

approved

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – January 22, 2024 @ 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER The January 22, 2024 regular meeting minutes 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 and M. Mastrogiovanni. There were approximately 18 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 2, 2024 Re-organization meeting at 6:30 p.m. and January 2, 2024 Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m. - **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Disidore to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None.

PRESENTATION

LMB Sandts Eddy Fire Co. –G. Russo reviewed with the Board the handouts for the Fouts FB-94 Custom Rescue Pumper and Fouts 4000 Gallon Super Tanker. G. Russo J. explained the payment estimate amortization. They would like to go with the 10-year payment of \$149,143.00 with a one-year deferred payment. That would leave them \$60,000 savings per year. They also have 2 grants submitted for the next 2 trucks to be replaced, the Brush truck and utility truck. They had asked to have the current loan of \$17,000 be paid off. J. Smethers mentioned the check is on the bill list tonight to be paid. J. Larrison discussed the SAMS system and how easy it is to operate. C. Cook contacted a few Fire Companies and they said they like the SAMS system.

There was a discussion about the Fire tax. J. Smethers explained the \$206,000 for the Fire tax is for assessed properties currently taxed and asked if it should include exempt properties also; very few are exempt and its mostly township properties. The Board agreed it should be only on tax assessed properties. S. Disidore said the plan makes perfect financial sense; but mentioned the \$34,000 payment annually out of the General Fund for loan payments, those payments should be reviewed to see if they should be paid out of the fire tax fund. There was a 33% tax increase and most of the tax base is from the residents; also, there is a need to replace road department equipment. D. Ascani asked if the \$34,000 was discussed during budget time. S. Disidore noted the fire tax was established very quickly at the end of the budget discussion. J. Mauser mentioned he likes the 10-year payback with the 1st year deferred. S. Disidore agreed it's a good deal, but would like to sit down and work out the details of the fire tax and future equipment purchases. J. Mauser noted the Board needs some time to research the \$34,000 and possibly modify the budget, but for now is in favor of moving forward with the plan to purchase the 2 trucks.

There was discussion about the interest rate on the \$34,000 loan. G. Russo Jr. mentioned he spent a lot of time figuring all this out to come up with the best way to get new equipment. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by D. Ascani to approve going forward with this deal in securing these to Fire Company trucks and suggested meeting every two months to review things they need for future planning. Vote: 5-0. G. Russo Jr. thanked the Board of Supervisors for working with them and asked if the Township would like to incorporate the Township logo on the side of the trucks. The Board will check with J. Zator on that.

J. Larrison asked the Board if for the appreciation dinner, can they provide alcohol. J. Smethers suggested instead of them providing the alcohol, possibly attendees can byob of beer or wine, which is permitted for a closed function. **MOTION** by D. Ascani, seconded by J. Mauser that guests attending the appreciation dinner on February 10th be allowed byob, just beer and wine. Vote: 5-0.

J. Larrison mentioned they are looking to have a Fire Company picnic and meat & gun raffle the weekend before Memorial Day at the Riverton Field on May 18, 2024. They will get donations.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING

OLD BUSINESS – Re-org agenda

Planning Commission re-appointment (4-year term): **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to appoint Bill Rush to the Planning Commission from Jan. 2024 – Jan. 2028. Vote: 5-0.

Planning Commission re-appointment (4-year term): **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to appoint Pat Mc Inerney to the Planning Commission from Jan. 2024 – Jan. 2028. Vote: 5-0.

Zoning Hearing Board appointment (5-year term): The BOS interviewed 3 interested candidates for the position. **MOTION** by D. Ascani, seconded by J. Mauser to appoint Jon Russo to the Zoning Hearing Board. Vote: 5-0.

Appoint Alternate SEO –The Board interviewed two candidates for the position. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to appoint Phil Schiebel from Barry Isett and Associates as the Alternate SEO. Vote: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS J. Smethers noted there was an additional \$444.00 added to the bills list to Fox Brothers for the alarm at the Welcome Center. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to pay the bills in the amount of \$148,706.31. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Chairman’s Report – M. DeBerardinis reported there was an executive session held on 1/16/24 for legal and personnel matters. No action taken.

Board Members Reports

S. Disidore reported due to the inconsistencies at the re-organization meeting, we need to set a policy to set standardized procedures and guidelines for appointments. We should also adopt a Resolution to follow these procedures and when receiving multiple letters of interest, we should follow the same interview process for all. The Board discussed if they should accept recommendations from Committees. S. Disidore noted the Recreation Board does a lot of planning and working together, so the BOS might want to consider the Rec. Board’s recommendation for appointments.

C. Cook – Chris reported he talked to a lot of people on Del Haven that have been without power. 27 residents are filing complaints with the Public Utility Company and B. Smith is meeting with Ann Flood. M. DeBerardinis noted Met -Ed is taking action to trim trees and replace equipment by 2025.

D. Ascani – Dave indicated this is a safety hazard and suggested the Township send a letter to the district office. J. Smethers will check with J. Zator before sending the letter.

J. Mauser – John reported Met-Ed north of the PPL plant were out of power for 9 days. The power lines going through the woods is a severe issue.

Township Manager Report - J. Smethers reported ARPF money needs to be committed by the end of the year. There is \$159,000 left. Jen needs to complete the annual report by April 1st and asked the Board to start thinking about what they would like to use the money for. We already used some of the money for covid related items and the tennis courts. D. Ascani suggested using the money be used for a warming station, cots and showers at Centerfield.

Road Department Report – Mike reported the snow removal efforts on the township level went very well, only a few mailboxes were damaged.

D. Ascani asked about the gym lights replacement. M. DeBerardinis indicated they are being replaced the week of February 23rd. The Road Department will assist in moving the bleachers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, M. Mastrogiovanni
Township Secretary - Lower Mount Bethel Township