

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CAMBRIDGE**  
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**REGULAR MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 8, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER, MOMENT OF SILENCE, AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG:** Chairman Cole called the November 8, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors to order at 7:00 PM, in the Municipal Building, 22530 Electric Drive, Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, followed by a moment of silence and the salute to the flag.

**ROLL CALL:** Supervisors in attendance were Kevin Cole, Charlie Bauer, and Bernie Blystone. Also present was Secretary/Treasurer/Zoning Officer, Debra E. Merritt; Roadmaster, Dan Klapthor; and, Residents, John and Judy Anderson, Matthew DeFrances and Visitor, Mike Evett.

**IDENTIFICATION OF RECORDING DEVICES:** There were no recording devices identified.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** There were no comments offered by the public at this time.

**SUPERVISOR COMMENTS:** There were no comments from the Supervisors.

**PUBLIC REQUESTS BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT:** There were no requests made by prior arrangement.

**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

**CAJA** – Minutes from the October 5, 2021 were received from CAJA. Mr. Bauer reported that CAJA is working on rectifying the sewage discharge issues with Riverside Brewery, as well as finalizing an agreement concerning the payment of surcharges. Additionally, Mr. Bauer reported that it appears that CAJA will be raising rates in an attempt to supplement some of the loss of revenue. He stated that the proposed rate increases are \$.75 per 1,000 gallons of usage.

**PLANNING AND ZONING -**

- **Planning Commission:** There were no minutes received from the Planning Commission.
- **Zoning Hearing Board:** There were no matters before the Zoning Hearing Board.
- **Zoning Officer:** A written report was submitted by the Zoning Officer.

**FRENCH CREEK COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS** – The next meeting of the French Creek Council of Governments is scheduled for Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 11:30 AM at the Meadville Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Merritt reported that at the October 21, 2021 meeting, representatives of the Northwestern REC presented information on solar energy, however mainly focused on residential solar systems rather than large scale solar farms.

**TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE** – The next meeting of the Crawford County Tax Collection Committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 6:00 PM in the West Mead Township Building. Mr. Cole reported that at the October 21, 2021 meeting, a resolution was passed which would authorize Berkheimer to withhold an entity's allocation amount in February, rather than having the entity send a check directly to the TCC in April. Upon collection, Berkheimer would then directly deposit the sum of the allocation amount into the TCC's account.

**SEWAGE** – There was no report received from Peter Homchenko, Sewage Enforcement Officer.

**PROJECTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Solar Energy Ordinance Adoption.** Ms. Merritt stated that following the Public Hearing held on Monday, October 11, 2021, Public Notice of the Board's intent to consider and enact Ordinance No. 01 of 2021, an Ordinance amending the 2016 Cambridge Township Zoning Ordinance to Provide Regulations for

Solar Energy Systems, with a summarization of the proposed Ordinance, was published the Monday, October 18, 2021 edition of the Meadville Tribune, as well as posted on the Township's Bulletin Board and the Township's website.

Mr. Anderson stated that he was in attendance to address the Board on the proposed solar energy ordinance. He questioned the Board's justification in including principal solar energy systems in the Rural Residential district. Mr. Cole stated that when reviewing the land contained in the RR district, it would appear only a few parcels would be large enough to accommodate a PSES, and that those few parcels are adjacent to the Agricultural district, where the solar energy project is being proposed. He continued by noting that the Board does not feel that including the RR district, will have an adverse effect on the district overall. Mrs. Anderson questioned how the solar energy project would be taxed, with Mr. DeFrances noting that he believed that the adjacent property owners will be the ones negatively affected with a decrease to their property values.

Mr. Anderson also questioned why the proposed Ordinance only requires 8-foot screening when the solar panels themselves could potentially be 18 feet high. He further stated that he believed that a double staggered row of live screening should be required rather than providing the developer with the option to use a fence as screening. Mr. Cole stated that regardless of the screening, all principal solar energy systems are required to follow the National Electric Code which requires a 7-foot-high security fence around the perimeter of the project. Accordingly, regardless of what type of screening is used, the developer is required to install a chain link security fence. Mr. DeFrances agreed with Mr. Anderson that he would rather have the screening consist of vegetation, rather than a slat or decorative fence. Mr. Anderson questioned when the developer would have to notify the Township on its elective screening. Mr. Cole stated that it would need to be included in the Conditional Use Application.

Motion by Mr. Bauer to adopt Ordinance No. 01 of 2021, an Ordinance amending the 2016 Cambridge Township Zoning Ordinance to Provide Regulations for Solar Energy Systems. Second by Mr. Cole.

**Further Discussion:** Mr. Blystone stated that he would like to be put on record that he is opposed to utilizing prime farmland as sites for principal solar energy systems. He stated that the State has provided little to no assistance to municipalities being faced with developing regulations for these projects. He further stated that in the future, and with the development of guidance from the State, he hoped that the Township could revisit the Ordinance regulations.

Cole: Yes

Bauer: Yes

Blystone: Yes

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Proposed 2022 Budget.** Ms. Merritt stated that she has provided the Board with a working copy of the 2022 proposed budget, which includes the 2022 proposed allocations, the 2021 allocations, as well as the 2021 year-to-date actual receipts and expenditures. Additionally, she has provided the Board with a year-to-date payroll summary, and spreadsheets representing employee wage and benefit calculations, 2022 potential wage increases, cost-of-living adjustments vs. actual wage increases, and a health insurance rate history by percentage. Ms. Merritt then reported on the proposed State Fund Budget, noting that this year's ending fund balance is lower than it was at year end 2020. Accordingly, to make up for the lesser funds, adjustments were made to the Road Repairs and Maintenance category, as well as the Dust Control category. Since the Township is no longer permitted to utilize State funds for dust control purposes, the Board requested that Ms. Merritt remove the Dust Control category and reallocate the monies back to the Road Repairs and Maintenance category.

Next the Board reviewed the General Fund Budget, noting that proposed changes to Receipts included an increase in the Earned Income Tax, a decrease in the District Court fines, and the addition of the anticipated 2022 tranche of the American Rescue Plan Act monies. With regard to Expenditures, Ms.

Merritt noted that decreases in allocation amounts were being proposed to Benefits to Elected Officials, Mileage Reimbursement, and the Debt Service for the 2016 Western Star line items. She further reported that increases in allocation amounts were being proposed to the Internet Services/Web Design, Telephone, Road Crew Wages and Road Maintenance Supplies categories. Additionally, Ms. Merritt stated that she is proposing new line items to include Computer Supplies, as the Township will soon have three laptops with subscription costs, and an Interfund Operating Account to include the monies designated under the American Rescue Plan Act.

Mr. Bauer questioned the need for the increases in the Telephone category. Ms. Merritt stated that since the Township has been providing the public with access to participate in the monthly meetings remotely, the monthly telephone bills have increased, as well as the addition of the Roadmaster's monthly cell phone reimbursement. Mr. Cole added that the Township is also paying the business/commercial price for telephone services. Mr. Bauer stated that he would like to investigate whether we could get that cost down in the upcoming year. Mr. Cole questioned why the Road Crew Wages, and the Road Maintenance Supplies categories were increased. Ms. Merritt stated that she anticipates that Road Crew Wages will be at or over budget by the year's end. Accordingly, to permit for wage increases in 2022, the line item requires an increase. With regard to the Road Maintenance Supplies, since the Township can no longer pay for dust control materials out of the State Fund, money has been allocated to this category to provide for the purchase of brine. Mr. Bauer stated that it appears that employee Mike Porter, is currently over his allocated hours with two months left in the year. Mr. Cole stated that Mr. Porter was employed to work an average of 30 hours per week and questioned Mr. Klapthor as to why he has exhausted those hours. Mr. Klapthor stated that he did not believe it was his responsibility to keep track of Mr. Porter's hours. Mr. Cole noted that the Roadmaster is Mr. Porter's supervisor and is responsible for ensuring that Mr. Porter is working the appropriate number of hours. Mr. Cole further noted that this matter was discussed last spring, at which time the Board had reiterated that Mr. Porter was a part-time employee, budgeted to work an average of 30 hours per week throughout the year. Mr. Cole requested that Mr. Klapthor reemphasize to Mr. Porter that he is employed to work approximately 1,560 per year, which would average 30 hours per week. He further requested that Mr. Klapthor discuss a remedy to minimize his hours through the end of year, perhaps by way of lay off, as Mr. Porter is already over his budgeted allocation of hours.

Motion by Mr. Cole to advertise for public inspection the proposed 2022, with corrections, which contains no tax increase for adoption at the December 13, 2021 Regular Meeting. Second by Mr. Blystone.

Cole: Yes

Bauer: Yes

Blystone: Yes

**2022 Insurance Renewal.** Ms. Merritt reported that the Township's group healthcare renewal rates were received from UPMC and have been provided to the Board for their review. The Board must make a determination on the proposed renewal by November 30, 2021.

Motion by Mr. Bauer to renew the Township's healthcare plan, provided by UPMC, identified as PPO \$2,500 \$20/\$40, for the period of January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022, provided through Borgeson Insurance Services and to pay the applicable premium. Second by Mr. Blystone.

Cole: Yes

Bauer: Yes

Blystone: Yes

**ROADMASTER'S REPORT:** A written report has been submitted by the Roadmaster. Mr. Blystone questioned what Mr. Klapthor's plan for Ridge Road was for the remainder of the year, noting that needs some attention. Mr. Klapthor stated that he planned to grade it, as well as spot grade portions of Henry Road. Mr. Klapthor also reported that he was notified by Terry Lewis, that he is no longer interested in plowing. Mr. Lewis has recommended Mike Evett, who was in attendance this evening to

introduce himself and discuss possible employment. Additionally, Mr. Lewis has stated that he would be willing to stay on and train Mr. Evett, so that he could familiarize himself with the plow route. Mr. Evett stated that he is laid off in the winter and would like to pick up some work to supplement his unemployment compensation. Mr. Evett stated that he could probably work up to 20 hours a week, which would cover the hours previously worked by Mr. Lewis. Ms. Merritt stated that since this matter was not placed on the Agenda until this evening, she would feel more comfortable if the Board could hold off until the December meeting to officially hire Mr. Evett should they choose to do so. If Mr. Klapthor would require the additional plow driver, the hiring could also be affirmed at the December Regular Meeting. In the meantime, Ms. Merritt stated that she would schedule Mr. Evett's pre-employment drug test, which would be a prerequisite to his hiring.

**SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Motion by Mr. Cole to accept the Treasurer's Report and make Payment of the Bills as presented. Second by Mr. Bauer.

Cole: Yes                      Bauer: Yes                      Blystone: Yes

Motion by Mr. Blystone to accept the minutes of the October 11, 2021 Public Hearing and the October 11, 2021 Regular Meeting, as presented. Second by Mr. Bauer.

Cole: Yes                      Bauer: Yes                      Blystone: Yes

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** There were no additional comments from the public in attendance.

**FURTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Bauer state that he wished to discuss the CAJA revenue projection issue with the Board. He stated that projections continue to indicate that CAJA will still be down in revenues at the end of year, and accordingly, will not meet the 120% covenant requirement as provided for in the guarantee agreement. Mr. Bauer stated that he would still prefer to have Township and Borough supplement the loss of revenue with the American Rescue Plan Act funding. Mr. Bauer questioned whether Ms. Merritt had heard from Rick Clayton, following their discussion from last Friday. Ms. Merritt stated that she had not, however has confirmed that the Township's pro rata share of the bond is 7%. She further stated that she confirmed that the outstanding balance on the bond would be \$6,950,000 at the end of the year, making the Township's share of the bond repayment at \$486,000. Ms. Merritt further reported that in speaking with Solicitor Shaddinger, he would advise that should CAJA wish for the Township and Borough to supplement the lost revenue, then CAJA should submit a letter to both the Township and Borough requesting such funding. Mr. Bauer stated that since CAJA has not submitted such a letter, he would propose that the Township begin the discussion process by composing such a letter, advising of the Township's interest in funding the lost revenue in order to possibility avoid another downgrade in the bond rating. He stated that he would be willing to draft such a letter once further information was received from Mr. Clayton. The Board agreed and felt that it would be in the Township's best interest for CAJA to avoid another downgrade to their bond rating.

**FURTHER BUSINESS:** There was no further business for the Board to address.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Mr. Cole moved to adjourn, with a second by Mr. Bauer. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

  
Debra E. Merritt, Secretary