

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING**

JULY 3, 2023

- MEMBERS PRESENT** John J. Merhottein, President
John K. Gallagher, Vice President
Jan Beatty, Commissioner
DeAnn L. Lawrence, Commissioner
Luke A. Verdes, Commissioner
- OTHERS PRESENT** Jim Broughal, Township Solicitor
Doug Bruce, Township Manager
- CALL TO ORDER** Mr. Merhottein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
- COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**
- BARRY ROTH
4323 CHETWIN TERR.** Mr. Roth said big projects are coming to the township in the near future and it would be very helpful to have the vacancies on the Planning Commission and Recreation Commission filled.
- GLENN KRIER
3942 KENRICK DR.** Mr. Krier said the bank on Freemansburg Avenue and Linden Street has overgrown grass and weeds.
- PAUL WEGRZYNOWICZ
4147 WALTER RD.** Mr. Wegrzynowicz said he would like to speak with a commissioner but didn't know which represented his ward. Mr. Gallagher said he represents the third ward and would be happy to meet with him.
- APPROVAL
OF MINUTES** Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2023 regular public meeting as presented.
- PUBLIC HEARING**
- ORDINANCE 04-23** **AN ORDINANCE REQUIRING THE MANDATORY RECUSAL OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN MATTERS IN WHICH THEY HOLD A FINANCIAL INTEREST**
- Mr. Verdes said he went to the Northampton County Courthouse prior to tonight's meeting to find out if those on the ballot submitted campaign finance report. He discovered that one candidate failed to submit the required paperwork.
- Upon motion (Beatty-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to adopt Ordinance 04-23 requiring the mandatory recusal of public officials in matters in which they hold a financial interest.
- RESOLUTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

RESOLUTION R051-23**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION WITH THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM AND BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY, WITH RESPECT TO A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AND PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF BETHLEHEM AND CITY OF BETHLEHEM, AND TO CREATE, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN STORMWATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WITHIN THE PROJECTS**

Mr. Gallagher said this is the very first step to get the flood mitigation project on Santee Road and Easton Avenue moving forward. He said the Stormwater Committee worked hard to get the City of Bethlehem to cooperate. Mr. Merhottein added that the Stormwater Fee Fund has been in affect for a year and will take time to accrue the money.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Beatty), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R042-23 authorizing the intermunicipal cooperation with the City of Bethlehem and Bethlehem Township Municipal Authority, with respect to a collaborative effort and process of implementing certain stormwater management projects within the Township of Bethlehem and City of Bethlehem, and to create, operate, and maintain stormwater best management practices within the projects.

MOTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**MOTION****A MOTION APPROVING A CHANGE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Mr. Bruce said the Civil Service Commission voted 3-0 to recommend the board waive the Act 120 certification and/or 60 college credits requirement for patrol officer applicants. He said this change would allow the township to cast a wider net for applicants.

Mr. Verdes, a member of the Civil Service Commission said he was not at the commission's meeting and would have voted against recommending this change. He said dropping the requirements lowers the police department's standards. Mr. Verdes said having the applications completed by hand is outdated and a barrier for applicants. He suggested the police department should more aggressively at colleges and job fairs. Mr. Bruce strongly disagreed with Mr. Verdes. Mr. Merhottein said they are only waiving the Act 120 certification and 60 college credits requirement. Applicants must still pass the written exam, physical exam, oral exam, psychological exam, and drug test. Ms. Lawrence added that law enforcement across the country are changing how they recruit. Mr. Verdes said the township needs to do better.

**PAUL WEGRZYNOWICZ
4147 WALTER RD.**

Mr. Weryzynowicz said he met Officer Tom Smith and thanked him publicly for his help and professionalism.

**BARRY ROTH
4323 CHETWIN TERR.**

Mr. Roth said he has been working with the police department for 30 years and said the department has always held a high standard. He said the officers work hard. The vacancies are due to retirements and injuries. Mr. Roth supports the rule change.

Mr. Bruce reiterated that this requirement is to apply for the position only. The testing and background investigation process is robust enough to identify both good and bad candidates. He said they do a lot of recruiting at colleges. Ms. Beatty said she was very proud of staff and all the hard work. Mr. Gallagher said waiving the requirement does not lower the standards. He said he supports on the job training and believes they can still find top quality officers.

Upon motion (Merhottein-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted by voice vote to approve a change in the Civil Service Rules and Regulations. The motion carried 4 to1. Mr. Verdes opposed.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THAT GAIL CAPUANO BE GRANTED A LUMP SUM PAYMENT VIA DIRECT IRA ROLLOVER FROM THE NON-UNIFORM PENSION FUND, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023

Upon motion (Gallagher-Beatty), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to grant Gail Capuano a lump sum payment via direct IRA rollover from the Non-Uniform Pension Fund, effective July 1, 2023.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THAT STEPHEN HUJCS BE GRANTED A MONTHLY DISABILITY BENEFIT FROM THE AFSCME PENSION FUND, EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2023

Upon motion (Beatty-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to grant Stephen Hujcs a monthly disability benefit from the AFSCME Pension Fund, effective April 1, 2023.

APPROVAL OF PURCHASE ORDERS

PO 20231697 – Recon Construction Services – PW – \$437,791.75
PO 20231698 – John Deer Shared Services – PW – \$8,495.40

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

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Beatty adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata
 Recording Secretary