Maidencreek Township Board of Supervisors
January 24, 2022
11 A.M.

Attending: Heidi Fiedler, Joseph Farley, David Franke, Eric Frey of E. Kenneth Nyce Law Office and Diane Hollenbach

Guests: Anthony Spero, John Previtera, Carl Weston, Joann Chabrol, Eric Bauman, Dennis and Robin Fink, Heather Schoener, Dan Brown, Scott Eaken, Jim Cecchini, Dan Novakovich, I Richard Wick, John Huemmrich, Steph Davenport, Gaynelle Bloh, Curt B. Rhine, Jay Pendleton, Claude Beaver

Heidi Fiedler called the special meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and asked everyone to rise for the Pledge to the Flag.

A motion was made by David Franke to approve the agenda. Joseph Farley seconded the motion and hearing no questions on the motion, all members voted, "Aye." Motion carried.

Accept Manager's Resignation

A motion was made by Heidi Fiedler to accept the resignation of Diane Hollenbach effective January 28, 2022. David Franke and Joseph Farley disagreed and the motion was modified and seconded by Joseph Farley to accept the resignation of Diane Hollenbach effective February 4, 2022 and pay all personal time and vacation time as allowed under her contract. Hearing no questions on the motion, all members voted, "Aye." Motion carried. The solicitor agreed he will confirm the amounts of the personal time and vacation time to be paid in Mrs. Hollenbach's last paycheck.

Eric Bauman, Wales Way, Blandon thanked Diane Hollenbach for her twenty years of service.

Gaynelle Bloh of Fleming Street, Blandon thanked Diane Hollenbach for her service, dedication and thoroughness.

A motion was made by Heidi Fiedler to amend the agenda to include appointing an acting manager and setting the compensation and authorize the advertisement for the Township Manager position. David Franke seconded the motion and hearing no questions on the motion, all members voted, "Aye." Motion carried.

An executive session was held for personnel from 11:07 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.

Appoint Acting Manager and Set Compensation

A motion was made by David Franke to appoint Katelyn Gruber as acting manager effective February 7, 2022 with a rate increase of $4 an hour. Joseph Farley seconded the motion and hearing no questions on the motion, all members voted, "Aye." Motion carried.

Authorize Advertisement for a Township Manager

A motion was made by David Franke to advertise for the position of Township Manager utilizing the Reading Eagle, PSATS and the Township website. Joseph Farley seconded the motion and hearing no questions on the motion, all members voted, "Aye." Motion carried.

Amend 2022 Budget

A motion was made by Heidi Fiedler to adopt Resolution 13-2022 amending the 2022 Budget. Joseph Farley seconded the motion.

David Franke stated that he did not think the position was needed, and that the cost for the position will continue to grow. Heidi Fiedler stated that the Township had a Road Master and Public Works Director in the past, and we need to maintain the roads at a higher level. She added with cash reserves over one million dollars, the Township has adequate funds. Joseph Farley asked why we need a Public Works Director to maintain roads and was concerned about the impact of a Countywide reassessment on real estate taxes. Mr. Farley felt taxes should be cut. Heidi Fiedler stated that the biggest portion of the real estate tax bill was the school tax. Ms. Fiedler did not believe that a Countywide reassessment would happen anytime soon. She suggested that the Township could promote from within to the position.

Scott Eaken of Berk Road, Shoemakersville asked if the budget was being opened for a specific item and if the qualifications and job description have been set. Mr. Eaken added that since Claude Beaver left the position, he had not heard complaints about the road crew. He suggested "if it ain't broke, don't fix it".

Steph Davenport of N View Road, Fleetwood asked why the Board was in a rush to do this, since there is no long documented need for the position. Everyone is struggling to make ends meet and this cost will be an extra burden on the taxpayers. Mrs. Davenport asked if there is a list of needs not being filled.

Eric Bauman of Wales Way Blandon asked if the Township was getting rid of the Authority since a Public Works Director by definition supervises water and sewer as well as roads. He asked if Supervisor Fiedler had reported the issues she had with the roads and asked for examples. Mr. Bauman felt the current foreman was doing a fantastic job and gave three examples of issues he knew were addressed quickly – filling of a pothole in front of his home, removing of a dangerous branch dangling over a shed next to the Community Park during the August 2020 storm, and after Mr. Shuman had been in an accident himself, he still went out to put up barricades for the police department.

Carl Weston of S. View Road, Fleetwood asked if the Board had examined why we no longer have a Public Works Director. He stated that if no one communicated that something is wrong with the road, no one will know to fix it. Mr. Weston added that Keith Shuman knows the ins and outs of the community and that the road crew is demoralized. The focus should be on what is best for them and learn from history.

John Huemmrich of Millennium Drive, Blandon stated that is seems like the money is burning a hole in the pocket. He asked how the position would improve the roads. Mr. Huemmrich was not in favor of hiring another bureaucrat and if the Township hired from within, would the person not be replaced? He felt that the focus should be on hiring a new Township Manager. Heidi Fiedler stated that she doesn't believe in wasteful spending but believes in maintaining the facilities, and there are issues with drains as well as complaints about how things are run here.

Claude Beaver of Lee Spring Road, Blandon stated that he was Road Master and not Public Works Director. Diane Hollenbach was asked when the Township last had a Director of Public Works. She stated 2013 and Claude was Road Master in 2014 and 2015.

John Previtera of Faith Drive, Blandon stated that he was concerned about taxes and loved the idea of decreasing taxes instead of more spending. He reminded Joseph Farley that when he campaigned for Supervisor, Mr. Farley portrayed himself as being fiscally responsible.

Gaynelle Bloh of Fleming Street, Blandon opposed hiring a Public Works Director. She did not believe it was necessary. Ms. Bloh travels three to five hundred miles a month and Maidencreek Township roads are pretty good. The Township fixed a pothole in front of her house and when it sank again, contacted the developer to repair the base. She believed that the amended budget was conservative and would rather see the money spent on emergency services that are used heavily or spend it on recreation.

Board discussion: David Franke asked do you hire a manager for a barn repair or do you put the money towards the repair? A hundred thousand dollars can do a lot more for road repair. Joseph Farley stated that if you look at the state of the nation, there is a huge budget deficit and he doesn't want to create a deficit here. He asked what the difference between a Road Master and a Public Works Director was and suggested two foremen. Heidi Fiedler suggested a Foreman of the Shop and a Road Foreman. David Franke asked how many full-time road crew workers there were. Diane Hollenbach stated five. Mr. Franke did not think that three workers required two foremen. Joseph Farley stated that the roads are in good condition and he has lived here thirty years. He wasn't suggesting two foreman and he really hasn't been a supervisor long enough to know the facts. Mr. Farley wanted to keep taxes down. Heidi Fiedler stated items in the budget sometimes do not get spent. David Franke stated that we should include the position in the budget when we see the need. He felt there is no need for two management positions in a group of five. Mr. Franke was concerned that if he missed a meeting and this position was in the budget, that a Board member would take the opportunity to shove the hiring through. Heidi Fiedler stated that it is important to have flexibility. She added that Mr. Farley has not heard from the employees and that she doesn't think the road crew issues have been fully addressed. Joseph Farley stated the people in the audience are hard working people. They are struggling, and they are worried. Heidi Fiedler withdrew her motion.

A motion was made by David Franke to close the 2022 budget as approved previously. Joseph Farley seconded the motion and hearing no questions on the motion, David Franke and Joseph Farley voted, "Aye." Heidi Fiedler voted, "Nay." Motion carried.

Having no further business, a motion was made by David Franke to adjourn the January 24, 2022 meeting of the Maidencreek Township Board of Supervisors. Joseph Farley seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Hollenbach