

**BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
JANUARY 19, 2026**

MEMBERS PRESENT John Merhottein, President
John Gallagher, Vice President
Matthew Deckman, Commissioner
Michael Hudak, Commissioner
DeAnn Lawrence, Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT Anthony Giovannini Jr., Township Solicitor
Doug Bruce, Township Manager
Samantha Smith, 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.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

**TOM KEEFER
3803 CARTER RD.** Mr. Keefer reported that the snow blowing around continues to shut down a portion of Carter Road and that one of the township snowplows took out a mailbox. Other than that, he said, the township did a fantastic job of plowing the streets.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the January 5, 2026, meeting minutes as presented.

**SUBDIVISIONS
& LAND
DEVELOPMENT**

RESOLUTION R022-26 A RESOLUTION GRANTING SITE PLAN APPROVAL OF DLUX PROPERTIES LLC SITE PLAN

The applicant is proposing to use the existing building as a financial services office at 3452 Easton Avenue. The property is located in the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Commercial Enhancement Overlay Districts. A deferral for required streetscape improvements was granted, along with land development approval of the property, in 2008. Ms. Smith said the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval, subject to all the township professional review letters, at their December 16, 2025, meeting. Staff also recommends approval.

Mr. Gallagher noted that the Zoning Hearing Board waived a lot of things but not the number of tree plantings. The township could require five trees. Ms. Smith said she would look into it. Mr. Gallagher noted the fence is shown only on the frontage. Ms. Smith said they received a variance for that as well. The applicant said the street edge is a combination of fence and building. Mr. Gallagher disagreed.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted 4-1 by voice vote approve Resolution R022-26 granting site plan approval of DLUX Properties LLC Site Plan. Mr. Gallagher opposed.

MOTION

A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE STAFF AND SOLICITOR TO MOVE THE PROPOSED CONVENIENCE STORE ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT FOR ADOPTION, AND AUTHORIZE ADVERTISEMENT OF A PUBLIC HEARING RELATED THERETO

Mr. Merhottein said the Zoning Ordinance text amendment would update regulations for convenience stores with gas stations. Ms. Smith said staff was satisfied with the proposal. Mr. Gallagher asked how many properties are affected by this change. Ms. Smith said there are approximately six properties and added that the proposal modernizes the regulations. Mr. Gallagher said the amended language in Section 2 limits convenience store hours. That meant only stores with unlimited hours would reap the benefits. Ms. Smith said the amendment did not have that effect. Mr. Gallagher said the language didn't make sense and needs to be reviewed again. Mr. Hudak said there is only one place on Freemansburg Avenue a gas station and convenience store can be developed and added that he supported the changes. Mr. Merhottein agreed and said the other six places were all developed.

Upon motion (Hudak-Deckman), the board of commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing the staff and solicitor to move the proposed convenience store zoning ordinance text amendment for adoption and authorize advertisement of a public hearing related thereto.

MOTION

A MOTION TO ESTABLISH A 2027 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE AND APPOINTMENT OF 10 MEMBERS, AS RECOMMENDED BY STAFF

Ms. Smith said the Comprehensive Plan is updated every ten years and for previous updates the board had appointed a steering committee. She requested the board to appoint two of commissioners to the committee. The first meeting is scheduled for February to keep in line with the project schedule, she said.

BARRY ROTH
4323 CHETWIN TERR.

Mr. Roth the last committee had two representatives from the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commission. He said he didn't see anyone from the Recreation Commission on the current list. Ms. Smith said members of the Recreation Board were invited more than once. Mr. Deckman asked if the meetings were open to the public. Ms. Smith said they were. Mr. Hudak said the Recreation Commission reviewed the last plan and submitted their recommendations to the board which accepted many of them. He believes Ms. Smith has done her due diligence in recruiting members to serve on the committee. Mr. Merhottein nominated Mr. Deckman and Ms. Lawrence to serve on the committee.

Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote approving the 2027 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and appointment of 10 members, as recommended by staff, and Commissioners Lawrence and Deckman.

MOTION

A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ADVERTISEMENT AND SCHEDULING OF A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT UCC CODE UPDATES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMONWEALTH ADOPTION OF THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE (IBC) AND 2021 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE (IRC), AS AMENDED AND EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026

Ms. Smith said the state is always three years behind on code adoptions. She said she wanted to start the adoption process now to make the code updates effective February of this year. This would keep them in line with the state schedule.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing advertisement and scheduling of a public hearing to adopt UCC Code updates in conjunction with the Commonwealth adoption of the 2021 International Building Code (IBC) and 2021 International Residential Code (IRC), as amended and effective January 1, 2026.

MOTION

A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ADVERTISEMENT AND SCHEDULING OF A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE (IPMC), AS AMENDED

Ms. Smith said she wants the the adoption schedule to run concurrent with the state's schedule.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing advertisement and scheduling of a public hearing to adopt the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), as amended.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION R021-25 A RESOLUTION APPOINTING A TAX COLLECTOR

Mr. Merhottein said John Petro was elected Tax Collector but resigned. The board has 30 days to replace him. He said Todd Kowalski, former Tax Collector, expressed interest in the appointment.

Upon motion (Hudak-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote adopt Resolution R021-25 appointing Todd Kowalski Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION R023-25 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ATTENDANCE OF CORPORAL GRETCHEN KRAEMER, INVESTIGATOR LARISSA GWOZDZ AND OFFICER SARAH ZIELINKSI AT THE TECHNICAL COLLISION INVESTIGATION TRAINING, HOSTED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE ON JANUARY 26-30, 2026 & FEBRUARY 2-6, 2026, IN AUDUBON, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. Merhottein said this was a standard police training resolution and a budgeted item.

Upon motion (Lawrence-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote adopt Resolution R023-25 authorizing the attendance of Corporal Gretchen Kraemer, Investigator Larissa Gwozdz and Officer Sarah Zielinski at the Technical Collision Investigation Training, hosted by the Pennsylvania State Police on January 26-30, 2026 & February 2-6, 2026 in Audubon, Pennsylvania.

MOTIONS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MOTION

A MOTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A RIGHT-OF-WAY GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP AND PPL ELECTRIC UTILITIES CORPORATION (TABLED IN NOVEMBER 2025)

Mr. Hudak said he would like to keep it tabled.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to untable the motion.

Mr. Gawlik said the agreement is for an additional utility support pole for safety within the street right-of-way.

Upon motion (Gallagher-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote authorizing and approving a right-of-way grant agreement between Bethlehem Township and PPL Electric Utilities Corporation.

**BILL AGENDA OF
JANUARY 14, 2026**

Upon motion (Lawrence-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the bill agenda of January 14, 2026.

PURCHASE ORDERS

PO 20260004 – M & J Outdoor Service – PW – \$10,950.00
PO 20260008 – Vermont Systems Inc. – BTCC – \$15,992.69
PO 20260029 – Breakthrough Concepts, LLC – PPIS - \$4,200.00
PO 20260030 – Signal Service Inc. – BTPD – \$3,565.00
PO 20260031 – Signal Service Inc. – BTPD – \$2,300.00
PO 20260047 – Bethlehem Twp. Athletic Assoc. – Finance – \$50,255.00
PO 20260048 – BTVFC – Finance – \$495,133.00
PO 20260049 – FBT Athletic Assoc. – \$53,000.00
PO 20260050 – Miracle League – Finance – \$5,000.00
PO 20260051 – NRFC – Finance – \$294,000.00
PO 20260058 – Hi-Tech Security Alarms Inc. – PPIS – \$13,950.00
PO 20260059 – Computing Technologies LLC – PPIS – \$31,944.76
PO 20260060 – Computing Technologies LLC – PPIS – \$7,701.71
PO 20260063 – Hi-Tech Security Alarms Inc. – PPIS – \$23,702.50
PO 20260064 – Hi-Tech Security Alarms Inc. – PPIS – \$16,509.00
PO 20260068 – ACR Products – Public Works – \$6,300.00
PO 20260069 – PA Steel Co. Inc. – Public Works – \$4,147.68
PO 20260070 – TP Trailers Inc. – Public Works – \$5,810.20
PO 20260097 – Axon Enterprises – BTPD – \$39,412.04
PO 20260098 – City of Allentown – BTPD – \$6,000.00
PO 20260121 – Joao & Bradley Construction – PPIS – \$23,527.01
PO 20260131 – Groff Tractor & Equipment – PW – \$3,814.14
PO 20260132 – Stephenson Equipment – PW – \$3,475.90
PO 20260133 – Groff Tractor & Equipment – PW – \$2,940.41
PO 20260134 – Winter Engine-Generator Service – PPIS – \$3,744.00
PO 20260135 – Kappe Associates – PPIS – \$3,295.00
PO 20260146 – Trane U.S. – PPIS – \$13,260.00
PO 20260147 – Environ. Planning & Design – Comm. Development – \$8,909.18
PO 20260158 – Elite Vehicle Solutions – Police – \$9,546.01
PO 20260159 – Chapman Auto Group – Police – \$48,999.00
PO 20260160 – Leonardo US Cyber & Sec. Solutions, LLC – Police - \$16,305.00
PO 20260161 – Aimpoint Inc. – Police – \$9,982.00
PO 20260163 – Trius, Inc. – PW – \$119,939.00
PO 20260164 – Transedge Truck CTRS – \$169,168.00

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

**2026 BLANKET
PURCHASE ORDERS**

Upon motion (Lawrence-Gallagher), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to the 2026 Blanket Purchase Orders as presented.

**TREASURER'S
REPORT OF
DECEMBER 31, 2025**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Deckman), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the treasurer's report of December 31, 2025, subject to audit.

**ZONING HEARING
BOARD MEETING
OF JANUARY 28, 2026**

Ms. Smith noted the following items on the agenda and said the staff recommended opposition to Appeal 01-2026:

Appeal 01-2026 – Julie Fogt, Stephen Fogt & Teresa Fogt / 3399 Darien Road – Appeal of zoning determination that first 20 feet of driveway from Darien Road be no more than 7% slope. Alternatively seeking variance allowing an 11% grade for the first 20 feet.

Appeal 02-2026 – Dunne Manning Investments LP / 3908-3918 Chipman Road (aka St. Francis Friary) – Seeking special exception use to operate a boardinghouse at the property. Boardinghouse to be used as part of the non-profit organization 'Bloom for Women.' Applicant also seeking variance to allow for a maximum of 30 residents associated with the boardinghouse. Zoning ordinance only permits for a maximum of 20 residents.

Appeal 03-2026 – William Claypool / 3326 Lewis Ave – Seeking dimensional variances for a principal structure side yard and rear yard setback. New home was constructed within required setbacks.

Appeal 04-2026 – Dewberry Engineering Inc on behalf of Walmart / 3926 Nazareth Pike – Seeking variance from signage requirements to allow for a total of 27 public service signs with 14 of these same signs being larger than 2 square feet in size. Walmart is proposing to add designated Online Pickup and Delivery parking spaces and the public service signs are to be used for these designated parking spaces.

Upon motion (Deckman-Lawrence), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to send the township solicitor to the Zoning Hearing Board meeting to advise staff and to oppose Appeal 01-2026, as necessary.

MONTHLY REPORTS

All monthly reports were accepted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

**PORTABLE
BATHROOM TRAILER**

Mr. Merhottein said the trailer was previously kept at the North Forty and used by the Bulldogs who were also responsible for cleaning them. Unfortunately, the facilities were vandalized and expensive to repair. Mr. Merhottein said he wanted to keep it but didn't know what to do with it. Mr. Gallagher thought it could be moved around and used for other events. Mr. Deckman asked how many times it was used. Mr. Merhottein said it was used for about five years for summer camps but was too costly to maintain and insure. It is much easier to get porta-potties. Mr. Merhottein said PPIS recommended placing it on Municibid with a reserve price of \$35,000.

Upon motion (Merhottein-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to sell the bathroom trailer on Municibid.

**APPOINTMENT OF
COMMISSIONER TO
INTERNAL**

Mr. Merhottein said he was no longer able to serve on the committee. Mr. Deckman said he was interested in serving.

**STORMWATER
COMMITTEE**

Upon motion (Gallagher-Hudak), the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously by voice vote to appoint Commissioner Deckman to the Internal Stormwater Committee.

COMMENDATION

Mr. Hudak said public works did a great job of clearing the roads with the back-to-back snowstorms.

**RESIDENT
MADISON FARMS**

The resident said she was 14 years old and lives in Madison Farms. She expressed concern about the hazardous road conditions in her neighborhood including Cook Drive, caused by the snowstorm. Mr. Hudak said the township has a contract with a snow removal company to handle plowing in the development if more than four inches of snow have fallen. Mr. Bruce said he will follow up.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Merhottein adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G. Zapata
Recording Secretary