

ROSS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS MEETING
September 8, 2025

The Ross Township Supervisors Meeting was called to order on September 8, 2025 at 5:59pm. The meeting was held at the Township Municipal Building.

In attendance were Chairman James Zahoroiko, Vice Chairman David Shay and Supervisor Randy Detrick. Solicitor Attorney Eric Filer was also in attendance.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Vincent Delhery, Judge of Elections, spoke to remind all of the upcoming General Election on November 4th. He shared that October 20th would be the last day to register to vote and that October 28th would be the last day to apply for a mail in ballot. Mr. Delhery also stated mail in ballots must be received by the county office by 8:00pm on November 4th and can only be submitted by the voter themselves or by mail. Mail in ballots will not be able to be accepted at a polling location, but can be voided to allow for the voter to vote in person. Further information can be found at vote.pa.gov

Martha Rezeli, of the Ross Township Historical Society, stated the Reenactment event held the previous day was well attended with a little over 200 attendees who spoke of how beautiful the park was. She also shared compliments and thanks towards all those involved from the Township who helped with the success of the event. Ms. Rezeli also stated many also visited the museum which led them to gaining new members and new donations for the museum. She continued with stating the next date the Museum will be open will be October 11th from 11-3, but that members would be willing to meet and let visitors in on off hours should it be requested.

Ms. Rezeli ended with asking the Board of Supervisors about posting signs received from the Monroe County Commissioner in regards to events related to the upcoming PA250 celebrations and 250 for 250 Challenge where participants, whether as an individual or team, would log various outdoor activities to cover 250 miles in celebration of 250 years. The signs would be placed outside of the Township Building to provide more information.

Howard Beers came before the meeting next and first asked the Board of Supervisors about if anyone was contracted to mow the park. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated there wasn't an official agreement, but that it was mowed for hay by the Meixsell family and that he would touch base with Rick Meixsell about having it done again.

Mr. Beers then wanted to address the Board of Supervisors in regards to the "controversy" with the Fire Department and wondering if the discussed split between Hamilton and Ross Townships, of 66% and 33% respectively, were still the true numbers. He further stated there had been a formula years ago for calculating a set dollar amount to be paid per dwelling/residence while noting that these numbers have grown. He stated he is against a Fire Tax as it would vary from person to person, being not fair overall, and that it would take away from those voluntarily giving if made mandatory. Mr. Beers then stated he had looked at the numbers, from the last "right to know" he requested, for the Fire Department showing them as having an excess of half a million dollars and Ross having an excess of one million dollars. With that, he believes there should be enough available in the Township to cover costs without passing an unfair tax onto the residents.

Next to address the meeting was Kevin Overfield who asked the Board of Supervisors for an update on the Pinecone Court dangerous structure. Vice Chairman David Shay stated they were waiting to hear back on the result of the tax sale, which had happened that day, and that he would reach out to his contact the following day to see where they were at to be able to move forward. He further explained the property had gone to tax sale as it would not have been on the Commissioner's agenda until this month anyways. Vice Chairman David Shay reiterated he would be reaching out the following day for more information as he was unsure of the timeline. Mr. Overfield ended with stating his concern of there being more children in the neighborhood with the dangerous structure still standing.

MINUTES REVIEW:

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2025 meeting as written by Supervisor Randy Detrick and seconded by Vice Chairman David Shay. The motion carried 3-0.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Vice Chairman David Shay made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Randy Detrick and carried 3-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

PC Letter Regarding BlueStar Construction/Bonser Road

Vice Chairman David Shay made a motion to grant final approval based on the July 15, 2025 recommendation letter of the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

1. A note would be added to the Plan in regards to a granted waiver for Section 703 and noting utilities may be present on the property even though none would be required to be shown on the Plan.
2. The Subdivision Plan is conditional upon the applicant satisfactorily addressing the Township Engineer's comments in Review Letter #2 dated August 1, 2025.
3. The DEP Sewage Planning Module be completed and approved

The motion was seconded by Supervisor Randy Detrick and carried 3-0.

PLANS:

Catherine Andrews Extension Request – Extension to expire 10/6/2025

Daniel Saunders, Attorney Joe Weismeth and Plan Engineer Chris McDermott were present at the meeting. Attorney Weismeth stated they had been waiting for the Zoning Hearing Board Meeting for the last three months and were finally able to attend the Hearing where they prevailed and so they were now back before the Board of Supervisors seeking conditional approval.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked Secretary Melissa Monaco about if a letter had been received from the Zoning Hearing Board which she stated they had not yet received any transcripts. Supervisor Randy Detrick then asked Attorney Weismeth to clarify what he had meant by that they had prevailed to which Attorney Weismeth responded the Zoning Hearing Board had overturned the Zoning Officer's Notice of Violations, upholding their appeal. Attorney Weismeth also stated they had been informed the Board of Supervisors would be informed of the decision so they would be able to proceed with the Plan. Vice Chairman David Shay stated they would need to wait to receive a written decision and Supervisor Randy Detrick Stated he would like to give conditional approval based on what they were being told of the results of the Zoning Hearing. He also stated there were still some remaining items from the Planning Commission that would need to be addressed including the Sewage Planning Module. Mr. Saunders stated the Septic Module was with the DEP and Attorney Weismeth stated they had a receipt from the

SEO that a completed Sewage Module had been received back in April which would be outside of the sixty day time frame for the Township to have acted on.

When asked about the Stormwater Management, Engineer Chirs McDermott stated onsite testing had been completed and that they would now be able to move forward with developing the Plan after the Zoning Hearing Board decision. He also stated adding a condition of approval for the Township Engineer to review the Stormwater Plan would be an acceptable condition.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated he had wanted to make a motion for conditional approval at the previous month's meeting as long as the applicant met all requirements set forth by the Planning Commission and especially now that the Zoning Hearing Board had made their decision. Attorney Weismeth stated they were in agreement to comply with the letter from Township Engineer Tighe Meckes dated July 16, 2025.

Supervisor Randy Detrick made a motion to grant conditional approval based on the Board of Supervisors receiving a letter from Zoning, in regards to the decision of the Hearing, along with compliance with all current requests of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Chairman James Zahoroiko and carried 2-1.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated his reasoning for voting against was in regards to the SALDO indicating Elmer Drive to be a Private Access Street which should not serve more than three dwelling units. There are currently five and this will be adding a sixth residence.

Attorney Weismeth stated that they would wait for the Zoning opinion to be received and asked if they would need to go back before the Planning Commission. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated they would not need to go back before the Planning Commission as they already had received a list of requirements. Attorney Weismeth then confirmed they would come back before the Board of Supervisors with their revised Plan.

OLD BUSINESS:

Blue Ridge Hook & Ladder

Fire Chief Paul Warnick was in attendance and Supervisor Randy Detrick asked if he had any new items to discuss. Supervisor Detrick then stated he believed there needed to be a long term and permanent solution found within Ross Township. He agreed with Mr. Beers' earlier comments about there being varying amounts of what the tax would be from resident to resident, and that there is the possibility for property assessment values to drop which would lower the tax, but that a solution needs to be found as the Fire Department is already putting in a lot of time fundraising on top of volunteering their time to respond to calls. Supervisor Randy Detrick also addressed the comment from Mr. Beers about additional money that is seen in accounts, but that the Township needs those funds for items such as replacement trucks for the Road Foreman to continue maintenance within the Township. By adding a Fire Tax, it would not only bring money into the Fire Department, but also the Township as a whole as money that is currently dedicated to the Fire Department could be allocated elsewhere.

Supervisor Randy Detrick then stated Vice Chairman David Shay had looked into the potentiality of implementing a tax on cable bills, but that he had not been able to review everything yet. He then asked Attorney Filer if they were in a position to make a motion on a Fire Tax. Attorney Filer stated they would have needed to advertise if a motion was to be passed on a new tax. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated he

wanted to move ahead with advertising they were looking to add a Fire Tax and would be willing to make the motion to advertise for a future meeting to make a motion on either the Fire Tax or Cable Tax or on both as the issue will not be going away.

Mr. Delhery asked about looking into Federal Funding through FEMA, which would be for emergency only, and about holding a public referendum in regards to adding a tax versus only the Board of Supervisors making the decision. Supervisor Randy Detrick responded that they have been continuing to have the item on the agenda to allow for public discussion over the last months along with the meetings being broadcast live. He also stated he has not had anyone speak out against the tax to him as many are in agreement to support the Fire Department. They further discussed the obstacle of not being able to have the discussion with everyone in the Township at one time, but that they are limited with those who come to the meetings and speak out.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated another compounding factor comes from Ross Township not being the only township served by Blue Ridge Hook & Ladder as they also serve Hamilton Township who had voted they are not in favor of having a Fire Tax. He continued with stating he would not vote in favor of a Fire Tax as he feels appropriate funding can be provided based on what Hamilton is giving. Chairman James Zahoroiko stated there had been a commitment before from previous Supervisors to help fund the Fire Department and he did not feel it would be right to not pay the bills so they would have to come up with the money somehow to uphold the funding agreement.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated that the information he had provided to the other Supervisors included not only information on a Cable Tax, but also on what items Relief Money could be used for and other factors. He stated that the Relief Money could be used to buy trucks to which Fire Chief Warnick stated it could only be used towards safety equipment. Vice Chairman David Shay stated Relief Money could be used to pay for vehicles used for emergency response. He also stated there is a process for receiving a loan if a Volunteer Company purchases a vehicle and requires funding from a Relief Association for a portion of the vehicle under a 2% State Loan. Fire Chief Warnick explained that the available numbers would not be enough to cover a purchase of a truck and that Relief Money could go towards the lighting and warning systems, but was unsure of putting a whole truck to be titled under Relief.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated he had read on the State website about being able to use Relief Money towards the purchase of a vehicle used for emergency response along with also being able to be used towards safety equipment/turnout gear. He then asked if Ross Township were to commit to \$139,000 total for a year, with Relief Money, would that not be enough and Fire Chief Warnick stated they would be back the following year to ask again. Supervisor Randy Detrick then asked if it would work for one year and Fire Chief Warnick answered anything more would be better than what they have.

Vice Chairman David Shay asked to confirm the yearly budget of the Fire Department to which Fire Chief Warnick stated the budget is around \$405,000, not including Relief Money. He was unsure of a total number including Relief Money as they are two separate entities. He confirmed that Hamilton Township is giving around \$270,000-\$300,000 without Relief Money, which is around an additional \$85,000. Vice Chairman David Shay stated that, with Relief Money, it would give the Fire Department around half a million dollars. Fire Chief Warnick explained that the \$405,000 budget, not including Relief, is factored based on no equipment needing to be repaired/replaced which can be difficult with their average truck age being 24 years which could lead to an additional \$40,000-\$50,000 in repair costs.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated there will always be unknown factors as they also come up for costs at the Township and that they cannot control what is done at County, State and Federal levels. He stated it is difficult in the current economic environment to force another tax on residents and if they would be able to get through until budget discussion in November, they would be able to provide the Fire Department with a number. Vice Chairman David Shay then asked about the additional funds being provided from Hamilton Township only being for the next two years and Fire Chief Warnick stated he was told the additional funds were for moving forward with no end date and that they are currently running about \$64,000 in the negative each year which is why they have been going through savings. They are fundraising roughly \$143,000 per year, but it is not guaranteed money and all members of the Fire Department can only give so much of their time.

Mr. Beers asked if the Board of Supervisors had been provided a breakdown of the annual budget. Fire Chief Warnick stated they are provided breakdowns along with copies of their taxes each year. He also explained to residents about the Relief Fund needing to be used to replace outdated safety equipment, which must be done every ten years, that totals around \$10,000 per person.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated the Township shops different options, such as insurance, each year to best save money and that there are needs versus wants within a budget. He then asked who had the most equipment of all of the local fire departments. Fire Chief Warnick stated it would probably be Blue Ridge Hook & Ladder, but that some of the trucks are owned by DCNR. Vice Chairman David Shay then gave the breakdowns that Blue Ridge has twelve pieces of equipment, West End has eight, Kunkletown has five and Polk has seven without counting UTVs. Fire Chief Warnick stated it would also need to be factored that Blue Ridge is spread between two stations covering two townships.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated he was waiting to receive a call list from Hamilton Township, before quoting numbers, to compare how many emergency calls came from Ross and from Hamilton Township. He further stated he was always in support of the Fire Department and that they had come up with the formula in the 90s for what to provide. Fire Chief Warnick again stated there being confusion between the Relief Money being included in totals as it could not be used for all items in their budget. Vice Chairman David Shay reiterated that he would not vote in favor of a tax as there would always need to be more and that they would not go away. He believes that Ross can continue to run and support the Fire Department with the money already coming into the Township.

Fire Chief Warnick asked if Relief Money was used towards the purchase of a truck, what money would be available to backfill the funds used to purchase their equipment to meet State requirements. Vice Chairman David Shay stated in other townships the fire departments get next to nothing from township funding, without a Fire Tax, and that they are able to continue to operate though he does not have all of the specifics outside of Ross Township that he has been researching.

Supervisor Randy Detrick then stated there had been taxes implemented before within Ross Township, to build the current Township Building, that have since been undone and which could happen again. He then asked Fire Chief Warnick if it came to it and he had to cut items from the budget, what would he cut? Fire Chief Warnick stated they didn't have much they could cut from their budget as they were only replacing items they had to, but not purchasing new as they did not have the budget to do so. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated his point was that there weren't items to be cut.

Greg Gill stated there are other fire departments which have transitioned into doing online raffles so only couple people would be needed to run the raffle. They would sell tickets to cover the cost of items being raffled and then have winners come to them to pick up. It would be a fundraising option to allow for more money to come in without stretching resources thin for who would be available. Ms. Rezeli then stated her challenge to those who do not want a tax implemented would be to then donate directly to the Fire Department.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked how they could better bring public awareness to the issue. Fire Chief Warnick stated that it had been said before that there are only 13% of residents who give directly. He also stated they had found the numbers to have been previously around 27% of residents back in 2001. Chairman James Zahoroiko asked about if the difference in percentages donated was due to the budget now being larger and Fire Chief Warnick stated it was just the percentage of residents who had donated, not an amount.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated all were in agreement that they would not want to implement a tax, but that a solution to stabilize the Fire Department long term would be needed or this would be an ongoing issue every year. Fire Chief Warnick stated they only had funding to continue operations as they are for only another year and a half at the beginning of 2025 so they would run out in the following year.

Supervisor Randy Detrick then asked what motivates them to continue doing what they do and Fire Chief Warnick responded that it is just a good thing for the community. It was stated there is a lot that the community may not understand of all that they give out of their own time and money to continue to serve the community and that the residents need to be further informed before becoming a bigger problem.

When asked about how other townships handle funding, Fire Chief Warnick stated there are only four which do not have a Fire Tax, those being Eldred, Ross, Hamilton and Barrett, and that boroughs are different. Vice Chairman David Shay stated there were eight which do not have a Fire Tax which include Barrett Township, East Stroudsburg Borough, Eldred Township, Hamilton Township, Paradise Township, Ross Township, Stroudsburg Borough and Stroud Township. He then read all the townships that do have the Fire Tax. It was confirmed that Ross Township was the only township without a Local Property Tax and Chairman James Zahoroiko stated it has to be considered that other townships without a Fire Tax have another source of tax income going into the township. Vice Chairman David Shay said it would also be worth it to find out how much each township was giving to their departments and would have Secretary Melissa Monaco research.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated if they were to start advertising they would be making a motion on a Fire Tax at an upcoming meeting, it may lead to more showing up. Those who do not know all of the details would always vote against a new tax. He has stated those he has spoken with have not gone against him as they agree they need to support the Fire Department.

When discussing those that voluntarily give additional donations to the Fire Department, Fire Chief Warnick stated they are aware that donations could drop off with the implementation of the tax, but that the tax would still compensate for any loss. Mr. Beers asked about why it would be fair for residents of Ross Township to pay a tax when Hamilton Township does not. Chairman James Zahoroiko explained Hamilton has Property Taxes that are paid into allowing them more revenue to work with. Mr. Beers explained there should be more than enough within the Ross Township accounts to allow to support the

Fire Department without a tax. Vice Chairman David Shay stated the current numbers are deceiving as there are expenses to still come out for the purchase of a new truck and paving project that had just been completed. There are also set amounts that would need to be retained for other projects and to remain within the state required funds.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated they should be able to comfortably fund the Fire Department and that they would know better numbers once they were able to set the new budget. Supervisor Randy Detrick asked if the report Vice Chairman David Shay had provided had the amount of Hamilton's local property tax. Vice Chairman David Shay shared the millage is 0.14, the lowest in the county after Ross, which would be less than the 0.5 millage for the proposed Fire Tax being proposed leading to a discussion of the fairness of what residents would be paying into between the two townships.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated, with the number of houses in Hamilton, there is a lot of turnover of houses which leads to additional funds going into the township after the sale of homes. He then stated he was glad more have become involved in the conversation and asked for advertising to be started for further discussion on the Fire Tax for the following meeting as he was not confident to make a motion that evening.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated, as of the 2020 Census, there were 5,400 residents of Ross Township so is difficult to gauge proper representation of everyone from the few that attend the meetings. When asked how many residents were registered to vote, Mr. Delhery stated only 1,842 were currently registered to vote so even if discussion of the tax were added to the ballot, there would still not be a full representation.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated he appreciated Mr. Beers' point of how much money was available in the account that there may be other possibilities to fund the Fire Department with the next budget meetings being set for late October or early November. Supervisor Randy Detrick asked to have proper advertising put out for there to be a vote at the next meeting.

Data Centers & Solar Farm Ordinance

Chairman James Zahoroiko asked if both the Data Center and Solar Farm Ordinances could be discussed together. Vice Chairman David Shay answered yes and stated Attorney Filer had put together two proposed ordinances for Solar Farms and Data Centers which would allow for them to be in the Township in the General Commercial Zone

Vice Chairman David Shay made a motion to forward the proposed ordinances to the Monroe County Planning Commission, Ross Township Planning Commission and the West End Regional Group to review and give comments on. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Randy Detrick and carried 3-0.

Motion for New Heater for Maintenance Shop

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated he had called Alpine Home Air and they no longer sell the heaters that had been previously bought for Blue Ridge Winery and was provided with another recommendation which matched the heaters listed on the received report. Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated three companies had provided quotes and, at the workshop meeting, all were in agreement to go with standalone propane heaters. These came in as the cheapest quote from Affordable Comfort at \$6,840.

Supervisor Randy Detrick made a motion to accept the proposal from Affordable Comfort at \$6,840. The motion was seconded by Chairman David Shay and carried 3-0.

Secretary Melissa Monaco would send the proposal back the following day and the project should be completed within a few weeks.

EVENTS:

Permit Free Yard Sale – Saturday 9/13 & Sunday 9/14

Fall Clean Up Days – Friday 9/19 & Saturday 9/20 from 6:30am-2:00pm

Friday 10/3 & Monday 10/6

The Township Office will be closed 10/3 and 10/6. Zoning/Building will be open their normal hours of 2:00-4:00pm.

Columbus Day – Monday 10/13

The Township Office will be closed 10/13 for Columbus Day.

ROAD FOREMAN REPORT:

Mt Eaton Road Culvert

Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated a final inspection is set for this week. If all goes well, the road should be reopened the following week.

Help with CDL Drivers for Seasonal Snow Plowing

Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated no one has applied yet, but that they are still advertising to hire part time CDL drivers that they need for help with snow removal.

He also stated, for the Clean Up Days, it had been discussed previously about verifying that only residents of Ross Township are able to take part in the cleanup day with the concern that there have been others from outside of Ross coming and dropping items off to be disposed of that were turned away elsewhere.

Vice Chairman David Shay asked about the LTAP which Road Foreman Ethan Brewer explained is the Local Technical Assistance Program from PennDOT. He said he had spoken with a neighboring township about PennDOT coming out and doing a no cost study for them and to look into the same being done for Ross Township.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Board of Supervisors had reviewed the provided Correspondence items and there were no further questions.

RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURES:

After a review of the bills to be paid, a motion to approve the processing and payment of all current bills was made by Vice Chairman David Shay and seconded by Supervisor Randy Detrick. The motion carried 3-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:19pm. The motion to adjourn was made by Supervisor Randy Detrick, seconded by Chairman James Zahoroiko and carried 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lizzy Stortz

Temporary Recording Secretary