

# LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

October 28, 2025

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their second monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 28, 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  
Mike Jones  
David Hess  
Cindy Miller  
Jerry Pritchard  
Attorney David Backenstoe  
Alice Rehrig

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. October 14, 2025. David Hess made a motion to approve these minutes. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. David Hess, Cindy Miller, David Hess, Janet Sheats, and Mike Jones voted aye. Jerry Pritchard abstained. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- A. General Fund Checks 29049 to 29090. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these bills. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. State Fund Checks 1632 and 1633. David Hess made a motion to approve these bills. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- C. Pennoni Associates
1. Check 29010. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve Check 29010. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
  2. Additional Costs. The additional costs that were provided to complete the zoning ordinance were in the amount of \$4,938. Cindy Miller commented the concern with the contract they provided was the provision at the bottom where they indicate they would be billing on a monthly basis. Why would this be in the contract when this is supposed to be what it takes to settle up all the work on the zoning ordinance? To her, she feels it opens the Township up to receive additional invoices down the road.

Janet Sheats commented she understands things from both sides in that she doesn't believe that they fully understood what they were getting into and that there were also things that were added or needed to be redone. In speaking with

Mike Muffley, it is her understanding that Urban Research came in with a very low price from the start, but things were added on to the work because things had to be revisited that they thought were already done. Jerry Pritchard commented he understands, but they cannot keep running the tab up going forward. Mike Jones understands, but he also agrees that if this is supposed to be the final bill, why would they be billing us monthly.

Attorney Backenstoe commented there are two ways to look at this. One is that this is the amount to complete the job and they still need to submit invoices and that paragraph is explaining that process. This should be confirmed before signing the agreement because it also could mean that the bills will just keep coming and you will be expected to pay. Cindy Miller commented she is reading this as the proposal before the Board is the invoice. Alice Rehrig commented she doesn't believe it is. She believes that Attorney Backenstoe's interpretation is closer to what is to be expected because the initial draft she received had unclear language in the second paragraph that made it seem like we could possibly owe the \$4,938 plus an additional \$1,000. She had asked them to change the second paragraph to read that it would be capped at \$1,000. She can reach out to Matt Wannamaker again for additional clarification. Cindy Miller commented she wants it to be put into writing.

Janet Sheats made a motion to table the additional costs until clarification is received that it will not exceed the \$4,938. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- D. Check 28894—Hannabery HVAC. This check was tabled at the beginning of September because of a question regarding the warrantee on the HVAC. The one year warrantee with Shannon A. Smith started on May 1, 2024 so it expired on May 1, 2025. The issue with the water dripping started in July when it was hot and humid. Rather than having to pay the additional travel time for Shannon A. Smith to come here from Reading, Hannabery was contacted since they are local. They came out and went through the system and found the system was working properly, but there was an issue with condensation because of pulling the humid air in from the outside. The amount of air that is pulled in from the outside can be adjusted by obtaining the codes from the manufacturer. Shannon A. Smith has agreed to obtain those codes so the adjustment can be made. Cindy Miller questioned if this will stop the condensation because we don't want water coming through the ceiling in a new building. Alice Rehrig commented that once they have the code, the amount of air can be adjusted to eliminate this.

Janet Sheats made a motion to approve Check 28894. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Extension of Time for Plan Approval

1. Billy Carter Minor Subdivision. Mr. Carter provided the Board with an extension of time until April 30, 2026. He needs the additional time to complete his plan. He was originally looking at subdividing three lots, but will most likely need to go down to two lots because of the steep slopes. Cindy Miller made a motion to accept the extension of time until April 30, 2026. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

V. OLD BUSINESS. There was no old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Manager's Report. Alice Rehrig reported the dates the Fire Company provided for a meeting were October 30 and November 6. She heard back from Cindy Miller that the 30<sup>th</sup> was not good and was questioning if the 6<sup>th</sup> would work. Mike Jones commented he would not be available on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Alice Rehrig will request additional dates from the Fire Company. Linda Roman questioned what the purpose of the meeting would be. Janet Sheats commented it would most be for a financial update from the fire company.

B. Solicitor's Report

1. LTMA Land Development Plan—Waiver of Letter of Credit. Attorney Backenstoe reported the Jaindl project is finally starting to move along. As part of the project, the sewer treatment plant owned by the Municipal Authority will need to be redone and they submitted a land development plan which was approved by the Board. As part of the land development plan, he needed to prepare an improvements agreement and a maintenance agreement for the improvements that will be done. As part of the improvements agreement, a letter of credit securing the improvements is required to be submitted. Often times when there is another public entity such as a municipal authority involved, the requirement to submit a letter of credit is waived and they are requesting that of the Board. There is no objection to entering into the standard developer's agreement. The work that needs to be completed will be done by Mr. Jaindl as part of his project.

Jerry Pritchard raised a concern with waiving the security based with the concerns of the financial status of the Municipal Authority and the situation with their loan. Cindy Miller commented the Township is ultimately responsible for the Authority and any impacts will affect the individuals who are served by them. Attorney Backenstoe commented he understands the concerns the Board has and would

suggest they table this matter until Attorney Zator is able to be present to discuss this in more detail. Cindy Miller commented she would also expect that the Municipal Authority should be attending.

Janet Sheats made a motion to table this until the next meeting. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Katherine Mack questioned why the attorney for the Municipal Authority wouldn't be attending the meeting as well. Cindy Miller noted the Board is in the dark with regards to this project. They do not know what agreements were made, what the Authority is doing, or what Mr. Jaindl is doing. The Board knows nothing. Attorney Backenstoe noted he will strongly urge that Mr. Jaindl's counsel, a Municipal Authority representative, and their counsel be present. Paul Nikisher commented the Board and the public are upset with the Authority's defiance, but it doesn't seem that the Board has any control over them. Mike Jones commented once they are formed, they become their own entity. Paul Nikisher questioned if there is anything that the Board can do. Attorney Backenstoe commented they are asking for a waiver. The Board is not obligated to grant it. They can say no. Motion carried.

- VII. PUBLIC COMMENT. Zach Szoke commented, at the last meeting, he learned that the Board can choose to not observe a cemetery's tax exemption for the fire tax. Can they also do that with the real estate tax? Mike Jones commented they cannot do that with the real estate tax; only the fire tax because it is a service tax. Cindy Miller commented the State regulates what the Township can and can't do as far as setting taxes and fees.

Katherine Mack questioned if there is any follow up to the situation with the Airbnb from last meeting and someone reaching out to the owner. Attorney Backenstoe commented he will be reviewing the file to see if there is an issue and if it is appropriately in place as well as if they have a vested interest. Janet Sheats commented the Police Department may also have an update at the next meeting. Cindy Miller commented she also submitted the names of the Airbnbs she found to the Zoning Officer.

- VIII. 2026 BUDGET. Alice Rehrig commented she went through the budget and made the adjustments that she was able to and there still is a shortfall of \$223,000. Jerry Pritchard questioned where the short fall was coming from. Alice Rehrig commented it is a combination of capital expenses, additional staffing and roadwork. At this point, there needs to be either additional revenue, reduction in expenses, or a combination of both.

Cindy Miller commented we have reached the point where we need to add revenue. Jerry Pritchard did not agree. Cindy Miller commented we are; we need to get our roads done. We are not putting enough money into our roads. Mike Jones commented he is starting to get more calls regarding the roads. Cindy Miller commented we have held the taxes

for eleven years and nothing new is coming into the Township. Our real estate taxes and earned income taxes are not significantly increasing and they are the two main sources of income. What else can we do? There is no choice. Jerry Pritchard questioned which department has extra money. Cindy Miller commented there is no extra money. Jerry Pritchard commented we need to evaluate where the money is going. We have spent money in the past few years that we may not have to spend in the next year. Cindy Miller commented the Township tax rate is one of the lowest in the County. How long can we keep going like this?

Jerry Pritchard commented we need 12 officers who are able to come to work every day, not an additional two. Mike Jones commented even if the two officers are eliminated, we are still short. Jerry Pritchard questioned what else can be cut? Cindy Miller commented there is nothing additional to cut. David Hess commented he feels we need to get the department back to twelve officers before we think about hiring two additional officers. Jerry Pritchard commented how do we know what we need if we are not running with full staff. Cindy Miller commented that is why we don't need two in the budget. She would rather take that money and put it towards the roads.

Mike Jones questioned how much funding would be received if we get the COPS grant. Alice Rehrig commented if approved, we would receive \$125,000 for each officer over a period of three years. For 2026, she included \$65,000 for each, then in 2027 it drops to \$45,000, and 2028 it would be \$20,000. Cindy Miller commented in three years we have to pay the entire amount. Jerry Pritchard questioned when the last time was that we ran with twelve officers. Cindy Miller commented we haven't for several years. Jerry commented he would like to run one year with twelve officers before deciding to hire additional officers. Mike Jones commented if we get the grant, he would agree with the hiring. If we don't get the grant, then we don't hire. Cindy Miller commented she doesn't agree with that because we would be spending money we don't have and will not put the Township in that position. There are a lot of other items that are needed besides just the salary if we are to hire. We already are being told we need new body cameras for next year. Janet Sheats commented even one officer would be beneficial to fill in the gaps when there is a long term absence which seems to occur every year. This department has not had their full staffing for the past 10 years. There are officers working 7 days a week and a lot of overtime. They are getting stressed and getting burned out. One extra officer would help because he could to jump from platoon to platoon and help out when they are short. Cindy Miller commented she was told we needed to hire two. David Hess commented we are down three officers. If we are not able to replace the officers to get the department back up to twelve, how can we consider hiring two additional officers. Cindy Miller commented the officers are working overtime and getting burned out because we don't have the twelve officers. We can't hire for that. Jerry Pritchard commented let's see how things work out with twelve officers for at least a year.

Janet Sheats questioned why the Board approve applying for the COPS grant if there was never any interest in hiring the officers. Cindy Miller commented it wouldn't be the first time. We have done that in other things. Mike Jones questioned if the grant is awarded, must we hire the two or can we just accept one. Alice Rehrig commented we could accept just one. Janet Sheats commented she feels that would be a good compromise. In 20 years, there have only been two officers added to the department. Cindy Miller commented she feels there are other avenues that can be explored to provide assistance to the department. Jerry Pritchard commented he does like the idea of staying in house, but does agree that we need to see how things work with 12 officers. David Hess commented we need to get back to the twelve before we consider going to 13 or 14. Jerry Pritchard commented we need to see how things work with 12. It is doesn't work, then we look at hiring additional officers.

David Hess questioned where things stood with hiring officers for the vacant positions. Alice Rehrig commented there is one officer of the six applicants that appears to be making it through the background investigation.

Janet Sheats commented she has a hard time understanding that after all the studies that have been done over the past ten years, they have been wrong in the manpower and the Board is right. Mike Jones commented it is not a matter of right or wrong, it is the costs. David Hess commented he thinks they all agree that they would like more officers. Janet Sheats commented then we need to figure out how to get there. Look at all the overtime we have been spending. Cindy Miller commented you can't look at that. We are not at twelve officers. They are running short so additional overtime is to be expected.

David Hess questioned if we will be running another advertisement so we can hire someone to replace the second officer. Janet Sheats commented she thinks that at the next meeting authorization should be given to Sergeant Henry to start getting a list together, not necessarily a hiring list. It appears that we have someone to fill Christian Surjan's position which has been vacant since June. Cindy Miller commented they were told that they should get back to twelve. Alice Rehrig commented a conversation needs to take place between the Board and Sergeant Henry as to whether he would accept the position of Chief. The Board gave him until the end of the year to decide. Alice Rehrig was asked to speak with Sergeant Henry regarding this.

Janet Sheats questioned when the budget needs to be completed. Alice Rehrig commented it needs to be adopted by the end of the year, but she needs 20 days to advertise the budget. Mike Jones commented since the second meeting in December usually is canceled, it should be approved at the next meeting. Alice Rehrig commented the other alternative is to hold a special meeting sometime in December for the purpose of adopting the budget. Cindy Miller commented there is no reason that the budget shouldn't be able to be ready for advertising by the next meeting.

Monica Brown questioned how much money is being budgeted for the road. Alice Rehrig commented there is \$375,000 budgeted, with \$100,000 of that being offset by the Building Fund. There will also be \$474,000 received from the State. Monica Brown questioned how much was included other years. Mike Jones commented other years we only used the money from the State. Monica Brown questioned if it will be paving and if the Township has a paver. Cindy Miller commented Frank Zamadics is working on a list. Alice Rehrig commented it will most likely be similar to what was done this year where the Road Crew repairs the areas that are bad with our paver and then do oil and chip to preserve the road. If paving were going to be done, that \$375,000 will only get us about a mile and a half which means the remaining 80 miles of road are left go.

Jerry Pritchard commented there was a lot of money spent on drama last year that can come back into the budget. Jennifer Karmonic questioned how this would bring money back into the budget if the money was spent. Once the money is gone, you will need to replace it. Mike Jones commented that was more of a theoretical comment.

Linda Roman commented a tax can be created for specific a project and then when the project is completed it can be removed. If you do just a general increase, it will go on forever. Mike Jones commented once an increase is created, it generally doesn't go away.

John Knobloch commented he doesn't expect that grant funding for additional officers will be successful if the department is not operating at full staff now. When he used to work for New York City, the federal government used to give them money for the salaries, the vehicles, guns, radios, and everything that was needed. Alice Rehrig commented the grant now only covers the salaries. John Knobloch commented there are federal programs available to fund vehicles, overtime for DUI enforcement; there are other avenues for revenue. He is willing to look into grant funding.

Zach Szoke commented when you do the math for the number of shifts that officers work and keep 3 officers on the road, with 12 officers, there will inherently be overtime. If someone is hurt, there will be even more overtime. It is tough to find people to work, but if take care of your people and get the right number, it makes it easier on them and they don't leave. Jerry Pritchard commented we need twelve people who want to come to work and are slowing getting there. Zach Szoke commented if it takes raising his taxes to pay so we can get to 12 people who want to come to work, then raise his taxes. Mike Jones commented it is more an environment type of issue. Janet Sheats commented if you have a person out on sick leave with an injury, you create even more open shifts that everyone else has to pick up. In addition, there is one officer who hasn't yet been replaced. If there was an additional officer included, it would help fill the holes. The Department has not been whole for the past 10 years.

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Paul Nikisher questioned how much it costs to hire an officer including salary, radio, and other items. Alice Rehrig commented it is about \$144,000.

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