

approved

**LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES – MAY 4, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER - The May 4, 2026, Regular Monthly meeting of the Lower Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors was held at 6984 S. Delaware Drive, Martins Creek, Pennsylvania, 18063. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman J. Keifer at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were M. DeBerardinis, D. Ascani, R. Siegfried, J. Zator, Solicitor J. Coyle, Engineer, M. Hart and M. Mastrogiovanni. There were approximately 100 plus members of the audience present. J. Keifer announced there was an Executive Session held on 4/14/26 and 5/4/26 for Legal Matters.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - April 7, 2026. **MOTION** by D. Ascani, second by M. DeBerardinis to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 4-0.

SUBDIVISIONS / ZONING – None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. N. Palmeri - Rec. Board updates and request for approval to serve alcohol at Line Dancing event 5/9/26 and Community Day 6/13/26. Nicole indicated we have done this in the past. Tolino's has the licensing and insurance. All proceeds from the Line Dancing will go to the Fire Co. J. Keifer asked about liability serving alcohol. J. Zator indicated Tolino's can add the Township as an additional insurer. Nicole will make sure they do that. The plant sale and market is 5/16/26. Next year hopefully we can bring back the Easter Egg Hunt. Nicole would like to fundraise for an electric sign but would need to talk to Penn DOT.

MOTION by D. Ascani, second by M. DeBerardinis to approve the Rec. Board serving alcohol at the Line Dancing event on 5/9/26 and Community Day on 6/13/26 with the caveat that Tolino's add LMBT as an additional insurer. Vote: 4-0. J. Keifer mentioned he attended the Rec. Board meeting to discuss moving forward with a Community Service award. J. Keifer noted this award was given to his father a few years ago and was supposed to keep going. Nicole indicated this is a great idea, the residents can submit their nominations. Community Day is only a month away, but we can figure out guidelines and parameters for this award in the future.

2. Presentation Re: Zoning - P. McInerney, PC Chair. S. Newman, PC prior member. P. McInerney and S. Newman submitted a written outline of pertinent excerpts to protect LMBT P. McInerney gave the history of the Zoning Ordinance. The previous zoning ordinance was 40 years old, and the new ordinance was adopted in 2021 after working on it for 7 years, in 2014 the Township hired a consultant to finalize the ordinance. Questions were sent out to residents to see what they value the most; 75% of the residents indicated Agriculture and Open Space was most important. A lot of work went into the zoning ordinance to protect the township S. Newman discussed her outline and read the Governors Executive Order and reviewed the 2022 Comp. Plan and permanent zoning ordinance excerpts. The zoning remains intact, and resources are very valuable. J. Keifer thanked them for a very nice presentation.

3. J. Mauser Presentation regarding use of The Meadows – J. Mauser. John presented his power point on The Meadows property. This property was acquired with Grants and is a nice quiet place for birdwatching fishing and archery hunting. The Township must follow the stipulations and caveats in the grant and follow DCNR & Northampton County requirements included in the deed, we don't want to jeopardize future funding.

John mentioned farm preservation in LMBT not paying as much as other townships for farmland. In no way did they want to jeopardize the farmers when passing the CAPZO ordinance. The Open Space Committee is discussing with Ryan Shaw to see if we can make up the difference using EIT money to compensate the farmers. J. Kiefer would like to see more farmland preserved and help the farmers with the EIT money. J. Mauser asked he be considered for the open seat on the Open Space Committee.

John suggested the 250 tons of stone (lot 5) to be used to protect all parameters of the trails. J. Keifer mentioned \$490,000 EIT funds were used to purchase parks, not farmland. J. Keifer read the portion of the Open Space Plan that discusses preserving farmland. J. Keifer indicated there are a lot of safety issues and health hazards with 6 ft. high obnoxious weeds. He wants to make it look nicer and safer. There are good benefits to farming with crops, grass and hay, the manager was looking into it and were waiting for Northampton County to get back to us to see if we can farm at the Meadows. J. Mauser suggested we cut down the weeds 3-4 times per year and keep the control paths in place. D. Ascani said he would like to give back to the farmer by allowing them to farm there. Megan will forward John's presentation to the BOS. Public Comment by R. Angle – The previous Board passed the 9010 CAPZO, this was eminent domain to the farmers without the pay. It's not fair to the farmers, they are struggling to compete. R. Angle mentioned the Governor of Pa is in favor of Data Centers.

4. Consideration of amendment to the Teamsters Local 773 Union Contract to expand medical insurance opt-out reimbursement eligibility from coverage under a spouse's plan only to coverage under any other plan. **MOTION** by D. Ascani, second by M. DeBerardinis to approve the amendment to the Teamsters Local 773 Union Contract. No Public Comment. Vote: 4-0.

5. Consideration of reimbursement to LMB Sandt's Eddy Fire Company in the amount of \$5,121.10 for their Appreciation Dinner. J. Keifer brought this up at the last meeting, why would the Fire Company have to pay for their own appreciation dinner. This should be included as a line item in the budget to cover this annually. Dave asked where the money will come from to pay this. Megan indicated it can come out of the General Fund or transferred from another account. **MOTION** by D. Ascani, second by R. Siegfried to approve payment to the LMB Sandt's Eddy Appreciation Dinner in the amount of \$5,121.10. No Public Comment. Vote: 4-0.

6. Consideration of Penn DOT's Offer to Purchase right-of-way for transportation improvement impact to the agricultural conservation easement located on UPI# G10-1-14-0117. J. Keifer spoke to the owners about this ROW. This was to fix a culvert, Penn DOT needed a staging area, but believes it's Eminent Domain. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to table the matter to allow the manager to get more information. No Public Comment Vote: 4-0.

7. Consideration of establishing Friday office hours at the Welcome Center for staff from May 29th – Sept. 4th. It was discussed asking volunteers from EAC or Open Space to man the Welcome Center. J. Keifer indicated this upcoming year were facing busy times, having staff man the Welcome Center is not proper use of staff. The BOS did not approve the request.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion and possible action regarding Roadmaster position/designation, including consideration of a Board Liaison role. D. Ascani is the current Road Master appointed at the January Re-organization meeting.

MOTION by R. Siegfried to appoint M. DeBerardinis as Road Master. J. Zator was asked if M. DeBerardinis can vote for himself. J. Zator noted since it's an unpaid position, he can, but an hourly pay was set for a working supervisor. Second by M. DeBerardinis. J. Keifer recommended appointing a Road Department liaison instead, other townships do that. D. Ascani noted at the last meeting, the previous Supervisor Chair and other supervisors sitting on the Board at that time stated what that separation agreement was for, it was only relating to the Police Department. Public Comment by K. Brewer – Before you appoint a new Road Master, the previous one needs to resign or be removed. If you don't it's a moot point, and the current Road Master stays until the next Re-organization meeting. No further Public Comment. Vote: R. Siegfried - yes, J. Keifer - yes, M. DeBerardinis - yes. Motion passed.

2. Update regarding the MC OPCO LLC proposed revised settlement terms. D. Ascani reported M. Hart, M. Deberardinis and himself met with Talen. The original settlement proposal was that we pay MC OPCO \$300,000 over a period of 10 years with no interest (\$30,00 per her). They discussed if Talen is willing to take the \$300,000 payment and donate to the Fire company. We are waiting for them to get back to us.

3. Discussion and possible action regarding RFP – Farming at the Meadows. J. Keifer indicated we received 3 RFP's for the Meadows Farming. Jeffrey commented on the fact were not allowed to do something with our own property and are waiting for Sherry Acevedo to get back to us. Tabled to allow us to get a response from Sherry Acevedo, Northampton County.

4. Approval to list the 1998 Mack Tandem Axle Dump Truck on Municibid. We received an appraisal in the amount of \$4,000 - \$6,000. **MOTION** by M. DeBerardinis, second by J. Keifer to list the 1998 Mack Tandem Axle Dump Truck on Municibid with a reserve of \$3,500.00. Vote: 4-0.

5. Financial support for LMB / Sandt's Eddy Volunteer Fire Company. G. Russo read a letter of support from resident Susan Castelletti. George gave a presentation regarding Funding the Fire company options, background information and key data regarding the Fire Company's' operations, membership and financial challenges. George also provided the 2026 Operational Expenses. They received \$50,000 from Talen this year, and have received \$25,000 in the past, however they lost \$20,800 from the Fire tax for pay back for the MC OPCO settlement. The Fire Company are all volunteers and work countless hours. George mentioned the fire tax is only for purchase of equipment and apparatus, they are still receiving the same funding from the Township since 1996. In 2017 they started major fundraising, however their bills have doubled since 2021. In 2018 they put together a 25-year plan. George Russo Sr. mentioned they deserve what they proposed, they can't do any more fundraising. Fire Companies are closing thru out the State for Financial reasons. The Solution: 2027 1 mil Fire Tax increase (equates to approximately \$2.00 per household) and the Township help with operational costs. They need all support to move forward. D. Ascani mentioned if we don't have our volunteer Fire company and had to pay for Fire Services, it would be more than our budget. This will be on the agenda every month going forward for updates.

Correspondence - All Correspondence is located in the Township office.

Approval of the Bills MOTION by M. DeBerardinis, second by R. Siegfried to pay the bills in the amount of 142,258.60. No Public Comment. Vote: 4-0.

Reports

Township Solicitor Report – J. Zator submitted his written report, no further comments.

Township Engineer Report – J. Coyle reported the Martins Creek Belvidere Hwy Trail Reconstruction project is complete. Request for final payment will be forthcoming. Justin noted the drainage culvert on Martins Creek Belvidere Hwy at the Kiefer and Hess Farm was in the process of being replaced, Megan will reach out to Penn DOT for a status on the project.

Chairman's Report – C. Cook was absent.

Board Members Reports

M. DeBerardinis – Mike reported they are looking to meet with a Data Center Consultant to see what protection we have either adopting an ordinance or other means.

D. Ascani – Dave asked J. Zator for a detailed report and if it can be available to the public to see where tax payers money is going. J. Zator indicated his report is Attorney Client privilege and confidential just for the Board of Supervisors and staff.

R. Siegfried – No report.

J. Keifer – Jeffrey asked who can specifically talk to the Solicitor via email or phone calls. Is there a procedure for Supervisors contacting the Solicitor, or just the Manager or Chairman. J. Keifer discussed looking into one school district (Bangor) instead of Bangor and Easton. D. Ascani suggested we look into how many kids from the Township go to Easton School District. Megan will get some information. J. Keifer discussed the letter we received from K. McEwen. The McEwen's preserved 30+ acres on Ott Dr. price per acre was \$6,690.00. At the same time, Washington Township paid \$7,720.00 per acre. When checking with Northampton County, they indicated the appraisal was lower per acre due to LMBT 90/10 zoning. The McEwen's are asking the Township to consider supplemental funding from the EIT money. Brian Shaw is working with the Open Space Committee on this matter. J. Keifer asked the manager to follow up. J. Keifer asked if we can look into broadcasting / live streaming meetings on you tube so there is more transparency with residents.

Township Manager Report – M. Hart reported staff has been doing the usual daily operations. The Sojourn event is scheduled for June 19th at Riverton.

Asst. Manager / Secretary Report – M. Mastrogiovanni reported the newsletter went out, she's been working with the intern and working with the Rec. Board on upcoming events.

Zoning Officer Report – Written report submitted.

Road Department Report – No report.

Courtesy of the Floor/Public Comment

1. Bob Baggitt – 10087 Richmond Rd. Mr. Baggitt commented he has lived here for 30 years, he has property preserved. He is not in favor of the Data Center. If the Fire Company needs additional funds, the Township should give it to them. Changing Zoning for this projects will open a can of worms and life will change here forever.

2. Marge Holmes – 1006 Klause Rd. Ms. Holmes was upset with the Developers presentation. She has lived here for 44 years, she chose here to live because it's Agricultural. If this project goes in, it will change the environment forever. Ms. Holmes indicated the Township can raise her taxes, so she still has a choice. She was not aware how defunded the Fire company has been.

3. Matt Hackenburg – 10210 Gravel Hill Rd. Mr. Hackenburg submitted to the BOS an article from the 102 Beacan IBEW Local 102 and read the statement in the article regarding Chris Cook who is a member of this union, that he's in favor of the Data Center.

4. K. Brewer – Mr. Brewer indicated he has lived in the township for 76 years. All the grants for the Meadows ultimately came from taxpayers.

5. H. Klein – Mr. Klein noted his concern with spreading sludge at the Meadows. He noted all large business should be giving to the Fire Company and suggested the Manager and two Supervisors meet with these large companies. Mr. Klein asked for the name of the Data Center Consultant. Megan will send that to him.

- G. Russo explained Conagra in the past paid for all their air packs and then they stopped. Adelphia for the first time in a while gave them \$5,000.

- R. Angle – Mr. Angle commented Conagra's not in great shape right now. The Township needs to address the farmland preservation; farmers are suffering right now. The 90/10 was eminent domain and took farmers land, people have rights.

ADJOURNMENT – MOTION by M. DeBerardinis, second by D. Ascani to adjourn the Public Meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

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