

**BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
APRIL 15, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT John Merhottein, President
John Gallagher, Vice President
Jan Beatty, Commissioner
Michael Hudak, Commissioner

MEMBERS ABSENT DeAnn Lawrence, Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT James L. Broughal, Township Solicitor (virtual)
Anthony Giovannini, Township Solicitor
Ron Gawlik, Township Engineer
Doug Bruce, Township Manager
Amanda Jensen, Community Development Director
John Bartholomew, Assistant PPIS Director

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

ANNOUNCEMENT Solicitor Giovannini said the Board of Commissioners had met at 6:30 p.m. for minutes this evening in executive session to discuss a matter related to litigation pursuant to Section 708a of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

THOMAS KEEFER, 3803 CARTER ROAD Mr. Keefer asked if filter bags had been installed in the stormwater inlets at the Wawa construction site on Nazareth Pike. Ms. Jensen answered “yes.”

Mr. Keefer said there was a pedestrian accident Sunday on Freemansburg Avenue and that traffic speed is a problem on the road. Mr. Merhottein said the pedestrian accident was not caused by speeding and was actually a low-speed accident.

Mr. Keefer said too many township employees don’t live in the township and some don’t even live in Pennsylvania, and these employees are making too many decisions instead of the elected officials.

STEVE HUNT, 2197 COOK DRIVE Mr. Hunt asked about a matter he raised at the last meeting -- the silt fence around the stormwater collection pond on Emrick Boulevard by Dealtrey Drive, which connects to Madison Farms. Ms. Jensen said she had reached out to the Northampton County Conservation District about the matter and had not received a response. She said she had also contacted the developer who said the fence had been disrupted for a time by a fallen PPL pole.

Mr. Hunt asked if there was information available about the Johnston mansion. He said the mansion had been discussed at public meetings but he was wondering if there was a plan he could review. Mr. Gallagher said there was a conceptual plan for the interior renovation of the mansion. Mr. Gallagher said he would send Mr. Hunt information on the next meeting of the Archie Project, the private nonprofit organization raising money for the mansion’s renovation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Gallagher said the reference in the draft minutes to a “silk” fence should be changed to a “silt” fence. Upon motion (Gallagher-Beatty), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the April 1, 2024, regular public meeting minutes as amended.

SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE PULLING OF THE DEFERRAL FOR INSTALLATION OF SIDEWALK ASSOCIATED WITH THE LVIP VI, LOT 43, DEVELOPMENT ALONG EMRICK BOULEVARD AND DEALTREY DRIVE.

Ms. Jensen said the developer of LVIP VI, Lot 43, received a deferral for the installation of sidewalks when the project was approved in 2018. He said the property immediately to the north was granted approval and will be installing sidewalks, and there are sidewalks on Dealtrey Drive up to the property line.

Upon motion (Hudak-Beatty), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the motion as presented.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER TO ADVERTISE AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 131, FIRE PREVENTION, OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BETHLEHEM’S CODE OF CODIFIED ORDINANCES, ADOPTING THE 2018 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE, AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT HERewith.

Mr. Merhottein said the Township Fire Marshal has recommended the adoption of the 2018 International Fire Code.

Upon motion (Hudak-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the motion as presented.

MOTION

A MOTION APPROVING IMPROVEMENTS SECURITY RELEASE #2, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$260,412.35, FOR 3608 NAZARETH PIKE (LEISER’S WAWA).

Mr. Merhottein said this was a standard security release based on work completed by the developer and the release of \$260,412.35 would leave a balance of \$39,974.00.

Upon motion (Beatty-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the motion as presented.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION R029-24 AUTHORIZING, EMPOWERING, AND DIRECTING THE PROPER OFFICERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPOINT A LIAISON BETWEEN IT AND BERKHEIMER, THE DULY APPOINTED COLLECTOR OF LOCAL TAXES FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF BETHLEHEM, FOR THE EXPRESS

PURPOSE OF SHARING CONFIDENTIAL TAX INFORMATION WITH THE DISTRICT FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES.

Mr. Merhottein said this was a procedural resolution replacing Andy Freda, finance director, as liaison with the positions of finance director and assistant finance director.

Upon motion (Beatty-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the resolution as presented, appointing the finance director and assistant finance director as liaisons.

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION R030-24 APPROVING A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE COVID-19 ARPA PA MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROGRAM.

Mr. Merhottein said this was a new state grant opportunity offering \$45 million for construction of community facilities and the manager was recommending a grant request of \$2 million, the maximum allowed, for the Johnston mansion interior renovation project.

Mr. Gallagher said the most recent cost estimate for a reduced-scope project came in at \$1.3 million. He said the township's chances to receive the grant might be better if the request was for \$1.5 million.

Mr. Bruce said the board had approved a different state grant application in January based on a cost estimate of \$2.2 million. He said, since the project has been delayed due to lack of funding, his recommendation was to ask for the maximum grant amount of \$2 million.

Upon motion (Hudak-Beatty), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the resolution as presented, with the requested grant amount of \$2 million.

MOTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAM AGREEMENT WITH MED LICENSING PLUS.

Mr. Merhottein said this agreement related to a personnel matter, details of which could not be discussed in public.

Upon motion (Hudak-Beatty), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the motion as presented.

BILL AGENDA OF APRIL 10, 2024

Upon motion, the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the bill agenda as presented.

PURCHASE ORDERS

- 1. PO 20240820 – Trans-Bridge – BTCC – \$4,481.59**
- 2. PO 20240832 – U.S. Municipal Supply – PW – \$7,540.35**
- 3. PO 20240923 – Agentis Plumbing – PPIS – \$2,277.00**
- 4. PO 20240938 – Glick Fire Equipment – BTVFC EMS – \$5,816.61**
- 5. PO 20240939 – Metz – BTCC – \$7,280**

6. PO 20240944 – TMI Allentown – BTCC – \$2,500.00

Mr. Gallagher asked about the long-term plan related to Purchase Order #3 paying a plumbing company to clean out “sagging” sewer pipes in the community center.

Mr. Bruce said the PPIS department is regularly checking and cleaning the pipes on a monthly basis. He said the long-term fix is to replace the pipes and the surrounding material, which will require digging through the floor of the BTCC lobby in certain places, necessitating closure of the facility for several days. Mr. Bruce said PPIS and BTCC staff are working to schedule that project at a time that will be least disruptive of BTCC events and programming.

Mr. Hudak asked how the BTCC lobby would be repaired after the work and whether the repairs would take away from the aesthetic quality of the lobby floor. Mr. Bartholomew said most of the digging would be behind the front desk and not in the main lobby.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve all purchase orders as presented.

**TREASURER’S
REPORT OF MARCH
31, 2024**

Upon motion (Hudak-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to approve the treasurer’s report, subject to audit.

**ZONING HEARING
BOARD MEETING
OF APRIL 24, 2024**

Ms. Jensen said there were four appeals scheduled. Mr. Bruce said the staff was not recommending the board oppose any of the appeals, but he asked the board to direct the solicitor to attend the meeting to advise staff as needed.

Upon motion (Beatty-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-0 by voice vote to direct the solicitor to attend the April 24 zoning hearing board meeting.

MONTHLY REPORTS

There were no comments on the monthly reports.

Mr. Merhottein asked the manager when the new playground at the municipal park would be opening. Mr. Bruce said the facility would open when the recently planted grass was stable and able to handle substantial foot traffic. The target opening date was early May, he said.

Mr. Hudak said the River Hill Estates development was substantially done and asked when the wearing coat would be placed on the roads by the developer. Ms. Jensen said that would likely happen this spring, but she needed to check further.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Bruce
Township Manager