

Chairman Alan Fossi on Thursday, April 4, 2013 at 2:00pm in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building called the Special Meeting of the Sewickley Township Board of Supervisors to order. The members of the Board of Supervisors present were Alan Fossi, Wanda Layman, and Joe Kerber. Also attending the meeting were Marianne Errett, Micki Patterson, Paul Rupnik, Jr., Lee Ohler, Lynn Boettner, Amber Kline, Eric Kline, David Boettner, Christina Reuss, Denise Manley, Jonathan Jobe, Lisa Dimon, Robert Scott, Joe Marincik, Michael Stangroom, Matthew Smelser, Wendi Crusen, Carole Murphy, Jack McWilliams, Gary Moore, Marty Ponebshek, Kathy Kerber, Joy DeClaudio, John Hoffman, Sheldon Ingram, Stacey Federoff, Sharon Cerne, Alan Samulski, Patsy A. Iezzi, Jr., P.C., Greg Kominsky, Linda Harvey, Dan Hewitt, Paula Alcott, Dean Zimmerman, and Susan Leukhardt. A few names were illegible.

Mr. Fossi led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Joe Kerber made a motion, seconded by Wanda Layman, to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting held on March 20, 2013 as reviewed. Voting: Mrs. Layman, Mr. Kerber, Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Joe Kerber made a motion, seconded by Wanda Layman, to approve Ordinance No. 2013-3 to impose road weight limitations on portions of certain Township roadways as designated. Solicitor Comments: The Township Engineer evaluated certain roads within the Township. These roads include Whyte, Apples Mill, Brunazzi, Taylor, Volk, Sulphur Springs, Shaner, Rodebaugh, Pierce, Freeman, and Shuglie Hill. All of which are 10 ton except for Shaner. Shaner Road is 3 ton. For the Township to obtain bonding on these roads for heavy hauling, these restrictions must be in place. Voting: Mrs. Layman, Mr. Kerber, Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Joe Kerber made a motion, seconded by Wanda Layman, to recommend proposed changes in Section 508 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance to the Planning Commission. Solicitor Comments: The current Zoning Ordinance standards regarding setbacks for garages and storage buildings propose hardships on residents in the Villages. Mike Stack, Township Zoning Officer, recommended that garage and storage buildings that are 100 sq ft or less have a setback of 5 ft from rear and side yards. Anything over 100 sq ft would be 10 ft from rear and side yards. With swimming pools, this amendment would allow 10 ft from rear and side yards. Voting: Mrs. Layman, Mr. Kerber, Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Joe Kerber made a motion, seconded by Wanda Layman, to consent to judicial sale of the property of Claudia Peters, Tax Map No. 58-07-11-0-182. Voting: Mrs. Layman, Mr. Kerber, Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Alan Fossi read the following statement.

Sewickley Township Board of Supervisors would like the Community to understand all the facts regarding our decision in voting for an ambulance service to service Sewickley Township residents. In November, 2012, Sewickley Ambulance Service requested turnover of ownership of the ambulance building currently owned by the Township. This was in hopes that they could do some refinancing using the building. The Board of Supervisors passed a motion stating they would do that pending the request of looking at their financials. December through February, the Township did not receive their financials. The Township then began to receive calls from creditors for Sewickley Ambulance. A meeting then took place with the Ambulance Service and they informed the Supervisors that they were in a dire situation. At that time, their fuel supply had been shut off. The Township made arrangements with their vendor by paying \$3,000 out of the Ambulance Service's portion of the EMS fund to get their fuel flowing again. It is our understanding that the same day, the Ambulance Service met with West Newton/Rostraver Ambulance Service in which they borrowed \$5,000 from them to make their payroll. The very next day, the Ambulance Service requested another meeting with the Supervisors. At that time, they told the

Supervisors that their only option was to form an alliance with West Newton/Rostraver and operate under the Sewickley Township banner, but managed by West Newton/Rostraver with a Board change. That is the last conversation we had with Sewickley Township Ambulance. No one has talked with us since then. The Supervisors understand that there have been changes in management and some of the volunteers have since left the organization. That's how we've gotten to this point. We are going to take some action today as stated on the agenda. We wanted to have people from the Ambulance here. We sent them a certified letter asking them to attend.

Public Comment

Chris Reuss is a mother of a 24 year old son with cerebral palsy and uses Sewickley Township Ambulance Service more than most people in this Township will in a lifetime. She pulled up the tax records for Rostraver vs. Jeannette. Jeannette has been working in an operating deficit for the past four to five years. Rostraver has a positive income. Why would you bring in a company that doesn't know our area or our people and has a negative operating base? This affects her personally. If her son dies, she's going to be a very, very unhappy camper. These people work hard for her son. She has nothing against any other EMS. They are just coming from so far away. Mr. Hewitt stated that there will be equipment located within Sewickley Township. Mrs. Reuss asked if the Township has tapped into any of the money generated by the gas wells. This can be used to help them. Mr. Fossi stated it was thought about. Mrs. Layman stated that they told Sewickley Ambulance that the Township would do anything they could to help them. Lisa Dimon stated that the Supervisors did say that and that they would explore all options. Mrs. Layman stated that we just never heard from them. Ms. Dimon stated that they had found a solution in West Newton/Rostraver. Mrs. Layman asked if they are merged right now. The Supervisors have no idea where they stand because they were never told. The Supervisors should have received at least a letter advising them of what has happened with a merge. Ms. Dimon stated that this happened on February 23rd. Mrs. Layman stated that as of today, the Supervisors still have not been notified.

Mr. Fossi spoke regarding Mrs. Reuss's comments and question so far. We all understand what this means for our residents. Yes, roads and equipment are important, but we understand that this is a life and death matter here and that's what is most important. This is not taken lightly. He is concerned about everyone in this Township. This is not all about their financial condition. Mrs. Reuss asked what are they basing their decision on. Mr. Fossi stated it's also about the lack of confidence they have in our Ambulance Service due to the reasons stated earlier. We understand that these people provide a life service to our Township. They sacrifice a lot, and are not paid a lot of money. We just lost confidence in their ability to service our Community. We had a day that they were unable to buy fuel and someone had to take money out of his own pocket to put fuel in their equipment. Mrs. Reuss stated that at least they took it upon themselves to get things working again and to fix the problem. Mrs. Layman stated that they want to make sure that there is service for all of Sewickley Township. That's what is most important. Mrs. Reuss then asked Mr. Hewitt what is the procedure for getting a new ambulance service. Mr. Hewitt stated that the Board of Supervisors has the legal authority under the Second Class Township Code to designate its ambulance and fire department providers.

Michael Stangroom provided to the Supervisors a progress report showing an impressive improvement in the past five to six weeks. He apologized for the lack of communication. This company will continue to get stronger and stronger. Just give us time to make these changes with the Supervisors' support.

Amber Kline stated that since Rostraver/West Newton has taken over, there has been nothing but positive comments. She asked how many rigs are coming in from Jeannette to cover Sewickley Township. Mr. Fossi stated that they assured us adequate service. Mrs. Kline stated that we already have established relationships with Rostraver, Adamsburg, Irwin, and North Huntingdon. We do not have a working relationship with Jeannette. Why change a good thing? Give Rostraver a year to see the progress that is being made. Mrs. Layman said that the reason this is on the agenda is because they haven't heard from anyone to this point. We are afraid that if Rostraver decides to not keep a base here, we are not covered. Mrs. Kline stated that could also happen to Jeannette if this doesn't work for them financially.

Denise Manley stated that she has lived in this Township for 20 years. She has been in EMS for over 30 years. She asked about the EMS tax. Mr. Hewitt stated that it is a millage tax to provide for emergency management services such as police, fire, and ambulance. That is state law. Mr. Kerber stated that it was voted on a ballot two years before he ran. Linda Harvey stated that it was billed as a 2-mil for the ambulance to keep it here in Sewickley Township. Over the years, things changed. But, originally, it was voted to in to keep the ambulance here and not to have to pay a subscription. Mr. Kerber stated that, to his knowledge, it was set up to give it to the Ambulance Service for four years and then from that point on, it was to be split up. It changed prior to that due to the Ambulance Service wouldn't give audits to the Township. Ms. Manley then asked if the Board of Supervisors decides on who get the 2-mil tax money. Mrs. Layman stated yes and it is distributed evenly between the four fire companies of Sewickley Township, the ambulance service, and emergency management. Ms. Manley then asked Mrs. Layman about the time frame of not hearing from the Ambulance Service. Joe Marincic stated that he came to the Township Building and asked if a decision was made yet. Mr. Fossi stated that there was no decision as of yet. Mr. Marincic came up again two days later to drop off receipts. Ms. Manley then asked why North Huntingdon, Adamsburg, and other surrounding services weren't asked before Jeannette. Mr. Fossi stated that they did talk to them except for Adamsburg. Ms. Manley also asked what will happen if two calls come in at the same time. Mr. Fossi stated that Jeannette Ambulance has procedures in place that there will be coverage when one ambulance is already out on a call. Mr. Stangroom asked if Mr. Fossi knew where the half-way stand by is. The Supervisors will not comment on the specifics of the agreement since it hasn't been voted on yet. Ms. Manley then stated that there are many volunteers still in this Township that want to keep this Ambulance Service here.

Jonathan Jobe is the Station Manager of Sewickley EMS and Paramedic Supervisor for 2 Medic Street, Herminie. He proceeded to give his background with EMS and this organization. He admitted that this is a financial situation that they never wanted to be in. Hard decisions had to be made and time was crucial. This is why there was a breakdown in communication. There was just so much to deal with in such a short amount of time. Rostraver/West Newton EMS is the primary functioning staff of Sewickley Township EMS but they are still two separate entities. He then went on to speak of volunteers and how they are hard to come by nowadays. The Board of Directors has changed multiple times due to this. Sewickley Ambulance met with Rostraver prior to meeting with the Supervisors. A loose partnership was doctored up but they are still two very separate organizations. Two separate EIN numbers, insurances, workers comp, umbrella, etc. The trucks still say Sewickley Township EMS. Sewickley is still based in this Community. The trucks are insured and appropriately staffed. Sewickley EMS has been working with Rostraver since 2009. Through this partnership, Sewickley EMS has been able to gain many resources from that company. Mr. Jobe went on to name all the Rostraver personnel that has been assisting Sewickley in making many changes for the good. He then listed all his duties at Sewickley Ambulance which includes making sure that residents received the best care possible. Over 50% of the staff lives in Sewickley Township and they know the area. They put their heart and soul into this Company. He can't watch it leave for a Company that is near bankruptcy and \$488,000 worth of operational loss within the past three year. Mr. Jobe went on to talk about the ambulances themselves. Sewickley Ambulance are at many recreational and sporting events. They are also offering many classes and training to our Residents.

Marty Ponebshek began speaking of his past in the Community. Residents stop them in the streets telling them they are glad Sewickley Ambulance is here. People are happy with the level of care they are receiving and how quick they respond. Mr. Ponebshek then listed the Community events they are on stand-by for and some are even volunteer. The staff has a sense of pride for helping others and they are like a family to eachother. He then spoke of an incident the previous evening where they assisted Rostraver during a vehicle accident, but was also able to have the two other ambulances fully staffed. He believes that residents will be upset if Sewickley Ambulance is not responding to the calls. He then stated that this change will affect him personally along with 20 or 30 other employees regarding their paychecks. We rely on these paychecks. The call volume has required overtime from all of them. He believes Sewickley Township absolutely needs our own Ambulance Service especially with the community outreach that they provide.

Joe Marincic is a Supervisor for Sewickley Ambulance. He asked if the Supervisors have received any complaints regarding their care. Mr. Fossi stated that he has not received any and Mrs. Layman stated that wasn't really the issue. The Supervisors' concern is that they do not know what is happening. Are the Residents going to be protected? Mrs. Layman then stated that she still doesn't know what this alignment merger means. She sees that they have a secure payroll, fuel accounts are paid up, and opened a banking account. If you are not one entity with Rostraver/West Newton, then how is it possible to be financially sound from just February? Where did the money come from? The Attorney for Rostraver/West Newton then spoke about his lengthy involvement with that Company. Mr. Hewitt asked how the finances are salvaged at this time. Carole Murphy, the Treasurer for both organizations answered saying that a new account was opened at FNB and deposits are being put in there. Sewickley also has two accounts at First Niagara. When the big checks from Highmark and Medicare come in, they deposit them in the General Account then transfer to the Payroll Account when needed. Mr. Hewitt asked what the delinquency status is right now. Ms. Murphy says that they have been paying on the big bills every week. She doesn't have exact figures with her. The outstanding balances are way down, but they are not paid off. Mr. Stangroom added that Sewickley is caught up on their monthly utilities and loans. Mrs. Layman asked about the subscription drives between the two entities. If a resident receives a subscription notice from each entity, do they have to pay both? The answer is no. It's just a mailing issue with the post office and zip codes.

Greg Kominsky is the Business Officer at Rostraver and does some of the billing at Sewickley. He explained that Sewickley was in disarray and they came to Rostraver with the utmost urgency. The progress report submitted to the Supervisors is in chronological order as to what steps they took to get Sewickley stable. In the past, their call volume was in the 70's. After gaining supervision from Rostraver, they are now at about 150 calls. Double the call volume brings in more money. They then made sure that all the local vendors were paid, employees were paid, that the ambulances had fuel, addressed insurance policy issues. They are still not out of debt, but it is a work in progress. The only thing that Rostraver gave Sewickley Ambulance is \$5,000 for payroll and this is documented with paperwork. Mr. Hewitt then asked about the services Rostraver is provided as in the business side, treasurer, etc. Mr. Kominsky stated that these are fees for services and documented as well. Mr. Hewitt stated that the concern is the six weeks ago, there was \$71,000 in 90 day past due bills. Rostraver reps stated they are trying to help them any way they can. Mr. Hewitt then asked how much does Sewickley owe Rostraver so far for these services. Mr. Kominsky stated approximately \$30,000.

Eric Kline is the Fire Chief for Herminie Volunteer Fire Company. Mr. Kline feels that the Supervisors should've talked to him for his professional opinion on a new ambulance service. They were unaware of any of this going on. Mr. Kline stated that they have no working relationship with Jeannette at all. The fire companies have years of working experience with Rostraver/West Newton and Sewickley Ambulance. Jeannette does not handle their call volume well at all. The fire companies automatically know what Sewickley needs when out on calls. Mr. Fossi responded that this is not an easy decision. He feels bad that Mr. Kline feels blindsided. We do have a good working relationship with the fire companies. Mr. Fossi says that's on him. He did the negotiating with Jeannette. He informed the other Supervisors and he decided to keep it confidential. He would do the same thing again... difficult decisions needs to be made.

Amber Kline stated that when making this decision, keep the Residents in mind. The Supervisors responded that is the only thing they are keeping in mind. Mrs. Layman stated they have nothing financial or political to gain from this. It would've been so much easier to just let this go the way it was going.

Mr. Kominsky asked the Supervisors to give them one year. Set up some guidelines with Sewickley Ambulance. We will provide a progress report. We will have monthly meetings. Sewickley Township Community Ambulance Service can be a very powerful entity. Don't jump into this decision and lose your ambulance service. Things are going in the right direction.

Joe Kerber stated that he feels it is foolish to turn our backs on Sewickley Ambulance with the money we have invested in them. Looking at some figures, over \$150,000 of tax payers money have gone into that service.

Joe Kerber made a motion to table this for one year. There was no second.

Wanda Layman made a motion, seconded by Alan Fossi, to have the Sewickley Township Ambulance Service vacate the premises of 2 Medic Street, Herminie as of May 31, 2013. Voting: Mrs. Layman, yes; Mr. Kerber, no; Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried.

Wanda Layman made a motion, seconded by Alan Fossi, to approve the designation of Jeannette EMS, Inc. as the primary responder for Sewickley Township emergency calls subject to preparation and execution of final agreement as well as availability to house equipment. Voting: Mrs. Layman, yes; Mr. Kerber, no; Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried.

Joe Kerber made a motion, seconded by Wanda Layman, to approve the following bills for payment.

General Fund:	Checks 5312 to 5347 - \$ 53,803.52 (3/26/13)
Crabapple:	Checks 3944 to 3945 - \$ 7,741.72 (3/26/13)
Payroll Invoices:	Check 2899 - \$ 70.69 (3/26/13)
	Draft 90161 - \$ 862.46 (4/2/13)
	Draft 90162 - \$ 615.04 (4/2/13)

Voting: Mrs. Layman, Mr. Kerber, Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Joe Kerber made a motion, seconded by Wanda Layman, to approve the following payrolls for payment.

Employees Payroll:	3/29/13 - \$ 10,718.52 – checks 2900 to 2902 , drafts 23274 to 23286
	4/5/13 - \$ 10,633.49 – checks 2903 to 2905 , drafts 23287 to 23299

Voting: Mrs. Layman, Mr. Kerber, Mr. Fossi; yes. Motion carried unanimously.

With no further business to come before the Board, Joe Kerber made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Wanda Layman Voting: Mrs. Layman, Mr. Kerber, Mr. Fossi; yes. Meeting adjourned at 3:35pm.

Susan D. Leukhardt
Secretary-Treasurer