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CONTACT: John J. Holman, Township Manager
(717) 757-3521

PRESS RELEASE

Audit of Real Estate Collections in Springettsbury Township

York, PA – During the 2007 audit review process, concerns were raised as to the untimely remittances of 2007 real estate collections by Tax Collector, Mrs. Margaret Cousler, to Springettsbury Township. These same concerns were raised by Central York and York Suburban School Districts. Since it is the fiduciary responsibility of the Township and each School District to account for public funds, representatives and staff held a joint meeting with Mrs. Cousler to help clarify and resolve the matter. Unfortunately, Mrs. Cousler could not provide proper documentation for the delay, nor a complete reconciliation of the 2007 real estate taxes to the Township or either of the School Districts.

Since Mrs. Cousler is a publicly elected official, and not an employee of Springettsbury Township, the Township contacted Mrs. Cousler's surety bond company to notify them of these issues. At that point, to ensure fiduciary responsibility to its residents, Springettsbury Township hired the accounting firm of Boyer & Ritter to conduct a special audit of the 2007 real estate collections.

When the Township received Boyer & Ritter's report, it was provided to the Township solicitor Charles Rausch, Esquire, who then discussed it with the Board of Supervisors. The results of the audit have also been provided to Mrs. Cousler's surety bond company.

Some of the initial findings are as follows:

- Mrs. Margaret Cousler has not accounted for and remitted to Springettsbury Township \$82,725.99 of the real estate collections, \$4,044.37 of the streetlight tax collections, and \$155.51 of the prior year tax collections for January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007.
- Bank accounts utilized by Mrs. Cousler maintain inexplicable balances.
- A bank account in the name of Springettsbury Township, utilized by Mrs. Cousler, had a balance of nearly \$114,000 as of December 31, 2007. However, the account is utilized by Mrs. Cousler to receive and disburse tax collection transactions for the County of York, rather than Springettsbury Township. Maintaining the bank account in the name of Springettsbury,

rather than the County, provides the opportunity for unintentional misdirection of tax receipts.

- Monthly reports provided by Mrs. Cousler to Springettsbury Township were not submitted on a timely basis, contained mathematical errors, and did not provide for a full accounting of the 2007 real estate and street light taxes assessed. As a result, these reports do not provide the Township with a reliable accounting record of the taxes collected by Mrs. Cousler on behalf of the Township for 2007.

The Springettsbury Township Board of Supervisor's are working to resolve these issues in order to obtain a complete accounting of all tax revenues.

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