

BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
APRIL 21, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT	John J. Merhottein, President John K. Gallagher, Vice President Matthew 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.
EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT	Solicitor Broughal said the Board of Commissioners met tonight in executive session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss personnel issues pursuant to Section 708a of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act.
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR	
DAVID BUCHERER 4220 NICHOLAS ST.	<p>Mr. Bucherer asked if the union contracts had been posted on the website. Mr. Bruce asked which contracts. Mr. Bucherer replied all. Solicitor Broughal asked if any were currently under review. Mr. Bruce said none were in negotiations at this time. Mr. Hudak said he wasn't opposed to the idea of posting them online but asked Mr. Bucherer why. Mr. Deckman said it was a transparency issue. Mr. Bucherer agreed. Solicitor Broughal said the township had been consistent with requesting documents under the Right to Know Act. Mr. Gallagher said he was hesitant with posting them online. Mr. Deckman told Mr. Bucherer that he would speak with the board about changing the policy.</p> <p>Mr. Bucherer asked the board collectively if they were in favor of granting variances and waivers on larger buildings. Mr. Hudak said the planning commission reviews applications to see if they are in line with the ordinance and then give their recommendations to the board. Mr. Deckman said waivers are granted on a case by case basis. Mr. Bucherer said he was very concerned with over-development and traffic. Solicitor Broughal said this board does not grant variances: The Zoning Hearing Board does and if a resident is not satisfied with the outcome, they have a right to appeal their decision. He said 90% of the waivers that this board grants are for sidewalks.</p>
GLENN KRIER 3942 KENRICK DR.	Mr. Krier said the stonewall section of the property directly across from the Keystone Pub is falling down. Ms. Smith said she will check it out.
BARRY ROTH 4323 CHETWIN TERR.	Mr. Roth said the sidewalk by the retention pond on Route 191 needed attention. He was unsure who was responsible for maintaining it. Ms. Smith said she will look into it.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES**

The minutes of the April 7, 2025 regular public meeting were not ready. They will be on the May 5, 2025 meeting agenda.

**SUBDIVISIONS &
LAND
DEVELOPMENT**

MOTION

A MOTION TO CALL IN THE STREETScape IMPROVEMENT DEFERRAL FOR DISCHINAT/CVS LAND DEVELOPMENT ON FREEMANSBURG AVENUE; THE DEFERRAL INCLUDES SIDEWALK, STREETScape WALL LIGHTING, AND LANDSCAPING

Ms. Smith said the streetscape improvements were not installed at the time CVS was constructed by the developer (Dischinat) because of potential conflicts with the Freemansburg Avenue Corridor Improvements Project. There was a desire on behalf of the developer and Township to avoid installation of improvements that would only have to be removed and reinstalled after the roadway project was completed. Through an agreement, the streetscape improvements were deferred and the security for the cost of those improvements was returned to the developer. Streetscape improvements include sidewalk, landscaping, street wall, lighting, etc. This action directs the developer to install the improvements per the executed agreement. Mr. Merhottein thanked Solicitor Broughal and Ms. Smith for their work. Mr. Hudak said he remembered this project and added that all the property was rezoned except for one lot. Ms. Smith said it made sense at the time. Mr. Gallagher said it made sense to call in the deferral but was a bad idea to give it without asking for security. He asked if the township would be able to recover the legal expenses. Solicitor Broughal said no.

Mr. Gallagher said he would like to see a list of outstanding deferrals.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to call in the streetscape improvement deferral for Dischinat/CVS Land Development on Freemansburg Avenue; the deferral includes sidewalk, streetscape wall lighting, and landscaping.

**RESOLUTIONS OF
THE BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

RESOLUTION R034-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER TO UTILIZE MUNICIBID ON-LINE GOVERNMENT AUCTION SERVICE FOR THE SALE OF TOWNSHIP-OWNED PERSONAL PROPERTY

Mr. Merhottein this was a standard resolution to sell township-owned items on Municibid. The items for sale are a 2008 Ford Escape used by Community Development and BTCC; 2013 Ford police car; and traffic signal mast arms and poles.

Upon motion (Lawrence-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R034-25 authorizing the township manager to utilize Municibid on-line government auction service for the sale of township-owned personal property.

RESOLUTION R035-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ATTENDANCE OF INVESTIGATOR PATRICK BREHM AT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF POLICE POLYGRAPHERS ANNUAL SEMINAR MAY 5-9, 2025, IN STATELINE, NEVADA

Mr. Merhottein said this is a standard police training resolution which was budgeted for.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R035-25 authorizing the attendance of Investigator Patrick Brehm at the American Association of Police Polygraphists annual seminar May 5-9, 2025, in Stateline, Nevada.

RESOLUTION R036-25 A RESOLUTION HONORING SARAH KELLY ON ACHIEVING THE GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD

The board congratulated Ms. Kelly on receiving the award.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R036-25 honoring Sarah Kelly on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award.

RESOLUTION R037-25 A RESOLUTION HONORING SIENNA POWELL ON ACHIEVING THE GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD

The board congratulated Ms. Powell on receiving the award.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R037-25 honoring Sienna Powell on achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award.

RESOLUTION R038-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING PROGRAM OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE RYAN MACKENZIE

Mr. Merhottein said the resolution calls for making a grant application for one or both of the following: \$195,000 for two police cars or \$225,000 for a radio amplifier system for Freedom High School. Mr. Bruce added that this particular application is always short notice.

Upon motion (Hudak-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R038-25 authorizing a grant application to the Community Project Funding program of U.S. Representative Ryan Mackenzie.

**MOTIONS OF THE
BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

MOTION

A MOTION APPROVING CHANGES TO THE CIVIL SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Mr. Merhottein said the Civil Service Commission is recommending one-time waiver from the requirement for entry-level police applicants to have either Act 120 certification or 60 college credits and cleaning up language.

Upon motion (Lawrence-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote approving the changes to the Civil Service Rules and Regulations.

**BILL AGENDA OF
APRIL 16, 2025**

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the bill agenda of April 16, 2025.

PURCHASE ORDERS **PO 20250751 – H.T. LYONS CONTRACTORS – PPIS – \$19,361.00**
PO 20250760 – SIGNAL SERVICE – BTPD – \$3,520.00
PO 20250826 – PATRIOT WORKWEAR – BTPD – \$6,490.00
PO 20250786 – DMB CONSULTING – BTPD – \$2,400.00
PO 20250787 – GOLDEN EQUIPMENT – PPIS – \$3,49.26
PO 20250827 – RADARSIGN – BTPD – \$2,550.00
PO 20250848 – PATRIOT WORKWEAR – BTPD – \$7,512.00
PO 20250872 – ROBINSON STEEL – BTPD – \$106,500.00
PO 20258077 – HANNABERRY HVAC -- \$13,500.00

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

**TREASURER’S
REPORT OF
MARCH 31, 2025**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the treasurer’s report of March 31, 2025, subject to audit.

**ZONING HEARING
BOARD MEETINGS**

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF APRIL 23, 2025**

Ms. Smith said this is the third continuance of the following appeals. The board has already directed the solicitor to attend and oppose:

Appeal 01-2025 – Steven J. Inc. / 4011 Wilson Ave – Appeal of zoning determination issued on Oct. 22, 2024. Seeking to have determination invalidated by claiming the code is not applicable regarding a permit application and permissible uses for reconstruction of the primary home at the property due to the fire in 2022.

Appeal 02-2025 – Steven J. Inc. / 4011 Wilson Ave – Appeal of Notice of Violation issued on Nov. 8, 2024. Seeking to have determination invalidated by claiming the code is not applicable, regarding the unpermitted use of the property as a junkyard.

**MEETING OF APRIL
30, 2025**

The meeting of April 30, 2025 is canceled.

MONTHLY REPORTS

All monthly reports were accepted.

MASTER PLAN

Mr. Merhottein asked the board to discuss the parks master plan at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata
Recording Secretary