

ROSS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS MEETING

August 4, 2025

The Ross Township Supervisors Meeting was called to order on August 4, 2025 at 6:00pm. 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:

Ken, of the Ross Township Historical Society, announced that the Museum will be open Saturday 8/9 from 11:00am-3:00pm, as it is every second Saturday of the month, along with an exhibit on Indian Arrowheads. He also let it be known the Historical Society is still in the process of planning a French and Indian War Reenactment Presentation. The reenactment will be open to the public in the park on Sunday 9/7 from 12:00pm-4:00pm.

MINUTES REVIEW:

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the July 7, 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.

PLANS:

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

Attorney Joe Weismeth and Daniel Saunders were present as representatives of the Plan.

Chairman James Zahoroiko stated a motion would be needed to grant an extension to the Catherine Andrews Plan through October 6, 2025. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated he would like to read a statement he had prepared to give a summary of the Catherine Andrews Land Development Plan for 140 Elmer Drive.

From the summary statement, Supervisor Randy Detrick stated the original application was submitted June 3, 2024 with the applicant wanting to build a second home on a 21-acre piece of land with no proposed creation of any secondary lots. The Plan was originally stated to have impervious surfaces of less than 5,000 sqft which had later been updated to around 8,000 sqft of impervious surface leading to the requirement of the applicant needing to comply with the Township Stormwater Management Ordinance under Section 1008.A of the SALDO.

Supervisor Randy Detrick then stated that on June 2, 2025, the Township Zoning Officer determined the applicant would require relief from the Zoning Hearing Board for Zoning Approval to build a second house on a piece of land that does not front a Township Road. The meeting with the Zoning Hearing Board is currently scheduled for September.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated at the July 15, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting, the applicant did not request a further extension which led to the Planning Commission having to make a recommendation, to the Board of Supervisors, that evening and the Planning Commission adopted a

motion to recommend denial of the Plan. The applicant has since requested an extension through October 6, 2025.

Supervisor Randy Detrick then read through the reasons given by the Planning Commission to recommend denial of the Plan which were as follows:

1. Failure to submit a narrative, including computations to support the design of its Stormwater Management Plan, in accordance with the Stormwater Management Ordinances under the SALDO.
2. Noncompliance with the Zoning Ordinance as per the Zoning Officer's Determination Letter dated June 2, 2025 for which there is now a Hearing scheduled in September.
3. Failure to satisfactorily address Township Solicitor's comments 3-5 from letter dated June 24, 2025. In the letter the comments are:
 - a. Comment 3: Requirement that a Note be added to the Plan regarding the need for a State Permit to access a State Road
 - b. Comment 4: The applicant had requested a waiver to delay submission and approval of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan until a Building Permit was applied for. The Planning Commission had voted to recommend granting this approval. If the Board of Supervisors were to grant a waiver, there should a restrictive condition that no Building Permits, or Certificates of Occupancy, should be issued until the E&S Plan had been submitted, properly reviewed and approved.
 - c. Comment 5: A Note would be added that the Landowner, or any successors or signees, would permanently maintain Elmer Drive according to the Design Specifications in the Plan and that Ross Township also has the right, but is not obligated to, enforce the covenant of maintaining the road.
4. Lack of DEP Planning Module approval

Supervisor Randy Detrick continued with stating the applicant had previously submitted a list of requested waivers from October 3, 2024 which the Planning Commission had voted to recommend granting the delayed submission of the E&S Plan until the Building Permit is submitted and allowing the submission the Final Land Development Plan without Preliminary Plan Approval as long as the Final Plan submitted included all elements required.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated the current state of the Plan is that the Planning Commission had given a recommendation to deny the Plan based on the list of unfinished items which would also mean, if all items were able to be completed, there would not be further reason to deny the Plan. Since the July Planning Commission Meeting, the applicant has requested a time extension through October.

Supervisor Randy Detrick made a motion to grant the extension to October and, if the applicant can complete all items presented by the Planning Commission, that conditional approval be granted. If the applicant cannot complete all items requested by the Planning Commission by the October deadline, an additional extension would need to be requested or the Plan would be denied at that time.

Vice Chairman David Shay asked about the pending Zoning Concern with the scheduled hearing and Zoning compliance. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated that it was a part of the list he had shared for his motion. Attorney Eric Filer then recommended to only make a motion to grant extension as the applicant is aware of the items needed to be completed for approval.

Attorney Weismeth stated there were five issues listed by Supervisor Randy Detrick and that three were about adding notes to the Plan, which they have agreed to add. He then stated one of the other issues involved the Sewage Planning Module which they had submitted to the Township, and paid fees on, back in April with no response so they are unable to do more on that item. Attorney Weismeth stated this would leave only one outstanding issue with that being if they are able to receive the Variance from the Zoning Hearing Board.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated his intention is to make a motion to approve the Plan if they are able to meet all requirements that had been set forth.

Supervisor Randy Detrick made a motion to grant the time extension through October 6, 2025.

Mr. Saunders asked if the Sewage Module would be signed to be able to be forwarded to the DEP for approval. Supervisor Randy Detrick responded that he would send a message in regards to the module.

Chairman James Zahoroiko seconded Supervisor Randy Detrick's motion to grant the time extension through October 6, 2025. The motion carried 2-1.

OLD BUSINESS:

Blue Ridge Hook & Ladder

Fire Chief Paul Warnick was present to address the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated the discussion was to continue on whether Ross Township would budget more money to go towards the Fire Department or implementing a Fire Tax. He further stated it is his opinion to want to stabilize the Fire Department long term and had been thinking about half a mill for a tax. Supervisor Randy Detrick contacted the Monroe County Assessment Office to get an average assessed value of the homes in Monroe County and was able to determine through his research the average assessed value in Monroe County is \$152,000. With setting half a mill for a Fire Tax, he stated he believed it would help to fill in the funding gap for the Fire Department to stabilize them long term, but would be open to hear and discuss any other options.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked Fire Chief Paul Warnick how much they are able to raise through their annual fundraisers to which Chief Warnick stated around \$150,000 through roughly 12-15 events per year, on top of responding to calls as volunteers, as they don't have another option to be able to keep operations going.

Supervisor Randy Detrick then asked how much of a deficit the Fire Department has on an annual basis. Chief Warnick stated, looking at 2024, they were only up \$35,000 as they had received a \$100,000 donation from a trust after someone had passed and left the money for the Fire Department. Without this donation, they would have been short \$64,845. When asked about a budget prediction for this year, Chief Warnick stated, if nothing were to break down, their budget is roughly \$405,000.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked about Hamilton Township and Chief Warnick stated they do not have a Fire Tax, but that they do have a Township Tax and that Hamilton Township had agreed to go from \$100,000 each year, plus extra money towards a truck, to \$200,000 a year on top of also paying for fuel, workman's comp, road flares and other items. This is also without money from the relief fund. Vice Chairman David Shay stated he had been told the total amount for Hamilton Township was \$275,000 to which Chief Warnick stated was without relief money.

Chief Warnick continued with stating the Fire Department currently has a truck that needs to be replaced so their budget would also be changing with needing to take on another truck payment that they do not really have money to put down for as their savings has been being depleted over the last few years.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked about the percentage that had been brought up before about how much they are receiving between Ross and Hamilton Townships. Chief Warnick confirmed he had been told before the breakdown was roughly 2/3 from Hamilton and 1/3 from Ross. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated with Hamilton giving \$275,000, it was calculated Ross would then be around \$137,500.

Chief Warnick then explained the \$275,000 did not include relief money as that is a pass-through fund from the State which is handled through separate meetings and checkbooks as it is only for Life Safety Equipment. Any relief money does not factor into the \$405,000 budget previously stated. Chief Warnick stated they are only discussing the money received from the Townships which, for Hamilton, is roughly \$275,000 without relief.

Supervisor Randy Detrick stated the Fire Department would then need more than \$137,500 from Ross if the Township numbers were including the relief money. Chief Warnick stated the relief money was not to be included in any of the numbers as it could not be used for any general operations of the Fire Department. He explained the relief money could only be used for Life Safety equipment such as new turnout gear, fire coats, warning lights, replacement of air packs and other items with Ross Township's annual relief amounts being in the low thirty thousands.

When Supervisor Randy Detrick asked what Hamilton's total was with relief money, Chief Warnick stated it can change, but around an additional \$70,000. Chief Warnick reiterated that they are unable to use the relief money, which passes through the Township from the State, for their general budget or bills.

It was then explained that the \$200,000 received from Hamilton does not include the additional payments of worker's comp, diesel fuel, road flares, cones and closure signs that Hamilton is providing on top of the \$200,000.

A resident then asked what an estimate of the new tax would be with using the average assessed home value of \$152,000. Supervisor Randy Detrick asked how many homes were in Ross Township and Vice Chairman David Shay stated there were 1974 houses per the 2020 Census with 5464 residents. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated the Tax Collector previously shared a half a mill tax would bring in around \$170,000 which would give an estimate of around \$76 per house for the tax on average.

Supervisor Randy Detrick then asked Chief Warnick what amount they were looking to receive from Ross Township. Chief Warnick stated they would need \$140,000 to get things back up, but that they also would need to replace a truck. Implementing a half mill Fire Tax that could yield \$160,000-\$165,000 would help fill the deficit along with allowing additional funds to be placed towards the new truck payments. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated to be at the 1/3 amount in comparison to Hamilton Township's 2/3, that Ross Township would need to be at \$137,500 without including relief money.

Before moving on, another resident asked about how implementing a tax would impact the mail fundraiser. Chief Warnick stated they would expect it to go down some and that only 13% of residents

respond that receive the mailers. He further stated that even if that number were to drop to half, it would still work out better with the tax as they would have a known budget they could work within.

Attorney Filer stated there had been questions at the last meeting and explained that the tax would need to be based on millage and not per capita along with that the millage would not be able to exceed 3 mills without going to the voters.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked if there were any other questions. Greg Gill asked about the current money that was being budgeted to the Fire Department then being able to stay within the Township as the tax would be passed through instead. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated that it would be able to help Ross Township's budget in other areas having the other funds available.

It was also stated that there would not be continuous increases to the millage set without the Board of Supervisors voting on it. They only change would come from changes in assessed property values from which the tax would be calculated. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated the Board of Supervisors could also vote to remove the tax again in the future which Chairman James Zahoroiko stated had happened before.

A final question from a resident was directed to Chief Warnick about if the Fire Department would be able to report damaged or destroyed structures to the Township to avoid future issues of delays with dangerous structures remaining after fires. Chief Warnick stated he could send monthly Fire Reports to the Township.

Chairman James Zahoroiko asked if there were any motions. Supervisor Randy Detrick stated the goal was to only further discuss the Fire Tax and that action could be taken at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

To Adopt the Data Centers and Solar Farm Ordinance

There were two line items for discussion under New Business in regards to an ordinance for Data Centers and an ordinance for Solar Farms. Both items were discussed in conjunction with one another.

Vice Chairman David Shay stated the item had been labeled incorrectly for the agenda as they were just to discuss ordinances from other municipalities for review. He further stated Attorney Filer would need to compile the information from other townships.

Vice Chairman David Shay went on to explain there are increasing concerns with Data Centers wanting to come into the local area with large pieces of property being developed for the centers that house large computers for AI and cloud storage. These structures can create environmental concerns which Chairman James Zahoroiko explained is due to the large amount of water used for cooling the systems along with a large drain on local power grids and Ross Township does not have the current capabilities to upgrade the grid.

Chairman James Zahoroiko stated there is also the concern with proper response training for any emergencies, such as handling fires, within Data Centers or Solar Farms. He then addressed those present from Blue Ridge Hook & Ladder and asked they would handle a fire in a Solar Farm. Chief Warnick stated they did not know anything about as they didn't have any.

Chairman James Zahoroiko explained these are some of the concerns to be addressed and why an ordinance would need to be put into place to set restrictions on where Data Centers or Solar Farms could be installed with the hope of them not being satisfied with the options and moving on to another location. Vice Chairman David Shay stated, with starting the discussion that evening, a six-month time window had begun for them setting an ordinance so if any builders came in, they would be unable to move forward while an ordinance was in the works. He further stated it would take time as an ordinance would also need to be reviewed by the Ross Township and Monroe County Planning Commissions. Chairman James Zahoroiko stated there were concerns also discussed at the June CJERP Meeting including a shared story of a building in Mt Bethel that had become a Data Center and then was left behind after the company moved on. This left the local town with clean up and was also a concern with no longer used Solar Farms.

A resident then stated that the State is already in discussion to pass legislature that would allow centers to override local ordinances which could make the Township have to move faster than originally thought especially with the massive size of the centers that are being installed. Another resident shared the water concern with the possibility for wells to be ran dry from the water usage needed by the centers.

The discussion concluded with the decision for Attorney Filer to continue researching other Township ordinances to be compiled for review by the Board of Supervisors for the next meeting.

Escrow for Gateway Industrial

Marty Smith was present as a representative for the Gateway Industrial project and stated, while they were only discussing the Escrow Account that evening, he was available for any questions from the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked if they had any plans to be removing part of the mountain for another exit and Mr. Smith stated they were not and that they were still in the process of PennDOT reviewing everything.

Vice Chairman David Shay made a motion, based on the recommendation of the Ross Township Planning Commission and Township Engineer, to establish an Escrow Account in the amount of \$15,000 for review fees and the final amount to be determined when the project is complete. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Randy Detrick and carried 3-0.

Motion for New Heater in the Maintenance Shop

Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated he had received some quotes on the new heater, but that he would like to wait until next month to be able to fully discuss the available options.

EVENTS:

Labor Day – September 1, 2025

The Township Office will be closed for Labor Day. The September Board of Supervisors Meeting was voted on to instead take place on Tuesday 9/2 at 6:00pm.

Fall Clean Up Days

Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated the company that was used before was no longer doing dumpster service and that he had called other companies for pricing. He said they would still like to have the Clean

Up Days still in the second or third week of September, but that he should have dates posted to the website by the end of the week after all pricing quotes had been received.

Mt Eaton Road off Kunkletown Road – Closed for next 2 to 3 weeks

Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated the closure is for the replacement of the culvert on Mt Eaton Road. The culvert has been built and he spoke with the contractor who stated that equipment would be moved the following day. The hope is to have the majority of the work completed by the end of next week, but may still have guiderail and blacktop work to be completed.

ROAD FOREMAN REPORT:

Mt Eaton Road Culvert Project

An update on the Mt Eaton Road Culvert Project was discussed under the Events section of the meeting in regards to the road closure.

Backhoe Repair

Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated some of the repairs had been completed through Case along with some repairs he completed on his own. There is still one remaining issue that can be discussed at a later time, but is in a working condition.

He also stated Rolling Hills Road paving just wrapped up a week and a half ago. Tar and chip is scheduled for next week.

Ad for CDL Drivers for Seasonal Snow Plowing

Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated he would like an ad ran for Seasonal Snow Plow help and to have it posted early. Chairman James Zahoroiko asked about the status of the trucks. Road Foreman Ethan Brewer stated there are still two trucks down with needed repairs. He further stated he is looking for at least one hire to be available every time or possibly two.

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.

Prior to Adjournment, Attorney Filer asked for a motion to send the Catherine Andrews Plan back to the Planning Commission. Vice Chairman David Shay stated the Plan is currently before the Zoning Hearing Board, but then would need to go back before the Planning Commission for review of if all conditions had been met for recommendation of approval.

Supervisor Randy Detrick asked if the Plan needed to be sent back before the Planning Commission as they had already provided their list of reasons for recommending denial of the Plan which could be used to confirm if the Plan was ready for approval. The Planning Commission had to act at their last meeting as there was no requested further time extension at that time. It was decided no further action was needed at this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:46pm. The motion to adjourn was made by Supervisor Randy Detrick, seconded by Vice Chairman David Shay and carried 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lizzy Stortz

Temporary Recording Secretary