



**WEST ROCKHILL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**Meeting Agenda
November 14, 2018**

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance *Please silence cell phones during the meeting*

- 1. Public Comments** on Agenda items – *Please state name & address*
- 2. Announcements**
 - Executive Session to follow this evening's meeting
- 3. Consent Agenda**
 1. October 17, 2018 Minutes
 2. Wynn Plan Review Status & Escrow Release
 3. Emergency Services Report
 4. Building/Zoning & Building Permit Report
 5. Public Works Report
 6. Conservation Committee
 7. Joint Recreation Authority: Jim Miller
- 4. Confirmed Appointments**
 - Committee of Five – Karina Rilling, Vera Cole, David Collingwood
- 5. Committee Reports**
 - Planning Commission: Chris Derstine
 - Park & Recreation Report: Bob Strobel
 - Comprehensive Plan Committee: Don Duvall
- 6. Commission Reports**
 - Police Report: Chief Rod Blake
- 7. Tax Collector's Report:** Suzanne Clarke
- 8. Engineer's Report:** Steve Baluh, P.E.
- 9. Solicitor's Report:** Mary Eberle, Esq.
- 10. Township Manager's Report:** Greg Lippincott
 - Treasurers Report/ Payment of Bills
 - Emergency Manager Coordinator
 - Notice of Violation TMP # 52-006-013
 - Authorization to Advertise 2019 Budget
- 11. Old Business**
- 12. New Business**
- 13. Public Comment** - *Please state name & address*

Adjournment

**West Rockhill Township
Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2018**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. at the West Rockhill Township building by Chair Jim Miller, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Elected Officials *(Absentees noted with asterisk*)*

Chairman: Jim Miller
Vice Chairman: Don Duvall
Member: Jay Keyser
Tax Collector: Suzanne Clarke

Appointed Officials

Township Manager:	Greg Lippincott	Conservation Committee (CC): Don Duvall
Township Solicitor:	Mary Eberle*	Park and Recreation (P&R): Bob Strobel
Township Engineer:	Steve Baluh	Joint Recreation Authority (JRA): Jim Miller
PRPD:	Officer Tim Maloney	Township Secretary: Judith Decker*
Planning Commission:	Chris Derstine*	Township Bookkeeper: Sheri Baringer

Visitors Registered

David Collingwood, Karina Rilling and Michael Schrameyer of the Conservation Committee, Regina Schrameyer and Don & Pat Graham of Sterners Road, Frank Szymendera of Allentown Road, Charlie Guenst of Schukraft Road, Fred & Marie Diserod of Lonely Road, Butch Marx of Ridge Road, Denise Rogers of Lower Rocky Dale Road, Penny Markley of Hafler Road, Anthony Boegner of Clymer Avenue, John Sweriduk of Ridge Valley Road, Sue Furlong of Barndt Road, Kathy & Brian Weirback of Whaland Road, Barry & Judy Benninger of Masi Road, Doug Hansen of Cathill Road, Scott & Dianne Marshall of Whaland Road, Mike & Valarie Giannini of Ridge Valley Road, Art & Cherie Walter of Forrest Road, Linda Marx, Stan Heller, Jordyn Striad, Michelle Schetter, and Allison Heller of Thousand Acre Road, Marilyn Vogel of Finland Road, Jerry Guretse of the Telford Fire Department and Bob Keeler of the News Herald

Public Comments on Agenda Items: none**Announcements**

Mr. Miller announced that there will be an Executive Session following the meeting.

Consent Agenda

1. October 17, 2018 Minutes
2. Wynn Plan Review Status & Escrow Release
3. Emergency Services Report
4. Building/Zoning & Building Permit Report
5. Public Works Report
6. Conservation Committee
7. Joint Recreation Authority: Jim Miller

Mr. Keyser made a motion seconded by Mr. Duvall and carried to approve the Consent Agenda.

Confirmed Appointment

Committee of Five – Karina Rilling, Vera Cole, David Collingwood – BOS Health Insurance Costs

Vera Cole read a statement into the Minutes objecting to the unreasonable high cost of two of the Board of Supervisor's health insurance costs when they or their family members over age 65 might take a more economical Medicare option and other expenses are denied. Karina Rilling concurred citing other ways those township funds might be used such as the Save the Barn committee, now disbanded due to lack of funds. David Collingwood, who also objected to the BOS health insurance cost, asked that the spreadsheet they submitted late be projected onto the screen. Mr. Miller denied the request due to a lack of a quorum from the BOS. Mr. Collingwood relinquished his remaining time to Fred Diserod. Mr. Diserod explained that the BOS can vote themselves health insurance and he

compared 7 nearby Townships and only 5 Supervisors take health insurance. Costs in 2018 are: WRT: \$82,000, ERT \$1,875. Don asked for a document; Fred responded that he would provide it. Regina Schrameyer was in agreement. Jim Miller stated that he had taken the Medicare option to cut costs, fulfilling a campaign promise. He advised residents to use their voice. Mr. Duvall stated that health care costs have risen 52% since 2013. Mr. Miller responded that we should opt for other options. Mr. Lippincott stated that the Township had shopped around for plans.

Committee Reports

Planning Commission (PC): Chris Derstine

Mr. Derstine reviewed the November 13 meeting. Planner Mike Roedig of the Bucks County Planning Commission presented the draft West Rockhill Township Comprehensive Plan to the public and PC. Mr. Lippincott added that the draft plan was available for review on the website. PC will make a recommendation in December. LD 609 Hansen Lot Line Change: PC recommended Preliminary/Final approval for this simple lot line change with no issues. LD 605 Kratz Major Subdivision: following a description of the project, Mr. Derstine reported that PC recommended waiving the road, curbs, sidewalks and streetlights were also waiver but will be noted on the plan. PC felt the trail easement was not feasible and was satisfied with fees in lieu of recreation. Mr. Baluh advised that the Township will be meeting with the applicant to discuss breaking out Lot 1 into a new land development or as Phase I of II. PC recommended Preliminary approval. **Mr. Keyser made a motion seconded by Mr. Duvall and carried to approve the Planning Commission Report.**

Park & Recreation Committee Report: Bob Strobel

Mr. Strobel reported that P&R had two projects to approve. Compassionate Friends asked for approval of a drip irrigation system for the Compassionate Friends Garden at no cost to the township. **Mr. Keyser made a motion seconded by Mr. Duvall and carried to approve the irrigation system for the Compassionate Friends Garden.** An Eagle Scout candidate proposed a Hafler Trail clean up and improvement project. The Manager stated he had no objection. **Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried to approve the Eagle Scout project for the Hafler Trail.** P&R would like to remove the water fountain in James Park as too costly to maintain; the Manager concurred. **Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried to remove the water fountain in James Park.**

Mr. Keyser made a motion seconded by Mr. Duvall and carried to approve the Park & Recreation Committee Report.

Comprehensive Plan Committee: Don Duvall

BOS thanked the Comprehensive Plan Committee for a job well done. **Mr. Keyser made a motion seconded by Mr. Miller and carried to approve the Comprehensive Plan Committee Report.**

Pennridge Regional Police Department (PRPD) Report: Officer Tim Maloney

Officer Maloney gave the PRPD report. Mr. Miller requested a crime comparison report for years 2017 and 2018 to be presented. He also reminded attendees it was no-shave November to raise funds for cancer – go to PRPD website. **Mr. Duvall made a motion to accept the Police Report seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried.**

Tax Collector's Report: Suzanne Clarke

Mrs. Clarke presented the Tax Collectors report. Final notices have been sent out. **Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Miller and carried to approve the Tax Collector's Report.**

Engineer's Report: Steve Baluh, P.E.

Resolution 2018-09 LD 608 Penn Foundation Parking Lot Expansion - Conditional Amended Final Approval
Mr. Baluh presented the Resolution for LD 608 for BOS consideration. All conditions have been met and the applicant approved the conditions of the Resolution. **Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried to approve Resolution 2018-09.**

LD 609 Hansen & Hansen Lot Line Change

Mr. Baluh reported that PC recommended Conditional Preliminary/Final approval for this project. PC approved the two waivers requested for road improvements and a drafting notation. Scott Camburn gave a short presentation. Mr. Keyser stated that there were water issues on Cathill Road and trench grates should be added. Discussion ensued. Mr. Baluh responded that a condition for the 3-lot shared driveway easement could be added to the approval resolution. **Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried to authorize the Solicitor to prepare a resolution for consideration next month conditional upon resolution of the driveway trench grate issue.** Public comment was taken from Michelle Schetter asking the use of the property. The applicant responded that it is residential. **Mr. Keyser made a motion seconded by Mr. Miller and carried to approve the Engineer's Report.**

Solicitor's Report: Mary Eberle, Esq. – no report

Manager's Report: Greg Lippincott

Treasurer's Report/Payment of Bills

Mr. Lippincott presented the Treasurer's Report, which is on file. Public comment was taken from Regina Schrameyer who asked if balances are broken out addressed by Mr. Lippincott who advised filling out a Right to Know form. **Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried to approve the Treasurer's Report ending October 31, 2018, and to pay the bills as reported for October 11 through November 8, 2018, subject to Audit.**

Emergency Management Coordinator

Last month, the Manager announced that he had a volunteer, Ashley McElhare, from the Fire Department to take the Emergency Management Coordinator position. Mr. Lippincott recommended Ashley McElhare for this vacancy. **Mr. Miller made a motion seconded by Mr. Duvall and carried to appoint Ashley McElhare as Emergency Management Coordinator.**

Notice of Violation TMP # 52-006-013

The Manager reported that he sent a zoning violation letter to this property owner for an unauthorized building in the front yard with no response. **Mr. Miller made a motion seconded by Mr. Duvall and carried to authorize the Solicitor to get involved.**

Authorization to Advertise 2019 Budget

Mr. Lippincott presented the 2019 Budget with no tax increase and the lowest taxes in the area with a police force. **Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried to advertise the 2019 Budget for adoption in December.** Public comment was taken from Frank Szymendera who asked why the health insurance cost wasn't shown on a slide. Denise Rogers asked what the codification process was addressed by Mr. Lippincott.

Mr. Duvall made a motion seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried to approve the Manager's Report.

Old Business

Robert Linden asked about the Penn DOT signage and line striping at Allentown & Sterners Road.

Linda Marx wants line striping on Thousand Acre Road and stated she has brought it up before. The Manager responded that the Board has not adopted a policy for line striping. Mr. Miller stated this is still an open item. Jay Keyser added that Lawn Avenue was line striped this year at a cost of \$3400 and is almost faded out now. Mr. Duvall added that it costs \$9000 a mile to line stripe and WRT has 40 miles of roads.

Mr. Miller made a statement about on the Adelpia Compressor Station. There is an advertised DEP meeting in WRT on December 4. The Township supports residents but this is a federal project. The Township will not issue any permits but the Federal government can do what it wants to. The Solicitor has met with FERC, DEP and Adelpia. Mr. Duvall responded that he has formed a small committee and are meeting with a pipeline and environmental consulting firms and got an agreement to tour a compressor station. BOS has studied a stack of documents on this project.

Jay Keyser gave an update on Penn DOT roads. Cathill Road is to be improved in 2019. Allentown & Finland road improvements are slated to be completed by Thanksgiving as per Penn DOT.

Frank Szymendera stated there are three areas on Allentown Road where water is sheeting across the road. Mr. Lippincott responded that an email went out today to Penn DOT about that issue.

Marie Diserod had complaints about Lonely Road noted by the Manager.

New Business: none

Public Comment - Mr. Miller announced comments would be heard for two minutes per comment.

Michael Schrameyer objected to the Board taking wages and health insurance without taxpayer approval. He stated there were many ways to obtain health insurance at a reasonable cost; he and his wife pay \$8000 per year on Medicare and supplement.

Ebby Schirmer again asked for a donation for the Pennridge Community Center. She submitted an annual report and budget to the Board. She appealed for an allocation in the 2019 budget as funding is very limited.

Judy Benninger asked if the public can attend Don's Adelphia committee meeting. Mr. Duvall stated that the meeting is not a township meeting. Mr. Keyser suggested she give her contact information to the Manager. Mrs. Benninger asked if the Emergency Manager would attend that meeting. Mr. Duvall replied that she was appointed this evening but that was the intention. She further asked if there were or would be an ordinance adopted for land use with regard to compressor stations. Mr. Miller responded they would discuss it with the Solicitor.

Marilyn Vogel asked if the Engineer had any comments and Mr. Baluh responded that he was not an environmental engineer.

Cathy Weirbach has questions about houses up for sale near the proposed compressor station. The Manager thought that property was in Richland Township.

Elizabeth Herrington was concerned residents didn't know about the compressor station and asked if the federal government is subject to RC zoning. Mr. Lippincott urged residents to attend the December 4 DEP meeting, write to FERC, their congressman and senators and reiterated that the federal government supersedes all local zoning laws. WRT will not issue any permits if it does not meet local regulations but the federal government supersedes any local regulations and laws. WRT needs resident's help.

Cathy Weirbach asked where the DEP meeting is advertised. The Manager responded that it is a DEP meeting and was in the PA Bulletin and is on the WRT website, the DEP website and has been tweeted by WRT.

Barry Benninger asked if they have to obtain permits. BOS reiterated that they do not.

Ebby Schirmer asked for the location of the proposed station and an attendee identified it as 2950 Rich Hill Road.

Regina Schrameyer asked if a petition would help. BOS responded that it would.

Tony Boegner stated that the project has not been approved and that FERC will make a final decision on 4/4/19?

Butch Marx asked if WRT could advertise.

Mike Gianetti asked for a WRT website link for an e-sign petition. BOS responded that the Solicitor would have to be consulted and they would look into it.

Vera Cole volunteered to set those links up.

Marie Diserod asked for the DEP meeting to be put on the James Park sign. BOS agreed.

Valarie Gianetti asked why residents didn't receive a letter after WRT was informed in January. The Manager responded that in June the Township realized what the project was and applied for party status in July.

Cathy Weirbach stated that residents close to the project did receive notification from FERC but ignored it.

Mike Gianetti has questions would like to see footage of a real compressor station on December 4. BOS responded that they would try to do that but not at the DEP meeting.

John Sweriduk suggested searching YouTube for Compressor stations.

Robert Linden stated that there was all kinds of information online on compressor stations.

Tony Boegner objected to the noise and pollution of the compressor station running 24 hours a day. Again, residents were urged to attend the December 4 DEP meeting by Mr. Miller.

Vera Cole wanted to make a difference with the health care costs in the 2019 budget. Any steps to be taken? Greg BOS can only make small changes prior to adoption once it is advertised.

Elizabeth Harrington asked about Richland Township involvement. The Manager stated WRT reached out and they declined party status.

Ebby Schirmer asked why Adelphia chose this location. BOS responded that two pipelines converge at the WRT-Richlandtown location. The natural gas will supply the US effort to obtain energy independence.

Penny Markley asked for a show of hands from the BOS if they would consider going on Medicare to save money.

Sue Furlong objected that they didn't have time to consider.

Mr. Herrington asked questions about the FERC project addressed by BOS.

Douglas Herrington asked if an environmental attorney could fight this. Mr. Duvall responded that BOS is considering this.

Michele Schetter informed the room that Pa residents have a right to clean air and water as per the PA Constitution, seconded by Vera Cole. Asked BOS to look into that.

Linda Marx wants BOS to consider reducing their health care costs. This should not be an issue.

Judy Benninger announced there would be a meeting on November 20 at Springtown Rod & Gun Club about pipelines.

Sue Furlong asked whether the Township would be able to sponsor a petition. She suggested that citizens work on the petition at pennridge.buzz not to "taint" the Board of Supervisors. Manager stated that BOS meets again December 19 to approve any petition. BOS could support a petition at that meeting.

Mr. Duvall disputed a "memo" going around in the community.

There being no further business, a motion for adjournment was made by Mr. Miller seconded by Mr. Keyser and carried at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sheri J. Baringer
Bookkeeper

**West Rockhill Township Board of Supervisor's Meeting, Nov 14, 2018
Vera Cole, 2045 Upper Rocky Dale Road**

I would like to request that these comments be read into the record. Thank you.

Hello, My name is Vera Cole. I live at 2045 Upper Rocky Dale Road. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you tonight. Thank you for your service to the community. The comments I am about to read represent the work of a small group of concerned township citizens, including David Collingwood of 14 Barndt Road, Regina Schrameyer of 2115 Sterners Road, Francis Szymendera of 1030 Allentown Road, Karina Rilling of 217 Thousand Acre Road, and Fred Diserod of 201 Lonely Road.

At the May 2018 Board of Supervisors meeting, information was shared by a member of this group about the cost to West Rockhill taxpayers for health insurance coverage for supervisors. This information was uncovered through an open records request and was, at least for us, the first time we had seen the actual costs.

In 2016, West Rockhill tax payers paid nearly \$95,000 to provide healthcare insurance for three supervisors and their families. In 2017 this dropped to just under \$70,000: roughly \$35,000 for one supervisor; \$30,000 for another; and, \$5,000 for the third. All in all, this information raised for us serious questions about costs to township taxpayers. We have learned the following—

Under Pennsylvania state code, supervisors and their families are eligible for group health insurance paid in whole or part by the township and that *the decision to provide this insurance rests with the board of supervisors*. We surveyed six area townships, and found that out of 25 total supervisors, only two receive any healthcare coverage through their townships. For four of the six area townships, total healthcare costs for supervisors is \$0. In these townships, there is no cost to tax payers for health care for supervisors.

State code also allows that "Supervisors and their dependents who are over sixty-five years of age are eligible for inclusion in supplemental Medicare insurance coverage paid, in whole or in part, by the township." For small organizations, the practice of requiring Medicare enrollment at age 65 is routine. West Rockhill does not do even this. The more than \$25,000 drop in total healthcare costs between 2016 and 2017 was the result of ONE supervisor voluntarily enrolling himself and his wife in full Medicare. It is our understanding that there are similar cost-saving opportunities available to the current group of supervisors and their families but they have chosen not to take them, at considerable expense to West Rockhill tax payers.

State code also states that supervisors are required to submit “a letter requesting participation [in health care plans] at a regularly scheduled meeting of the board of supervisors before commencing participation.” We asked the Board of Supervisors for evidence of these letters, but received no response.

Our concerns can be summarized as follows:

The taxpayers of West Rockhill Township are paying an excessive amount to provide healthcare coverage for supervisors. After being inadvertently uncovered in an unrelated open records request, this issue was first raised publically at the Board of Supervisors meeting in May 2018. Last month, this group of concerned citizens raised these concerns again, submitting a letter to the Board of Supervisors, listing specific questions and requesting a meeting. We received no response. We are concerned about the lack of transparency on this issue overall and question if proper procedures have been followed, when no evidence of the required letters requesting health care participation has been forthcoming.

In the 2018 budget, the amount allocated for employee benefits was greater than for road repairs; and employee benefits were nearly twice the amount allocated for public works. Our supervisors have been entrusted to serve the public interest—to budget and allocate precious taxpayer dollars in the best interest of our community. Over and over again, members of our community have stood before this Board seeking small amounts of financial support for things that matter to us—senior activities, the historical society, parks and recreation projects, and others—only to be denied or delayed because funds are tight. Yet here you sit before us, using tens of thousands of tax payer dollars every year for your health insurance, when you are not employees of this Township and when vastly less expensive options are available, as demonstrated by one supervisor’s responsible decision.

We appreciate the importance and sensitivity of access to healthcare, and its personal nature. Yet, while the tax payers of this township have shown remarkable generosity to supervisors in even providing healthcare coverage, the Board of Supervisors at large has shown little interest in managing or minimizing these costs or even engaging in this discussion with us.

We are here to ask that you do NOT approve a 2019 budget, until total healthcare cost for West Rockhill supervisors is fully addressed and preferably eliminated, in keeping with practices at townships throughout the area. The current financial burden on West Rockhill taxpayers is unreasonable and directly takes away from the township’s ability to support activities and projects that are of value to our community at large.