

## LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

May 27, 2025

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their second monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 27, 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: Cindy Miller  
Janet Sheats  
Jerry Pritchard  
David Hess  
Mike Jones  
Alice Rehrig  
Attorney David Backenstoe

The Chairman announced the Board met in Executive Session prior to the meeting to discuss personnel. No action was taken.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. May 13, 2025. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve these minutes. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Cindy Miller noted the following corrections to the minutes: Page 1, should be Bob Eyer, not Bob Ayer; Page 5, second paragraph, it should state that Janet Sheats was the only one who read the proposal; Page 6, “per mile should be added to the discussion regarding the cost of the roads; Page 7, last paragraph it should be added that Janet Sheats was told it was a female on the Board and it wasn’t her. David Hess, Janet Sheats, Jerry Pritchard, and Cindy Miller voted aye to approve the minutes with the noted corrections. Mike Jones abstained since he was not in attendance at that meeting. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- A. General Fund Checks 28726 to 28754. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these checks. David Hess seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard noted the bill from Campbell Durrant is relatively high. Alice Rehrig commented it was for legal services by the labor attorney. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Recreation Consultant. Cindy Miller noted the dates need to be removed from Pages 1 and 2 of the RFP; on Page 7, Item d, she is proposing to change it to “Develop an action plan to include capital improvement plan, policy recommendations, funding and partnership strategies.” Page 10, D under price proposal, it states the price should be valid for 90 days. She doesn’t believe that should remain. It was agreed that the price should be valid for one year since it will take time to apply for and potentially

receive grants as opposed to using local taxpayer money. The date on Page 11 also needs to be removed.

Mike Jones commented on Page 10, the awarding of the contract in 60 to 90 days should be removed. He has no objection to requiring them to start within 30 days from being notified of the proposal being accepted. He also believes the references to the LTAA facilities should be removed. He doesn't agree with having a consultant to review a park that is under a 99 year lease and out of the Township control. Page 7, subsection b, should be increased from 1 work session to 2 work sessions.

Alice Rehrig will make the changes to the RFP and provide it to the Board for a final review.

Tom Szoke questioned what the reason was for not including LTAA in the study. Mike Jones commented the park is leased to LTAA for 99 years and under the control of them during that time. There would be no point in having a consultant tell the Township what could be done with the lease in place. There is still probably 35 or 40 years left. Cindy Miller commented they are looking at a 10 year comprehensive plan.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Appointment of Interim Zoning Officer/BCO. Janet Sheats made a motion to appoint Liz Amato as Interim Zoning Officer and Building Code Official. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. Paul Nikisher questioned how long the appointment would be. Mike Jones commented she will be helping out until a new zoning officer is hired. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. Appointment of Interim Code Enforcement Officer/Zoning Officer. Janet Sheats made a motion to appoint Scott Brown as Interim Code Enforcement Officer and Zoning Officer. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Cindy Miller questioned what the rate will be for Scott Brown. Alice Rehrig commented she didn't have Hanover Engineering's rate sheet with her, but believes it would around the surveyor rate. They assign a reduced rate, not that of the SEO. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- C. Letter of Resignation. Officer Christian Surjan submitted his letter of resignation as a police officer. Janet Sheats made a motion to regrettably accept the letter of resignation from Officer Surjan. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Janet Sheats made a motion to amend the agenda to allow a motion for the advertising of a police officer. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Janet Sheats made a motion to authorize the Chief to advertise for a full-time officer per Lehigh Township policies. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Paul Nikisher questioned what the starting rate was for a police officer. Alice Rehrig commented the starting rate for an officer who has completed the Police Academy is around \$62,000 per year. Katherine Mack questioned how this will affect the police schedule. Janet Sheats commented they will be strained which is why it is important to advertise and hire someone. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- D. Police Air Conditioning Units. Alice Rehrig received three proposals for the replacement of the air conditioning units at the Police Station. The lowest proposal that was received was from Home Comfort Solutions at a price of \$17,990. All three vendors were out and reviewed the systems. Janet Sheats questioned how soon the work could be completed. Alice Rehrig commented none of the vendors list a date. The units would need to be ordered. Cindy Miller questioned who did the air conditioning system for the municipal building. Alice Rehrig commented it was Hannabery. Cindy Miller questioned if it wouldn't be better to stay with one contractor for all the HVAC. Jerry Pritchard noted their quote is about \$3,000 more than the other. He thinks they based their price on the assumption they would automatically get it since they already installed a system for the Township. Cindy Miller questioned if it was an apples to apples quote. Alice Rehrig commented the systems are the same, but the brands are different. Janet Sheats commented Home Comfort Solutions is offering a 10 year warrantee and Hannabery is offering a 5 year warrantee. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve the quote from Home Comfort Solutions at a price of \$17,990. David Hess seconded the motion. Tom Szoke commented if the Township wants to look at a local company, he has used ABC Air a few times in the past. He doesn't know if they would be any better or worse for pricing. Alice Rehrig commented Frank Zamadics made the calls to see who could come out the quickest for looking at the system when it went down and those are the ones to provided the estimates. Paul Nikisher commented you may want to check their schedules to see who is able to do it the soonest. All voted aye. Motion caried.
- E. Budget. Cindy Miller commented she feels we are at a point with our finances where we need to start looking at a budget that is a minimum of three years, but ideally it would be for five years. The Board needs to start looking at a multi-year budget, not just year by year. With everything that is going on with staffing, roads, and other expenses, she feels we need to be looking at more than just one year at a time. Alice Rehrig commented she has been working on this. Janet Sheats suggested starting with a three year budget and then see how it goes, we can switch to a five year. Cindy Miller commented the Board authorized the Chief to apply for a grant for two new officers. The grant will cover the salary for three years, but what will the impact be on the Township after that, which is why she is suggesting five years. Alice Rehrig commented she can definitely create a three year budget and will try to get

five completed. Cindy Miller commented personnel needs to be included in the budget. We need to start planning on what the future of the township is going to be and how to move forward.

Jerry Pritchard questioned what the numbers for the budget will be based on. Alice Rehrig commented some information she will know and what is not known will be an estimate based on prior years information. Jerry Pritchard commented that he doesn't want it to become that something that is in a future budget is automatically expected because it is included. Cindy Miller commented the Board would still need to review the budget on a yearly basis. It's just that we need to start looking at what we may be faced with in the next five years so we can plan. This information will be what drives future tax rates and everything else. It will make it easier to explain things to the residents.

Linda Roman questioned where the Board thought the Township was going in the next three to five years. Janet Sheats commented for her, she feels we need to increase the police department by at least two officers. Linda Roman questioned what the Board saw things with zoning. Jerry Pritchard commented it depends upon what comes in before the Board. Linda Roman questioned what would be used as the basis for the development over the next five years. Janet Sheats commented it would be an estimate.

Cindy Miller commented if you look at today's budget, the police department makes up 44 percent, public works is 25 percent, administration and legislative are 10 percent and Fire and EMS are 8 percent. These variables will all change in the next five years. We may need more police. What could happen with the ambulance service? Linda Roman questioned what will happen with Mr. Jaindl's project and the sewer treatment plant. Cindy Miller commented the sewage plant is not the Township's; the Municipal Authority is a separate entity from the Township. The Township has planning and zoning and she doesn't see that there are any plans on expanding the water and sewer areas.

Jerry Pritchard commented he can understand forecasting what is coming for the future, but he doesn't want it to be misconstrued that we need to spend it just because it was included in the budget.

Cindy Miller made a motion to have the Manager move forward with working on a three year budget. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- F. Manager's Report. Matt Marks from Senator Miller's office had contacted her regarding hosting a coffee and conversation event with the Senator, possibly in August. It would be an opportunity for people to come in and ask the Senator and the

Township questions. Janet Sheats commented she thinks it's a good idea as long as the Board is included. Alice Rehrig commented when she gets a date, she will forward the information to the Board.

1. GroNorCo Grant. Alice Rehrig provided the Board with a concept design and estimate for a LED sign in front of the building so that she could submit for the grant. Janet Sheats made a motion to authorize Alice Rehrig to submit the application for the GroNorCo grant. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT. Katherine Mack questioned if the light in the back lot was repaired. Janet Sheats commented it was.

Katherine Mack questioned the legal service bill for Cambell Durrant. \$13,000 for one month seems very high. What kind of services were performed? Alice Rehrig commented it was for consultation with the labor attorney. Katherine Mack questioned if it was just for the police? Mike Jones commented it can be for any employee.

Katherine Mack questioned the status of other recreation projects, such as the tennis courts. Mike Jones commented that is still at the Rec Board. They discussed it at their last meeting. Katherine Mack questioned if the shades for the dog park will be back on an agenda. David Hess commented he is still waiting on an estimate.

Janet Sheats wanted to make everyone aware that traffic will be backed up on Saturday and to keep the Fire Company in everyone's thoughts because of the passing of one of their firefighters in what is being considered a line of duty death. Katherine Mack commented she thinks it would be appropriate for the Board to have a moment of silence at their next meeting.

Zach Szoke questioned why the land preservation was placed on the agenda at the last meeting. Alice Rehrig commented when the discussion took place at the previous meeting, it wasn't on the agenda and it was stated that it should be placed on the next agenda. Zach Szoke commented he was surprised to learn it was on the agenda and that a motion was made to squash it when they were not present. Janet Sheats read a portion of the minutes from the last meeting. Attorney Backenstoe clarified that he would not have quoted over all rates. He would only discuss that the increase for preservation would be .25 percent. Jerry Pritchard commented he was running the meeting and when something is on the agenda, a Board member has every right to make a motion. Jerry Pritchard commented he was not comfortable with the motion because the individuals who brought it to the Board were not present. To him, it wouldn't have looked right to have something kicked to the curb without them being present. Janet Sheats commented she

still wants them to have the opportunity to speak to the residents so they are fully aware of it. Jerry Pritchard commented he also wanted to have a full Board present. Cindy Miller commented there was nothing underhanded done. It was on the agenda and that is how she has always felt and she made the motion. Zach Szoke commented whenever this comes up, it always seems like there was a vague understanding of what took place at the previous meeting. He knew they were going to be away for the meeting and wouldn't have requested it to be placed on the agenda. He would just like the courtesy of being told when it was going to be placed on the agenda since he is the one who brought it forward to the Board. It would be respectful for it to not be discussed when they are not here.

Zach Szoke question if someone could give him a definition of the responsibilities and duties of a Supervisor. Jerry Pritchard commented they are responsible for the health, safety, and welfare of the residents. They are also a steward of the resident's money. Zach Szoke questioned if there would be a component of work with and learning what the citizens want. Mike Jones commented as a whole yes. Zach Szoke questioned if the last meeting was an attempt to not involve the residents of the community. Cindy Miller commented it is trying to be made into something it is not. It was on the agenda and a motion was made. They have the right to do that. There was no underlying attempt to do anything. It was on the agenda, but obviously it shouldn't have been on. There are many times they get their agenda and don't know why something is on there. Just like "budget" was on the agenda. No one knew what she was going to talk about. Tom Szoke commented he thinks the uncomfortableness is because it was on the agenda and a motion was made to squash it. The meeting before no one was ready to make a motion, yet three weeks later a motion was made. It was previously stated that the Board didn't want to deal with it right now. Cindy Miller commented she understands they put a lot of time and energy into this. If she had to vote now, she would still vote no because she does not feel it is a good time to implement this. She voted to not move it forward. It doesn't mean she doesn't want it on the agenda further down the road. She wants to get the zoning and SALDO completed first. Zach Szoke commented it is not the matter of what the vote was, but the fact that no one previously wanted to take a vote and then it was voted upon at the meeting when they were not present. Cindy Miller commented that had nothing to do with it. Zach Szoke commented he is just asking for outreach by the Board that they are notified when they are going to be on an agenda.

Mike Jones commented at a previous meeting, it was stated that he was in cahoots with Zach Szoke, Mike Hock and the other individual who spoke at the meeting and that his property would be the first one preserved and he should abstain from the vote. He has  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre which couldn't be preserved. That statement is one hundred percent incorrect. Yes, he does know Zach Szoke and Mike Hock, but he would have no benefit from the preservation.

Board of Supervisor Minutes  
May 27, 2025

Linda Roman questioned how the land preservation got on the agenda. Mike Jones commented as previously, it was a carryover from the previous meeting. Linda Roman commented they were at the meeting when it was stated that it was going to be moved to the next agenda.

Katherine Mack commented she is on the Ad Hoc committee that is working on the zoning ordinance and SALDO which they are hoping to complete the end of June. She knows there will have to be public hearings on the ordinance. This could be a major part of it. Maybe they can both be combined into the same meeting. Maybe Zach Szoke could be invited to the Ad Hoc meeting and speak to the Planners. Cindy Miller commented she believes that Mike Hock was planning on attending one of the meetings; she encouraged him to come. Katherine Mack commented if the ordinances and preservation could be combined into one meeting, they could both be explained to the public at one time. Preservation will affect the Township and a number of property owners in the Township. Maybe invite the 300 property owners that could be affected. Residents could hear everything at one time, the zoning, SADLO, and preservation.

Zach Szoke commented Mrs. Mack is correct. There are several points within the Comprehensive Plan regarding protecting and preserving the delicate lands, but the Township doesn't have the means in by which they can protect them which is why they are making this push for land preservation. Although zoning and land preservation may accomplish the similar goals, they work very differently. We definitely want to be on top of both of them. Merging them could be difficult. Land preservation will take some momentum until they get enough funds to accomplish the preservation of the land that is needed. If the zoning is amended in the meantime, it will help buy them the time that is needed. From what he understands, he doesn't necessarily know that they are changing subdivision requirements such as uses and size of lots. He thought it was more about changing verbiage. Katherine Mack noted the Ad Hoc committee meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. She really thinks that this is so comprehensive and have taken so much time to see this through, should would also like to invite all the Supervisors because they really need to understand this because they will have to vote on it. There is a lot of material involved. Some is minor in nature and others are major. The Board really needs to understand what is in the ordinances that are being proposed.

Monica Brown commented she thinks that having everyone hear everything at one time is a good idea. It promotes transparency. Everyone will know what is going on and have a chance to ask questions. That is what it is about, working together for the betterment of the Township.

Paul Nikisher questioned if it was decided whether or not the drop off site would be open on a Sunday. The Board confirmed that the site is open.

Sandy Hopkins questioned if Zach Szoke and Mike Hock will have time to speak about preservation at the Ad Hoc meeting. Cindy Miller commented she is sure the consultant is aware of how land preservation works. They will be able to speak, but not for one or two hours. The committee has a lot of material to cover. Sandy Hopkins commented she views land preservation as important if you want to save our community. She has been going to New Jersey quite a bit and wouldn't like to see this area become the way New Jersey has where it is large apartment buildings one after another.

Michele Hopkins questioned if the Comp Plan and other items that are being worked on are on the website. Alice Rehrig commented the Comp Plan and Ad Hoc minutes are on the website.

Zach Szoke commented South Whitehall Township is making a push to get land preservation on their ballot for fall. Cindy Miller commented South Whitehall is pushing because they don't have a lot of land left, just like Lower Macungie.

Katherine Mack questioned the status of the monitors for the meeting room. Alice Rehrig commented the computer upgrades are in process.

- VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Session to discuss a Collective Bargaining agreement.
- VIII. ADJOURN. Janet Sheats made a motion to adjourn. David Hess seconded the motion.