was. Mr. Luetchford answered that the reason he suggested this to the Board was that he had two resources for additional expenditures. He noted that he discussed charging for the summer playground program and also for the use of the playing fields. He suggested that the Board may also have some families come to the Board to complain about charging for the summer playground programs. He noted that people are charged for all types of services. He explained that he is not necessarily saying that the Township should or should not charge for field rentals, but it is the only usage that the Township does not charge for. He noted that it is about time that the organizations pay for the field usage. He explained that the organizations do a lot of work on the fields, but the work that they do is for their own purposes, and no one else. He noted that a fee of some level is appropriate.

Mr. Blain questioned what the adult groups are charged. Mr. Luetchford explained that they are charged \$11 per day, the same as non-resident groups. Mr. Blain suggested that the Township could charge \$2.50 for a field rental. He noted that it would be sending a message that the teams need to help pay for their services to the Township. Mr. Luetchford noted that it would send a message that not only the fields need to be maintained, but the fences, parking lots, bathrooms, etc.

Mr. Wolfe noted that the field rentals could be increased on a staggered basis, starting at \$2.50 for the first year, and then an increase could be planned for 2009 and 2010. He noted that, ultimately, the Township could get to where it wants to be without having an adverse impact on youth sports. Mr. Hawk noted that the budget is close enough that reducing the fee to \$2.50 would not result in a major impact to the budget, and secondly, when the Township starts to subsidize each organization, for example, fire companies, the organizations lose the initiative to sponsor fund raising events. He noted that \$2.50 would not break an organization, but it would give the organization a sense of ownership and responsibility for things. He noted that he liked the monetary responsibility that goes with using the fields, and he is not hung up on the amount.

Mr. Hornung noted that there is a cost associated with collecting and tracking the fees, so he would be in favor of charging \$3 since fifty cents would cover the cost to collect the fees. He noted that he liked the idea of a gradual increase as it relays the message to the sports organizations that the Township feels for their pain, but it must start to move in the direction of charging fees.

Mr. Hawk noted that it would impact the sports organization's budgets slightly. Mr. Wolfe questioned if this was the consensus of the Board. Mr. Hawk noted that \$3 makes sense. Mr. Crissman suggested that the fee would be \$3 this year and \$5.50 next year. Mr. Blain questioned if it would be better to phase the increases over a three-year period. He suggested that the fee could be \$2 this year, \$4 next year, and \$6 in the third year. He suggested that \$3 is a lot for an organization to pay for this year. He noted that going to \$5.50 in the second year would be a 100% increase. Mr. Seeds suggested that it may be more trouble to collect the fees that it is worth.

Mr. Blain questioned how the Parks Department would manage the collection of the fees. Mr. Luetchford noted that there is already a process to reserve a field, regardless, noting that the Township provides this service for free. He noted that the application process is already in place, and staff coordinates the dates.

Mr. Blain questioned what was in the budget. Mr. Wolfe noted that \$34,000 was in the budget for this line item. Mr. Blain noted that there were 6,181 field reservations. Mr. Luetchford explained that there are more than 10,000 dates and 40,000 hours of usage. Mr. Hornung noted that the money needs to be tracked, even if the Township only charges \$2. He noted that there is and overhead cost to collect the funds, ending up in manpower and costs to the Township.

Mr. Seeds noted that he is not convinced that the Township should charge the fee. Mr. Blain noted that he agreed with Mr. Seeds. Mr. Seeds noted that people are hurting and if the registration fees go up, then it is not good. Mr. Blain noted that the Township could balance the budget by pinching youth organizations or by having the Township operate more efficiently, or by better manpower utilization. He noted that the fee would fund the minimum amount of the budget of \$16,000 on a \$20 million budget by pinching the youth sports organizations. Mr. Hawk suggested waiting until the end of the meeting to make a decision.

Review of a policy proposed by the Public Works Department to govern mailboxes as they may be affected by snow removal

Mr. Robbins noted that Board members have a copy of a draft ordinance that he prepared for a formal mailbox policy. He noted that it would produce a means for the Township to reduce its liability, and labor and materials cost. He noted that the policy would educate the public on where the right-of-way is, and that the mailbox and post is within the right-of-way and it is not the responsibility of the Township. He noted that as more intense storms occur, his staff spends more time repairing mailboxes. He noted that it can include replacing a mailbox and post, but in many instances, the mail post broke at ground level since it was never maintained. He noted that in order to put a new post in, he must do a one-call and the Township becomes a contractor to excavate a hole. He explained, if his personnel hit a utility line, then there is a liability issue. He noted that the current policy is, when the Township damages a mailbox with a truck or a plow, it would replace it. He noted that he would like to stop supplying the manpower to make the replacement. He noted that his personnel can plow snow for up to 24 hours to 36 hours straight, and then spends days afterwards making mailbox restoration. He noted that they just don't go out with a screw gun and make a repair. He noted that a foreman must review the incident, pick two personnel who must be vested to make the repair using a vehicle with a beacon. He noted that one repair could amount to over \$200 worth of labor costs.

Mr. Robbins noted that he needs a policy that would be consistent, and he suggested that the draft policy fits the bill. He noted that the public does not understand that the mailbox is an extension of their home. He noted that it is a utility in the right-of-way, and it is not the Township's responsibility to maintain. He noted, if the snow from a plow knocks over a mailbox, it is not the responsibility of the Township to fix it.

Mr. Robbins noted that the policy states that, if a resident's mailbox is in good repair and it meets the requirements shown in the diagram, and a Township vehicle hits it with a snow plow or truck, the Township would pay the owner \$35. He noted that the fee is based upon the costs to purchase a mailbox and post. Mr. Stine noted that a brick mailbox would be considered an obstruction in the right-of-way, noting that if someone hit that type of mailbox and was killed; the Township and builder could be sued. Mr. Stine noted if the mailbox is not in the right-of-way, then it is a different matter. Mr. Wolfe noted that the Township has an issue with Colonial Ridge Development as the developer installed mailboxes in the Township's right-of-way, and he was told that he couldn't do it, but he did it anyway.

Mr. Seeds noted that there is no policy to cover the Township's repair of mailboxes damaged by snow. He noted that he thought the policy was good, but he felt the exceptions could be reduced to one line, as the additional information is redundant. He noted that it could be any piece of Township equipment, such as a street sweeper. Mr. Robbins questioned if Section "C" should be kept separate in the event of a major event. Mr. Seeds noted that he was not talking about that. Mr. Hawk noted that the important wording in Section "C" is that it states that it must be physically struck. He noted that there are probably many instances where the force of the snow can damage a mailbox. Mr. Robbins noted that a curbed street would not have a 2,000 pound plow come up over a curb and hit the mailbox if it was installed in the proper fashion. Mr. Hawk noted that there would be physical marks on a mailbox if it was hit by a plow.

Mr. Seeds suggested that Section "B" was redundant. Mr. Seeds noted that the fee of \$35 would be fine now, but he questioned if it would be enough in future years. He suggested that the Township would not remember to update the amount. Mr. Wolfe noted that staff would remember to do this due to the amount of service calls they would receive. Mr. Hawk noted that the difference between Sections "B" and "C" is one covers the Township and the second covers the subcontractor.

Mr. Hornung noted, if the mailbox was properly installed, the only reason a mailbox would be damaged is if it was hit. He suggested that this policy would open up the Township for an investigation or argument, on the part of the Township, to prove that the mailbox was in disrepair. He noted that staff would have to investigate each incident with the resident and he suggested that the policy should state that the only time the Township would fix the mailbox is if it was hit by a plow or truck. Mr. Robbins noted that he included the diagram to educate the public as to what they need to look for. Mr. Hornung noted that Mr. Robbins would have to send someone out to review each mailbox incident. Mr. Wolfe noted that Mr. Hornung suggests that unless the person claims that the snow plow physically hit their mailbox, we do not do anything. He noted that Mr. Robbins may have to go out to determine if a mailbox was hit by equipment and not snow. He noted that Mr. Hornung wants to reduce the number of calls Township personnel respond to. Mr. Hornung suggested that the resident should bring the mailbox to Mr. Robbins, and if it looks like it was hit, then the person would get their money. Mr. Robbins noted that it is a better proposal than what is currently stated. Mr. Crissman noted that he has a steel column mailbox with an eagle, and it is worth more than \$35. Mr. Stine suggested if he had to bring a mailbox for the Township to view if it was hit by a plow, he would probably do something to it to make it look like it was hit by a plow.

Mr. Robbins noted that the policy could provide the ability to educate residents on the proper installation of a mailbox, possibly proclaiming September as Mailbox Inspection Month. He noted that people need to check the hardware, the construction of the post and its connection to the mailbox and the ground installation. He noted that many people in the Township assume if their mailbox is damaged, regardless of the reason, the Township would fix it. He noted that, if the mailbox shows signs that it was hit, then they should be paid the \$35 and he should not spend time arguing with the owner, unless he had proof that the mailbox was sticking out over the right-of-way. He noted that the fee of \$35 may be too low to fix a mailbox however, if it was \$100, people may damage their mailboxes to get a newer one. He noted that a lower price would minimize the occasion for people to lie in order to get a new mailbox. Mr. Crissman questioned if he could purchase a new mailbox for \$35. Mr. Hornung answered that it would be pretty tough. He noted that a mailbox and post would cost close to \$50 and that would not include the labor. He noted that there is a new type of mailbox that you can just slam the post into the ground but it costs almost \$100.

Mr. Wolfe questioned if the Board was willing to adopt this resolution during the next Board meeting. Mr. Hornung noted that these are the type of things that the Board does as a government, to take a look at what issues ties up staff, and in the long run, what it can do to build efficiency. He noted that it would be good to look at these types of things all the time to see where the Township could save money. He explained that the Skate Board Park project started as a result of the Police Department spending a tremendous amount of time chasing skateboarders off of parking lots. He noted that there would be a return in the future on labor costs.

Mr. Hawk noted that he would be fine with Mr. Wolfe's modifications.

Mr. Robbins noted, in a heavy storm, it is easy to have to repair 45 to 50 mailboxes. Mr. Crissman questioned if the drivers are driving too fast. Mr. Robbins answered no. He noted that after the drivers make their first pass to open the streets, it doesn't take long for the calls to come in, and staff can see where the trucks rolled the snow to. He noted that, if a driver knocks seven mailboxes in a row down, he would conduct an investigation, but he does not get those types of calls. Mr. Seeds noted that snow is heavy and if a person has a weak post, it would break. Mr. Robbins explained that he found that the decorative posts don't last long in the elements.

Mr. Blain noted that he was okay with the policy, but he thought that \$35 was too low, and he suggested that it should be higher, such as \$50. He noted that the policy covers the Township well in that if the mailbox is in the right-of-way, it would not pay to replace it. He noted that Mr. Robbins stated that most mailboxes fail due to the lack of maintenance. Mr. Blain

noted, if the Township is responsible for damaging someone's mailbox, then the owner should be compensated. Mr. Seeds questioned if there should be a separate cost for just the post or the mailbox. Mr. Wolfe noted that the compensation reads to a maximum of a certain amount.

Mr. Wolfe questioned Mr. Stine if he had anything to add to the discussion. Mr. Stine answered that all the mailboxes are in the right-of-way, and a person would be hard pressed to have it out of the right-of-way and still receive mail. He noted, if the Township, under the tort claims act, is ever at fault, even if its hits a mailbox, because the truck is in the right-of-way, unless it is going through a front yard, then it would be an obvious violation. He noted, from a legal standpoint, that the Township would not have any responsibility. He suggested that this policy is kind of a compromise. Mr. Stine suggested that this is also PENNDOT's policy. He noted that many municipalities do nothing to compensate citizens if the mailbox is damaged.

Mr. Hornung noted that \$50 is more reasonable. Mr. Robbins noted that his people are very crafty at repairing mailboxes. Mr. Wolfe noted that Mr. Hornung suggested that the Township makes no repairs, and if a citizen can prove that a Township or contractor struck their mailbox, then the Township would issue them a check. Mr. Hornung noted that the only involvement from the Public Works Department should be inspecting the site to ensure that the mailbox was hit and then requesting payment in the amount of \$50. He noted that, on average, the repair bill would be roughly \$50. He noted that he would not get into any arguments with citizens, as it would save money to pay the \$50. Mr. Seeds noted that he was okay with \$50. He noted, if it was a very expensive stone or brick mailbox you could argue that it would cost more. Mr. Stine noted that some Townships bill the owner for the damage to the truck or plow.

Mr. Hornung noted if it becomes a hassle, then the next step would be for the Township not to do anything. He noted, if the people complain about this policy, then the next step would be not to do any thing at all, and act in the same manner as PENNDOT.

#### Discussion regarding options for providing towing services at the scene of vehicle accidents

Mr. Wolfe noted that there are five on-call towing service providers at this time in the Township: Bob's Auto, Carl's, Danny's, Hutch's, and MARS. He noted that each towing company is under an agreement with the Police Department and on a schedule, charging \$175 for routine towing during business hours, and \$250 for off-business hours. He noted that they charge \$35 for storage for any part of a day and there are other add-ons as well.

Mr. Wolfe noted that the Township is constantly receiving complaints about the fees and how fast they add up. He noted that the Township does not set the fees, although the towers tell

people that the Township does set the fees. He noted that the Township negotiated the lowest possible price that it could get for the services to be rendered. He noted that the towers stated that they could not tow vehicles for anything less, however; there are other ways to provide this service. He noted that the Township has received inquiries from non-listed towers. He noted that, currently, the Township only lists towers who are housed in the Township, but there are others who would respond for service. He noted that one tower indicated that he would provide the service for a rate well below \$100 per tow.

Mr. Wolfe noted that it is the Police Department's desire to get itself out from underneath this issue, or eliminate itself as the third party in the process. He noted, at the scene of an accident, where no one is able to choose a vendor for towing, or in the case of an abandoned vehicle, the Township needs to have someone provide the towing service. He noted that one option would be to put together a bid specification and award to the lowest responsible bidder, per tow, and the tower, just as the solid waste disposal collector, would bill the responsible party. He noted that he could put a bid specification together, but warned that there would be an outcry from those towers who are already on the towing list. He noted that one or two would be selected to do the work, and the others would not. He noted that it is possible that no one on the list would be selected, and someone from outside the Township would be selected.

Mr. Hornung explained that he had his car towed from the Holy Spirit Hospital to the store and it cost him \$80. He noted that the Township towers charge \$175. Mr. Crissman noted that that is the rate for routine hours. Mr. Wolfe explained that it never turns out to be only \$175, since, if you are involved in an accident, the vehicle is towed to the lot, and the tower automatically adds one day storage charge, so now the price is \$205 plus tax. He suggested that an easier way to do this would be to provide a list to the people at the accident, and they could make the call. He noted that the towers admit that they charge less to customers who call on their own, than they do if the police call, stating that they prioritize the police requests.

Mr. Blain suggested that a Request for Proposal (RFP) should be done for this service. Mr. Crissman agreed as well as Mr. Hawk. Mr. Wolfe noted that the fallout would be significant since the five towers have raised significant consternation.

Mr. Blain questioned how many other towers are available for service. Mr. Wolfe suggested that there are another five vendors who could provide this service. Mr. Hornung questioned if the Township does an RFP, would it have to be involved in the billing. Mr. Wolfe answered no. Mr. Hornung questioned how the Township would know that the person is being billed at the rate determined by the RFP. Mr. Wolfe noted that the Police Department could

provide the rate at the scene of an accident. He noted that it would be a public document, and an audit provision could be made part of the contract. Mr. Hornung noted, if a person is hurt at the scene of the accident and is unable to make the call for a tow, the Police Department must make the call. Mr. Hornung questioned how the billing would occur. Mr. Wolfe noted that the bill would go directly to the owner of the vehicle. Mr. Hornung noted that the towing company would have to worry about being paid. Mr. Wolfe noted that they would have the vehicle in their possession. He noted that a vehicle that was totaled in an accident could be salvaged.

Mr. Seeds noted that the towing companies would not be happy. He noted that they got together and set the price for their services. Mr. Crissman questioned if a person is a member of AAA, would they not pay that rate. Mr. Wolfe noted that the Township's policy is, for an accident scene, the Police Department calls the on-call service provider. He noted that he does not know if every officer does that, especially if the person is an AAA member. Mr. Seeds questioned what would happen if an owner of a vehicle would request that AAA be called. Mr. Wolfe noted that a car cannot sit in the middle of a roadway waiting for another towing agency to come, as the vehicle must be removed as soon as possible. He noted that part of the towing agreement includes emergency service.

Mr. Blain questioned if there is other competition in the marketplace. Mr. Wolfe answered that there is competition with the five Township towers. Mr. Blain noted that the market and economy is tight, noting that these towers would not want to lose business, and they may be willing to take a fee reduction. He noted that they should be told to lower their rates or the process would be put out to bid. Mr. Seeds suggested that they should be provided a chance to correct the situation or the Township would correct it for them. Mr. Crissman noted that the RFP could include that the service provider must be affiliated with AAA. Mr. Blain noted that if a person is a member of AAA, then they would receive that rate. He noted that it would give the vendors a choice of options.

Mr. Hawk noted that the fees are uniform between the five vendors. Mr. Seeds suggested that the Township should be divided up as there may be a need for multiple tow trucks.

Mr. Wolfe noted that the field reservation fee discussion needs to be resolved. Mr. Hornung noted that no one showed up at the meeting to voice their opposition. He noted that the discussion ended with a choice of no fee or a phased implementation for a fee.

Mr. Hornung questioned how the Parks Department would take payment. Mr. Luetchford noted that the organization would send a check, and be processed with the application. Mr.

Hornung questioned if the organizations would be billed. Mr. Luetchford answered no. Mr. Luetchford noted that there is a \$20 permit fee and there would be an additional fee per day for reservation use. Mr. Hawk suggested that the permit fee could be raised. Mr. Hornung noted that raising the permit fee would not help to curb the overbooking of reservations.

Mr. Hawk suggested for the amount of money involved he would drop the fee. Mr. Blain noted that he agreed with Mr. Hawk, and suggested that someone should meet with the organizations next year and inform them that a fee would be charged in the future. Mr. Crissman noted that he would like to charge some type of fee as he would like to stem the problem of overbooking reservations for fields. He noted that the amount of money does not bother him. He noted that the organizations would have to pay a fee to reserve the fields and this would stop other people from using the fields too. Mr. Blain suggested that it could be controlled outside of imposing fees. He noted that each organization could be allotted a certain number of uses. Mr. Luetchford noted that it is difficult to do that as there are various needs for the different leagues. He noted that he asks for schedules, and in many instances, they are unreadable by anyone not involved in the leagues. He noted that in some instances, he doesn't get a schedule from a league. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Department would become an enforcement agent. He noted that there are ten different leagues, and he would become involved with all the league issues. Mr. Hawk noted that Mr. Hornung made a comment that the cost of processing is worth more than the amount of income brought in. He noted that he understood what Mr. Crissman said, but from a cost stand point he would drop the fee.

Mr. Seeds noted that when the organizations request the fields, and Mr. Luetchford knows that they haven't used them in the past, he should check to see if they had an increase in registrations, and if they haven't, then tell them, that since they didn't use the fields last year, they would not be able to reserve as many this year. Mr. Luetchford noted that he does not have enough personnel to monitor the field usage. Mr. Seeds noted that Mr. Luetchford stated that the teams reserve fields but don't always use them. Mr. Luetchford noted that they admit that they do it. Mr. Wolfe noted that this does not solve the problem, as the organizations would complain to the Board that they have not been given a field. He noted that some organizations have taken quasi-ownership of the parks, and when the Township intrudes into their environment, they resent it.

Mr. Blain suggested that this should be delayed until next year, in order to schedule a joint meeting between the organizations and the Board of Supervisors and the Parks and Recreation Board to set the ground work and foundation to institute a fee for the use of fields. He

noted that it should be centered more on the costs to maintain the fields and parks and facilities. Mr. Hawk agreed and suggested that this should be the pitch provided at that meeting. Mr. Blain suggested that this should be done in the first quarter of 2009, as it provides the organizations an entire year to plan for it. Mr. Seeds noted that the organizations would balk and not maintain the fields as they have been. Mr. Luetchford noted that they would continue to do that work as it is for their organization only. He noted that they want to make the fields very nice.

Mr. Hornung noted, if this was really important, the organizations would have had a large group of people attending the meeting in protest. He noted that they didn't show, and to go back and have meetings with them, when they are already prepared to pay the \$5.50 fee, does not make sense. Mr. Blain noted that he disagreed with Mr. Hornung because the letter states that we may do this. He suggested that they may be waiting for a final decision. Mr. Hornung noted that the people he talked to stated that it was a done deal, and they wanted to know if it could be undone. Mr. Crissman noted that his party also thought that it was a done deal. He suggested that the fee should be \$2. He noted that the letter was sent, so they are looking for an increase, and \$2 would not make a large impact. He suggested that it would cost an organization around \$1,500, approximately \$5 per participant. He noted that it would start the process, and help to reduce some of the over-reservations. He noted that it would show them that the costs to maintain all the facilities at the parks are increasing. Mr. Crissman noted that the dollar amount does not make a difference to him; he noted that he wants the organizations to make a contribution. Mr. Seeds suggested that the fee should be zero. Mr. Hawk noted that he agreed with Mr. Seeds. Mr. Blain noted that he agreed with Mr. Seeds, and did not want to charge the reservation requirements at time.

Mr. Wolfe noted that all the budget changes would result in a deficit for operations of \$3,389.00 on approximately a budget of \$18.5 million. He noted that he could prepare the budget using these numbers if the Board so desires. Mr. Hawk agreed.

“Otta Know” Presentation - No items scheduled

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Blain made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hornung seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Heberle  
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

Gary A. Crissman  
Township Secretary