

**Cherrytree Township Board of Supervisors**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**February 3, 2020**

A regular monthly meeting of the Cherrytree Township Board of Supervisors was held on Monday, February 3, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., at the township building. In attendance were Jim Waugh, Dave Zdarko, and Rob Kellogg, Supervisors, and Christine Kurelowech, Secretary-Treasurer.

**Call to Order**

Jim Waugh called the meeting to order.

**Pledge**

**Moment of Prayer**

Jim Waugh led those in attendance in a moment of prayer.

**Cypress Creek Renewables – Solar Farm**

Two representatives from Cypress Creek Renewables, David Weightman (project manager) and Scott LaSalle (civil engineer), were in attendance to answer questions regarding the proposed solar farm. They explained that the project will be located along Route 8, on parcels owned by Carmen and Antoinette Paliotta and Lewis Staub. They said the project will be reviewed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and that the construction should begin in early 2021 and be finished by the end of 2021. Many people in attendance had questions for the representatives.

Jamey Miller asked who is funding the project and the representatives said the company is funding the project by itself. He also asked if money would be put in escrow to restore the land when the solar panels are no longer functioning. The representatives said it had not yet been discussed with the county or with the township. They said the value of the panels would pay for the decommissioning and that, in the leases the company has with the property owners, it is stated that the company is required to decommission the property, even if the company is bankrupt.

Keith Klingler asked how the company would handle a situation where someone other than the property owner has OGMs and needs access to the OGMs, but the entire property is covered with solar panels, making the surface inaccessible. The representatives said that pipelines, wells, etc. would be mapped before the solar farm is constructed. They said, as far as new development with the OGMs, the company always does title work and tries to accommodate agreements before the project begins.

Steve Anderson said that he heard solar farms create oxidation that is not environmentally friendly and stray electricity that makes animals sterile. The representatives responded by saying the solar panel industry has done a lot of studies and found that solar farms do not have an adverse effect on farming. Steve Anderson asked if the solar farm would have underground cables that could create stray electricity and the representatives said the solar farm will not have any underground cables.

Jeff Langworthy asked if Cypress Creek Renewables will be required to develop a stormwater management plan and be held to the same standards as homeowners in the township.

The representatives said they will work with the county, including the conservation district, to develop a plan. They have already been in contact with the township engineer to develop a stormwater management plan as well. They said the post-development condition must be the same or better than the pre-development condition and that many soil studies will be performed. Additionally, every drainage area will be studied individually.

Ron Stewart said that the project would clearly benefit the owners of the two properties involved and asked if the county and/or the township would benefit as well. The representatives said that the company would be willing to help the community and asked what they could do. Some in attendance suggested helping the Cherrytree VFD. Ron Stewart also asked how certain the company is that this project is a “done deal” and will actually happen. The representatives said that they were unable to comment.

One person in attendance asked the representatives where the closest Cypress Creek Renewables solar farm (to Cherrytree Township) could be located. The representatives thought Cypress Creek had a solar farm in Erie County, but did not know which municipality.

Jamey Miller said that he is very disappointed that Cypress Creek Renewables has been given zoning approval because the project cannot be considered an essential service and is a commercial venture. He asked the Supervisors to consider passing a resolution that would put a 9 – 12 month moratorium on land development to give the township the opportunity to put zoning regulations into place. Jim Waugh said that the Supervisors have been in touch with the township solicitor regarding the solar farm. Jamey Miller asked that the Supervisors make sure the residents are protected. He said there are studies that show an electromagnetic field impacts people and animals and he also said there is an environmental impact with the diversion of water. He urged the Supervisors to take time to sort things out.

Keith Klingler asked how solar energy can compete with the low natural gas prices and if Cypress Creek Renewables is subsidized. The representatives responded by saying that there are subsidies/renewable energy credits related to the project.

Venango County Commissioner Sam Breene questioned the logic behind building a solar farm in Cherrytree Township when the sun rarely shines in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The representatives said that Pennsylvania is open to renewable energy and that any community can benefit from solar energy. Furthermore, there are solar farms in Germany and in Antarctica.

Venango County Commissioner Mike Dulaney asked the representatives what they expect the wattage of the solar farm to be and they said 20 megawatts. The solar farm will be plugged into existing lines.

Venango County Commissioner Chip Abramovic told those in attendance that Dan Brockett, of Penn State Extension, will be holding a presentation/conversation, at the Venango County Fairgrounds on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, about leasing with solar companies. He noted that Cypress Creek Renewables is not the only solar company that is approaching landowners in the area in an effort to lease property.

Marilyn Drake asked if the landowners would be expected to pay the back taxes once the solar farm is constructed if they are currently participating in the “Clean & Green” program. The representatives said that Cypress Creek Renewables will pay the back taxes on the properties involved in the project. She also asked if township taxes would increase as a result of the solar farm coming into the township and Jim Waugh said they would not. Venango County Commissioner Chip Abramovic told those in attendance that the “Clean & Green” rules could be changing in the future to consider “solar farming” a use that would not prevent a piece of land from being included in the program. Keith Klingler said that the county solicitor might have to

weigh in on whether “solar farming” is considered “farming”. One of the Cypress Creek Renewables representatives said that solar development is usually considered commercial/industrial use.

Ken Humanic told those in attendance that his property was originally part of the project but would no longer be included. He is disappointed that the opportunity has fallen through. However, he is still in favor of solar energy and wishes the landowners involved well. He said that landowners can make much more money with solar development than with farming. When he was part of the project, Cypress Creek Renewables was working on a plan for vegetation for his property. He asked the representatives if they plan to do the same with the other properties and they said they are still evaluating and are taking it on a case-by-case basis. One of the representatives told those in attendance that the company had planned to put the solar farm on both sides of Route 8, but due to study results, decided to only use the west side of Route 8.

Jamey Miller asked how much water the solar farm will use and the representatives said that the solar farm will not use any water.

Chrissie Kurelowech said that the zoning ordinance specifies the percentage of a parcel that can be covered (roughly 25%). She asked the representatives if the solar farm would meet those requirements because their project map showed solar panels almost completely covering each parcel. They said that their interpretation of the ordinance is that the poles used to erect the panels would be used in the coverage calculation, not the panels themselves.

Keith Klingler said that he has a problem with government subsidies being used for solar development when there is enough gas to last at least 200 years. The representatives said that there are investment tax credits and renewable energy credits available for the project.

Ron Stewart asked what Cypress Creek Renewables is spending on the project and the representatives estimated \$20,000,000.00.

Jamey Miller asked if the project would create any jobs and the representatives said that there will be 15 full-time jobs created to maintain the solar farm once it is constructed and that the company tries to hire local contractors during the construction phase.

Kirby Ames asked if the solar panels will create glare that could possibly affect motorists. The representatives said there will not be glare with the technology they are using because they use anti-reflective coating.

### **Public Comment**

Jamey Miller noted that the Supervisors did not give any feedback on his request to pass a resolution that would put a 9 – 12 month moratorium on land development to give the township the opportunity to put zoning regulations regarding solar farms into place. Jim Waugh noted that the Supervisors had been in contact with the township solicitor on the matter.

### **Minutes/Treasurer’s Report**

The minutes, from the annual reorganization meeting/regular monthly meeting held on Monday, January 6, 2020, were read, accepted, and approved, on a motion made by Jim Waugh, seconded by Dave Zdarko, and carried unanimously.

The treasurer’s report, for January 2020, was read, accepted, and approved, on a motion made by Dave Zdarko, seconded by Rob Kellogg, and carried unanimously.

## Correspondence

### National Fuel – Release of Account Information

*Chrissie Kurelowech asked the Supervisors if they were in favor of allowing National Fuel to release the township's account information to third-party suppliers. The Supervisors were in agreement that they did not want the township's account information released. Chrissie Kurelowech will notify National Fuel.*

### Venango County Board of Elections – Use of Polling Place

*Chrissie Kurelowech asked the Supervisors if they were in favor of allowing the township building to be used as a polling place for the 2020 primary, which is scheduled for April 28, 2020. The Supervisors were all in favor of allowing the township building to be used as a polling place.*

### Venango County Tax Claim Bureau – Petition for Judicial Sale

*The Supervisors reviewed the Petition for Judicial Sale, which included 3 properties in Cherrytree Township that are scheduled to be sold.*

### Roger Patterson - Ditches

*Roger Patterson expressed concern regarding deep ditches in several areas within the township. He said that they are not only dangerous to motorists, but they are eroding the roads. The Supervisors agreed to assess the situation in the spring.*

### PSATS News Bulletin

### Venango County Association of Township Officials

*The Venango County Association of Township Officials will hold its annual spring dinner on Saturday, March 21, 2020 at the Sandycreek Township Volunteer Fire Department. Chrissie Kurelowech said she would make reservations if any of the Supervisors are interested in attending.*

## Zoning

### Permits

None

### Zoning Report

There was no report.

## Administrative Action

### Resolution #20-40–Approve Single Residence Sewage Treatment Plant–Bonnie Vaughn

On a motion made by Jim Waugh, seconded by Rob Kellogg, and carried unanimously, the Supervisors voted to adopt Resolution #20-40, approving a single residence sewage treatment plant for Bonnie Vaughn at 2267 Buxton Road.

### Cherrytree Township VFD – Fire Police – 2020 Schedule – Vote to Approve

On a motion made by Jim Waugh, seconded by Dave Zdanko, and carried unanimously, the Supervisors voted to approve the 2020 schedule for the Cherrytree Township VFD fire police.

## **Committee Reports**

### **VFD**

Tom Huffman, VFD 1st Assistant Chief, reported that there were 13 calls since the last meeting. Of the 13 calls, 2 were building fires, 2 were EMS, 1 was a gas leak, 1 was an electrical wiring problem, 3 were public service, 3 were dispatched and cancelled, and 1 was a carbon monoxide detector.

The spring shoots will begin on February 18, 2020. They will be held every Tuesday night through Easter. Sign-ups start at 5:30 and the cost is \$2.50 per shot.

Cherrytree Township VFD will join several other fire departments in the area to apply for a regional FEMA AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant). The departments will request new radios and new SCBAs (self-contained breathing apparatus). The new radios will allow Crawford County and Venango County departments to communicate more easily. Additionally, Cherrytree Township VFD will submit its own application for a FEMA grant through the AFG program. It is not yet known exactly what will be requested.

Tom Huffman noted that the VFD is always looking for volunteers. Help is needed in all areas including, but not limited to, fund raising and directing traffic. Anyone willing to help is welcome.

### **EMA Office**

There was no report.

### **Road**

Lew Staub, Roadmaster, reported that the road crew plowed and put down antiskid 12 times, put down antiskid 6 times, fixed soft spots on 5 roads, filled holes twice, checked the roads twice, and spent 1 day cutting trees. Hepler Lumber, Allegheny Wood Products, Ongley Lumber, and Shetler Lumber put gravel on 3 roads.

The Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Roads contract for 2020 was signed. This will allow Cherrytree Township to receive a \$35,490.00 grant from the Venango Conservation District to fund drainage improvements on Pastorius Road.

The road crew worked on the lights on the 2002 International and on the 2009 International. They put a fuel filter on the tank outside the garage. Air tank brackets and cables were put on the 2002 International. The 2014 Dodge had to be towed to Shults of Warren due to blocked injector fuel filters. The fuel filters were changed on the 2014 Dodge and a new tire was put on it.

## **Old Business**

There was no "Old Business".

## **New Business**

### **Titusville Herald Correspondent**

Chrissie Kurelowech told those in attendance that The Titusville Herald is looking for a correspondent to report the news of Cherrytree. Anyone interested should contact Lori Drumm at The Titusville Herald.

## **Adjournments**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The bills were reviewed by the Board of Supervisors.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Kurelowech, Secretary-Treasurer