

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
MARCH 4, 2024**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT Jan Beatty, Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT James L. Broughal, Township Solicitor
Doug Bruce, Township Manager

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

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR There were no comments or questions during Courtesy of the Floor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the February 19, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Beatty was absent.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION R024-24 A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE EXPENDITURE OF \$1,071,480 FOR TWO BENCHMARK 100 BOILERS WITH ALL ATTACHMENTS AND ACCESSORIES; TWO COMMERCIAL INTELLIPAK ROOFTOP UNITS WITH ALL ATTACHMENTS AND ACCESSORIES; ONE COMMERCIAL PRECEDENT ROOFTOP UNIT (RTU 2) WITH ALL ATTACHMENTS AND ACCESSORIES; AND ONE COMMERCIAL PRECEDENT ROOFTOP UNIT (RTU 5) WITH ALL ATTACHMENTS AND ACCESSORIES; AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CERTAIN MASTER EQUIPMENT LEASE/PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH FIRST COMMONWEALTH EQUIPMENT FINANCE, A DIVISION OF FIRST COMMONWEALTH BANK

Mr. Merhottein said this is for the lease-purchase of two boilers for the municipal building heating system and two rooftop HVAC units for the community center. This purchase was approved in the 2024 budget. Mr. Gallagher said the interest on this lease purchase is high and it would be more cost effective to purchase outright. Mr. Hudak said leases come with maintenance and other guarantees. He said Matt Miranda, PPIS Director, and Andy Freda, Finance Director, are well versed and trusts them to provide the board with their best recommendation. Solicitor Broughal reminded the board that this was a tax-exempt loan. Mr. Bruce said this was discussed during the budget process. Mr. Merhottein said he preferred to have money on hand rather than to purchase all the equipment up front.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Merhottein), the Board of Commissioners voted 3-1 by voice vote to table Resolution R024-24. Mr. Hudak opposed. Ms. Beatty was absent.

RESOLUTION R025-24 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSITION OF CERTAIN

MUNICIPAL PUBLIC RECORDS PURSUANT TO THE SCHEDULES AND PROCEDURES APPROVED THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPAL RECORDS ACT

Mr. Merhottein said this resolution pertains to finance records. A similar resolution was passed a few weeks ago for police records.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R025-24 authorizing the disposition of certain municipal public records pursuant to the schedules and procedures approved the Local Government Records Committee in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipal Records Act. Ms. Beatty was absent.

MOTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING A LETTER IN SUPPORT OF BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY'S APPLICATION FOR A FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT OF UP TO \$1 MILLION IN SUPPORT OF THE PURCHASE OF A NEW FIRETRUCK AND CONFIRMING THE TOWNSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO FUND THE REMAINDER OF THE PURCHASE

Mr. Merhottein said the Bethlehem Township Volunteer Fire Company is applying for a grant for the purchase of a new fire truck which was rescheduled for purchase this year. The board approved the accelerated purchase at its February 5th meeting.

Upon motion (Lawrence-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote approving and authorizing a letter in support of Bethlehem Township Volunteer Fire Company's application for a federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant of up to \$1 million in support of the purchase of a new firetruck and confirming the township's commitment to fund the remainder of the purchase. Ms. Beatty was absent.

MOTION

A MOTION APPROVING THE REVISED POLICY UPDATE TO THE BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION, MANUAL OF POLICY, AND RULES AND REGULATIONS

Mr. Merhottein said the revised policy updates were reviewed and approved by Chief Gottschall and Solicitor Broughal.

Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote approving the Revised Policy Update to the Bethlehem Township Police Department Organization, Manual of Policy, and Rules and Regulations. Ms. Beatty was absent.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH FIRST RESPONDER CHAPLAIN CORPS FOR POLICE COUNSELING SERVICES

Mr. Merhottein said the 2024 budget included chaplain and counseling services. Chief Gottschall recommended First Responder Chaplain Corp as provider of these services.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing the township manager to enter into an agreement with First Responder Chaplain Corps for police counseling services. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**APPROVAL OF
PURCHASE ORDERS**

PO 20240493 – CHOCOLATE WORKS LV – BTCC – \$2,070.00
PO 20240494 – ARNOLDS FAMILY FUN CENTER – BTCC – \$2,304.00
PO 20240501 – DEEP RUN AQUATIC SERVICES – BTCC – \$28,064.00
PO 20240533 – BERGEY’S – PW – \$2,694.28
PO 20240534 – JOE’S BATTERY & TIRE SERVICE – \$2,571.84
PO 20240588 – FIRST RESPONDER CHAPLAIN CORPS – \$10,000.00

**TOM KEEFER
3803 CARTER RD.**

Mr. Keefer, referring to purchase order 20240533, believes the repairs should be done by the township mechanics.

**PAUL
WEGRZYNOWICZ
4147 WALTER RD.**

Mr. Wegrzynowicz believes the jets in the hot tub at the community center do not have enough pressure and suggested the pumps be moved or improved.

Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve all the purchases orders as presented. Ms. Beatty was absent.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

**NANCY RUN FIRE
COMPANY ENGINE
PAYMENT OPTIONS**

Mr. Bruce said that at a previous meeting, the board agreed to move up the purchase of a new Nancy Run Fire Company firetruck and asked staff to present a breakdown of payment options. He said he and Finance Director Andy Freda believed that a down payment of 50% yielded a greater savings of \$63,000. Mr. Hudak thanked Mr. Bruce and Mr. Freda for their research. Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Merhottein agreed that a 25% down payment was a better option. Mr. Hudak disagreed and commented that if the board was going to question the finance director, then he should be invited to the meeting. Mr. Bruce said it would have been better if the board contacted him with any questions or concerns prior to the meeting.

**MARIA SILVA
9TH STREET**

Ms. Silva asked if this lease was at a fixed interest rate. Mr. Merhottein said it was.

Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted 3-1 by voice vote to go with the Finance Director’s recommendation to pay 50% of the purchase price up front. Mr. Gallagher opposed. Ms. Beatty was absent.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata
Recording Secretary