

BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
MAY 19, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT	John J. Merhottein, President John K. Gallagher, Vice President Michael C. Deckman, Commissioner DeAnn L. Lawrence, Commissioner Michael D. Hudak, Commissioner
OTHERS PRESENT	James L. Broughal, Township Solicitor Doug Bruce, Township Manager Samantha Smith, Community Development Director 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	
LINDA HILL LOWER SAUCON TOWNSHIP	Ms. Hill provided the board with an update on the Bethlehem Landfill expansion and lawsuit. Solicitor Broughal said the board is already a party to the lawsuit and supports the opposition.
GLENN KRIER 3942 KENRICK DR.	Mr. Krier asked for an update on the crumbling wall at the property across the street from the Keystone Pub. Mr. Bruce said the public works department looked at it and determined it was not a safety hazard.
DAVE BUCHERER 4220 NICHOLAS ST.	Mr. Bucherer thanked the board for posting the union contracts to the website. He asked who negotiates the contracts. Mr. Bruce said he does and the board approves them. Mr. Bucherer said that after reviewing them, he found them to be unsustainable. He asked why the solicitor doesn't negotiate the contracts. Mr. Hudak said they are reviewed by the solicitor before they go to the board for approval.
BARRY ROTH 4323 CHETWIN TERR.	Mr. Roth thanked public works for cleaning up Mower Road and Highland Avenue. He said the cleaning was originally initiated by the late Commissioner Sourbeck. He asked if signage could be placed or the concrete piers painted.
STEVE HUNT 2197 COOK DR.	Mr. Hunt said land developer KRE took down several trees on the walkway and asked for them to be replaced. He asked who manages the storm water system from start to finish and how often they are inspected. Mr. Hunt said one of the wet ponds was not working properly. Mr. Bruce asked if the pond was public or private. Mr. Hunt said it was private. Mr. Bruce said he will have the township stormwater engineer look into it.
FOR THE RECORD	Mr. Bruce noted for the record that items G1 and G2 were duplicated on the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES**

Upon motion (Lawrence-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the May 5, 2025 regular public meeting minutes as presented.

**SUBDIVISIONS &
LAND
DEVELOPMENT**

MOTION

**A MOTION APPROVING IMPROVEMENTS SECURITY RELEASE
CERTIFICATION NO. 2, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,624.65, FOR LVIP VI
LOT 44 (FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES)**

Mr. Merhottein said this will begin the maintenance period.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote approving Improvements Security Release Certification No. 2, in the amount of \$29,624.65, for LVIP VI Lot 44 (Fairfield Inn & Suites).

MOTION

**A MOTION TO EXTEND THE DEVELOPER'S OBLIGATION TO
COMPLY WITH THE CONDITIONAL APPROVAL, PURSUANT TO
RESOLUTION R062-23, FOR 1932 FARMERSVILLE ROAD SUBDIVISION
TO AUGUST 31, 2025**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to extend the developer's obligation to comply with the conditional approval, pursuant to Resolution R062-23, for 1932 Farmersville Road Subdivision to August 31, 2025.

MOTION

**A MOTION TO ENTER INTO A MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH
NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR TWO PEDESTRIAN
CROSSING SIGNALS BEING INSTALLED ON GREEN POND ROAD**

Mr. Merhottein said PennDOT requires the township to own the signals. Mr. Gallagher asked if these were for the existing walkway. Ms. Smith confirmed they were.

Upon motion (Deckman-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to enter into a maintenance agreement with Northampton Community College for two pedestrian crossing signals being installed on Green Pond Road.

RESOLUTION R042-25

**A RESOLUTION GRANTING APPROVAL OF THE FREEDOM HIGH
SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELD IMPROVEMENTS SITE PLAN**

Ms. Smith said the applicant proposes to construct a 600-square-foot athletic storage with a second story 300-square-foot press box building and related site improvements at 3149 Chester Avenue. The property is within Bethlehem Township's Institutional Overlay Zoning District and is served by public water and sewer. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the site plan at its April 28, 2025 meeting.

Upon motion (Lawrence-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R042-25 granting approval of the Freedom High School athletic field improvements site plan.

RESOLUTION R043-25 A RESOLUTION AMENDING BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP’S FEE SCHEDULE FOR APPLICATIONS, PERMITS, INSPECTIONS, APPEALS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES REQUIRED BY LAW AND/OR ORDINANCE THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Merhottein said the commercial construction inspector will be retiring in July and the third-party services will be used until the position is filled.

Upon motion (Deckman-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R043-25 amending Bethlehem Township’s fee schedule for applications, permits, inspections, appeals, and other activities required by law and/or ordinance through the Department of Community Development.

**RESOLUTIONS OF
THE BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

RESOLUTION R040-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ATTENDANCE OF OFFICER GARRETT CHIRIK AT NORTH AMERICAN STANDARD LEVEL 1 INSPECTOR CERTIFICATION TRAINING, PRESENTED THROUGH THE FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, JULY 14-AUGUST 1, 2025, IN HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. Merhottein said this was a standard budgeted item.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R040-25 authorizing the attendance of Officer Garrett Chirik at North American Standard Level 1 Inspector Certification training, presented through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program and the Pennsylvania State Police Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program, July 14-August 1, 2025, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

RESOLUTION R041-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ATTENDANCE OF OFFICERS AIDAN PHEIFFER AND RYAN BEVAN AT NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (NASRO) “ADVANCED SRO” TRAINING JUNE 9-11, 2025, IN YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. Merhottein said this is a standard budgeted item.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R041-25 authorizing the attendance of Officers Aidan Pheiffer and Ryan Bevan at National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) “Advanced SRO” training June 9-11, 2025, in York, Pennsylvania.

RESOLUTION R044-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPLICATION TO THE 2025 NORTHAMPTON COUNTY GROW NORCO GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Merhottein said this year a \$20,400 matching grant was received for improvements to the 14th Street Park including installation of pickleball courts, fence replacement, and new benches. The public works department estimates total project cost of \$60,000 and a grant request of \$30,000.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R044-25 authorizing an application to the 2025 Northampton County Grow NORCO grant program.

RESOLUTION R045-24 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF A DECLARATION OF TAKING AND RELATED DOCUMENTATION FOR THE CONDEMNATION OF CERTAIN REAL ESTATE FOR PUBLIC ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS TO FREEMANSBURG AVENUE IN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP

Mr. Merhottein said this resolution pertains to Phase C of the St. Luke's project. Mr. Bruce added that Resolution R045-25 and R046-25 deal with two separate pieces of land.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R045-25 authorizing preparation and submission of a declaration of taking and related documentation for the condemnation of certain real estate for public roadway improvements to Freemansburg Avenue in Bethlehem Township.

RESOLUTION R046-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF A DECLARATION OF TAKING AND RELATED DOCUMENTATION FOR THE CONDEMNATION OF CERTAIN REAL ESTATE FOR PUBLIC ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS TO FREEMANSBURG AVENUE IN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP

Upon motion (Hudak-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R046-25 authorizing preparation and submission of a declaration of taking and related documentation for the condemnation of certain real estate for public roadway improvements to Freemansburg Avenue in Bethlehem Township.

**MOTIONS OF THE
BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A MEDICAL EQUIPMENT (EMS STRETCHER/LOADER) USE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP AND BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Mr. Merhottein said this is required by state DCED for grant reimbursement. This item has already been purchased and is in service.

Upon motion (Deckman-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing and approving a medical equipment (EMS stretcher/loader) use agreement between Bethlehem Township and Bethlehem Township Volunteer Fire Company.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A MEDICAL EQUIPMENT (EMS CPR DEVICE) USE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP AND BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Mr. Merhottein said this is required by state DCED for grant reimbursement. This item has already been purchased and is in service.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing and approving a medical equipment (EMS CPR device) use agreement between Bethlehem Township and Bethlehem Township Volunteer Fire Company.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP AND TRAVELERS INDEMNITY COMPANY REGARDING INSURANCE COVERAGE RELATED TO PREVIOUSLY SETTLED LITIGATION BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP AND PC LAND LLC

Mr. Merhottein said this agreement settles the matter with Travelers paying the township \$15,000 and the township waiving all future claims.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing and approving a settlement agreement between Bethlehem Township and Travelers Indemnity Company regarding insurance coverage related to previously settled litigation between the township and PC Land LLC.

BILL AGENDA OF MAY 14, 2025

Upon motion (Gallagher-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the bill agenda of May 14, 2025.

PURCHASE ORDERS

PO 20251036 – Chambers & Sons Flooring – BTCC – \$6,685.00
PO 20251084 – Portnoff Law Associates – Finance – \$32,590.40
PO 20251091 – Brite – BTPD – \$3,556.00
PO 20251092 – Brite – BTPD – \$3,556.00
PO 20251093 – Industrial Communications – BTPD – \$9,222.25
PO 20251094 – Industrial Communications – BTPD – \$9,222.25
PO 20251095 – Motorola Solutions – BTPD – \$6,350.50
PO 20251096 – Motorola Solutions – BTPD – \$6,350.50
PO 20251097 – Elite Vehicle Solutions – BTPD – \$25,515.34
PO 20251098 – Elite Vehicle Solutions – BTPD – \$25,515.34
PO 20251108 – CCP Industries – PW – \$3,350.33
PO 20251109 – Casilio Concrete – PW – \$7,850.00
PO 20251117 – Witmer Public Safety Group – BTPD – \$28,272.39
PO 20251119 – Bethlehem Twp. Volunteer Fire Co. – Finance – \$20,000.00
PO 20251120 – Nazareth Ford – PW – \$3,294.26
PO 20251110 – Gross Law Office – Administration – \$4,839.70

Mr. Gallagher asked for the total cost of purchasing a police vehicle. Mr. Bruce said approximately \$85,000. Mr. Gallagher said he would like to see a hard number.

Mr. Bruce noted that the contribution to the Bethlehem Township Volunteer Fire Company for Community Days is \$20,000, not \$25,000 as stated on the agenda.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT OF APRIL 30, 2025

Upon motion (Deckman-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the treasurer's report of April 30, 2025, subject to audit.

**ZONING HEARING
BOARD MEETING OF
MAY 28, 2025**

Ms. Smith said the following appeals are on the agenda:

Appeal 01-2025 – Steven J. Inc. / 4011 Wilson Ave – Having taken testimony and conducted deliberations the Zoning Hearing Board will make their formal decision regarding this appeal. This appeal was in regards to a Zoning Determination for the construction of a multi-family dwelling.

Appeal 02-2025 – Steven J. Inc. / 4011 Wilson Ave – Having taken testimony and conducted deliberations the Zoning Hearing Board will make their formal decision regarding this appeal. This appeal was in regards to a Zoning Notice of Violation for the operation of a junkyard at the subject property.

Appeal 08-2025 / 2805 Fairview St / Kevin & Karlene Kinney – Dimensional variance request. Applicant is seeking a 0 ft side and rear yard setback to construct a concrete and/or deck walkway around their pool.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Gallagher asked if the police expenses, on page eleven of the finance report, were usual. Mr. Bruce said he was unsure and would get back to him. All monthly reports were accepted.

PRIMARY ELECTION

Mr. Hudak wished Mr. Deckman and Mr. Merhottein luck at the primary election tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata
Recording Secretary