

Judy Trudell, Supervisor

June 30, 2015

Comments regarding Blue Letters:

Letters distributed to the public during a board meeting (from a board member) should have had the permission of the board; but most especially the board should have been given a copy of the letter as a courtesy and given a chance to address the letter at the time it was given, if they so desired. There is more than one side to every issue!!!

Letters distributed in the mail to the tax payers or water customers should have permission of the board; with no exceptions made as to who receives the letter. A letter written to the public should be received equally – not selectively. Letters distributed without board permission, using board resources such as the paper, the copy machine, the envelope, and the postage, is unethical.

1. A half sheet was enclosed with water bills; and not all customers received this letter. I found out about the note during a conversation with a friend 15 days after the bills went out. The board did not approve this mailing.
2. The second letter was found with the reports provided to the public and lying on the tables after the board meeting (by a **board** member) while cleaning the tables after the meeting. This letter was written by a board member to “To whom it may concern” and since the contents concerned actions of the Township Board tribute at an official Board Meeting, the Board should have received a copy and been given a chance to address the letter if so desired.

I will address some of the contents now:

Paragraph one concerns FOIA's and the fact that the Twp. Treasurer had received two requests. As the FOIA coordinator it is my job to distribute the FOIA requests to the person that can best fill the request. The first request was from a Trustee asking the treasurer for information regarding grants. The trustee had asked the treasurer for two months, verbally, for this information, did not receive it, therefore the FOIA request. The second FOIA was given to the water billing clerk (an employee of the water system) because information regarding customer activity reports that was asked for in writing were not being given. The comment on this letter was made that we have set up an office where records are kept and why should she have to receive the FOIA? #1 because it concerned her position as Treasurer and as the Water Billing Clerk, #2, the water records are not kept in this office, and #3 because she was designated to.

The word transparency was used. Transparency refers to “openness, communication and accountability”. Resenting and/or not complying with a FOIA request is definitely not transparent!

Paragraph two refers to the order of an additional 12 meters. Last fall, when the decision was made to order the meters, we had 95 paying customers. 100 meters were ordered BUT it was not taken into account those residences that were out of town, for sale, foreclosed on etc. We were given the same price as last fall, without the price increase, and we were advised to be sure to have 4 to 5 on hand. As of today, if we use all of the meters ordered for those residents with service lines, we will be short two or more meters with none on hand.

Paragraph three refers to the Bank Loan and the interest. Currently we have borrowed \$5000.00 for the meter project at an interest rate of 2.5%, a savings from the 3.5 to 4% that we should have been charged. We had projected that we would have to borrow up to \$40,000. Using the \$10,000 from grant funds (not anticipated at the time the decision to get the loan) and our yearly water receipts we have presently kept this down. The interest rates quoted in the letter was that we borrowed 5000 in Jan 2015 at an interest rate of 2.5 costing the

system over \$100.00 in a 3 months' time. I have contacted the bank who calculated our interest due at the time of the blue letter (5 months from Jan.) and our interest to date is \$43.06 with a daily interest of 35 cents per day. Next April when our payment is due, the interest rate for the year will be \$139.93. It is also stated that we are borrowing money to put into savings. Not so. The loan is for the meter installation project. Our savings, restricted, is for repairs and maintenance of the water system. Two years ago, we had no savings. We do have \$8000.00 now BUT we have several repairs and maintenance issues to attend to and that is what the restricted savings is for. This savings has not come from the loan monies but from those areas in the budget where we were able to tighten our belts, Funds from grants due to the 2014 freeze were a help in that area. In business, and the Water System is a business of the Township, there are times that you will have to make decisions; such as raising rates, making repairs, getting a loan to help make those repairs and upgrades, how the billing will be handled, and so on.

In business, the saying is, you have to spend money to make money. Do I like having a loan, no. Do I respect the board's decision to do so, yes. Would I respect their decision if I had voted no; yes I would because that is how a board is supposed to operate. Do I like having to outsource our billing to another source? NO, but is it the best decision for our present situation. There are going to be times where you don't agree 100% but you respect the decision made by the board and move forward and HELP with the work that needs to be done. Agreeing to disagree means when a decision is made, and it may not be the way you wanted it to go, you walk away from the table on friendly terms. If you have issues – be willing to discuss them and find a solution that best suits the people involved and the constituents who elected us to do what is right and fair for everyone. The letter implies that the board has made all the wrong decisions for all the wrong reasons; that we have not been transparent (open, communicated, and accountable). The reports are available at every meeting (folder) and upon request, there is public comment, the office door is open every time that I am at the hall and several letters have gone out to the water customer with explanations, we use the WEB page for the agenda, minutes and other items, our phone numbers are posted and my e-mail address is available. The office phone has an answering system and I am in the office daily, or every other day, checking the phone, my e-mail and my regular mail. My office is here at the center as is Sue's, Janet's and Bill's. Three of us share the one computer which was money well spent.

Had I been given a copy (directly) of this letter, a few words would have been said and oh well but as I said earlier, there are 2 sides to every story and I was asked to address it.

One last item, every board member that is going out of town, whenever – post it on the calendar. If I need to get ahold of you and can't I should be able to see why. Thank you.

Next item on the agenda: