

BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
MAY 5, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT John J. Merhottein, President
John K. Gallagher, Vice President
Matthew C. Deckman, Commissioner
Michael D. Hudak, Commissioner
DeAnn L. Lawrence, Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT Anthony Giovannini, Jr., Township Solicitor
Doug Bruce, Township Manager
Ron Gawlik, Township Engineer

CALL TO ORDER Mr. Merhottein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

TOM KEEFER Mr. Keefer said there should be one commissioner present at every public meeting.
3803 CARTER RD.

BARRY ROTH Mr. Roth said the township should be regulating single-family residences being turned
4323 CHETWIN TERR. into apartments. He believes there is a single-family home in his neighborhood that has been converted into apartments. Mr. Roth said it is a huge safety concern. Mr. Roth said press coverage on the Abe Atiyeh's lawsuit regarding trees omitted the long history of the matter.

ARIELLE NICHOLSON Ms. Nicholson resides in River Hill Estates and said the developer is planning on
1702 CHARLEY LN. putting trees in front of other trees in front of her home. She said this is not prudent nor is it aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Bruce said it was his understanding that some areas of the development were granted a waiver from this requirement. Mr. Gawlik said the township would need a specific waiver request in this case. Mr. Merhottein said the board has issued waivers in the past. Mr. Gallagher recommended putting the trees in other areas. Mr. Deckman suggested the trees be planted in the gaps. Ms. Nicholson said her request was urgent as they plan to install the trees this week. Mr. Bruce said township staff will contact the developer in the morning.

PAUL PULEO Mr. Puleo said his development was promoted as a 55-plus gated community. The
4003 VICTORS WAY gates were supposed to arrive two months ago but residents have been informed the gates are not coming. Mr. Puleo said he was told by the township the gates were not shown on the recorded plan and are therefore not required by the township. He also noted the following concerns:

- Pergola above the outdoor kitchen should be permitted.
- Two ponds are without spray irrigation as noted in the plan.

As a result of the developer's delays in completing stormwater controls, Mr. Puleo believes the residents should be entitled to a 35% discount of the stormwater fee.

BRUCE LINK Mr. Link said trees were cut down at the Pektor development but were not replaced. He
3757 LOYAL LN. asked when construction would start. Mr. Bruce said that after several years of

litigation, the township settled with the developer. He said they plan to move forward with the project in the third quarter of the year.

**GLENN FERRARA
4105 ALLEN ST.**

The resident asked if the code enforcement department drives around town to look at blighted properties. Mr. Bruce said the township is complaint driven and doesn't have the staff to check 9,000 properties. There are no plans to increase staff, he said.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the April 7, 2025 and April 21, 2025, regular public meeting minutes as presented.

**RESOLUTIONS OF
THE BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

RESOLUTION R039-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PREPARATION OF A DECLARATION OF TAKING AND RELATED DOCUMENTATION FOR THE CONDEMNATION OF CERTAIN REAL ESTATE FOR ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF 9TH STREET AND FREEMANSBURG AVENUE IN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP

Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R039-25 authorizing preparation of a declaration of taking and related documentation for the condemnation of certain real estate for roadway improvements at the intersection of 9th Street and Freemansburg Avenue in Bethlehem Township.

**MOTIONS OF THE
BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A HOLD-HARMLESS INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP, THE BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY, AND DARYL MCELROY OF 3501 DRIFT COURT, BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP, REGARDING A CERTAIN ZONING PERMIT APPLICATION

Solicitor Giovannini said the boundary line adjustment was approved in 2024. The property owner applied for a zoning permit. The Municipal Authority determined there was no formal dedication or acceptance of the easement. The agreement was reviewed and approved to proceed by the solicitor. Mr. Gallagher asked what the improvements were. Solicitor Giovannini said the owner plans to construct a patio.

**DARYL MCELROY
3501 DRIFT CT.**

Mr. McElroy thanked the board.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing and approving a hold-harmless indemnification agreement between Bethlehem Township, the Bethlehem Township Municipal Authority, and Daryl McElroy of 3501 Drift Court, Bethlehem Township, regarding a certain zoning permit application.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A RADIO USE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP AND BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Mr. Merhottein said state DCED requires the township and the fire company to sign a formal cooperation agreement: the township purchases and owns the radios and the fire company is responsible to operate and maintain them. Mr. Bruce added that this is a new requirement.

Upon motion (Lawrence-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing and approving a radio use agreement between Bethlehem Township and Bethlehem Township Volunteer Fire Company.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A RADIO USE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP AND NANCY RUN FIRE COMPANY

Upon motion (Gallagher-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing and approving a radio use agreement between Bethlehem Township and Nancy Run Fire Company.

PURCHASE ORDERS

PO 20250925 – PORTNOFF LAW ASSOCIATES – FINANCE – \$13,317.76
PO 20250962 – HYDRA-NUMATIC SALES – PPIS – \$3,490.51
PO 20250966 – CHAPMAN AUTO GROUP – BTPD – \$47,746.00
PO 20250967 – CHAPMAN AUTO GROUP – BTPD – \$47,746.00

Mr. Hudak asked about purchase for two police vehicles. Mr. Merhottein said the money will come from the LSA grants.

Upon motion (Hudak-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve purchase orders as presented.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

MASTER PARKS PLAN

Mr. Merhottein said he would like to use money in the Recreation Fund to improve the 14th Street Park. The Recreation Commission recommended a dog park behind CVS Pharmacy on Freemansburg Avenue, which is in the Master Parks Plan. Mr. Deckman said according to a township survey, a dog park was number one on the list. Mr. Gallagher said there wasn't enough money for one project and suggested spreading the money to improve parks and possibly open up part of another park to allow dogs. Mr. Hudak said it would be great idea to put a dog park behind the pharmacy. He said opening part of the park is not a good idea as many owners do not clean after their dog. Dogs are already permitted on the D&L Trail and the path is dirty. Mr. Deckman agreed that the location for the dog park is ideal and that it might be more cost-effective to build it without all the proposed amenities. Ms. Lawrence said she would like to see the other parks improved.

BARRY ROTH 4323 CHETWIN TERR.

Mr. Roth said the reason the dog park was on the list was because the other parks are too old to qualify for a grant to rehabilitate them. He said the dog park could be done in phases with grant money.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL REQUEST TO RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT RECORDS

Mr. Gallagher said the Environmental Advisory Committee requested to research land development records to see when SALDO was amended concerning placement of street and other trees. Mr. Hudak asked how far back did they want to research. Mr. Gallagher said he wanted to research all the developments to create an inventory of street trees. He said the EAC was denied access to those records. Mr. Bruce said access was not denied. He said he wanted to bring this request for full board direction.

Mr. Gallagher made a motion to enable the Environmental Advisory Council to view township development records with regard to street trees and was seconded by Mr. Deckman. The motion failed 3-2. Mr. Hudak, Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Merhottein opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata
Recording Secretary