

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – January 20, 2025 @ 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER - The January 20, 2025, workshop 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, and M. Mastrogiovanni. There were 4 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 6, 2025, Reorg and January 6, 2025, Regular Meeting. MOTION by S. Disidore, second by M. Deberardinis to approve the minutes from the January 6th Reorg and January 6th Regular Meeting as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None.

Fire Company Budget Discussion – G. Russo, J. Larrison and G. Russo Sr. were present. G. Russo Jr. submitted to the Board the 2025 Fire Tax Equipment Replacement Budget and 2025 Replacement of 2641 Brush Apparatus. They are also working on doing a full 25-year plan. G. Russo reviewed with the Board the 2025 Fire Tax Equipment Replacement Budget. Equipment purchases (to update current equipment): 1). Brush Truck 2641 – Total cost \$255,000.00; \$25,500.00 down payment now; payment \$24,105.49 per year. Loan breakdown: 2% PEMA loan for 15 years - \$127,500.00 (\$820.47 per month). First payment due 1 month after close of loan. 6.607% Bank loan for 10 years - \$102,000.00 (\$14,259.81 per year). First payment due 1 year after close of loan. 2). Rescue Truck 2645 – Grant \$200,000. Total cost \$500,000.00. Total cost to township \$300,000.00, \$30,000.00 down payment July 2028, payment \$27,614.62 per year. Loan 2% PEMA loan for 20 years, \$150,000.00 (\$758.83 per month) First payment due 1 month after close of loan. 8.769% Bank Loan for 10 years, \$120,000.00 (\$18,508.72 per year). First payment due 1 year after close of loan. 3). Rescue Boat 2643 – Grant. Total cost \$75,000.00, \$7,500.00 down payment in July 2026. Payment \$8,992.68 per year. Loan Breakdown: 6% Bank Loan for 10 years, \$749.39 per month. Other items not included in the year-by-year financial plan – SCBA compressor and fill stations – 30 years old, SCBA (air packs) – 7 years left plus 15 years on cylinders, UTV 2642 – 2023 replacement, Hydraulic P25 mobile and portable radios – They paid a grant writer to write a FEMA grant. They need 25 portable radios, and they are \$12,000 each. The county will eventually be switching things over and must figure something out regarding the frequency. D. Ascani noted if these are today’s figures, they will probably increase. George mentioned when they get rid of the old pumper and tanker, they would put the trade in towards the new trucks and get the most for the 2011 including all equipment.

G. Russo reviewed the 2025 Replacement of 2641 Brush Apparatus. The proposal is for replacement of their 2004 Brush Truck, which is not working, and they don’t want to waste more time and money repairing it. They are looking to purchase a 2025 Ford F550 crew cab equipped with a super single conversion kit for extreme terrain; total cost of the truck would be \$255,000.00. It would take 6-8 months to build. M. DeBerardinis mentioned this is much less than the \$400,000 they anticipated, and they should apply for all the grants they can. G. Russo indicated it’s nice that J. Smethers helps writes grants for them. J. Smethers asked if this is on state contract, George said that it is.

J. Smethers indicated she will put approval of the 2025 Ford F550 truck on the 2/3/25 BOS agenda. G. Russo will get the BOS the contracts and drawings for the February meeting.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING – None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Consideration of Ordinance 2025-01 Earned Income Tax and Property Acquisition Tax Amendment - Amending Part 1 (Earned Income Tax and Property Acquisition Ordinance) Chapter 24 (Taxation; Special) Section 102 (Imposition of Tax) of the Codified Ordinances to Provide that Revenue Shall be Used in Accordance with the Open Space Lands Act Section 5007:1; and Providing for a Severability Clause, Purpose and Repealer Section and Effective Date. D. Ascani asked if this would affect the 2025 budget. J. Smethers noted this has already been figured in the budget's Open Space and General Funds. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by S. Disidore to adopt Ordinance 2025-01. Vote: 5-0.

2. Increased Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Hours – J. Smethers indicated, (per Anthony) it will take about 3 days (4 hours each day) to drive the entire township and make a list with details and photos of all properties that have violations. Jen mentioned we only pay for Anthony when Matt is in the office with him. D. Ascani asked if were paying the same rate for Matt when Anthony is not in the office. Jen noted we pay the same rate, but Anthony's rate is a discounted rate. D. Ascani noted the township is doing the firm a favor having Anthony train Matt. He doesn't think we should be paying the same rate for Matt when Anthony is not there. The Board directed J. Smethers to set up a meeting with Anthony and someone in charge at Barry Isett's office. Dave asked how many hours the township is contracted with Barry Issett. Jen indicated 10-12 hours a week, but Anthony doesn't have extra time to go above that to make the list. He can work on compiling the list during his regular hours. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to dedicate the 12 hours to compile the list of property maintenance issues during his regular hours and get this done whenever he can. Vote: 5-0.

3. Consideration for Traffic Light Servicing and Changing Bulbs to LED - D. Ascani asked this be on the agenda to consider Hriczak Electrical Contracting LLC take over the servicing of the traffic light in Martins Creek. J. Smethers noted we do not have a contract with Telco. Telco and Hriczak Electrical Contracting LLC have provided information on their costs. Telco also recommends switching the existing lights to LED which should reduce the number of outages. Jen indicated over the past 25 years, the township spent an average of \$650.00 per year to Telco for outages. C. Cook suggested we replace them as they go out with LED. D. Ascani would like to find out how much the LED bulbs are and would like to get a price quote from Telco with labor included, total cost to replace. J. Mauser indicated it's not safe to have the lights malfunctioning at that intersection. The Board asked to have Telco give us their best solution and price to replace. Tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of Estimate from Hriczak Electrical Contracting LLC – This is the estimate to fix the lights that are out at Riverton. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by C. Cook to approve the estimate from Hriczak Electrical in the amount of \$4,673.11 for the Riverton Parking lot lights. Vote: 5-0.

2. Upgrading Martin Creek Streetlights to LED – Resolution 2025-04. This was tabled from the last meeting. The Street Light Services Agreement was approved at the December 16th BOS meeting. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to adopt Resolution 2025-04 - Upgrading the Martins Creek Streetlights to LED. Vote: 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS - J. Smethers noted she added one additional bill for the Teamster dues in the amount of \$227.00. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis second by D. Ascani to pay the bills in the amount of \$87,781.62. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

Board Members Reports

D. Ascani – D. Ascani discussed the street light assessment should be absorbed in the General Fund and stretched out across the Township. Dave noted everyone uses the streetlights when driving through. There are other services in the Township all residents don't get, such as leaf collection and road maintenance. This will be on the BOS February 3rd agenda.

C. Cook – No report

J. Mauser - No report

S. Disidore – No report

Township Manager Report - J. Smethers reported a Representative from Frontier contacted her regarding the Bead Program and possible fiber optics upgrade. There are about 150 addresses that are Frontier and eligible. Jen mentioned the employee's medical contributions keeps going up. They are being paid by the employee post-taxed. She would like to find out if the contribution can be pre-taxed, instead of post-tax. J. Smethers will reach out to PSATS for clarification.

Chairman's Report – M. DeBerardinis reported he found out about the oil tanks located at the Hoffman / Sipos property. They came from the Pallett Company and have been empty for a very long time. Michael indicated we need to order more salt and cinders tomorrow. Only damage from the storm was one peeled up curbing. Any complaints we receive about the roads should be directed to him.

PUBLIC COMMENT – J. Matthews commented he does not support the streetlights being absorbed into the General Fund and spread across the Township. His neighborhood had their streetlights turned off by petition because they didn't want them. J. Smethers asked Mr. Matthews if absorbed in the General Fund, would he want Gravel Hill turned back on, he said "no".

ADJOURNMENT - The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Mastrogiovanni, Township Secretary - Lower Mount Bethel Township