

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

July 22, 2025

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their second monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 22, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport, Pa. 18088. Vice Chairman Jerry Pritchard called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Janet Sheats
Jerry Pritchard
David Hess
Mike Jones (via telephone)
Cindy Miller
Alice Rehrig
Attorney David Backenstoe

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. July 8, 2025. David Hess made a motion to approve these minutes. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. David Hess, Jerry Pritchard, Janet Sheats, and Jerry Pritchard voted aye. Cindy Miller abstained since she was not at the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- A. General Fund Checks 28851 to 28891. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve these bills. David Hess seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard questioned the bill to Campbell Durrant, as it was a rather high bill. Alice Rehrig commented it was for labor attorney services. Cindy Miller questioned Check 28868 to EM Kutz for the new truck. The bill is \$94,696, but there was only \$85,000 budgeted. Alice Rehrig commented this is the body of the truck that was ordered last year. It was recorded as a payable through the 2024 budget. The total cost of the truck was in line with the capital improvements plan and slightly under the 2024 budgeted amount. Paul Nikisher questioned what the bill to Campbell Durrant was. Cindy Miller commented it was labor related and the details cannot be discussed. If there is an employee issue, they need to consult with a labor attorney. The charges are pretty much out of the Board's control. Jerry Pritchard commented we can try to control things in the future. Linda Roman questioned if there will be a time when the public will be able to look at it. Attorney Backenstoe commented that when something is related to personnel matters, it is not available to the public. Personnel matters are private and cannot be discussed unless the individual involved agrees. Personnel matters are exempt under the Right to Know Law. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. State Fund Checks 1625 to 1627. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these bills. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Extension of Time

1. Top of the Mountain Estates. The developer provided the Board with an extension of time until October 31, 2025. No one was present to represent this plan. Mike Jones commented the Board's position has always been that someone needed to be present for the discussion. Alice Rehrig noted this plan received conditional approval at the Planning Commission meeting. If an extension is not accepted, then the plan will need to be denied. Cindy Miller noted a good explanation would be needed for the denial. Janet Sheats commented she would be willing to go to the end of August, but they need to be present at the next meeting. Janet Sheats made a motion to accept an extension of time until August 31, 2025, and a representative must be present at the next meeting to represent the plan. David Hess seconded the motion. Cindy Miller commented this plan is part of the major subdivision on Quince Road. They are making changes to the plan, so it needed to be resubmitted to planning because of these changes. Tom Szoke questioned if this will give them enough time to complete the plan by October 31. Cindy Miller commented that they need to come in and get the proper extension approved so that they can complete everything and move forward. All voted aye. Motion carried.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. County Repository Properties. Cindy Miller commented when a property is placed into the repository, the adjacent property owners are not notified. If the Board wants the neighbors to be notified, she is willing to do it. Mike Jones commented he doesn't mind if she does it but does not believe that as a Township we should be involved. Cindy Miller commented she is willing to try to follow what is going on and let the neighboring property owners know what is going on. She feels bad and doesn't agree that the adjoining property owners are not made aware of these properties and they don't have the opportunity to purchase them if they want to. The parcels are generally small and don't make sense to be sold to individuals from out of the area who really don't know what they are buying. Attorney Backenstoe commented the County has an obligation to notify the Township when they are selling a property. There usually is adequate time before the property is sold. If the Township wants to acknowledge the offer and ask them for 30 days to consider the offer, the adjacent property owners can be notified during that time and let them know they have the opportunity to bid on the property. The Board had no objection to Cindy Miller contacting adjoining property owners as an individual.

Tom Szoke questioned if the adjacent property owners are notified if there is a tax sale. Attorney Backenstoe commented they are not. There are no requirements for the adjoining properties to be notified. By the time a property goes into the

repository, it is even beyond a tax sale. It is in the repository because no one wanted to purchase it at any of the previous sales, and it just sits there until someone makes an offer. Generally, these properties are not the most desirable pieces of property. They are usually small lots or parcels, such as a detention basin, left over from an older subdivision.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Manager's Report. Alice Rehrig did not have anything specific to report other than the items in the Executive Session.

Cindy Miller commented it is noted in the Manager's report that the Capital Improvements Plan was going to be given to the Board for the August 12 meeting and the Budget was going to be given at the August 26 meeting. Since the Board is reviewing a three year budget, she wants the budget submitted at the August 12 meeting. This will still only give them three months to review the entire budget. Jerry Pritchard commented he doesn't object to seeing a three year budget, but doesn't want anything locked in. Cindy Miller commented the Board will still need to review it each year.

- B. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe requested a brief executive session regarding identifiable litigation. Upon returning from the executive session, Attorney Backenstoe announced that there has been a dispute with Pine Run, the company who installed the new fueling system. They have a claim, and he discussed the options with the Board.

- VII. PUBLIC COMMENT. David Hess commented he wasn't at the last Recreation meeting, but he received calls about the inappropriate language that was used during the meeting by a board member. Attorney Backenstoe commented you have a board that is representing the Township and inappropriate language is not proper for someone who is representing the Township. He thinks the Board should notify the individual that inappropriate language will not be tolerated. There is a section in the Second Class Township Code that addresses removing a member for neglecting or dereliction of duty. He believes profane language could be categorized as dereliction of duty. Mike Jones commented he had asked an individual to attend the meeting to answer questions about what Palmerton does with the small Christmas trees and they were blown away by the way the Rec Board was acting and how the meeting was conducted. Cindy Miller questioned if the person was called out by the Board and told to stop. Janet Sheats commented they were not. The Chairperson didn't say anything. Cindy Miller questioned why the Rec Board allows that type of behavior to go on. Jerry Pritchard commented he has seen Mike Jones sit at the Supervisors meetings and tell people to stop. The Rec Board Chairman didn't call it out. Cindy Miller commented any of the board members should have been telling the individual to stop. Mike Jones agreed; any

of the members could have called it out, but ultimately it does fall on the Chairman. Jerry Pritchard commented there also was an individual in the audience who tends to strike a nerve. It's not an excuse, but it does happen. He will give Linda Roman credit. She commented to everyone that they should be careful what they say. Linda Roman commented she was talking to all of them when she said they need to remember that there are other individuals in the room when they are speaking. Janet Sheats commented as representatives of the Township, they should be responsible, and the Supervisors shouldn't have to hold their hands to make them accountable. Mike Jones commented the individual felt as they were pushing him off because the Rec Board didn't want to deal with him. Monica Brown commented the meeting was out of control. Members of the audience were going back and forth with each other. They should have been gavelled. They should have been talking to the Board about what was on the agenda and that should have been the discussion. The rhetoric went back and forth for at least 15 or 20 minutes. Janet Sheats commented she believes they need to speak with both the individual and the Chairman. The Chairman needs to take control of the meeting. Monica Brown commented they need to address the Board as what is on the agenda and if they go back and forth, gavel them and that it that. Cindy Miller commented if individuals are acting like that during a meeting, they should be asked to leave. Mike Jones commented this should be discussed at the next meeting when the Rec Board is on the agenda. Janet Sheats questioned whether this could be discussed in Executive Session since it may be considered personnel. Cindy Miller commented it wouldn't be personnel since it is an appointed Board. Janet Sheats requested that all the Rec Board members be present at the next meeting so this can be addressed. Mike Jones commented he agreed. They don't necessarily need to agree on everything, but they need to be civil and conduct themselves appropriately.

Zack Szoke wanted to thank the Board for moving the land preservation to the ballot. He also noted the article for the newsletter has been in limbo along with the number of meetings that the Board would want to see in the future. He would like to collaborate with the Board. Jerry Pritchard commented thinks the main goal was to decide if the Board was going to move forward with going to the ballot, which they did. Now, it is the public's vote to decide if they want it as law. Jerry Pritchard questioned when the Board for governing the preservation program would be put together. Attorney Backenstoe commented at some point, he will be presenting the Supervisors with an ordinance which will need to be adopted for this to go on the ballot. If it passes on the ballot, then another ordinance will need to be adopted approving the tax and then at that point a committee will need to be formed. Zach Szoke commented he is looking to continue with getting something in the newsletter as well as holding public informational meetings. Jerry Pritchard commented he believes that the Board needs to remain neutral. Mike Jones commented there was discussion about getting the information into the newsletter and also including a date for a town hall meeting in the newsletter. Zack Szoke commented he and Mike Hock, as citizens, can do their own newsletter and meetings as citizens, but

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they also want to work with the Board of Supervisors on getting the information out to the residents. Cindy Miller questioned if the Board is going to be putting something in the newsletters about the open space. Jerry Pritchard commented the Board agreed to take his information and our information and create something for the newsletter. Mike Jones commented it was just going to be listing the facts. Cindy Miller commented she has more information to add. Zach Szoke commented he would like to see all the information before he agrees to what is going in the newsletter. She has read all four laws pertaining to this and there are a lot of facts that need to be made known. The sources of any statistics need to be cited in the newsletter. Zack Szoke commented he has all the sources and is willing to do whatever needs to be done. Janet Sheats commented if we can put all the information together and collaborate on this, it would be best.

Janet Sheats commented National Night Out will be taking place on August 5th at Indiantrail Park from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Paul Nikisher commented he likes when people volunteer and noted the Fire Company's annual fund drive is taking place and hopes people will support them.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining and personnel matters. No action was taken.

IX. ADJOURN. Janet Sheats made a motion to adjourn. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.