

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORKSHOP MINUTES MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025 @ 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER - The October 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, M. Hart, and M. Mastrogiovanni. There were approximately 6 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 6, 2025 Meeting. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by C. Cook to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Board of Supervisors to authorize and approve Resolution 2025-18 to amend previously approved R2025-14 to submit a grant application in the amount of \$75,000 to the Local Share Account (LSA) Monroe County Program for renovations at the Centerfield Building. Amendments include project scope to of exterior lighting safety improvements and grant amount of \$52,323.59. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to approve Resolution 2025-18. Vote: 5-0.

2. Board of Supervisors to authorize and approve Resolution 2025-19 to amend previously approved R2025-15 to submit a grant application in the amount of \$75,000 to the Local Share Account (LSA) Northampton County Program for renovations at the Centerfield Building. Amendments include project scope to of exterior lighting safety improvements and grant amount of \$52,323.59. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to approve Resolution 2025-19. Vote: 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2026 Rec. Board Budget - N. Palmeri, Rec. Board Chair. was present to discuss the Rec. Board Budget, permission for Holiday Bazaar – Sunday, 11/23 and events for 2026. Nicole indicated the dates for 2026 events are as follows: Spring Plant Sale & Farmers Market – May 16, 2026 9-1 p.m. at the Centerfield Building; 7th Annual Community Day – June 13, 2026 1-5 p.m. location to be determined – they would like to bring Community Day back to the village, maybe at Pacchioli Field; Fall Mum Sale & Farmers Market – September 13, 2026 9-1 p.m. at the Centerfield Building and the upcoming Tree Lighting is scheduled for December 6, 2025 from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at the Township Office. 2026 will be the same, the first Saturday in December. Nicole noted Megan had a good suggestion for a Holiday Bazaar and would like permission to have it November 23, 2025 from 10-2 p.m. at the Centerfield Building. They originally withdrew the request, but with a lot of interest from vendors the Rec. Board has decided to move forward. They will charge a \$15.00 table fee. The hot cocoa truck is not available for the tree lighting from Fidelity Bank, therefore they would like to have the Local Scoop come and provide cocoa and coffee for the events. The Residents will not be charged, but the Rec. Board would pay \$3.00 per cup out of their budget. The Fire Company will be giving out free hotdogs and soup same as last year. D. Ascani mentioned the price is a little high. Nicole indicated she negotiated the price from \$3.25 to \$3.00, they have money left in the budget to cover the costs.

Nicole indicated she is looking into having Pilates classes in the winter, but tabled for now. They are hoping to get more activities, such as a bounce house for Community Day from the Hotel Grant. S. Disidore asked about showing a movie in the gym. Nicole said they talked about that and will be discussing that further. D. Ascani asked about the profit of the mum sale, maybe they can look into getting a vendor to come next year. The Rec. Board will look into that. Nicole indicated they profited approximately \$540.00 and will order less next year, they were unsure how many to order since they sold out quickly last year. **MOTION** by S. Disidore, second by C. Cook to authorize the Recreation Board to have a Holiday Bazaar on Sunday, November 23, 2025 from 10-2 p.m. at the Centerfield Building. Vote: 5-0.

2. LMB Sandt's Eddy Fire Company - Water Rescue Equipment purchase update and Operation Budget Funding discussion. G. Russo, Chief reviewed with the Board the Water Rescue Equipment purchase update and request to move forward with the purchase of the Rock Proof Rescue Boat. The required deposit is \$2,500.00 and can be paid out of the fire tax money. Build time is approximately 11-12 months. They were awarded a grant for \$50,000 towards the boat. Total price is \$84,920.00 with the tandem axle trailer. The balance owed would be \$34,920.00 and annual payment for a 5 year loan would be approximately \$6,687.00 to be paid out of the fire tax. The longer they wait, the price increases. George explained the inflatable boat and rescue equipment are essential. Their current boat stalled 6 times during a water rescue. This investment is not only necessary for the protection of residents, but also vital to ensure responders can perform their duties safely. D. Ascani agreed this is a safety issue and would like to see the boat ordered asap. J. Mauser agreed. M. DeBerardinis asked George and Megan to look into maybe longer-term rates and get actual numbers together from Community Leasing and Fidelity Bank. Tabled to 11/3/25.

Fire Company Operation Budget Funding - George gave an overview regarding the Fire Company's operations, membership and financial challenges. Some key points mentioned: Active members 47, approximately 1% of the townships population volunteers to serve 100% of residents and business. Total households – Approximately 1,369 and 1,179 are occupied. Total businesses – approximately 60 with only 2 businesses in the township contributing annually. Annual letter drive – participation is fewer than 25% donated. Training and readiness – Members dedicate multiple hours each week to training and drills. The Fire Co. answers approximately 180-200 calls per year, averaging one call every other day with thousands of man-hours annually from volunteers. Financial Overview: Current fire tax revenue is directed towards equipment and apparatus purchases only; operational costs include fuel, insurance, utilities, training, gear, tooling, and building are not covered by township funding. Inflation continues to increase overall operation expenses while donations have remained relatively unchanged. George indicated they need to fundraise \$73,760.00 for 2026. Last year George paid for the yearly gear washing out of his pocket for the safety of his fire fighters. M. DeBerardinis noted he would like to see the Fire Co. not have to fund raise to stay afloat. George mentioned the Business Privilege Tax (Act 511). The BPT is a small percentage tax on gross receipts of businesses operating in the township. Only the portion of revenue earned withing Lower Mount Bethel Township is taxable. Non-profits and very small businesses can be exempted. 100% of the proceeds can be earmarked for fire and emergency services operations. Administration can be collected and managed by Keystone or Berkheimer. The business tax could not only help the Fire co. but could help the Township. Megan will reach out to the Solicitor or PSATS to see what kind of business or established business would pay the tax. George mentioned Talen and Ardent Mills already contribute (an agreement with PPL since 2012 includes \$20,000 to be paid to the Fire Company). Tabled to 11/3/25.

3. 2026 Budget – M. Hart Township Manager.

Annual Loan Obligations: Megan indicated the 2020 Freightline Pumper Truck is an adjustable rate and will be increasing from \$17,970.00 to \$20,506.00. The Board asked if she could look into a fixed rate. Megan reviewed with the Board 2026 draft proposed Budget changes to be in line with ytd expenses.

General Fund - Proposed changes for 2026:

310.801 – Prior year Fire Tax – this is an added line item

392.860 – Transfer from Capital Reserve - \$48,495.00 Road Dept. Capital Equip. (backhoe and plow truck).

355.081 – LS / Gaming Proceeds –\$234,065.00 increase to \$363,449.00MLSA for Reimbursement Cinder Shed - \$22,020, NLSA / MLSA Centerfield - \$52,323.59 no match, NLSA / MLSA Bandshell - \$75,000 no match, NLSA Rescue Boat \$60,000 and NLSA / MLSA Fire Co. Equip. \$176,126.

357.010 – County Gen. Gov. reimbursement May Day - \$9,100 and Hotel Grant - \$5,880.

400.105 – Salary of Elected Official increase from \$9,375.00 to \$12,500.00. S. Disidore asked to check accuracy, they are paid a set amount annually.

408.115 – Maintenance Salary (Rodney) – increase from \$11,900.00 to \$12,000 (\$1.00 hr. increase)

408.310 – Professional Engineering Services – increase from \$17,000 to \$26,000 (trail work) need to check numbers with J. Coyle to see if there are any projects for 2026.

409.363 – Electric Service Martins Creek – added line item for 2026 \$17,500.00.

409.600 – Capital Improvements Building – increase to \$52,324 (NLSA / MLSA Centerfield - \$52,323.59.)

411.155 – Fire Company Insurance – increase from \$10,500 to \$11,277.

411.541 – Fire Tax / truck payments – decrease from \$201,126 to \$152,800 (annual tanker \$136,464, Brush truck \$16,294.94).

411.820 – Capital Equip. purchase – increase from \$112,140 to \$245,226 (\$176,126 – 2 grant app).

413.313 – Code Enforce. / Prop. Maint. – increase from \$0 to \$20,800.00 this is adding 5 hours per week at \$80.00 per hour.

421.120 – Sewage Enforce. Wages – increase from \$400 to \$2,000.

430.112 – Road Dept. wages – decrease from \$205,464 to \$173,189.60 according to union contract.

D. Ascani asked how many hours and \$ will be transferred from Open Space to Gen. Fund for Road Dept. Park maintenance. M. Hart indicated approximately 228 hours = \$27,610.00 will be transferred in December. Dave asked if this includes maintenance of equipment. Megan will check the ordinance and with J. Zator. M. DeBerardinis thinks is just for the hours at the Meadows and Tekening trials, not maintenance of equipment.

438.700 – 2026 Plow Truck - \$29,008 – CR Road Dept. Cap. Equip.

451.370 – Recreation Facility repairs decrease from \$264,945 to \$110,880 – Bandshell MLSA - \$30,000 award, Bandshell - \$75,000 – NLSA & MLSA grants, Hotel Grant - \$5,880

492.300 – Transfer to Capital Reserve balance is \$20,310 Megan suggested maybe \$10,500 can go towards the bandshell. These funds will be allocated in February.

Public Comment by Catherine Buehler – Catherine asked why the Public Works diesel is so high and not closer to the actual amount spent. M. DeBerardinis indicated he likes to keep the higher amount in case of a bad winter.

J. Mauser mentioned interest earned with Open Space monies must be deposited in the Open Space account and cannot be used for general fund purposes.

J. Matthews asked M. Hart if she can provide interest paid on all loans.

Sanitation Fund

364.300 – Sanitation Assessments - Increase from \$473,273 to \$503,851 according to 2026 Sanitation contract in the amount of \$511,524 / 1.5 delinquency rate 1233 units at the rate of \$415.00 per unit. 427.310 - Professional Legal Services – increase to \$5000 for 2026 RFP. The process for the RFP should be started in February 2026. D. Ascani asked that we look into purchase of additional garbage and recycling cans for new residents. M. DeBerardinis mentioned this was a one-time deal, the cans were to stay with the home. We looked into this last year to see if we can get some additional cans, but we have to purchase a tractor trailer load and it was very costly to initially purchase the cans. This is something we can look into during contract negotiations.

Liquid Fuels

Our Motor Vehicle Tax payment went down from \$164,221.90 to \$158,171.48.

Open Space

492.010 - Transfer to General Fund - \$30,000 for Public Works Salary for maintenance at the Meadows and Tekening Trails.

Gravel Hill

Misc. Expense – Swanson to be paid balance due of \$1,175.00, PPL - \$153.59 for cameras.

J. Matthews commented the mounting is still there and wires are hanging out, he could lose his license for tapping into that. C. Cook indicated it's not wired, it's turned off. D. Ascani commented he appreciates his questions, however, doesn't like Swanson's credentials being challenged.

The recommended revisions will be made to the Final Draft Budget for the November 2nd BOS meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS – M. Hart had one addition R. Engler in the amount of \$740.00. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to pay the bills in the amount of \$28,302.57. Vote: 5-0.

REPORTS

J. Mauser – John presented a power point to the Board regarding updates. There were 3 fires recently, the new brush truck was used for all of them. Residents need to contact G. Russo for permission to burn. We might want to consider a Code Red alert to notify residents. It's also in the newsletter and website. River conditions are still low. The sign at the lower Meadows has been replaced. Over 60 holes were dug for plants at the Meadows, R. Budihas got a grant for \$2,500. M. DeBerardinis put in 120 stakes with a pounder, 2 stakes for each tree. John indicated the car show was a great success, he would like to sit down with G. Russo and write an article for the newsletter regarding volunteerism and donations. We need to use all our facilities and Boards, Committees and the Fire Company need to partner as one family all working together, we don't have a lot of money to get everything done, so we need to all work together.

No further reports.

PUBLIC COMMENT - No Public Comment.

ADJOURNMENT - The workshop meeting of the Board of Supervisors was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.