

approved

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – DECEMBER 16, 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 (zoom), J. Smethers, M. Mastrogiovanni, P. North, Solicitor and C. Briglia, Engineer (zoom). There were approximately 7 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 25, 2024 – MOTION by D. Ascani, second by C. Cook to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. Anthony Gasperetti – Mr. Gasperetti talked about the traffic on Front Street and not being in favor of a crosswalk. M. DeBerardinis noted we petitioned PennDOT in the past about a crosswalk, but they did not deem to put it there, it's too dangerous. S. Disidore agreed, a crosswalk could give pedestrians a false sense of security.

2. Jeff Matthews – Mr. Matthews asked again about adding the monthly expenditures in the minutes. He also asked the minutes from 11/4/24 be clarified that he didn't comment that the entire township should be paying the streetlights.

3. LMB/Sandts Eddy Fire Co. – G. Russo and J. Larrison were present to discuss their request of \$8,872.50 from the capital reserve for two sets of turnout gear. They are waiting to hear about the EMS grant for purchase of 5 more sets of turnout gear. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to authorize J. Smethers to purchase 2 sets of turn out gear in the amount of \$8,872.50. Vote: 5-0. George indicated they will be changing their meeting night so there is no conflict with the BOS meetings. George mentioned he met with Barbara from Suburban EMS who took over for Jeff. Barbara told him even if other municipalities go with Centronia and LMBT doesn't, they will still service us. The fire company will find out later from Centronia what locations they are proposing to house the ambulance. Next month George will bring records of calls for the year. Update on the brush truck – They are waiting for price to repair the truck. The way it sits now it is in the range of \$10,000 - \$15,000. A new brush truck would be in the \$250,000 range and would take 6-8 months to be built. George would like to come to the BOS workshop meeting on January 20th to look at their budget and equipment schedule up to 2037.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING – None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of the 2025 Budget. J. Smethers noted this is the final budget, advertised for 30 days with the revisions as requested by the Board of Supervisors. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to approve the 2025 Budget. Vote: 5-0.

2. Consideration to Advertise Ordinance 2025-01 Earned Income Tax and Property Acquisition Tax Ordinance Amendment for Adoption – J. Smethers indicated this ordinance will amend and restate in its entirety, certain provisions of the 2011 Ordinance. Everything else in the 2011 Ordinance would remain intact. This amendment will allow LMBT to use Open Space funds per Act 115. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to advertise Ordinance 2025-01. Vote: 5-0.

3. Consideration to Approve Street Light Services Agreement – J. Smethers indicated the agreement will allow PPL to replace all the street lights in Martins Creek with LED lights with no expense to the Township. The savings will be about \$40.00 a month for electricity. The distribution cost will be increasing. Jen will look into any other cost savings opportunities. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to approve PPL replacement of the street lights with LED. Vote: 5-0.

4. Resolution 2024-24 Providing for the Furnishing of Electric Street Lighting Service. Tabled to next month's meeting.

5. Discussion on Street Light Assessment - D. Ascani discussed distributing the street light assessment of homes evenly per household in the village. J. Smethers indicated there are 339 street light bills in Martins Creek; 83 unimproved lots and 256 improved. There was discussion about all unimproved lots be one rate and all unimproved lots another rate. The assessment would probably be around \$55.00 per household. P. North noted according to the 2nd class township code, you have a lot of different options. Jen will do a spreadsheet showing a breakdown of different options for payment of the streetlights. The change would need to be done by ordinance. Jen could put the billing back to August at the latest to figure out a plan. Tabled to the January workshop meeting.

6. Approval of the PSATS Supplemental Participation Agreement – J. Smethers indicated this agreement allows the township to enroll and participate in the governmental eligible, tax-exempt plan under Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, sponsored by the Trust. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Disidore to approve the PSATS Supplemental Participation Agreement. Vote: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution 2024-22 Hazard Mitigation Plan and Annex Adoption – J. Smethers indicated the municipalities of Lehigh and Northampton Counties have been working with the County EMCs and the consultant Witt O'Brien to develop the 2024 Lehigh Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Resolution will include the annex with LMBT. Chris Briglia provided a brief overview of the Plan. A few municipalities have already adopted the Plan. J. Mauser indicated it is important to adopt the plan in order to receive grants. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by S. Disidore to adopt Resolution 2024-22 Lehigh Valley 2024 Hazard Mitigation update. Vote: 5-0.

2. Resolution 2024-23 Establishing the Real Estate Tax Millage Rate for Calendar Year 2025. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to set the millage for real estate in the amount of 5.7 mills on each dollar of assessed real estate valuation, and 2.0 mills on each dollar of assessed real estate valuation for the fire tax. No changes from last year. Vote: 5-0.

3. Approval to Close the Books – December 31, 2024 – **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to close the books December 31, 2024, and authorizes J. Smethers to pay the final bills for 2024. Vote: 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS - MOTION by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to pay the bills in the amount of \$142,894.97. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Township Solicitor Report - P. North reviewed his written report. No action is needed in the near future on any items.

Township Engineer Report - No report.

Chairman's Report - No report.

Board Members Reports

D. Ascani – D. Ascani asked about the expense reports being included in the minutes. Dave asked if Jen contacted Forks Township regarding a traffic study to limit trucks on township roads and post signs no trucks except local delivery. Dave asked about increasing hours for the zoning officer to deal with violations; maybe 10-12 hours extra per month during the slow months. M. DeBerardinis indicated the township always dealt with property maintenance issues that are complaint driven. S. Disidore suggested we talk to Barry Isett to see if we can do this short term until under control; or it could be a project for the Board of Supervisors to undertake and file the complaint. J. Smethers is going to talk to Anthony.

C. Cook – Chris mentioned the road washing out on Little Creek Rd. There is a ditch, and the cones are gone, a barrier should be put there for safety purposes.

J. Mauser – John reported that he, and Mike will go look at Little Creek Road on Thursday, or Friday. Susan may also attend. They will be touring Martins Creek Belvidere Highway with NCCD and the watershed specialist. NCCD will give us an idea if we need a DEP permit.

S. Disidore – No report.

Township Manager Report – J. Smethers reported that she and Melissa attended a meeting at the Bell Tower to discuss future events in the Township. The group would like to try and promote each other's events on the Township website, Facebook & Newsletter. Jen suggested we compile one master list of all events for the Newsletter. Jen mentioned a company contacted her in regard to putting a Naloxone box at the Township building. The Board suggested she reach out to G. Russo and J. Larrison. On Wednesday, township representative and NCCD staff are going to walk the watershed along Mt. Pleasant Road. Jen received permission from several residents to walk on their property. Jen noted the staff is going to have a zoom meeting for their new pension on Thursday, 12/19/24.

Road Department Report – F. Heitzman reported they salted and cindered the roads last night, fixed the bench at the Meadows, Shannon cleaned leaves off shoulders, they cleaned up a tree struck by lightning, put spreader box on the truck and cleaned up trees down on the trails.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

ADJOURNMENT - The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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