

Approved

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

CALL TO ORDER - The November 4, 2024, regular meeting of the Lower Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors was held at 6984 S. Delaware Drive, Martins Creek, Pennsylvania, 18063 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, C. Cook, D. Ascani, J. Mauser, J. Smethers, M. Mastrogiovanni & J. Coyle. There were approximately 7 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

M. DeBerardinis announced the Board of Supervisors took a road trip tour of the Township on 10/24/24 to look at future projects.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 21, 2024. MOTION by J. Mauser, second by D. Ascani to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. T. Mezzanotte – Rt. I-80 Retaining Wall Replacement Update. Tara reported Route 611 is having a soft opening tomorrow but she is concerned with the light. It will take 2 years to do the Environmental Impact Study for the Rockwall replacement and 1-2 years for the design work. Route I-80 still has the same issues. The Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River (LDWSR) in the next phase are looking at the tributaries and will take another year to move forward with the study. They will be meeting the 3rd Tuesday, 4 times per year from 11-12:30 p.m. on zoom. J. Mauser, J. Smethers and C. Cook will all rotate. J. Mauser will be in touch with all three to figure out who will attend via zoom.

2. J. Matthews – Mr. Matthews had requested at the last meeting to put the expenditures in the minutes, but the Board has not discussed the request. Mr. Matthews commented about transferring money from the Sanitation and Street Lights to General Fund to cover salaries, when salaries are already budgeted for. He suggested leaving the money in sanitation and streetlights to possibly give a tax benefit to residents. Mr. Matthews asked about the Health Insurance & Pension paid by the township. J. Smethers indicated the employees do contribute towards both. Union dues are also deducted from the union employee's paycheck. Mr. Matthews asked about the Petty Cash. J. Smethers noted we keep approximately \$100.00 in petty cash at the office.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING – None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Park signs & locations – The Board discussed the Park signs and locations to be placed at Riverton and Welcome Center. J. Mauser suggested purchasing painted signs instead of vinyl. J. Smethers will get some estimates and let the Board know. This request was made by H. Klein. J. Smethers has been discussing with him and J. Mauser has been working on placement of these signs.

Authorization to Advertise the Draft 2025 Budget. J. Smethers reviewed the changes with the Board. General Fund revisions were made to Professional Engineering Services, Road Projects & Equipment due to not receiving the grants.

Street Lights - There was discussion about the (3) three options proposed: 1). No increase in the street light assessment and the township only recouping \$508.00 for staff time, 2). A 26% increase and the township would recoup all the costs, 3). Dissolution of the street light assessment. Liquid Fuels can be used for street light assessments after all streetlight funds are expended. Beyond 2025, any delinquent payments we receive from prior liens would be used first and then the balance could either come from liquid fuels or general fund. Jen also reached out to PPL to send us the new contracts to proceed with getting LED lights. S. Disidore suggested not disbanding the streetlights, or having all resident pay for the tax and would like to see the township move forward with LED lights and the cost of install and savings. D. Ascani suggested dividing the street light tax equally between all the residents that are in the street light district; or if all residents paid the tax, it would be around \$13.00 per dwelling unit. J. Mauser suggested we leave things the way they are and look into the LED alternative going forward. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Disidore that we don't raise costs and reduce the fees of \$500.00 (St. Lights to General Fund) for admin. Costs, with the understating that we can do an amended budget after we received more information / costs on the LED lights. Vote: 4-0-1 with D. Ascani voting no. This will be put on the December meeting and future agendas under old business. Jen will reach out to PPL to see if a rep. can come and explain it to us. After review and discussion, **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by M. DeBerardinis to advertise the 2025 proposed draft budget as revised. Vote: 5-0.

1. P3 Towers Discussion/Approval on Whether or Not to Move Forward with Cell Tower.

J. Smethers indicated her, Mike and Chris met with the owner and the VP of Development to discuss a possible location for a monopole tower at the garage. The Board was given a copy of the site map. Mike mentioned a neighbor contacted him and would like to come to a meeting to discuss. J. Zator should also weigh in on this as well. J. Coyle noted the township could be exempt on complying with the zoning ordinance on property owned by the municipality. J. Smethers noted the zoning ordinance states a cell tower need to be 500 feet from any surrounding property owner, the one location portrayed on the dwelling buffer exhibit would be 485 – 490 feet from all three houses. The Board asked this to be tabled to the next meeting to allow us to send letters to all surrounding property owners to give them the opportunity to speak at the next Supervisors meeting.

2. Update for Resolution 2024-19 – A Resolution Authorizing the Application for Statewide Local Share Account Funds for the Purchase of a Brush Mower/Roadside Cutter for the Road Department

– J. Smethers indicated the resolution was approved at the October 7th meeting with a grant request amount of \$135,000. The quotes are coming in higher than expected so the cost will be around \$160-170,000 (\$90,000 for the arm mower, \$80,000 for the tractor and \$30,000 for the extra part). M. DeBerardinis suggested we could look into leasing, without the attachment or buy used. F. Heitzman mentioned we call for a price for replacement tires for our current mower, cost will be around \$3,600.00.

Mike suggested we go ahead and have them changed since we won't know about the grant until next year. Jen suggested we change the grant amount to \$150,000 or keep the same with a match of \$50,000 to be more competitive. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by M. DeBerardinis to authorize J. Smethers to increase the grant to \$135,000 with a match of \$35,000. Vote: 5-0.

3. WM Recycling Toters Automation - J. Smethers gave an update. There would be no reduction in price by going automated and no incentive. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by C. Cook to stay with the recycling program we have now. Vote: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution No. 2024-18 – Authorizing the Participation of Lower Mount Bethel Township in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Pension Trust Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Law and Accept the Amended and Restated Declaration and Agreement of Trust
J. Smethers indicated this is required to move forward with the pension change. The approval and adoption of the pension plan itself will have to be done at a November 18th workshop meeting since she is still waiting to hear back from PSATS regarding the questions raised by Joe. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to approve Resolution No. 2024-18. Vote: 5-0.

2. Resolution 2024-20 – A Resolution Authorizing the Application for Statewide Local Share Account Funds for the Purchase of a Rescue Truck for the LMB/Sandt's Eddy Fire Company.
G. Russo Jr. was present and indicated the rescue truck is not big enough and would like to purchase the rescue truck instead of the brush truck. The grant application will be for \$450,000 with a \$50,000 match. The grant application is due on 11/30/24. They will try and piece together their brush truck for now to get by. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to approve Resolution No. 2024-20. Vote: 5-0.

3. Approval of Teamsters Local 773 Contract 2025 to 2028. Revisions were made as follows: Pg. 11 Article 22 – Miscellaneous Provisions. Seasonal and temporary employees shall work from Memorial Day to Labor Day and shall not be hired to take work away from Full-time employees. This will be tabled to the next meeting to make the revisions to the contract.

4. Gravel Hill Enterprise Tipping Fee Due Date - J. Smethers indicated GHE pays the tipping fee quarterly with payment due on the last day of the quarter. Jen suggested a 10-day grace period would be more reasonable. The Board was in agreement but asked to check with J. Zator if we can just send them a letter approving this change, or if we need to change the agreement. Tabled to the next meeting to get clarification from Joe.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS - **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to pay the bills in the amount of \$56,850.05. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Township Engineer Report – J. Coyle reported 15+ people met at the Martins Creek Belvidere Highway stormwater project and he is pretty confident the project will move forward in the spring. Penn DOT is having a pro-active role with the township to help facilitate the project.

Justin reported on the Blum earth disturbance adjacent to the pickle ball courts. They need a grading plan which they have not submitted yet, therefore he had to issue them a cease-and-desist order until they comply.

Chairman's Report – M. DeBerardinis will report under the Road Department.

Board Members Reports

J. Mauser – John reported on Wednesday the Conservation District and Farmland Preservation are doing a tour of the Hess & Kiefer property regarding draining and culvert issues on Martins Creek Belvidere Highway. John suggested they reschedule the tour when Ryan Shaw and Austin Draeger can attend. J. Smethers will reach out to them.

C. Cook - No report.

S. Disidore - No report.

Township Manager Report - J. Smethers reported she has reserved the election day signs; they will be picked up by the Road Crew and turned on by 6:00 a.m. The Fire Company will also put 2 additional signs on each side. The Cameras for Gravel Hill are still being worked on by Swanson Electric. The Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by FEMA and will come back to the Township for approval and adopted at the BOS December meeting. The building permit has been issued for the cinder shed at the garage. We need to pick colors for the trim, roof and soffit. They will give us two weeks' notice before they start.

Road Department Report – M. Deberardinis reported a resident asked us to prune dead trees hanging in our road, but the trees are on their property. The Road Crew is not going to prune them, they need to hire a tree trimmer. F. Heitzman reported they helped with the Fire Company car show set up and clean up, worked on drainage ditch on Klausz road, they did 4 days of leaf collection and last day will be Nov. 27th other than that, they have been doing general maintenance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

B. Smith commented on cracks that need to be sealed on Del Haven Road and along the river, also the lines on the roads are very faded.

J. Matthews commented on the camera at Gravel Hill not working. J. Smethers indicated the cameras are not functioning yet. Mr. Mathew agreed the entire township should be paying for everyone's streetlights.

ADJOURNMENT – The Board of Supervisors meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Mastrogiovanni, Township Secretary - Lower Mount Bethel Township