

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING**

JANUARY 16, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT

John J. Merhottein, President
John K. Gallagher, Vice President
Jan Beatty, Commissioner
Dale A. Sourbeck, Commissioner
Luke A. Verdes, Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT

James L. Broughal, Township Solicitor
Doug Bruce, Township Manager
Ron Gawlik, The Pidcock Company, Township Engineer
Matt Miranda, PPIS Director
Amanda Raudenbush, Community Development Director

CALL TO ORDER

President Merhottein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Solicitor Broughal announced that on Monday, January 16, 2023, the Board of Commissioners met in executive session at approximately 6:30 p.m. to 6:55 p.m. to discuss personnel issues pursuant to Section 708a of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION R011-23 HONORING STEVE HUNSBERGER FOR 46 YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT WITH BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP

Mr. Merhottein read the resolution aloud. Upon motion (Sourbeck, Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the resolution. Mr. Merhottein presented a signed copy of the resolution to Mr. Hunsberger.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

**PAUL WEISS
3649 CHIPMAN ROAD**

Mr. Weiss, a Zoning Hearing Board member and former commissioner, said his comments were in reaction to the authority/board/commissioner appointments at the board's January 3 meeting. He said he was surprised to hear commissioners asking about interviewing potential appointees; he said he was interviewed by two commissioners when he first applied for an appointment in 1987 and later interviewed many candidates when he was a commissioner.

Mr. Weiss read a social media post of Commissioner Verdes seeking for these appointments people who were opposed to "unwanted development." "It sounds like you are not looking to engage people who are interested in the community, but rather people who have an agenda," Mr. Weiss said. He said he was disappointed that several longtime appointees had not been reappointed.

**ROD LAW
4210 ANTHONY DRIVE**

Mr. Law, a Zoning Hearing Board member, said he agreed with Mr. Weiss's comments and was also upset at the recent appointments. He said there may be a lack of understanding among current commissioners of the role of the Zoning Hearing Board. "When you folks start to interfere with our role, in my opinion you are doing a disservice to the township," he said.

TOM KEEFER

3803 CARTER ROAD

Mr. Keefer said he agreed with Mr. Weiss and Mr. Law. He said the way the commissioners looked whole voting for appointments at the January 3 meeting “was not good.”

Mr. Keefer said the speed of traffic on Carter Road has become “outrageous,” particularly westbound traffic and particularly at in the morning when high school students are driving to school.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bruce said the January 3 meeting minutes had been delayed and were not ready for review.

SUBDIVISIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT

MOTION

A MOTION APPROVING IMPROVEMENT SECURITY RELEASE CERTIFICATION #7, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$450,177.32, FOR TRADITIONS OF AMERICA AT GREEN POND.

Mr. Merhottein noted for the record the security release amount was substantially different than the number listed on the original meeting agenda.

Upon motion (Sourbeck, Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the motion.

MOTION

A MOTION APPROVING THE STANDARD CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS OF BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP.

Mr. Gawlick, township engineer, said the township had to occasionally update its standard construction documents, which govern how developers construct public improvements such as roads and curbs. These documents are referred to in agreements between the township and developers, he said.

**ROD LAW
4210 ANTHONY DRIVE**

Mr. Law asked if these documents were negotiable. Mr. Gawlik said no.

Upon motion (Gallagher, Sourbeck), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the motion.

MOTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH MKSD ARCHITECTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES RELATED TO ROOF REPLACEMENT AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND PARK PAVILIONS.

Mr. Bruce said the administration recommended signing an agreement with MKSD to prepare construction specifications, to manage the public bidding process, and to provide construction oversight for these roofing projects. He said the remaining roof work at the municipal building was budgeted at \$327,000 and the two pavilion rooves were budgeted at \$75,000.

**BARRY ROTH
4323 CHETWIN TERRACE**

Mr. Roth said the condition of the rooves was obvious and there didn't need to be another study done about it. Mr. Bruce said the proposed agreement did not include a roofing study, but rather dealt with preparing for public bidding of the project and

construction oversight.

**GLENN KRIER
3942 KENWICK DRIVE**

Mr. Krier asked what was the lifespan of the current and new roofs. PPIS director Matt Miranda said the current municipal building roof, installed in 1998, had a 25-year lifespan. The new roof would also be expected to last 25 years, he said.

Upon motion (Sourbeck, Beatty), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the motion.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THAT STEVE HUNSBERGER BE GRANTED A LATE RETIREMENT WITH 100% JOINT AND SURVIVOR BENEFIT FROM THE NON-UNIFORM PENSION FUND, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2023.

Upon motion (Beatty, Sourbeck), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the motion.

**APPROVAL OF
BILL AGENDA OF
JANUARY 11, 2023**

Upon motion (Beatty, Sourbeck), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the bill agenda

**2023 BLANKET
PURCHASE ORDERS**

Mr. Bruce said the blanket purchase orders are for vendors and other organizations the township pays on a regular basis. Mr. Sourbeck asked if these payments were in the township budget. Mr. Bruce said yes, they are from approved line items in the budget. Mr. Gallagher said he assumed the numbers were projections and the actual numbers might come in slightly higher or lower. Mr. Bruce said yes and noted the township was not obligated in any way to pay the vendors the given amounts. Mr. Verdes asked if the board would be notified if there were significant overcharges on these purchase orders. Mr. Bruce said yes.

Upon motion (Beatty, Sourbeck), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the 2023 blanket purchase orders.

PURCHASE ORDERS

- 1. 20230004 – Vermont Systems – BTCC – \$13,343.11**
- 2. PO 20230015 – Valley Industrial Rubber Products – PW – \$2,160.00**
- 3. PO 20230018 – McCann Associates – BTPD – \$2,132.67**
- 4. PO 20230022 – DBM Consulting – BTPD – \$5,950.00**
- 5. PO 20230037 – Intelice Solutions – Finance – \$27,950.00**
- 6. PO 20230101 – Chemung Supply Corp. – PW – \$2,814.24**
- 7. PO 20230102 – MKSD – PPIS – \$18,800.00**
- 8. PO 20230103 – Networking Matters – PPIS – \$49,917.10**
- 9. PO 20230104 – iWorQ – PPIS – \$16,000.00**
- 10. PO 20230106 – Koch 33 Ford Toyota – CD – \$38,845.00**
- 11. PO 20230113 – Amusement Restoration Co. – BTCC – \$15,989.00**
- 12. PO 20230129 – Chapman Auto Group – PW – \$71,095.00**
- 13. PO 20230130 – Chapman Auto Group – PW – \$78,820.00**
- 14. PO 20230131 – U.S. Municipal Supply – PW – \$34,299.00**
- 15. PO 20230132 – U.S. Municipal Supply – PW – \$58,247.05**

Regarding Purchase Order No. 10, for a new vehicle for the community development department, Mr. Gallagher said he would prefer the administration refurbish an older township vehicle, such as the old police vehicles stored at the yard-waste center. He said even a \$20,000 refurbishment cost would be better than spending \$38,000 on a new vehicle. Mr. Gallagher asked the manager to provide information on refurbishment costs for these vehicles.

BARRY ROTH
4323 CHETWIN TERRACE

Mr. Roth said he agreed with Mr. Gallagher. He said the township spends too much money on new vehicles and does not get enough use out of its existing vehicles.

Mr. Gallagher made a motion to approve all purchase orders except No. 10. Mr. Sourbeck seconded the motion. The Board of Commissioners voted 4-0-1 by voice vote to approve this motion. Ms. Beatty abstained.

Ms. Beatty asked what was the disposition of Purchase Order No. 10. Mr. Bruce said that, as the board has specifically taken no action on it, the community development staff would continue to use a 20-year-old vehicle that was recently in for maintenance. Ms. Raudenbush said the proposed new vehicle had been included in the 2023 budget, had been discussed at budget hearings, and was a replacement for a vehicle that was totaled in a collision last year.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Upon motion (Sourbeck, Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the treasurer's report of December 31, 2022, subject to audit.

ZONING HEARING
BOARD MEETING

Ms. Raudenbush said the Zoning Hearing Board was scheduled to meet January 25, 2023, with Windrift Real Estate Associates seeking dimensional variances for eight residential lots. She said the Zoning Hearing Board would also be meeting February 7 to hear the Harvey's Corner validity challenge. If that hearing ran long, it will be continued February 15, she said.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Gallagher complimented Chief Gottschall on providing an extremely detailed monthly police report, including information on several serious crimes that show Bethlehem Township is not immune to such problems.

Mr. Gallagher thanked the administration for the new spreadsheet on wages/salaries being charged to the general, sewer, and stormwater funds. He said the information should be incorporated into the normal monthly reports so as not to add another layer of difficulty in finding the information.

Mr. Gallagher said he would like to see consolidated information on community center attendance to compare pre-pandemic number to current data.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

TOWNSHIP VEHICLE
PLAN

Mr. Verdes said he would like to see the staff and the Environmental Advisory Council research what electric and hybrid vehicles are available for municipal use, what funding sources are available for such vehicles, and how they would fit in to a five- to 10-year vehicle plan.

Mr. Gallagher said a long-term plan, to include electric vehicles and hybrids, should be developed for non-emergency vehicles.

By consensus, the Board of Commissioners directed staff and the Environmental Advisory Council to put together a long-term vehicle plan to include electric and hybrid vehicles.

Mr. Sourbeck read an email received from Mr. Gallagher stating Mr. Sourbeck should recuse himself from voting on purchases of Ford vehicles because Mr. Sourbeck is former Ford employee, current pensioner, and receives a substantial discount when buying Ford products.

Mr. Sourbeck said he retired from Ford 28 years ago and the company bought out
01-16-2023

his pension around 15 years ago, so Mr. Gallagher's email is inaccurate. Mr. Gallagher said the email was based on a conversation with Mr. Sourbeck, who disputed that statement.

SOLAR PANELS

Mr. Verdes said, similar to his thoughts on electric vehicles, he would like to see staff and the Environmental Advisory Council explore solar energy options and funding for township facilities.

By consensus, the Board of Commissioners directed staff and the Environmental Advisory Council to explore and report on solar energy options and funding for township facilities.

JOHNSTON MANSION COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Bruce said late commissioner Malissa Davis had served for many years on the township's ad hoc committee for the Johnston mansion. He asked if the board would consider appointing her successor on the committee. Mr. Sourbeck said he would like to serve on the committee.

By consensus, the Board of Commissioners appointed Commissioner Sourbeck to serve on the Johnston Mansion committee.

COOLIDGE BUILDING LIBRARY

Mr. Sourbeck said he had spoken to the Coolidge Building librarian and she was interested in locating photos of the "old days" in Bethlehem Township. The photos would be hung on the walls of the library.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Bruce
Township Manager