

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

August 12, 2025

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport, Pa. 18088. Chairman Mike Jones called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Janet Sheats
Jerry Pritchard
David Hess
Mike Jones
Cindy Miller
Alice Rehrig
Attorney David Backenstoe
Mike Muffley
John Henry
Frank Zamadics

II. POLICE DEPARTMENT PROMOTION

- A. Sergeant. It is the recommendation by Sergeant John Henry that Officer Jonathan Roth be promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He has completed and passed the promotional process which includes a written test, two interviews, and an in depth scenario. He has been with the Department since 2005 and became the K9 officer in 2019. He is the coordinator of the DUI program and a crash reconstructionist. Most importantly, he has shown strong leadership throughout his entire career. Janet Sheats made a motion to promote Officer Jonathan Roth to the position of Sergeant subject to a one year probationary period. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard, Janet Sheats, Mike Jones, and David Hess voted aye. Cindy Miller was opposed. Motion carried. Jon Roth's wife Alexis and daughter Sophia presented him with his badge.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. July 22, 2025. David Hess made a motion to approve these minutes. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- A. General Fund Checks 28892 to 28952. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve these bills. David Hess seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard questioned if the payment to Pine Run is the final payment and if everything is complete. Alice Rehrig

commented it was the final payment. Cindy Miller questioned Check 28906 for the memorial bench was being reimbursed by the family. Alice Rehrig commented it was and she has already received the payment. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. State Fund Check 1628. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve this check. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

V. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Extension of Time

1. Top of the Mountain Estates. Brian Gasda was present to represent this plan. The Developer has granted the Board an extension of time until October 30, 2025. They were before the Planning Commission at their meeting last evening; however, they did not receive a favorable recommendation. They plan on presenting the plan to the Board of Supervisors at their September 9th meeting. They need the additional time to have the Board of Supervisors review the plan and work out the technical details with Hanover Engineering. Cindy Miller made a motion to accept the extension of time until October 30, 2025. David Hess seconded the motion. Mike Jones questioned if the extension was needed until the end of October if the plan is coming before the Board on September 9th. Attorney Backenstoe commented it makes sense to give the extra time in the event one review by the Board of Supervisors is not enough.

- B. Engineer's Report. Mike Muffley reported the only plan on the Planning Commission agenda was Top of the Mountain Estates. Jerry Pritchard questioned why this was back before the Planning Commission. Mike Muffley commented the plan was reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission approximately 15 years ago by one developer and it was just recently purchased and recorded by a different developer. As they started construction, the Developer did a cost benefit analysis and realized that the cost of the cul-de-sac street that was supposed to be built would be more costly to him than if he were to eliminate two lots and remove the need for the cul-de-sac so he submitted the revised plan which is before the Planning Commission.

VI. DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT

- A. Recreation Report. Sandy Hopkins reported the Santa and the choir have been confirmed. The entertainment is almost confirmed. It will be a balloon sculptor and possibly a local magician. Todd Merkel from Palmerton has offered to decorate the large tree. She did ask him about extra stands for the small trees, he thought they would run about \$19 a piece, but was not aware of any extra tree stands. Mike Jones commented he saw the stands with Mr. Merkel. There are about 50 that are available. The Rec Board raised concerns about doing the small trees because they are starting from scratch and will need to solicit the trees and get the stands. There would also be

a lot of work being put on the Road Department because of getting all the power run to the trees. The Rec Board also felt the Township tree lighting was different than others because they are providing free entertainment, food and try to direct it towards the children. They didn't feel they were obligated to add the additional trees.

She has been struggling to get someone to come and look at the snack stand window in Berlinsville. Finally, she has been able to get Walnutport Door to come out and meet her on Thursday. It was also reported to her that there was a problem with the garage door. Frank Zamadics commented he was aware of a problem with the garage door on the track side of the building and the guys did work on that door.

There was no objection to additional gates for the ballfields by the Rec Board, but they have not been provided the cost for the gates. The team coaches for Berlinsville were highly objecting to adding a gate along first base, feeling it would interfere with their game. They felt if an additional gate was needed, it could go in the outfield. Mike Jones commented the cost of the gates has increased by \$3,700 since it was originally brought up. He will provide the revised quotes for the fencing. With the additional price increase, additional quotes should be obtained. Sandy Hopkins questioned why the pricing has not been given to the Rec Board. Alice Rehrig commented she has incorporated the fencing into the Capital Improvements Plan and that will be coming before the Rec Board at their next meeting.

Janet Sheats commented the Board had asked to meet with the Rec Board and was questioning if that could happen at the next meeting. Sandy Hopkins commented there is a Rec Board member who is not available on Tuesdays. The Supervisors agreed they will attend the September 15th meeting of the Rec Board. Kim McGonigle questioned why the Board was meeting with the Rec Board. Mike Jones commented there was an issue that took place at their last meeting and the Board wanted to discuss it with them.

- B. Public Works Report. Frank Zamadics reported they are almost done installing the Hometown Hero banners from the first three orders. He estimates they installed about 300 banners and also is aware that there is a fourth order in process.

The Department has been working on the repairs to the roads in preparation for the oil and chip project. They are hoping they will be able to get it completed during this season.

Janet Sheats wanted to thank the Road Department for their help with getting ready for National Night Out.

David Hess questioned if Frank Zamadics had an opportunity to look at the step on the playset. Frank Zamadics commented he did. They can try to do a repair, but he doesn't know that it will be a permanent fix.

Cindy Miller commented she has been spending a lot of time at Delps Park. The dogs are supposed to be kept on a leash at all times. She has been hearing horror stories of small dogs being attacked and needing stitches. There is no reason for dogs to be off leash when walking the tracks. If people want to let their dogs run, then they should be using the dog park. Also, there are dog waste bags and receptacles placed throughout the park, but yet people are not cleaning up after their dogs, or when they do, they are leaving the bags lay along the track or the road where you come into the park. The Public Works Department is not there to clean up after everyone.

Paul Nikisher commented there is quite a dip developing on Long Lane between Third and Fourth Street as you approach Blue Mountain Drive. Frank Zamadics commented he will check the area. There is a pipe that was replaced and the trench may have settled.

Mike Jones commented he will also have the pricing for a shelter at the Dog Park for the next meeting. It was suggested doing one larger structure that would straddle the fence rather than two smaller ones because the total cost would be less. He will also have pricing for installing white metal under the pavilions at Indiantrail Park.

John Knobloch wanted to thank the Road Department for the installation of the Hometown Heros. He appreciates seeing the banners for his father and son.

- C. Zoning Report. Alice Rehrig reported in July, there were 22 new zoning permits received and 36 were issued. There was an application received for a variance for an undersized home which will be going before the Zoning Hearing Board in August. The applicant has approximately 950 square feet of living area rather than the required 1,000 square feet. In July, the Zoning Hearing Board heard a special exception for a home occupation which was granted with conditions.

Cindy Miller questioned where things were at with the hiring of a zoning officer. Alice Rehrig commented the individual with experience turned down the offer of employment. Cindy Miller commented she feels we need to expand our method of advertising because we need to get experienced candidates so the position can be filled. We can use Indeed or other on-line methods, PSATS, or other means to broaden the area so we can find experienced candidates. She would only want to train someone as a last resort. We cannot keep operating without a zoning officer and expecting everyone in the office to have double the amount of work. They won't

be able to keep doing that and we don't want a snowball effect of people leaving the Township. She's not sure what we are doing right now. Alice Rehrig commented Hanover Engineering has been helping with the zoning and she will be meeting with Keycodes on Thursday regarding their pricing for next year. She can also see what they may be able to offer. The area we are short on is the BCO and we can't keep utilizing Liz Amato. Cindy Miller commented if we keep subbing out the zoning, it is going to get expensive.

Keith Hantz questioned who is doing the zoning right now. Alice Rehrig commented it is Scott Brown from Hanover Engineering. Mike Muffley commented someone from Hanover Engineering will cover the zoning if Scott Brown is unavailable.

Kristin Soldridge suggested reaching out to the local Vo-Tech School for someone in the construction field. They may be able to assist with something that Hanover Engineering or Liz Amato does and do something similar to an internship or apprenticeship. They could learn the job in the process. Keith Hantz commented if you are going to have to train someone, why not look at the applications you already received. Janet Sheats commented she would be open to all of these ideas.

Jerry Pritchard questioned when things will be wrapping up with the Ad hoc committee. Cindy Miller commented they won't be complete until the Board approves the new ordinance. It will probably be several months yet. Mike Muffley commented the consultant is working on the last round of revisions which will go back to the committee this month, then the entire process of adopting the ordinance will have to take place.

- D. Police Report. Sergeant Henry reported in July, there were 486 calls for service, 12 reportable accidents, 7 non reportable accidents, 18 summary violations issued, 7 equipment report orders issued, and 8 people processed through the Booking Center. There were also 15 criminal arrests made.

The hiring process for a patrol officer closed on July 25. They received seven application and will be conducting interviews with all seven individuals.

The Department has been working with Keystone Technology and the 911 Center to transfer and install the new computers in the cars. It takes about four or five days for everything to be completed so they are trying to do two computers at a time.

They are hoping to hear the results of the COPS grant by the end of October.

He believes National Night Out was a success and would like to thank everyone who helped out with the event and came out to support the event. Everything seemed to go well.

Cindy Miller requested if the individuals who are processed through the Booking Center could be broken apart as to who is from the Township and who is outside the Township. John Henry commented they could do that. Most of the individuals who are from outside the Township are by order of the court and their municipality would be listed on the order.

Linda Roman commented that there are tri-axle trucks traveling on Route 145 that are not securing their loads. There was an incident where a rock fell off a truck on July 31. There was an individual walking around Route 145 who could have been hit by the rock. There was a report made to the Police Department. Was this ever followed up on? Sergeant Henry commented he will have to look at the report to see what happened with the incident and follow up with the individual who filed the complaint.

1. Letter of Resignation. A letter of resignation was received from Scott Fogel resigning his position as Police Chief effective August 1, 2025. Janet Sheats made a motion to accept the resignation and separation agreement of Scott Fogel. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Paul Nikisher questioned why he resigned. Mike Jones commented this is a personnel matter and it cannot be discussed. Paul Nikisher commented there was a settlement of \$1.75 million which would appear as though there was some type of admission of guilt. Jerry Pritchard commented the settlement was recommended by our insurance company because they didn't want to take the risk of the costs going higher. This matter is over. Paul Nikisher questioned if there was something put in place to prevent something like this happening in the future. Mike Jones commented a consultant was hired to review everything and make recommendations. Janet Sheats commented this is an ongoing process. She is also hoping that the public will be supportive of John Henry and the rest of the department so they can keep moving forward and not keep going backwards. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Keith Hantz questioned what the next step will be now that the Chief has resigned. John Henry commented per the Department Policy, in the event of the absence of the Chief, he, as the highest ranking senior officer becomes the officer in charge and will remain in that position until the Chief is replaced. He would take on all the duties of the Chief while being the officer in charge.

Tom O'Donnell questioned if the Sergeant will be receiving Chief's pay because he should be. Mike Jones commented that is something that the Board needs to

address. Alice Rehrig commented the current contract does not address this, but it will be addressed in the new contract. Tom O'Donnell commented something should be done because if he is stepping in as Chief, he should be paid as Chief. This is something that should be implemented now. The Board commented they understand and plan on being fair to Sergeant Henry.

- E. Fire Company Report. Brian Krische reported they have cleared all their fire suppression equipment from the fire on Cherryville Road. They are still monitoring the site, but are expecting that the Fire Commissioner will be making a determination that the fire is out shortly.

The next fundraiser for the Fire Company will be on October 4 which will be an Oktober Fest raffle. Janet Sheats also noted the Fire Company is going to be having a yard sale on August 30.

Mike Jones questioned if there is any updates on the delivery of the ladder truck. Brian Krische commented they are looking at a February/March delivery date. Scott Uhnak commented the chassis has been completed and the body is partially constructed in raw metal.

VII. OLD BUSINESS. There was no old business.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Manager's Report. Senator Miller is planning on doing a coffee with the Senator Event on Saturday, September 20th, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Municipal Building. He would like the elected officials to attend if possible.

The fourth payment reimbursement on the Maintenance Building has been received. The loan for the building is now paid off. The final audit still needs to be completed.

Alice Rehrig reported that she will need to do an RFP for a Pension Firm. Truist Bank who has been doing the investing for the police pension fund is getting out of this service. They have provided information on a new company; however, the requirements of Act 600 and updated acts relating to the pension require an RFP to be done. She has received a sample RFP from our Actuary and questioned if the Board wanted to review it or if she should get it advertised so she can get the proposals back since she only has a 60 day window. The Board asked that the RFP be emailed to them and if there are any questions, they can let her know.

1. Police Contract Settlement Agreement. Cindy Miller requested a brief Executive Session to clarify some items. Upon returning from the Executive Session, Cindy Miller made a motion to accept the Police Contract Settlement Agreement dated

July 29, 2025, for the years 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried. Janet Sheats commented with hard work done by Alice Rehrig, Jerry Pritchard, the Police Association and herself, she believes this is a good step in moving forward.

2. 2026 Capital Improvements Plan and Budget. Cindy Miller requested that Sergeant Henry and Frank Zamadics be included in giving input in the budget and capital improvements plans, especially since we are looking at a three to five year budget. With everything going on in local government right now, we need to look at the impact things will have for the future. What will the future staffing needs be? How does the contract that was signed affect the budget? We are looking at the possibility of an open space tax. There are a lot of things that need to be taken into consideration and wants people to be totally aware of things as we move forward. Personally, she believes we will be looking at a general fund increase. She doesn't know how we will be able to get away without an increase. It's been 10 years and she doesn't see how we can continue to do that and look at hiring staff and repairing roads. She doesn't see any way around it.
 - B. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe updated the Board with regards to the Lehigh Valley Resort and Spa. The Township had previously entered into a multifaceted agreement with the developer which included the transfer of land from the Township to the Municipal Authority so their plant could be expanded. They are now ready to move forward with this transfer and the deed has been prepared. He sees no reason that the deed cannot be signed and transferred at this time since the subdivision plan has been recorded. Jerry Pritchard commented he believes there are also items coming back to the Township. Attorney Backenstoe commented that there will be items as outlined in the agreement. His understanding is that they are ready to move with a good portion of their project.
- IX. PUBLIC COMMENT. A resident commented that she believes when the individuals ask questions about what is in documents, the Board could have simply left them know they had the right to file a right to know request. That would let them know they have a way to obtain the information they are looking for and that the information is not being withheld .

Stan Reuben, a resident of Mulberry Drive, commented there have been issues that started in 2021 and has become more serious in 2022. He has witnessed dozens of instances where his family was almost run over by speeding vehicles. He has filed seven complaints about the speeding. The speed limit on the road was reduced last year, but there are no signs. He has also been told by the police they are short staffed, they can't use radar, they must see the speeding and that it is not posted so their hands are tied. He

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argued with them that it doesn't need to be posted because it is in a residential neighborhood. He is looking for answers so this can be taken care of. The Police did put up a speed checker which seemed to be working and helped slow down traffic, but now it is not working. The speed limit signs need to be installed to slow down the traffic. He has considered taking matters into his own hands. People also do not stop at the stop sign at Steven Lane and Long Lane Road. Because he is trying to protect his family, he is not liked by the neighborhood. John Henry commented the data that was collected from the sign indicate that the average speed is 28.1 miles per hour. There was a high speed around 45 miles per hour. The Board agreed the signs should have been installed when they passed the ordinance and need to be installed as soon as they can. Frank Zamadics commented he should be able to get the signs up in about two weeks. He needs to get the material and place a One Call for the installation.

Monica Brown questioned if there were going to be canopies installed at the dog park. Mike Jones commented he is in the process of obtaining pricing for two 12' X 12' pavilions and then it was brought to his attention that a larger 12' X 20' pavilion that straddles the middle fence would be a more effective structure since it would require less material. Monica Brown commented there have also been discussion about adding pavers to the entrance of the dog park to prevent it from getting muddy. She feels both of these items need to work together. Frank Zamadics commented he thinks if the canopy is installed over the first set of benches, it will help with the issue at the entrance because it will help with keeping the mud down because people will not be gathering at the entrance.

Paul Nikisher questioned if a video could be taken of the speeding vehicles on Mulberry and taken to the police department. Attorney Backenstoe commented it may be helpful to identify a vehicle, but it would not be able to be used in court.

Paul Nikisher also wanted to thank everyone who helped put National Night Out together. People don't realize all the work that goes into an event like this.

Paul Nikisher also noted that the weeds on the old Seidel property are getting tall, perhaps someone could reach out to Mr. Jaindl to have them cut.

Stan Reuben commented there is a lot of rubbish along Route 145 near Beckers trailer court. The Board commented a complaint would need to be filed with the State since it is a state road.

Marc Kerscmar questioned what the normal process is to get signs installed and is there a system of checks and balances. Janet Sheats commented this is something that the Board

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needs to look into. Cindy Miller commented it is not something that the Board should have to be checking on. They should be able to pass the ordinance and then have the employees take care of it.

- X. ADJOURN. Cindy Miller made a motion to adjourn. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.