

**BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
OCTOBER 16, 2023**

- MEMBERS PRESENT** John J. Merhottein, President
John K. Gallagher, Vice President
DeAnn L. Lawrence, Commissioner
Luke A. Verdes, Commissioner
- MEMBERS ABSENT** Jan Beatty, Commissioner
- OTHERS PRESENT** James L. Broughal, Township Solicitor
Doug Bruce, Township Manager
Amanda L. Jensen, Community Development Director
Ronald J. 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 announced that on Monday, October 16, 2023, the Board of Commissioners met in executive session at 6:00 pm for approximately 40 minutes to discuss matters pursuant to Section 708a of the Pennsylvania sunshine act.
- ADDITION TO THE AGENDA** Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to add a resolution authorizing applications to the Local Share Account (Northampton/Lehigh Counties and Monroe County) Grant Programs of the Commonwealth Financing Authority. Ms. Beatty was absent.
- ANNOUNCEMENT** Mr. Merhottein announced that Resolution R062-23 was removed from the agenda at the request of the applicant.
- PRESENTATION** **UPDATE ON IMPROVEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF FREEMANSBURG AVENUE AND FARMERSVILLE ROAD – JASON BESZ, PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**
- Jason Besz of PennDOT gave an overview of the Farmersville Road and Freemansburg Avenue realignment project and proposed improvements. He said in the past year surveyance, deed research, design, traffic counts and analysis were done. PennDOT has obtained federal funding for the and has budgeted money for all phases of the project. They propose advertising for bids in 2025 and beginning the work in 2026/2027, with project completion in 2027. Display boards of the project were made available to the public in the lobby of the municipal building.
- Mr. Verdes thanked Mr. Besz for the update. He asked where the money for the project would come from. Mr. Besz said it is in the PennDOT budget. Mr. Gallagher asked if there was any chance the money would be used for something else. Mr. Besz said the money is programmed for this project. Mr. Merhottein said that is a huge relief for the township and thanked Ms. Besz for the update.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

**BARRY ROTH
4323 CHETWIN TERR.**

Mr. Roth said the recycling center is starting to look like a dump. He believes items that are not in use by the township should be sold.

**MARK STEIN
BETHLEHEM AREA
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Mr. Stein said the school district owns a property on the corner of Freemansburg Avenue and Farmersville Road and may have a school built on it in the future. He said he was glad to see that the intersection will be improved.

**KATHY SOFIE
2151 FARMERSVILLE
ROAD**

Ms. Sofie said her property is in a cul-de-sac near the intersection and asked who will take care of that area in the winter. Mr. Bruce said the township clears the roads in the cul-de-sacs when they are owned by the township. Mr. Gawlik said it is not clear at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion (Gallagher-Verdes), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the October 2, 2023 regular public meeting minutes as amended. Ms. Beatty was absent.

SUBDIVISIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT

MOTION

A MOTION APPROVING IMPROVEMENT SECURITY RELEASE CERTIFICATION #11, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$206,041.20, FOR RIVER HILL ESTATES

Mr. Gallagher asked if the property line issue was resolved. Ms. Jensen said it was but there was still some confusion as to the fence placement which doesn't impact the township.

Upon motion (Lawrence-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Improvement Security Release Certification #11, in the amount of \$206,041.20, for River Hill Estates. Ms. Beatty was absent.

MOTION

A MOTION APPROVING IMPROVEMENT SECURITY RELEASE CERTIFICATION #3, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$91,246.10, FOR BIRCHES OF BETHLEHEM

Upon motion (Gallagher-Verdes), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Improvement Security Release Certification #3, in the amount of \$91,246.10, for Birches of Bethlehem. Ms. Beatty was absent.

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A HOLD HARMLESS INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP AND WILSON LOPEZ AND ARIANNA LOPEZ RELATED TO A FENCE TO BE BUILT AT 2505 6TH STREET

Upon motion (Lawrence-Verdes), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to authorize and approve a hold harmless indemnification agreement between Bethlehem Township and Wilson Lopez and Arianna Lopez related to a fence to be built at 2505 6th Street. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**RESOLUTIONS OF
THE BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

**RESOLUTION R066-23 A RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION R015-04 ESTABLISHING
AUTHORIZED SIGNERS FOR TOWNSHIP DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS**

Mr. Merhottein said this resolution authorizes the Assistant Finance Director to be an additional signer for township deposit accounts.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approved Resolution R059-23 amending Resolution R015-04 establishing authorized signers for township deposit accounts. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**RESOLUTION R067-23 A RESOLUTION APPOINTING DELEGATES TO THE NORTHAMPTON
COUNTY TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE**

Upon motion (Lawrence-Verdes), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approving Resolution R067-23 appointing delegates to the Northampton County Tax Collection Committee. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**RESOLUTION R068-23 A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A REVISION TO THE OFFICIAL SEWAGE
FACILITIES PLAN OF THE TOWNSHIP WHICH INCLUDES AN ACT 537
PLANNING SPECIAL STUDY**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R068-23 adopting a revision to the official sewage facilities plan of the township which includes an Act 537 planning special study. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**RESOLUTION R069-23 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATIONS TO THE LOCAL
SHARE ACCOUNT (NORTHAMPTON/LEHIGH COUNTIES AND
MONROE COUNTY) GRANT PROGRAMS OF THE COMMONWEALTH
FINANCING AUTHORITY**

Upon motion (Lawrence-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve Resolution R069-23 authorizing applications to the Local Share Account (Northampton/Lehigh Counties and Monroe County) Grant Programs of the Commonwealth Financing Authority. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**BILL AGENDA OF
OCTOBER 11, 2023**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Verdes), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the bill agenda of October 11, 2023 as presented. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**APPROVAL OF
PURCHASE ORDERS**

PO 20232511 – KEYSTONE HARLEY-DAVIDSON – BTPD – \$2,334.77
PO 20232524 – KOPIS – FINANCE – \$110,340.00
PO 20232539 – LOWE AND MOYER GARAGE – PW – \$4,329.72
PO 20232540 – VALLEY INDUST. RUBBER PRODUCTS – PW – \$2,460.00
PO 20232541 – GROFF TRACTOR & EQUIPMENT – PW – \$7,538.84

Mr. Gallagher questioned purchase order 20232524, for new financial software, which was over the budgeted amount of \$50,000. Mr. Bruce said the finance and IT departments, when investigating new financial software, found a solution that included more features than originally planned.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Verdes), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the purchase orders as presented. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**TREASURER'S
REPORT OF
OCTOBER 31, 2023**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the treasurer's report of October 31, 2023, subject to audit. Ms. Beatty was absent.

**ZONING HEARING
BOARD MEETING OF
OCTOBER 25, 2023**

Ms. Jensen said two new hearings were on the agenda.

MONTHLY REPORTS

All monthly reports were accepted.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Ms. Beatty was absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata
Recording Secretary