

**Cherrytree Township Board of Supervisors
Special Meeting
October 31, 2016**

A special meeting of the Cherrytree Township Board of Supervisors was held on Monday, October 31, 2016, at 6:30 p.m., at the township building. In attendance were Emery Fiely, Lew Staub, and Jim Waugh, Supervisors, and Christine Kurelowech, Secretary-Treasurer.

Call to Order

Emery Fiely called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Prayer

Public Comment

The meeting room was filled with people interested in discussion regarding employee benefits, more specifically, health insurance. On October 22, 2016, the Supervisors met to prepare the 2017 budget and part of that meeting addressed the increase in health insurance costs to the township. Currently, the township pays 100% of the premium to cover the full-time employees and their families. The three full-time employees currently are in a plan that costs the township \$1,913.06/month and the premium is increasing by 32% to \$2,525.24/month, beginning with December 2016 coverage. At the meeting held on October 22, 2016, the Supervisors voted to have each employee pay 20% of his premium each month, through a payroll deduction, to offset the cost. However, Emery Fiely changed his mind days later, necessitating a special meeting to reopen discussion on the matter.

Don Deliman began the discussion by asking the Supervisors why a special meeting was needed when they already made a decision on health insurance and benefits during the meeting held on October 22, 2016. He noted that, at that time, two Supervisors (one abstained) voted to have the employees start paying 20% of their health insurance costs. Emery Fiely asked Don Deliman if he would like to pay \$214.00/month for his insurance. Don Deliman pointed out that the road workers in Cherrytree Township are highly paid, in comparison to road workers in other townships, and that Cherrytree Township has the highest taxes in Venango County. He said some road masters make \$15.00/hour and that Richmond Township, Crawford County, has 42 miles of roadway and only has one road master and one part-time road worker. Emery Fiely said that, according to the state, there should be one road worker for every 15 miles of roadway and Cherrytree Township is one man short. Dick Shaffer said that might have been true 40 years ago, but not now. Jim Waugh pulled out the PSATS 2016 Wage & Benefits Survey Results and said that it was proof that our road workers are overpaid. Dick Shaffer said he believes Cherrytree Township road workers probably have better benefits than any other road workers in the state. Ron Stewart asked Emery Fiely why he voted for the 20% employee contribution nine days ago, but changed his mind. Emery Fiely responded by saying that his mind was not on it, during the budget meeting on October 22, 2016, and that he probably should not have been at the meeting. Jim Waugh said that he has not seen the road crew shovel the front sidewalk in years and that more weeding should be done around the township building. They are road workers, but are also township employees, and should be doing more work around the township building.

Tina Zdarko voiced her displeasure with Cherrytree Township requiring employees to pay for part of their health insurance, especially since her husband has only been with the township since summer. Chrissie Kurelowech shared the health insurance costs for the past few years. In 2017, the insurance will cost \$30,302.88. In 2016, health insurance cost the township \$17,827.00, and in 2015, health insurance cost the township \$16,455.58. She said that not only is the 32% premium increase a factor in the increasing cost to the township, but in 2015, the township had two employees on the “single” plan and one on the “employee and child” plan. Now, there is one employee on the “single” plan and two employees on the “family plan”, which is the most expensive level.

The room was clearly divided, with the three road workers, their families, and Emery Fiely against requiring the employees to contribute, with the other taxpayers in attendance and Jim Waugh in favor of requiring payroll deductions (20% of premium) to offset the cost to the township (already approved at a previous meeting). A heated, lengthy discussion went on, with most people voicing their opinions.

Emery Fiely made a motion to have a vote to require each full-time employee to pay 10% of his health insurance premium (coverage from December 1, 2016 to December 31, 2017), with that amount rising to 20% the following year. Lew Staub seconded the motion. Lew Staub then signed a “Memorandum to Disclose Conflict of Interest”. After signing the form, he read it to those in attendance, publically disclosing his conflict of interest as a full-time township employee as a reason for him to abstain in the vote. By signing the form and disclosing his conflict of interest, under the Pennsylvania Ethics Act, he was permitted to break a tie, if necessary, on the vote proposed by Emery Fiely. A roll call vote then took place, with Emery Fiely voting “Yes”, Jim Waugh voting “No”, and Lew Staub breaking the tie and voting “Yes”. The full-time employees will now only have to pay 10% of their premiums, which is contradictory to the 20% that was approved by Emery Fiely and Jim Waugh during the special meeting that took place on October 22, 2016.

Old Business

Health Insurance Renewal

This was addressed during “Public Comment”.

Prepare 2017 Budget

Emery Fiely stated that there is no reason to revisit the 2017 budget.

Administrative Action

Adopt Amended Proposed 2017 Budget

The proposed budget, that was adopted on October 22, 2016, will not be amended and will be voted upon at the Board of Supervisors’ regular monthly meeting scheduled for Monday, December 5, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Kurelowech, Secretary-Treasurer