

SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

February 22, 2012 – 6:00 p.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 6:05 p.m. Present: Mayor Fisher, Committeemen Rich and Molnar. Also in attendance were Chris Rose, Phil Rosso, Mike Janoski, and Phil Langon

In compliance with the Public Meetings Act, Mayor Fisher announced that this Special Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act with notices faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Trenton Times on February 16, 2012. A copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

The meeting was recorded via digital recording system.

DISCUSSION WITH CONSTRUCTION OFFICIAL & BUILDING DEPT STAFF:

Chris Rose relayed that the two main points for the evening's discussion were 1) re-instating mileage reimbursement now that times are better although fuel costs are worse, and 2) more time for plan review and inspections. Mr. Fisher relayed that this conversation is taking place at a good time as the budget is in process but reminded them that the Township has a 2% cap and cuts will probably be needed somewhere. However, documentation to support the number of inspections over a three year period was requested. Mr. Rich questioned whether the workload can be handled by the department and also requested a numbers breakdown.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the reasons for the requests and examples of same. Whether the former would be a flat rate or a per/mile charge, as per the policy manual and which might be easier, was raised. The building and electrical sub-code officials would be the ones needing this reimbursement the most with Mr. Rose stating that he will not be charging mileage. As for the latter, the sub-code officials noted that they are part-timers, with full time positions elsewhere, and arrange inspections around those other jobs or Saturdays. Their hours with the Township are fixed at 2 hours/day, twice a week but they've all be doing more than that due to the increasing workload. A change to a 3 hour/day, twice a week is requested in order to perform inspections and plan reviews, along with the resultant pay bump.

The situation with Texas Eastern was touched upon but Mr. Rose relayed that he was directed by DCA that as it is a federal facility and that the Township is not to interfere. This stems from a lawsuit in Rhode Island where a judge ruled that there is no local jurisdiction. Getting a tax assessor in there would require plans that are not forthcoming has Mr. Fisher stymied. This type of utility is seemingly an untouchable, according to Mr. Molnar. Also mentioned was the situation with Messick. Although there is construction office involvement concerning the permits, this is primarily a zoning problem and involves some environmentally sensitive areas.

Mr. Rose was requested to have the Construction Tech put together the numbers from the last two/three years and a projection for the upcoming one as well as revenue estimates vs cost of the department to justify the requested increases and mileage charges. It was relayed that these figures are needed rather quickly. Mr. Rose noted that the permit fee for the first house in the new development was \$5000.

Whether there should be quarterly/semi-annual meetings with the department was questioned but not resolved. The need for the names of possible substitute sub-code officials/inspectors was also raised. Suggestions are to be forwarded to the Clerk. The services of the substitute technical assistance are being sought for coverage over an upcoming 2-3 week period.

Appreciation for the meeting was extended all around.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

No public in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:52 p.m. on motion by Molnar, seconded by Fisher.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk