

approved

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – MARCH 4, 2024 @ 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER - The March 4, 2024, regular meeting of the Lower Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors was held at 6984 S. Delaware Drive, Martins Creek, Pennsylvania, 18063 (formerly known as Centerfield School), Martins Creek, PA, 18063. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson DeBerardinis at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were M. DeBerardinis, S. Disidore, D. Ascani, C. Cook, J. Mauser (zoom) J. Smethers, M. Mastrogiovanni, J. Zator & J. Coyle. There were approximately 10 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 5, 2024. MOTION by J. Mauser, second by M. DeBerardinis to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. **Bangor Public Library** – Kathleen Lynch, Director made a presentation of the many services and resources the library provides to the community. LMBT is unique in the way the Township is split between the Easton Library and the Bangor Library; 70% of the population lives in the Bangor School District of approximately 2,000 residents. Currently the library has a \$28,000 deficit. The Bangor Library asked the Board if they would consider committing \$1,500 to the library over the next four years. The Board agreed. The library is asking the Township and the Library to implement a Memorandum of Understanding. Kathleen will send J. Smethers an example of an MOU to be completed.
2. **K. Brewer** – Mr. Brewer mentioned he was at the meeting when the Fire Tax was passed, but noted there was no explanation on the tax bill for residents.
3. **S. Newman** – Ms. Newman indicated she attended the UMBT meeting held on Wednesday, February 28th regarding the RPL warehouse; she attended as a member of the LMBT Planning Commission and Planned Slate Belt. Sandra explained it's a massive warehouse that sits on 800+ acres. The traffic is expected to increase by 20,000 – 24,000 vehicles per day. S. Newman mentioned the Board was invited to attend, and thanked C. Cook for being there and would like to see the Board attend future meetings.
4. **J. Matthews** – Mr. Matthews questioned the Township Manager about the budget line item 400.420 – Dues & Memberships. J. Smethers explained only the Road Department is in the union; this line item is for various memberships such as PSAT membership, COG, QuickBooks, Sams Club etc.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING – None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval to Purchase and Finance Pumper Truck and Tanker Truck for LMB/Sandt's Eddy Vol. Fire Co. Resolution 2024-06. J. Smethers explained everything is all figured out. It is co-star pricing, and the price is actually lower since the Fire trucks are already built. G. Russo reviewed the financials and noted everything is in order.

2. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to adopt Resolution 2024-06 authorizing the purchase and financing of the Fouts FB-94 Custom Pumper with SAM system and the Fouts 4000 gallon / 1500 GPM tanker on Kenworth T880 Chassis from Firefighter One. Vote: 5-0. The lease agreement will be executed before the trucks are delivered.
3. **Discussion/Approval of the H&K Quote for Installation of Conduit for Lighting at the Courts.** M. DeBerardinis discussed the H & K quote for Pickleball / Tennis court lighting trenching at Centerfield. The pipe won't cost much, and the Road Crew can do the work. We will save around \$10,000. J. Smethers mentioned it must be done by the end of March, since the paving is being done the 1st week in April. J. Coyle agreed the price quote from H & K is high. Fred suggested renting a ditch witch. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser not to accept the proposal from H & K and have the Road Crew do the work. Vote: 5-0.
4. **Slate Belt Comprehensive Plan Update. S. Disidore gave a summary of the Slate Belt Municipal Comp. Plan.** S. Disidore, S. Newman, and J. Smethers have been attending the meetings for 4 ½ years. Susan noted the plan was to adopt a multi-municipal comp. plan and establish coordinated zoning between all the municipalities. The three of them for the past 6 months have weighed the pros and cons and put a lot of time and research into this and considered comments from our Solicitor. Our current comp. plan is much stronger than the multi-municipal plan. The Townships are more at risk for coordinated uses for undesirable uses. They recommend the Township withdraw from the Slate Belt Comp. plan and not participate any further in the comp. plan or coordinated zoning. S. Newman noted the process is going to take a very long time to complete and we are protected by our own Comp. plan, Zoning and Official Map. J. Smethers agreed they were skeptical going into it and noted our comp. plan and zoning is strong. Susan mentioned coordinated zoning projects of regional significance would have to be reviewed by Planned Slate Belt. J. Zator noted coordinated zoning is not in the MPC; Article 11 addresses Joint Comp. Plans. D. Ascani asked if we are the first township to withdraw. Susan indicated yes that Portland backed out when they had new council members, but then rejoined. J. Mauser thanked Susan, Sandra & Jen for all their hard work and attendance. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by J. Mauser to withdraw from any further participation in the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comp. Plan and Coordinated Zoning. Vote: 5-0. M. DeBerardinis thanked Susan, Sandra & Jen for the number of hours they put in and due diligence and coming to the right decision for the Township.
5. **Appoint Rec. Board Members.** M. DeBerardinis, Rec. Board Liaison handed out to the BOS N. Palmeri's, recommendation, Rec. Board Chair. Mike mentioned we need a lot of volunteers, so all that applied for these positions should get involved. D. Ascani asked about background checks for Rec. Board members. J. Smethers indicated it's not necessary, these are family events and none of the members work one on one with children. J. Zator explained some policies that are required for background checks, and typically 2 adults should be present when having any contact with youths. M. DeBerardinis noted N. Palmeri is going to work on revising the Rec. Board ordinance to redefine as more Community events, not Recreational sports. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by M. DeBerardinis to take the Rec. Board's recommendation appointing P. Mc Inerney and Kara Bartholomew to the Recreation Board. Vote: 4-0-1, D. Ascani abstained.
6. **Elected Auditor.** J. Smethers indicated we received no letters of interest for the Elected Auditor position. The Board said to leave it advertised until we receive letters.

7. **Commitment of the American Rescue Plan Act Funds.** J. Smethers indicated the annual ARPA report is due April 1st and all funds need to be committed and included in the report. The balance of the funds is \$157,662. Jen applied for funding to replace the cinder shed but is still waiting to hear back from 2 of the grantors. We did receive a partial grant from the County in the amount of \$22,000. The other two grants total \$250,000. The total project cost is about \$300,000. If we don't get the money for the cinder shed, we can look into a new pick-up truck. We can go ahead and use a portion of the funds to purchase the table, chairs, television, and pa system. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to designate the commitment of funds per the Township Managers suggestion plus purchase the table, chairs, television, and pa system for a dollar amount not to exceed \$12,000. Vote: 5-0.

8. **Discussion/Approval of Cameras at Entrance to Gravel Hill Enterprises.** The Board discussed the camera quote and location of the pole to install the system on. All agreed to put the pole at the entrance of Gravel Hill Enterprises and go with a hardwired system instead of solar. J. Zator noted we need to let the property owner know and make sure we put the pole in our right of way. D. Ascani asked J. Smethers to contact Fox Brothers also. We can do our own charting of the axles going into the property.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Approval to Remove Electrical Boxes at the Meadows.** The EAC questioned if the boxes should be removed. J. Mauser indicated the boxes should stay. Fred can have the switches just removed from the poles.

2. **Resolution 2024-05 Appointment of Tara Mezzanotte as the Township Liaison to NJDOT and PENNDOT for all I-80 and 611 Matters.** Tara was present to give an update on the project and noted the project is delayed until 2028 due to critical issues with the retaining wall. Route 611 is closed and not expected to open anytime soon. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to adopt Resolution 2024-05 appointing Tara Mezzanotte as the Lower Mount Bethel Township Liaison to NJDOT and PENNDOT for all I-80 and 611 Matters. Vote: 5-0.

3. **Appointment of Christopher Cook as the Township Liaison to the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River (LDWSR).** **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore appointing Chris Cook as the Township Liaison to the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River (LDWSR) Vote: 5-0.

4. **Approval to Work with Carroll Engineering on Walking Trail Resurfacing Grant.** J. Coyle explained he will do actual figures of construction estimate and sketch plan. The resurfacing would consist of a French mattress with paving on top. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore approving J. Smethers to work with J. Coyle on the walking trail resurfacing grant. Vote: 5-0.

5. **Approval to Apply for the Lehigh Valley Greenways Grant for the Walking Trail.** J. Smethers noted the maximum grant amount is \$15,000 and would use the Livable Landscapes grant as match. **MOTION** by M. Deberardinis, second by D. Ascani to approve J. Smethers to apply for the Lehigh Valley Greenways Grant for the Walking Trail. Vote: 5-0.

6. Approval to Apply for Delaware Valley Property Liability & Trust Mini-Grant. J. Smethers explained this is a \$1,000 mini-grant through our insurance company. Jen would like to apply for baby changing stations for all CF bathrooms (3 changing stations). No match required. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to approve J. Smethers applying for the Delaware Valley Property Liability & Trust Mini-Grant. Vote: 5-0.

7. Approval of the UMBT / LMBT Intermunicipal Agreement for Softball. This is their annual request to use the Riverton Field from April – July 2024 and waive the fees. The BOS reviewed the Intermunicipal Agreement. D. Ascani suggested under paragraph #7 we add background checks be done for all coaches and provide proof to LMBT. The Board agreed. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to approve UMBT request to use the Riverton Field from April – July 2024 and waive the fees. Vote: 5-0.

Dave discussed the Red Hawk wrestling club, and asked about their certificate of insurance and commented that he is operating a business at our facility. He also suggested getting a written contract from the Wrestling Club and make sure they have background checks done on the coaches.

8. Slaters Baseball Request to Use Kiefer Field– This is their annual request to use Keifer field from March – June 2024 and waive the fees. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to approve Slaters Baseball request to use Kiefer Field from March – June 2024 and waive the fees. Vote: 5-0.

9. Authorization to Open a Separate Account for the Fire Tax Revenue. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to authorize J. Smethers to open a separate bank account for Fire Tax Revenue. Vote: 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS – J. Smethers noted there was one additional bill to Hriczak Electrical for the gym lights. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to pay the bills in the amount of \$76,012.81. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Township Engineer Report – No report. J. Coyle left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Township Solicitor Report – Written report submitted. J. Zator indicated the Affidavits of “chain of custody” of 2011 CAPZO map are complete. M. DeBerardinis discussed with J. Zator the Little Creek Road creek diversion causing problems in our row pipes. We did get a DEP emergency permit, which we will need a 120-day extension and need to put a temporary bridge to install the pipes.

Mike asked if we would we need to get an agreement with the property owner, after installation of the pipe it would belong to the property owner. J. Mauser noted he has been doing repairs on private properties for decades. The Township can draw up a Memorandum of Understanding with the landowner for access crossing the stream; this repair will improve the landowners property.

J. Smethers will coordinate with DEP, M. DeBerardinis and F. Heitzman for an onsite meeting. Additionally, the power company needs to go in there and put up two poles to raise the electric lines to get the equipment through. D. Ascani suggested contacting Met Ed and Frontier to be included in the process. J. Mauser asked to be copied also. J. Mauser indicated C. Kulike will come down, but the project won't occur until there are low water conditions.

Board Members Reports

Chairman Report – No further report.

D. Ascani – Dave reported he found a constable and they are going down to the Board of Election. Dave mentioned the residents in Del Haven have filed a petition re: the Gackey property.

S. Disidore – No further report.

J. Mauser – John reported The Fire Company is having an event on May 11th at Riverton. John will be doing the hayrides. The Fire Company asked if Fred & Mark could move the tables under the pavilion so the band can set up there. They also asked that the soccer benches be removed and placed somewhere that they can be used. There is also a dirt pile that has been sitting there for years if that can be moved to allow additional parking.

C. Cook – No report.

Township Manager Report – No further report.

Road Department Report – F. Heitzman reported they fixed telephone lines on Little Creek Road and cut off the top of the pole. They have been cleaning up alot of down trees. The Township sent a letter regarding the overgrown bamboo in Witchwood Estates. They have been cleaning up the rain garden at the Welcome Center, cleaned up brush and debris at the Meadows, and repaired washouts at the upper Part of Little Creek Road and the pipe at Miller Road.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James L. Carpenter - 8897 Richmond Road. Mr. Carpenter complained about trucks running over the pipes and stop sign at the corner of Richmond Rd. and Miller Rd. and asked if a sign can be put erected "no trucks" on Miller Rd similar to the sign on Howell Rd.

Jeffrey Matthews - 6104 Geraldine Court. Mr. Matthews commented on the wrestling club running a business and is concerned as a taxpayer it might be costing the township money.

ADJOURNMENT - The Board of Supervisors Public Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Mastrogiovanni, Township Secretary - Lower Mount Bethel Township