

Connoquenessing Township's Supervisors Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Ed Rupert at 6:00 p.m. on September 1, 2021 at the Connoquenessing Township Municipal Building. Present were Supervisors Ed Rupert and Ricky Kradel. Supervisor Terry Steinheiser did not attend. Also attending were Solicitor Andrew Menchyk, Jr., Treasurer/Asst. Secretary Lee Kradel and Secretary/Asst. Treasurer Brenda Davis to take the minutes. Engineer Bill Braun did not attend. Twenty-three people signed in on the public sign in record on file. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

REVIEW MINUTES

Reviewed minutes of August 4, 2021. Kradel motioned to accept the minutes of August 4, 2021. Rupert seconded. Roll call, yes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Lee Kradel reported the beginning balance in the General Fund is \$159,387.00 but after deposits of \$103,059.68 and checks in the amount of \$67,569.88 are approved tonight the ending balance will be \$194,876.80. Lee Kradel stated the Escrow account beginning balance is \$54,143.82 but with no deposits and checks in the amount of \$706.82, the ending balance is \$53,437.00. Lee Kradel said the Highway Aide beginning balance was \$38,498.30 but with interest in the amount of \$4.32, the ending balance is \$38,502.62. Lee Kradel stated the Act 13 Impact Fee fund beginning balance is \$442,438.73 but with interest in the amount of \$53.47 and a transfer of \$200,000 to the Act 13 CD, the ending balance is \$242,492.20. Lee Kradel stated the Act 13 CD beginning balance was \$528,244.33 but with interest in the amount of \$599.16 and a deposit from the Act 13 checking account in the amount of \$200,000, the ending balance is \$728,843.49 for an Act 13 grand total of \$971,335.69. Lee Kradel stated the beginning balance in the American Relief Plan was \$203,162.94 but with interest of \$41.19, the ending balance is \$203,204.13. Kradel motioned to approve the financial report and pay the bills. Rupert seconded. Roll call, yes.

Rupert stated the Annual MMO needs reported each year so it can be added to the 2022 budget. Kradel motioned to accept the MMO in the amount of \$16,457.40 for the 2022 budget. Rupert seconded. Roll call, yes.

COMMENT PERIOD - Three minute limit pertaining to agenda

NONE

REQUEST TO BE HEARD - three minute limit

Dennis Higgins was on the agenda but did not attend.

Bill Long, resident at 267 Reiber Rd., thanked the board for allowing him extra time to speak and also the residents that gave up their 3 minutes to let him talk on their behalf. Mr. Long stated a Joint Comprehensive Plan was completed years ago between Connoquenessing Township and Connoquenessing Borough and the two (2) main topics included in the Plan were to keep the Township rural and sewage will be needed throughout the Rt. 68 corridor. Mr. Long stated the board was given 5 plans to review for sewage such as #1 to run sewer to BASA but the #5 Plan was chosen which had the Township have their own sewage system. Mr. Long stated the project is currently going to cost \$22 million. Mr. Long asked the supervisors to consider building a smaller system just to accommodate the Rt. 68 corridor. Mr. Long stated he attended a Sewer Authority meeting and they stated they are trying to get one house to connect from a different municipality which would give them access to \$10 million more dollars. Mr. Long stated this \$22 million is going to be divided by approximately 1340 EDU's (Equivalent Dwelling Units). Mr. Long addressed the board and stated they are the ones who have delegated the authority of this plan to the Sewer Authority. Mr. Long stated Senate Engineering was hired by the Sewer Authority to do the plan but he doesn't know where they came up with sewerage the rural southeastern portion of the Township. Mr. Long feels they are just interested in getting more EDU's

to cover the cost. Mr. Long stated the resident will have a tie in of approximately \$3,800 then \$6-7,000 in running the line to their residence and another \$1,000 at least in disposing of their current system. Mr. Long mentioned the housing development on Nursery Rd. in Forward Township that was built because of access to sewage and said our residents do not want this to happen here. Mr. Long also noted that the sewer lines need 50 ft. for construction and then will retain 20 ft. after completion. Mr. Long stated this will cause many residents to lose their trees, shed, etc. (privacy). Mr. Long said the growth will cause our taxes to go up, the present school and roads won't be able to accommodate the growth. Mr. Long asked the supervisors to review the Act 537 Plan and keep the Township a rural area. Mr. Long gave the supervisors a pamphlet in reference to the Powder Mill Creek and Powder Mill Valley Watershed and stated this area is in the wetlands and have endangered species, springs, artifacts, etc. Mr. Long said on behalf of the residents, the pitch back to the supervisors is to stop disaster from happening to our Township. The board thanked Mr. Long for his comments.

Mark Minto donated his 3 minutes to Mr. Long.

Laura Mason, resident at 384 Kriess Rd., stated her dream was to have a peaceful, private house and property where she could raise her family. Mrs. Mason stated this dream has turned into a nightmare. Mrs. Mason stated her nightmare started when she discovered someone can clear cut her trees, take her land with no adequate compensation, pay property taxes on property she no longer owns and forego her new septic system that the Township required her to build. Mrs. Mason stated the residents are being forced to pay to connect, construction expenses and decommission their current system to DEP regulations. Mrs. Mason said this sewer is going to affect the creek and ecosystem. Mrs. Mason stated this is not only a burden to the residents with higher taxes and costs up to \$15,000 plus but to the fire company, infrastructure and rural character. Mrs. Mason stated she and other residents should not have to pay for sewer that is needed on Rt. 68 when their systems are perfectly fine. Mrs. Mason asked the board to change course with the current public sewer system plan. Mrs. Mason said it is time to wake up from this nightmare.

Roy Gilliland was on the agenda but did not attend.

Christine Klink, resident at 212 Reiber Rd., built a log home surrounded by woods to have her privacy. Mrs. Klink agrees that Rt. 68 does need sewage. Mrs. Klink stated that in 2007, 2015 and 2016 the Township had Dave Ice, Sewage Enforcement Officer, go house to house and do a survey on malfunctioning systems. Mrs. Klink stated in 2007 there were 144 homes tested and 20 were malfunctioned (13.8% failure rate). Mrs. Klink stated in 2015 100 homes were tested and only 15 were malfunctioned - 13 were the same in 2007 which is only a 1% increase in 8 years. In 2016, Mrs. Klink stated 123 homes were tested and only 3 failed so probably they were repaired. Mrs. Klink said that leaves 93.2% of the homes in this area have working systems and asked why the Township would be spending \$22 million? Mrs. Klink stated at the one public hearing for the Act 537 in 2016 the residents submitted a signed petition with 189 names stating they didn't want sewage. Mrs. Klink stated this will destroy or disrupt our wildlife, trees, environment, native vegetation and sewer gases will be coming out of the manholes. Mrs. Klink stated over 50 trees will be taken from the middle of her woods and will decrease her property value. Mrs. Klink asked the supervisors to only sewer the Rt. 68 corridor and stated supervisors have a fiscal responsibility to the residents and Mrs. Klink asked them not to put the Township in debt.

Bill Klink donated his 3 minutes to Mr. Long.

Mark Williams, 270 Powdermill Rd., commented that the revised Sewer Map was just dropped at the Township on August 27th at the close of business for residents to review and are only given less than 30 days (Sept. 22, 2021) to make comments.

Mr. Williams feels more time should be given for this public comment. Mr. Long stated the forms can be retrieved from the website www.connosewer.org and submitted online or dropped off at the Township building.

David Lage, 400 Kriess Rd., stated he is a retired registered architect and when he hears a government project at \$22 million he foresees it becoming a \$44 million project. Mr. Lage stated he will be losing all his trees between his neighbors and said contractors will just rape the land. Mr. Lage said the drawing is showing the sewer line going right over his sandmound. Mr. Lage stated the center line of pipe is also only 15 ft. from the creek so with the steepness a road will have to be put in off Reiber Rd. to access and will cause erosion problems. His last comment was the wetlands disruption and losing a lot of wildlife and rattlesnakes.

Dave Dreher, 421 Kriess Rd., stated he moved here in 2016 and before moving he called the Township and asked if sewer was ever in the future and was referred to building inspector and stated the inspector said, "not in your lifetime". Mr. Dreher stated he received the 2020 letter stating sewer was going in and he in turn came to a meeting and was told how long it had been in the works and felt ridiculed for not knowing. Mr. Dreher is hearing from a lot of concerned Kriess Rd. residents about the destruction of their property, \$3,800 tap in fees, decommissioning costs of old system, his question was where is all the money coming from and what will the residents tax liability be? Mr. Dreher asked the board to vote down this \$22 million project and keep Connoquenessing Township rural.

Marty Mitchell donated his 3 minutes to Mr. Long.

Kay Double donated her 3 minutes to Mr. Long.

Mark Scott donated his 3 minutes to Mr. Long.

Dana Williams donated her 3 minutes to Mr. Long.

Rupert thanked all the above for their comments and told Mr. Long he had reviewed his pamphlet submitted earlier and commended him on his information.

Mr. Menchyk, Jr. mentioned the history of the Act 537 Plan which is required by the PA DEP. His points were as follows: 1. Township meetings with DEP in 2014 and 2015 requesting to see an updated Act 537 Plan. 2. Township moved forward and had public meeting at Armory in March 2016. 3. Senate reviewed all comments from meeting and Plan was submitted to DEP in April 2016 4. after receiving feedback from DEP and further review by supervisors the Plan was rescinded in June 2016 5. submitted revised plan to DEP June 2018 6. DEP requested revisions 7. re-submitted plan in August 2018 8. DEP approved in March 2019 9. Township required to form a sewer authority with 5 members to implement the Plan (done in late 2019) 10. January 2020 the sewer authority was formed as an active entity.

Mr. Long questioned why sewer such a large area and asked the board to try to shrink. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated meetings between Senate Engineering, DEP and supervisors would have decided the size. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated if the Township doesn't do the Act 537 Plan, the DEP will file a consent decree against them and require it to be done in 2 years or DEP will do it for the Township. Kay Double said at one of a previous sewer meeting someone said they called the DEP and were told that they did not force the Township to do this. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated to change this direction the supervisors would have to contact the DEP to see if they are allowed to submit a new plan which Mr. Menchyk, Jr. feels they wouldn't accept this request kindly. Rick Kradel asked the public if they are willing to spend additional money to move into a different direction? The majority of the public doesn't want to because they say their systems work and don't want public sewage.

Mark Scott, 187 Double Rd., asked why put sewage in when 93.5% of the systems work? Mr. Scott asked why not just repair the malfunctioned systems? Rupert stated the DEP had the Township do a holding tank ordinance to allow residents who had failed systems to have this as an option because they will not issue repair permits.

Dana Williams, 270 Powdermill Rd., stated she had talked to a woman at DEP who is very familiar with Connoquenessing Township and was told that the Sewer Authority has the latitude to work with the residents.

A man asked why other municipalities are not getting pushed into sewer by DEP? Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated the DEP is on other municipalities such as Summit and Forward Townships.

Christine Klink, 212 Reiber Rd., stated there are new sewage systems that the DEP allows and many people have alternate sites to use if their current one has failed. Mr. Rupert stated that many of the alternate sites might not be suitable to use due to the new DEP regulations.

Mark Minto, 251 Powdermill Rd., asked why the Township can't put in two big holding tanks to accommodate the Rt. 68 corridor? Rupert stated that the Township looked into running pipes to Evans City Borough which would have been 9 miles of pipe but was not feasible.

Kay Double, 187 Double Rd., stated Rt. 68 is who needs sewage and told Rich Lenhart, Sewer Authority Engineer, and the board that there will not be a pump station placed at 198 Double Rd. because it is a working farm and they better figure out where to move it.

OLD BUSINESS

Wayne Kaltenbaugh who was on agenda but could not attend was requesting a resolution on a stormwater issue he has had for years. The board briefly discussed the issue but tabled and stated to place him on next month's agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Jonathan Garczewski from Gateway Engineers was present to get guidance from supervisors on the Ritenour Family Limited Partnership #2 land development plan. Mr. Garczewski stated they are requesting a 25 ft. modification to the front set back of 100 ft. to accommodate a new 18,000 square foot building. Mr. Garczewski attended the Planning Commission meeting last month for approval but the plan was tabled. Rupert stated the supervisors don't usually review a plan until it has been recommended by the Planning commission but he would not personally approve this setback modification. Mr. Rupert stated it would really be a 33-1/2 ft. setback because the Township asks new developments to dedicate 8-1/2 ft. frontage for changes in the road width. Rupert said if they would move their proposed building back to meet the setback then they would be encroaching on the two previously approved septic sites which would make them unusable and allow them to apply for a holding tank. Rupert stated this is just his opinion and Rick Kradel and Terry Steinheiser has not agreed to this. Rupert stated they would then be able to dedicate the 8-1/2 ft. for the road. Kradel asked if there is any possible way the building could be shifted and use one of the available sewage sites? Mr. Garczewski explained that there is not. Kradel stated he would probably allow the holding tank. Mr. Garczewski stated they will put the modification request in for 9 ft. to accommodate the 8-1/2 ft. but asked if the Township would consider any more feet modification. Ritenour's attorney David Toal stated the 8-1/2 ft. the Township requests is not mandatory. Kradel and Rupert didn't seem interested in allowing any more front setback modification. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. told Mr. Garczewski this will need to go back to Planning Commission and follow the Township's SALDO section 245.57 and then supervisors can take action in October. Rupert reminded them to get the easement for the Stormwater. Rupert motioned to table the request for the modification until receiving recommendations from the Planning Commission. Kradel seconded. Roll call, yes.

Kradel motioned to advertise for 1,000 tons "more or less" of "anti-skid". Rupert seconded. Roll call, yes.

PLANS

NONE

ENGINEER REPORT

NONE

SOLICITOR REPORT

Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated he submitted his requests for revisions to Mr. Hassler at Armstrong in reference to the Armstrong Franchise Agreement. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated when he receives the final agreement he will present to the board. Kradel and Rupert stated if Armstrong is going to charge for video services (TV) they will vote to drop the service.

Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated four (4) Comprehensive Plan Packages were received from the advertisement approved at last month's meeting. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. suggests forming a committee to include supervisors, engineer, etc. to review all the proposals and then award. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated this does not have to be awarded to the lowest bidder but to the one who the committee feels is the best qualified. Mr. Menchyk, Jr. stated the board can accept late proposals.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Kradel motioned to approve invoice for August 2021 in the amount of \$388.06. Rupert seconded. Roll call, yes. Report in packets.

ROAD MASTERS REPORT

Kradel stated extensive work has been done to Whitestown Rd. Ext. and it may be paved next year. Kradel stated Lower Harmony Rd. culvert is in need of work and Whitestown Rd. Ext. could be used as a detour. Kradel said the road crew is still brushcutting and cleaning catch basins as time permits. Road superintendent report for August 2021 in packets.

BUILDING PERMIT REPORT

Rupert stated there were six building permits applied for this month. They were:

- 40-21 - Charles Brandon - Whitestown Rd. - pole barn - 8/11/21
- 41-21 - William Klink - Reiber Rd. - shed - 8/11/21
- 42-21 - Gregory Zdilla - Prospect Rd. - lean to - 8/12/21
- 43-21 - Sarah Boyd - Squirrel Rd. - shed - 8/16/21
- 44-21 - Joseph Hanchosky - Whitestown Rd. - carport - 8/18/21
- 45-21 - Curtis Kaelin - Prospect Rd. - pole barn - 8/24/21

TAX COLLECTOR REPORT

NONE

SEO REPORT

NONE

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR REPORT

Connoquenessing Volunteer Fire Company representative was on the agenda but did not attend.

Rupert stated the board had a conference call with PennDot in reference to the traffic light the Township has been working diligently to get at Double Rd. and Rt. 68 for years and PennDot did another study

recently and said it is not warranted. PennDot said they would be liable if they put one in and there was an accident.

MOTIONS & GENERAL INFORMATION

Kradel motioned to release sewage escrow to Robert Trosky in the amount of \$550.00. Rupert seconded. Roll call, yes.

Kradel motioned to release Matson Lumber Company road bond - .1 mile on Fassinger Rd. in the amount of \$1,250.00. Rupert seconded. Roll call, yes.

Rupert said the below, which was on the agenda, is for information:

BCATO Annual Safety Seminar is canceled this year due to Covid 19.

Connoquenessing Volunteer Fire Company will hold their Halloween Parade on Sunday, October 24, 2021 at the Connoquenessing Park. Line up is 1:30 p.m. - Parade begins at 2:00 p.m. In addition, Connoquenessing Township will hold their -Trick-or-Treat on Saturday, October 30, 2021 from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Rupert motioned to adjourn at 7:21 p.m. to an executive session to discuss real estate, litigation issues and meet with the Sewer Authority board and stated the board would not return. Kradel seconded. Roll call, yes.