



JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP August 2009 Newsletter

TOWNSHIP OFFICE HOURS

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM
and Friday mornings - 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM.**

(Exceptions are posted on the front door and indicated on the answering machine.)

Recreation Committee

At the Supervisors meeting on August 10, 2009, Leo Rosenbauer reported on the Recreation Committee meeting held on August 5th. The Baseball and Softball tournaments are done and deemed successful. There will be 'fall baseball' for 15 year olds. The attendance at the pool has been low due to the weather. The Pool Association is currently interviewing for a new manager due to the current manager taking a teaching position. The pool is scheduled to close on Sept. 7th, but 'may' be extended if another teacher's strike is not averted. The Soccer season runs from Sept. 12 to Nov. 1, 2009. The Recreation Committee members voted again to change their meeting times. They will continue to meet on the first Wednesday, but at 8:00 P.M. from February to October. There will be NO meetings in November, December and January.

The Supervisors agreed to pay Mrs. Stone to clean and stock the restrooms for 'pavilion rental dates' and pay her for this service. Subsequently the 'rental fee' was increased from \$50.00 to \$60.00 (Resolution #290.)

Planning Commission

The July 23rd Planning Commission (P.C.) meeting was reported on by P.C. Chair, Evelyn Gross. They reviewed and approved the Jankosky Lot-Line Revision in the Orchard Hill Plan off Rt. 356. The 1.2 acre lot previously divided off (was to be added to the pet cemetery property), is being conveyed back to the Jankosky property. At the August 10th meeting, the Supervisors reviewed the plan with easement for the well located on the 1.2 acres but used by the pet cemetery, and it was subsequently approved.

The P.C. was approached by Mr. Herchenroether regarding the possible construction of a 175' x 60' storage building for his business and some personal use. The P.C. said that a land development would be required due to the commercial use. If he reduces the size of the building to be used as residential, he still must abide by the PA Uniform Construction Code.

The P.C. was approached by the Neupert family to discuss a possible race track on their Neupert Rd. property. The following is an excerpt from the P.C. minutes from July 23rd: *The track will be ¼ mile 'clay' for miniature sprint cars (5/8 size of regular cars), quads and dirt bikes (250 CC to 1200 CC engines.) The 'noise' will be 99 decibels or less. They plan hours from 5:00-5:30 to 9:30-10:00 P.M. April thru Sept. mostly Saturdays and Sundays, and some Sunday afternoons (for truck, tractor, and tractor-trailer pulls.) They said they could have 300 to 400 spectators. They will put in port-o-johns and bleachers. They'll have grass parking with an over-flow area in front of the house; grass pit area with both parking and pit areas but having gravel access roads; no on-site potable water; food vendors in trailers (i.e. Scott's BBQ). Drivers will be 16 years or older.* The P.C. advised them that the entrance would have to be widened, but the Supervisors commented tonight that the entrance would have to be MOVED and widened due to insufficient site distance and number and size of vehicles entering. The P.C. also advised them to contact the Dept. of Environmental Protection and the County Conservation District to comply with any of their regulations; and our building code official, Dave McGuigan, in regards to the PA Uniform Construction Code. They were told to submit a land development including a storm water plan.

Planning Commission Report, cont.:

At the August 10th meeting there were several residents present to express their concern and opposition to the proposed race track. They wanted to know 'what can be done to stop it.' The Township Attorney explained that the Supervisors can't 'keep anything out', but only review the plan for ordinance compliance. The Township has no zoning! The Township received the 'preliminary land development' plan just prior to the Aug. 10th meeting. The Planning Commission will be reviewing it on August 27th at 7:30 P.M. It does not go to the Board of Supervisors until the P.C. has voted to approve it. The Township has 90 days from August 27, 2009 to make a determination.

August 10, 2009 Unfinished Business

Chairman James R. Jones attended a special meeting of the Butler County Sewage Association regarding the DEP funding shortage on Wednesday, July 22, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. Regarding the two topics: 1) how to calculate member repayment of the debt (IF the 2008 Act 537 Sewage Reimbursement is cut from the state budget) and 2) how to handle future finances, the BCSA decided to continue to wait and see if the state budget is passed including the 2008 'reimbursement' and for 2009 and 2010 to charge 100% of the costs of permitting and planning to the property owner/developer – with a possible rebate if future funding is anticipated for those years.

At the August 10th meeting the Supervisors authorized advertisement of the "Off Road Vehicle Ordinance (#292) and the "Road and Street Access" Ordinance (#293) for adoption at the Sept. 14, 2009 – 3:30 P.M. meeting.

The Off Road Vehicle Ordinance was initiated after miscellaneous calls were received by the Supervisors and a specific complaint at the June 2009 meeting regarding a request for '*some type of noise ordinance*' without interfering with '*farm machinery*.' Chairman Jones said then, that the township attorney had already provided some sample regulations on ATVs/off-road vehicles/dirt bikes, etc. which the Board passed on to the Planning Commission to review and recommend a version for Jefferson Township.

The Road and Street Access Ordinance has been under consideration for more than a year, but only recently did the attorney, engineer and Planning Commission do a final review.

August 10, 2009 New Business

At the regular meeting on August 10, 2009, the Supervisors considered the costs incurred for the five building code appeal hearings (from 7/2006 to 5/2009), costing the Township an average of \$2000.00 each. They agreed to increase the appeal filing fee from \$500.00 to \$2,000.00. Resolution #290 was adopted to change this fee and the pavilion rental fee.

The Supervisors received the 2010 Financial Requirement and Minimum Municipal Obligation report (for the Employee Pension Fund) from the secretary and approved the amount (7% of the gross wages for the 4 full-time members) to be included in the 2010 budget.

The Supervisors adopted Resolution #291 in support of the "Local Fiscal Assistance Act" being considered by Federal government. It is a program similar to the old 'revenue sharing.'

The Attorney reviewed and approved the use of a 'road agreement' as a type of 'excess maintenance agreement' to be used in conjunction with the road bonding permits for overweight vehicles.

The Supervisors authorized getting quotes for roofing and painting of the township buildings and to proceed at the discretion of Supervisor Bachman. The work is anticipated to be under \$10,000, so at least three quotes will be obtained.

The Supervisors authorized advertisement to sell the old green dump truck (85 International) by bid, to be opened Sept. 14, 2009.

Misc. Business August 10, 2009

The Supervisors approved a modification request from Mr. and Mrs. Wiefeling on Saxonburg Rd. to build a proposed garage 40 ft. from the road right-of-way (10 ft. less than the required 50 ft.). The proposed garage will be 'in line' with the existing house.

Major expenditures between meetings and at the August 10th meeting:

Casmas Line Striping, Inc. – line painting	\$3,125.92
McClymonds supply & Transit – gravel	\$1,251.43

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

According to the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) it **illegal** for **any business** to burn solid waste without a permit from DEP (724-656-3160 – DEP Solid Waste Management Program). There is a "burning ordinance" in Jefferson Township for **residences!** Please call the Township office for details. Recyclable items are NOT to be burned!!

It is illegal for residents or other non-resident users of Laura J. Doerr Park to dump their personal household trash in the park dumpsters. This is considered "theft of services." The Township officials will continue to monitor the situation and will prosecute violators if necessary.

THIS SUMMER, when mowing your grass, PLEASE do not allow the cut grass to accumulate on the roadway. It is a safety issue - especially if the grass becomes wet. It could cause a vehicle to lose traction!

The Newsletter

The Newsletter is only available On-line OR via e-mailing OR can be picked up at the Township Office. Our Web Site is: www.jeffersonbutler.com If you want to have the newsletter e-mailed to you or if you have not received your e-copy, please contact the Township Secretary: jefftwpbutlerpa.@zoominternet.net - 352-2324.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Board of Supervisors - 2nd Monday at 3:30 P.M. Recreation Board - 1st Wednesday at 7:00 P.M.

Planning Commission - 4th Thursday at 7:30 P.M. (except for Nov.19 and Dec.17, 2009 due to holidays.)

Jefferson Township Board of Supervisors 157 Great Belt Rd. Butler, PA 16002 724-352-2324 / FAX 352-8850
James R. Jones, Chairman / James Chick, Vice-Chairman / Phillip Bachman, Supervisor

☺ **ALERT** Last month we reported on House Bill #1500, a proposal to force municipalities to reimburse the state for 'state police coverage.' If the legislature passes this, it will be at the peril of the municipalities and at the expense of all property owners in the state. The rate proposed for the first year is \$52 per capita; \$104 per capital for the 2nd year; and \$156 per capita for the 3rd year. In Jefferson Township, this would amount to an 8-mill increase each year. The PA Second Class Township Code allows a maximum of 14 mills for general purposes (and police coverage is not considered a 'special levy' option.) Letters were prepared, signed and sent to Representative Darryl Metcalfe and Senator Don White asking them to oppose HB 1500. Both Rep. Metcalfe and Senator Don White oppose HB1500, but Senator White favors a different legislation (SB984), a 'state police contractual' program. **PLEASE READ THE "TOWNSHIPS TODAY" article included below!!!**

Police Fee Could Mean Higher Taxes for Township Residents Statewide

First came the news that Gov. Ed Rendell wants to temporarily raise income taxes to balance the state's sickly budget.

Now, lawmakers are considering legislation that threatens to take an even bigger chunk out of your wallet. House Bill 1500 would create a true hardship for most of Pennsylvania, including your township and others that rely on the Pennsylvania State Police for protection.

Under the proposal, which **does NOT increase State Police coverage**, more than 1,200 municipalities would be subject to a hefty annual service fee. To avoid it, these communities would be required by law to either start a full-time police department or contract with a neighboring or regional force.

Although the per-person fee has been described by a few legislators as a bargain, that's simply not the case. Because, the truth is, if you live in a township that is mandated to pay it, you can say goodbye to more of your money and hello to higher property taxes.

That is, unless you and your neighbors work with township officials to stop it.

'It's a lot of money'

The idea of charging municipalities for State Police protection isn't new; what is new is the scope of this particular bill.

Up until now, lawmakers had included population caps to exempt small municipalities from paying for coverage. Not so with HB 1500, which would affect nearly half of the state's municipalities, including those with part-time police departments, and generate about \$450 million a year. The bill would require townships without police departments to eventually pay an annual fee of \$156 per person, while municipalities with part-time police protection would pay \$52 per person.

In cold hard numbers, that means that Pennsylvania's largest affected municipality, Hempfield Township in Westmoreland County (*population 40,000*), would be charged \$6 million, and its smallest, Green Hills Borough in Washington County (*population 18*), would pay about \$2,800.

Regardless of a municipality's size or budget, the impact of this legislation could be devastating and force many townships into a corner.

"We can't afford a police department, and we sure as heck can't afford to pay the State Police," said one elected official from a small community that is facing a \$24,000 annual payment. "This is not just a couple of dollars. It's a lot of money."

Marvin Meteer of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors poses the question: "How would my township, a small, rural municipality of 1,340 residents, and others like us pay for this service? You guessed it: We would have to institute a property tax increase — possibly a large one — either to cover the fee or to form a local police force."

And here is something else you should know about House Bill 1500: Your township will be spending more of your tax dollars for State Police services but will not be getting more protection in return.

"That's something many people don't realize," PSATS President Kenneth L. Grimes says. "The State Police will continue to operate, much like they always have, with very limited manpower. House Bill 1500 won't do anything to increase coverage or decrease response times."

Where is the fairness?

Some, including the bill's sponsor, Rep. Mike Sturla, contend that municipalities without full-time local police have been draining the system for too long and should be required to pay an extra fee for State Police services.

"My legislation is about fairness and equity because it is obvious there is a serious inequity in how we fund police services in our state," Sturla said in a recent news release.

However, Grimes says, one man's fairness is another man's hardship.

“State lawmakers are asking residents in these municipalities to pay twice for the same service — with their tax dollars and with this fee. That’s not right,” he says. “And on top of that, the legislation would force township supervisors to do things they would rather not do, such as raise taxes or start a police force.

“And who will end up footing the bill? Our residents. Now, how fair is that?”

‘We need our taxpayers in our corner’

So what can you, a township resident, do to stop the passage of House Bill 1500?

The answer is simple: Join forces with your township officials, many of whom have been flooding Harrisburg with calls and e-mails opposing the legislation.

You and your neighbors have a lot to lose — namely, your hard-earned money — if this bill passes. Before taking action, though, call a township supervisor, who can explain the financial impact of the State Police fee on your municipality. Then, armed with the facts, call or write your state lawmakers.

“Township supervisors don’t want to raise taxes,” Grimes says. “However, they may not have a choice if House Bill 1500 gains momentum, which it could in this economic climate where the state is pressed to find extra dollars. Can we beat this legislation? Absolutely, but this isn’t a battle we can — or should fight — alone. We need our taxpayers in our corner.”

