

## **DAMASCUS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**Special Meeting of Thursday, December 29, 2005**

**Damascus Township Municipal Building**

Chairman Gager called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following Board members were present: Chairman William Gager, Supervisor Stanley Kuta, Supervisor Fred Haase and Secretary Sue Mycka.

Chairman Gager said that the meeting had been called to clear up personnel details before the end of the year. He had three resignation letters—from Supervisor Haase, Emergency Management Coordinator Frank Brooks and Secretary Sue Mycka. He began with an account of Supervisor Haase' employment.

He said he had been asking Supervisor Haase to come in to work for sometime, which he finally did, starting on Thursday, 12/15/05. Chairman Gager took him out to look over some of the roads that he would be working on. Supervisor Haase called in the next day and said he wasn't coming into work. The following Tuesday, Supervisor Haase called him and said that he wouldn't come to work again until the start of the new year. Chairman Gager then asked him to write a letter of explanation giving the reason he was terminating his employment. Chairman Gager then asked Supervisor Haase to read aloud his letter of 12/23/05.

Supervisor Haase, reading from his letter, said that he had considered the time before the first of the year as a transition period to get used to the job. He said that Chairman Gager told him that Supervisor Kuta would not help him break into the job. He had also intended to use the 1-ton truck that had been used previously by Supervisor Newport. When he came to work, he was informed by Chairman Gager that he would be driving one of the large dump trucks on unfamiliar roads that were steep and narrow and, knowing that a storm was due, he told Chairman Gager that he was uncomfortable with this. Chairman Gager replied to the effect that he'd make out alright.

On Friday, he opted to plow a trailer park for which he felt responsible, so he called Chairman Gager to tell him that he would not be in to plow Township roads. He also felt that he would jeopardize himself and the Township truck due to his lack of practice.

He came in Monday and worked around the shop. That evening, he called Chairman Gager and told him that he would not work until Supervisor Kuta left at midnight on 12/31/06, as it would be better financially and otherwise. He ended the letter by informing Chairman Gager that he would be ready to take over Supervisor Kuta's roads on 1/1/06.

After Supervisor Haase read his letter, he added that he did not report for work on Friday because he assumed the Township had the same number of men available as before and that he would be just an additional person. He added that, come the new year, he would work only for the Township.

Chairman Gager then continued with the letter from Mr. Frank Brooks dated 12/29/05. Mr. Brooks is resigning as Damascus Township EMC as of 1/11/06. He asked Mr. Brooks to give his reason and also requested a written explanation to attach to his letter (this is required in Township bylaws).

Mr. Brooks said that he enjoyed the job and helping people in the Township and is well-qualified to do the job as he has 18 years experience in fire service work.

But he said that immediately after the last big storm, he had tried to dispatch a Declaration of Disaster and only two supervisors signed it. He heard that the third supervisor made a comment to the effect that there was no need to hurry and the situation was being blown out of proportion. Mr. Brooks strenuously disagreed and said that speed is important in declaring disasters: to be at the top of the list gives the best chance for available funds.

He added that whoever takes over must have enough training and administrative skill to do the job, as both are difficult and must be done carefully to be effective and avoid penalties.

He also expressed disappointment that Supervisor Kuta was the only one of the three supervisors, who was aware of the 3% EMC administrative fee he was entitled to, as they are the people he must report to in this capacity.

He ended by thanking Supervisor Haase and Mr. Jim Freiermuth for attending the National Incident Management System (NIMS) training at Wallenpaupack High School. He said their attendance will help the Township.

Chairman Gager asked Secretary Sue Mycka to give her reason for resignation of 12/27/05.

Ms. Mycka answered that she is leaving for personal and family reasons.

Chairman Gager opened the floor for questions and comments.

Ms. Diane Boothe asked Supervisor Haase what he did on the day when he worked at the shop and he said general truck repairs. He added that he did not take a paycheck for the two days he had worked in order to avoid strife. She also asked him why he felt he would be able to do the job on Jan. 1, without working now. He said that he's driven heavy trucks before and can handle it.

Ms. Boothe then asked Mr. Brooks which two supervisors had signed the Declaration of Disaster and he said Supervisor Kuta and Chairman Gager. Supervisor Haase protested that he is not in as frequently as the other two supervisors, but comes when he is called to do so. His availability was briefly discussed.

Mr. Bob Gross asked when he had returned his pay and Supervisor Haase said it was returned on the previous evening, prior to the budget meeting, and that neither Supervisor Kuta nor Chairman Gager were aware that he was going to do this.

Mr. Tom Kane asked if taking over Supervisor Kuta's roads meant that Supervisor Haase would become road master, but Supervisor Haase corrected him and said that was not what he had implied and that could only be decided at the Organization meeting. Chairman Gager added that since Supervisor Haase is now no longer an employee, he would first need to be rehired at that meeting.

Mrs. Hedy Kuntsmann asked Supervisor Kuta whether he could stay on as road master even though he would no longer be supervisor. He said that was true. Chairman Gager cut short this discussion, saying the conversation had strayed from what was on the agenda.

Ms. Boothe wanted to know what Chairman Gager would do if Supervisor Haase should start again in January but quit a few days later, deciding that he didn't want to work. Chairman Gager replied that there is a 90 day probationary period wherein employees must prove themselves willing and able to do the tasks at hand. She asked Supervisor Kuta whether it was true that he refused to help train Supervisor Haase. He replied that Chairman Gager asked if he would help but Supervisor Haase did not and added that when he started the job, he received no training and that it was just a matter of going up and down the roads.

Ms. Boothe wanted to know when the EMC and secretarial positions would be filled. Chairman Gager said either at the Organization meeting or, for the secretarial position, through advertising. She also asked Mr. Brooks whether he would reconsider his decision to quit as EMC and he said no.

Other comments were made that did not pertain to the agenda and Chairman Gager steered the meeting back to the issues at hand.

Chairman Gager made closing comments. He said that Supervisor Haase, not currently an employee, could not start work again until after the Organization meeting on 1/3/06, not the first of the year, due to insurance issues. He also said that Supervisor Haase's comment regarding the usual number of people being available for work on the snow day was not true. The crew was actually short two men who were out with health problems. Supervisor Haase said he wasn't aware of this. Ms. Boothe asked whether he would be needed.

Discussion continued on various issues regarding EMC administrative work. It was also explained that the road master's term runs until the organizational meeting, when new road masters and other board members are selected.

At this point, Chairman Gager called for a vote to officially accept the three resignation letters with reasons attached. Supervisor Kuta made a motion to accept all three letters. Supervisor Haase seconded the motion. Motion passed, all in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm.