

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – OCTOBER 21, 2024 @ 7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER** - The October 21, 2024, 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, J. Smethers, and M. Mastrogiovanni. There were approximately 4 members of the audience present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - October 7, 2024 – **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by C. Cook to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR** - J. Matthews asked that the monthly expenditures be put in the minutes.

**SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING** – None.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Authorize Zoning Officer to File Citations/Complaints with the District Magistrate for 5651 Del Haven Rd. & 6825 Little Creek Rd.** **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Mauser to file both Citations / Complaints with the Magistrate for 5651 Del Haven Rd. and 6825 Little Creek Rd. D. Ascani mentioned there are other residents that are living in campers; there is one 3 or 4 houses down from 6825 Little Creek Rd. We will have the Zoning Officer check that one out. J. Smethers will have the Solicitor be involved and attend the hearings. S. Disidore mentioned this is a safety issue given the flood we had last summer. J. Mauser also mentioned this is a risk being it goes against FEMA / PEMA regulations. Vote: 5-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Election Day Traffic Control** – J. Smethers indicated the electronic signs are reserved for Election Day, the cost is about \$1,000. G. Russo Jr. suggested we put signage on both ends of the road and cones on the property; PennDOT will not allow cones in the road, we would be liable. We could also put a township vehicle on each end of the road. The electronic sign we would put a chain through the wheels (Dave suggested pintle locks). PennDOT's safety manual for placement of signs needs to be followed. We could put some additional signs that say slow ahead or Election traffic ahead - slow 5mph. If we pick up the sign, we will save an additional \$350.00. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to approve the rental of the electronic signs from United Rentals and the road crew will pick them up. Vote: 5-0.

**2. HB 1976 and HB 2045 (amending Title 53 - Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for multiple-unit dwelling zoning ordinances.** J. Smethers explained at the last meeting that these House Bills would override our Zoning Ordinance. S. Disidore asked we add to the letter at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, negative impact on agricultural operations. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by M. DeBerardinis to approve sending a letter to Rep. Ann Flood opposing HB 1976 & HB 2045. Vote: 5-0.

**3. Review Draft Budget for 2025** – J. Smethers reviewed the 2025 draft budget with the Board of Supervisors. General Fund: Jen reviewed the various grants that have been submitted. The revenue section includes \$1,552,227.00 in awarded and requested grants and \$109,276.00 from the Capital Reserve account (approximately 7% of the grant amount) when a match was required.

**409.610 Security Services** – Centerfield add cameras to exterior - \$3,852.00.

**406.320 Wireless Telephone** - Discussion on keeping the township cell phones – The Board decided we need to keep for legal reasons. D. Ascani suggested we check with the County if we can piggyback off them for cellular phones.

**491.430 MCOPCO Tax Appeal** - Money has been set aside; we are still waiting for the outcome of the Tax Appeal for the Talen Property.

**400.105 Salary of Elected Officials** - This increase is only for newly elected Supervisors or re-elected Supervisors.

**430.115 Seasonal PT Parks roads** - This is a new item and would be for a seasonal employee to mow the parks and help where needed. Pay is \$22.00 per hour for 12 weeks (\$10,560.00). A new revenue source is listed in the general fund to transfer from the Open Space EIT account (once the new ordinance is approved) would allow 25% to be used for parks maintenance and improvement. The amount budgeted is actually only about 12.5%.

**451.000 Recreation** - N. Palmeri, Rec. Board Chair. was present to review the budget with the BOS. Community Day - The bulk of the budget is spent on Community Day and will be combined with the Fire Company, May Day to be held on Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup>. Logistics needs to be worked out with the Fire Co. Spring Plant Sale will be held at Community Day. Farmers Market – Was very successful and mums were sold out in 45 minutes. Nicole would like to charge a nominal fee to vendors at the next Farmers Market. Movie Night – Nicole indicated it worked out very well at Riverton and is hoping to have more in the summer, then we should have a better turnout.

There was discussion about the fire department budget, the request was never settled whether or not the payment for the 2020 pumper would come from the fire tax or general fund. The budget proposed is for the \$15,444.00 be paid from the general fund and \$17,970.37 from the fire tax. The Fire Company is requesting an additional \$500.00 towards their insurance.

M. DeBerardinis asked G. Russo Jr. for a cost breakdown, service and testing for each piece of equipment. Mike mentioned if we don't get the grant for the brush truck, then we need money to buy it, it is in bad condition. J. Mauser suggested we could reopen the budget depending on what happens to the grants. G. Russo indicated Fire Company members are going for more training which helps with the ISO rating.

**Sanitation Fund** - J. Smethers indicated she never heard back from Waste Management if there would be any discount if we switch to automated recycling. The 2025 contract amount for the Sanitation Assessment will be \$482,508.00. Sanitation Assessment will need to be increased to \$390.00 per residential unit (2024 rate was \$375.00).

**Street Lights** – J. Smethers noted the street lights for 2025 will continue to cost the township to administer in the amount of approximately \$4,500 - \$5,000 per year. Jen reviewed three proposed budgets for streetlights. 1). No increase in the street light assessment and the township only recouping \$508.00 for staff time, 2). A 26% increase and the township would recoup all the costs, 3). Dissolution of the street light assessment. Liquid Fuels can be used for street light assessments after all streetlight funds are expended. Beyond 2025, any delinquent payments we receive from prior liens would be used first and then the balance could either come from liquid fuels or general fund. The estimate annual cost for PPL for Martins Creek for 2025 is \$16,928.00. D. Ascani asked that the Township look into replacement of the streetlights to LED, it would bring the costs way down. C. Cook will look into getting a good contact at the Electric Company to look into LED replacement for our streetlights.

S. Disidore noted using money from the Liquid Fuels fund takes money from Road Projects, if there's not enough money to cover the project, it would come out of the General Fund. The BOS will review all three options and decide at the next meeting.

Open Space Fund – J. Smethers noted we will have a balance of \$1,500,534.62 in the Open Space Fund with a projected income of \$40,000 in interest and \$245,000.00 from EIT for 2025. Jen indicated that \$30,000 would be transferred to general fund for parks. J. Mauser noted it's nice to have that cushion. John asked Jen to reach out to Maria Bentzoni to see if she has a map of what is preserved and still not preserved in the Township.

Liquid Fuels – J. Smethers indicated that since we did not have a road project in 2024, the balance in the fund is \$187,943.37. The township should receive \$164,795.85 in 2025 for a total balance in the fund of \$352,739.22.

The draft budget of expenses and revenue total \$3,180,153.00 for a balanced budget for 2025. At the next meeting on 11/4/24, the Board of Supervisors can authorize to advertise the budget, if they make a decision about the streetlights assessment.

**CORRESPONDENCE** - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

**APPROVAL OF THE BILLS - MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to pay the bills in the amount of \$16,361.12. Vote: 5-0.

## **REPORTS**

**Chairman's Report** – None.

### **Board Members Reports**

**J. Mauser** - J. Mauser showed pictures from the tree planting project at the Meadows. F. Heitzman dug the holes, and they had a lot of volunteers. The Fire Company was there to water the trees. Sixty-six trees were planted, this should help with stream improvements. John thanked the Road Crew and Fire Company for their help. J. Mauser indicated the car show was fantastic, they had 277 cars there and a big turnout. The Fire Company did a great job, and they are wonderful partners with us.

**D. Ascani** – None.

**C. Cook** – None.

**S. Disidore** – None.

**Township Manager Report** - J. Smethers reported she received an email from the Bell Tower requesting to use our Rec. Board sign that we purchase with grant funds for their events. The Bell has a lot of events, and the sign would get a lot of wear and tear. Also, the Road Crew would have to transport it back and forth. The BOS agreed it is not a good idea. J. Smethers can give them ideas for grants that they can apply to get a sign of their own.

**Road Department Report** - F. Heitzman reported they cut out the hole at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. to install the pipe, they completed the water swale mowing at the Hess property, brush trimming on certain roads and mowed high spots at Riverton. They did some patch work on some roads; Fred attended a training for Dirt & Gravel Roads and Mark attended sprayers training.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.

**ADJOURNMENT** – The workshop meeting of the Board of Supervisors was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

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