

Approved

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES - February 5, 2024 @ 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER - The February 5, 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, J. Smethers, M. Mastrogiovanni and J. Zator. There were approximately 16 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 22, 2024. MOTION by J. Mauser, second by S. Disidore to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

MOTION by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to add Slate Belt Multi-Municipal plan under old business. Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING – None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. LMB Sandt’s Eddy Fire Co. – J. Larrison & G. Russo Jr. – G. Russo explained the finance company is requesting to have the fire trucks be in the Township’s name since the payments are being made from the fire tax. The financing company is concerned that the Board could change in a few years and possibly eliminate the fire tax and not have the funds for the payment. Having the trucks in the Township’s name will reduce the payment from approx. \$146,000 to approx. \$136,000. The rate will be reduced by about 2.25%. There was discussion about if we need to bid this out. J. Smethers indicated she checked with Co-star and Keystone Purchasing Network to see if Fout Bros. is listed as part of their programs. Fout Bros. is listed under NPPgov. It was noted that it’s not uncommon for municipalities to own the Fire trucks. D. Ascani asked if we could co-sign without putting it out to bid and how long the bidding process would take. J. Smethers indicated the bidding process would take 30-45 days. There was further discussion about the financing, bidding out and the contract being part of a cooperative purchasing program.

Public Comment by G. Clamp – she suggested an agreement between LMBT and the LMB Fire Company. J. Zator noted there would need to be a list of things that would need to be included in the agreement. The Township could also consider passing a Resolution guaranteeing the township pay the loan for the 10-year term. G. Russo mentioned the Spartan pumper is supposed to be delivered at the end of this month. G. Russo will check financing with Kansas State Bank and J. Smethers will contact Embassy Bank regarding Fire Truck financing. J. Smethers will wait to hear back from the finance and if needed we can advertise a workshop meeting to be held in February.

2. Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan - S. Disidore, S. Newman, and J. Smethers have been attending the meetings for 4 ½ years. J. Smethers indicated we sent our questions to the steering committee by the deadline; they met last Thursday and LVPC had no answers to our questions or Plainfield's. J. Smethers followed up with B. Bradley at LVPC regarding the questions and is waiting to hear back from her.

There was discussion about how we are going to move forward, either pull out or proceed. All the townships have concerns regarding the current draft. It is not as strong as our Comp. plan we adopted in 2022 and our Zoning Ordinance was also just updated. S. Disidore explained some municipalities haven't updated their Zoning Ordinance since the 1970's and ours has just been updated. Jen explained the advantages of having a joint comp. plan for grant opportunities and joint zoning allows all municipalities / boroughs to include every land use. J. Zator noted it is uncommon to have joint zoning in Pennsylvania and there are no municipalities in the Lehigh Valley that do. D. Ascani asked if he and C. Cook could sit down with Jen to become familiarized with the Slate Belt Comp. Plan and asked if S. Newman could come to the next BOS meeting. J. Smethers will send D. Ascani and C. Cook the link. J. Mauser noted we adopted our own Comp. plan, official map and updated our zoning to protect the Township. S. Disidore mentioned one of our questions is do we bear the cost of all the other municipalities / boroughs to update their zoning. M. DeBerardinis suggested we wait to get answers to our questions before making a decision.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Nicole Palmeri – Rec. Board Chair. Nicole gave a presentation. The Rec. Board does not have a mission statement but read a statement that sums up the mission of the Rec. Board.

Nicole discussed the upcoming events the Rec. Board will be having:

Plant Sale - Saturday, May 18th 10-2 p.m. Plants will be purchased from Gift Box and Howard Klein will be donating some plants. The Rec. Board will be incorporating an outdoor Farmers Market to invite some of our local businesses. Karmas Kitchen will not be attending, but she is looking into another food truck. If it rains it will be held indoors at Centerfield school. M. DeBerardinis asked Nicole to give him a list of plants so he could also check with his suppliers.

Community Day – Saturday, June 8th 1-5 p.m. Nicole went over the details of Community Day. Franklin Hill will be attending, and they are looking into a Brewery and food trucks. There will be Tricky Tray again and all the games and activities as last year. It will be held in the Village again.

Tree Lighting – Saturday, December 7th. We will ask Fidelity Bank to come with their hot chocolate truck and have the same activities as last year.

Nicole mentioned the Township received a \$5,000 grant through the County. They will be purchasing a spin art machine for the kid's crafts, a freezer to sell frozen treats, tents, generator and purchase outdoor movie equipment. The goal is to plan a movie night either at the Riverton Ball field or in the village at Pacchioli field. Nicole indicated they have received many letters of interest for the Rec. Board open vacancies, and they are still reviewing them. They will pass their recommendation along to the BOS once they decide.

2. Appointment to Committees & Boards - Policies and Procedures. J. Smethers created a draft policy she reviewed with the BOS.

3. Elected Auditor - Laura Hackenberg one of our Elected Auditors (term is 2022-2026) has not shown up for the past two meetings (they only meet once per year). Melissa has tried to reach her numerous times by email, regular mail and phone, with no response. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to advertise for the elected Auditors position for 4 weeks on Facebook and our website. If there is no response, we will continue advertising until we receive letters of interest. Vote: 5-0.

4. Keys & Entry for Supervisors to Buildings – There was discussion about whether Supervisors should have keys and codes to the alarm system. S. Disidore suggested no keys or codes; no one should be in the office after business hours. M. DeBerardinis agreed. D. Ascani asked about emergency purposes. J. Smethers noted she can de-activate the alarm from her phone. C. Cook stated he does not want keys to any buildings. J. Mauser suggested contacting Jen, Melissa or Fred if someone needs to get in. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by M. DeBerardinis that the Board of Supervisors will not be given individual alarm codes. Vote: 5-0. Individual codes will be given to each Road crew employee and packets can be left for the Supervisors in the vestibule if they need to be picked up after hours.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS - **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to pay the bills in the amount of \$108,663.80. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Chairman's Report – No report.

Board Members Reports

S. Disidore – Susan reported under the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal plan. No further report.

J. Mauser – No report.

D. Ascani – Dave discussed the Gacki property on Del Haven being a mess and safety and fire hazard. It's a property maintenance issue. Dave will get the complaints together from the neighboring residents and email A. Disante the township Property Maintenance officer.

Dave suggested looking into the road department to pick up Christmas trees and put them in the chipper. Dave mentioned parking on Martins Creek Bangor Hwy. by the trails, the cars need to be parked more off the road.

Township Manager Report - J. Smethers reported she, D. Ascani and J. Coyle met with Gravel Hill Enterprise President G. DiDomenico regarding placement of a hardwired camera on the pole. We need to see if it would get a good picture or have another Met-Ed utility pole put up with electricity and meter in our right of way. The security company believes they can get a good picture with the cameras, and it will be motion activated. D. Ascani mentioned it needs to get the ID of the truck and license plate. Then we can manually monitor the statistics. Dave indicated it's hard to decipher the amount of tipping fees we should be receiving.

We might want to negotiate a flat rate and get a monthly check. J. Zator mentioned we have a settlement agreement with Gravel Hill Enterprises; citizens were involved in those negotiations. Those citizens would need to be a party to any contract changes.

J. Smethers gave the BOS information and prices for new meeting tables, sound system and chairs. M. DeBerardinis suggested we contact the geek squad and have them come out and check out the room to see what we need.

Township Solicitor Report – J. Zator submitted his written report, no further comments.

Road Department Report - F. Heitzman reported they plowed snow, been cutting trees on the trails, worked on the shoulder at Upper Mud Run Road, filled Little Creek Road over 1st bridge, filled spots in with millings on De Pues Ferry Rd., filled I guide rail problems across from S. Disidore. They need to get the pipe out and big rocks but need to talk to the property owner to discuss remediation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment by J. Matthews – Mr. Matthews suggested the Township pull out of the Slate Belt Comp. plan, it sounds like it is going to cause us issues. It seems like there's more pros than cons.

Property owner on Upper Mud Run Road. – Commented on the Slate Belt Comp. Plan. We should be concerned since they are not getting us the information we need or straight answers. There was discussion about grant opportunities by staying in the Slate Belt Comp. plan.

ADJOURNMENT – The Board of Supervisors Public Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Mastrogiovanni, Township Secretary - Lower Mount Bethel Township