

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

April 11, 2023

7:00 p.m.

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport Pa. 18088. Chairman Mike Jones called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Cindy Miller
David Hess
Phil Gogel
Jerry Pritchard (via telephone)
Mike Jones
Attorney David Backenstoe
Mike Muffley
Alice Rehrig
Liz Amato
Scott Fogel
Frank Zamadics

- II. CANDIDATE INTRODUCTIONS. Candidates running for office were given an opportunity to introduce themselves to the community:

Marc Kerksmar. Mr. Kerksmar is a candidate for School Board. He is running for the Board. He and Kristin Soldridge are supporting each other as a team. Some of the reasons that he is running are: He doesn't believe a majority of the current Board does not consider input from the public when making their decisions. He wants to bring a positive change to the School Board. He knows they are planning on building a new school on Seemsville Road. There already has been close to \$2 million spent on planning. Pre-COVID, the estimate was \$70 million. Based on today's economic climate, he would expect it to be closer to \$100 million when it goes to bid. He is looking at ways to curb spending. As a parent, he is looking for creating a better education for all of our children. At a recent School Board meeting, several members of the Board voted against accepting an 8th grade class donations of pocket size constitutions because they felt it would be political. As an American and son of a veteran, he loves the flag and what it stands for and found this to be very disappointing. He also saw the Board remove a resident from a meeting because of some of the things he was saying at the podium. While he doesn't condone the way it escalated and some of the words that were used, it was a violation of his first amendment rights. This led to a court case which cost the district around \$30,000 already. He is thinking about the local community and taxpayers.

Robert Mentzell. Mr. Mentzell is seeking reelection to the School Board. He is finishing his 2nd term. During the time he has been on the School Board, he has been guided by two major principles. First of all, strong academics. Northampton does have a strong academic program. He heartily supports that. Anytime a teacher comes up for new hire, he always looks to the highest academic credentials that teacher has in the specific area. He was a teacher for 38 years at the high school. Generally speaking, he believes a good education is not right, not left, but somewhere in the middle. Kids deserve a good solid education and he has always worked towards that; the public/taxpayers also deserve that. The other principle he carries through to the Board is respect for the taxpayers. Careful spending of the taxpayers money is absolutely essential. In the past four years, the tax increases he voted for were 0%, 0%, 1.5%, and 0% increases. No one knows what Harrisburg will give the District until the last moment. At the current time, they are putting together their budget proposals for the next year and will be voting on that in the next year. Some of the proposals are 0%, 1% and 2% increases; it could be anything. He is confident that they can maintain their educational program of very sound academics as well as extra-curricular activities at a 0% increase without cutting anything back. That is what he will vote for. He would be honored for everyone's support and his record stands on its own.

John Becker. Mr. Becker is also seeking reelection to the School Board. He was born and raised on the farm at which he currently resides. He taught for 37 years when he retired. He and his sons are graduates of Northampton and his three grandchildren are in Lehigh Elementary. He has deep roots in the community. He feels for the community; as a taxpayer, he pays taxes on his house and farm. Being retired, he is aware of what is it like to try to maintain the taxes. Over the past six years, he believes the School Board has done a good job of trying to maintain a low tax increase. Over the past five years, the average increase was .87%. In the past three years, it has been 0%. He spoke with Mr. Kovalchik today regarding a budget presentation that will be given at Monday's Board meeting. Mr. Becker believes there will be enough votes for a 0% increase this time around. They are working hard to keep the taxes low. 98% of the school districts in Pennsylvania, 490 of the 500 districts, had to raise taxes last year. Northampton was one of the 10 that did not raise taxes. Some of the other issues facing the School District are Willow Brook Farms has 500 homes that will be started in the next five years, there are 1,200 homes in Allen, East Allen, and Northampton Borough that are already on the books. Where will those children go? They have plans for a building on Route 329 in order to alleviate some of the issues. There are kids in the Siegfried Building who are working in the hallways because there is not enough room in the classrooms. The Franklin Building is a place where kindergarten kids do not belong right now. They have to do something to get them out of the building. They had a study done and a new school was recommend rather than trying to renovate a 100 year old building because you don't know what you may find in an old building. It will cost money, but if a building is not built, it will cost money anyway because you need to renovate the old buildings. To him

it is just throwing good money after bad. They did build a nice new elementary school here in the Township because they found out it was better to build a new building with all of the modern safety conveniences. A new building is much easier to construct with safety in mind. The cost of the new building was just about the same as renovating the old building. He was a common sense teacher and that is the type of philosophy he tries to bring across when he makes decisions on the Board--common sense, good curriculum. His children graduated from Northampton; he believes they got a good solid education. He believes the teachers are doing an excellent job. He makes common sense decisions. Are there some things that are controversial? Of course, but he tries to make the best decision based upon the information that he gets. 90% of the students go on to college, community college, trade schools, and military. Some of the students go directly to jobs from vo-tech. Their vo-tech program is excellent and it is going to be expanded. More and more of their students are going to vo-tech. It is an important part of their educational system. He gives credit to the teaching staff. He also gives credit to the other Board members for trying to maintain a reasonable rate of taxes and as Board member he would continue to try to do that. He is looking for a 0% again this year.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Minutes of March 28, 2023. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve the minutes of March 28, 2023. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

III APPROVAL OF BILLS.

A. General Fund Checks 26645 to 26687. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these bills. David Hess seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard questioned Check 26657 to PPL in the amount of \$3,113 for Danielsville Park. That bill seems high for just the park. Alice Rehrig commented the \$3,113 is the total of several electric bills. The park portion of the bill was \$18.48. The driving costs of the bill are the electric to the police station and Township building. All voted aye. Motion carried.

B. State Fund Check 1576 through 1578. David Hess made a motion to approve these bills. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Waivers for Approval

1. Lehigh Township Municipal Authority Land Development Plan. Carl Sharpe was present to represent this plan and requested the approval of the waivers be tabled as the Authority will be back next month with the plan. Phil Gogel made a motion to table this plan. David Hess seconded the motion All voted aye. Motion carried.

2. Timothy L. Pitts, Lot #5 Manufactured Home Park. David Lear was present to represent this plan. Mr. Lear commented they received a recommendation for approval of these waivers and deferral at the March Planning Commission meeting. The waivers and deferral which are being requested are similar to what was granted for the Northwoods development and they are requesting these waivers to keep the plan design consistent with Northwoods since this plan will be eventually incorporated into that development.

Phil Gogel made a motion to grant a waiver of SALDO Sections 147-17.E.10,a.1.3, 147-32.F, 147-18.I.2, 147.18.I.6, 147-27.A, 147-17.E.8,a and b, and Stormwater Management Section 138-15.B.8 as recommended in the Planning Commission letter dated March 22, 2023. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

David Lear commented they are asking for a deferral of SALDO Section 147-26.B.9 until the time of building permit submission. They will submit individual lot grading plans at the time when they submit their building permit. Phil Gogel made a motion to grant the waiver of SALDO Section 147-26.B.9 conditioned on a grading plan being submitted with all the building permits for this project. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Engineer's Report. Mike Muffley reported the Planning Commission reviewed the LTMA Water Booster Station and Waste Water Treatment Plant Expansion plan and the Timothy Pitts Land Development plans at their meeting last evening.

The LTMA plan was recommended for conditional approval and they most likely will be at the Board of Supervisors meeting next month for conditional approval which is why they requested the waivers be tabled.

The Timothy Pitts Land Development plan also was recommended for conditional approval and will be coming into the Board of Supervisors for approval.

The third plan on the agenda, Melo Enterprises was tabled. This is the land development plan for Solar Renewable Energy. They had asked the plan be tabled while they are working on responses to the comments in his letter. They expect to see them back at the next Planning Commission meeting.

V. DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

- A. Recreation Board. The Recreation Board is initiating pet inoculation program. The idea is to get people to have their pets inoculated because a lot of people do not because of the cost of taking them to the office. Dr. Shelly from Blue Ridge Veterinary Clinic has volunteered his time to provide rabies and distemper shots. He

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has proposed June 17th as a date to hold this event. It would be here at the Municipal Building from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There will be a form that needs to be completed authorizing him to administer the shots. The prices will be between \$25 and \$30 per shot. It will be for both dogs and cats. Dogs will need to be on a leash and the cats in a carrier.

Cindy Miller made a motion to authorize the Recreation Board to hold the pet vaccination program with Dr. Shelly on June 17th from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. here at the Township Building. Phil Gogel seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frank Zamadics commented he has been in touch with Dun-Rite Electric regarding the replacement of the lights on the Berlinsville baseball field. They are looking to start the replacement this week.

Mike Jones noted there is additional infield mix needed for the Danielsville field.

B. Public Works Report. Frank Zamadics commented there were three applications that were received for summer help which he would like to discuss with the Board in Executive Session.

1. Capital Purchases. When the budget was developed, it was anticipated that several attachments for a skid steer loader would be purchased. The cold planer attachment is approximately \$30,000 when purchased new. Frank Zamadics had located a used planer which is in good shape except for needing two of the teeth and a roller replaced. The cost of the used planer would be \$8,900 and the replacement of the teeth and the roller will not be more than \$1,500 to \$2,000. With the savings from purchasing the used planer, he would also like to purchase a used tac trailer for \$6,000. These machines are \$25,000 if purchased new. Purchasing the tac kettle would eliminate the need to rent or borrow one when we are doing blacktopping. Last year, they were having a problem finding a machine when we were blacktopping last year.

Phil Gogel made a motion to authorize the purchase of the used cold planer at a price of \$8,900 and the necessary repairs to not exceed \$2,000 and the purchase of the use tac trailer at a price of \$6,000 for a total of \$16,900. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

C Zoning Report. Liz Amato reported thing have been picking up with the warm weather. There were 46 applications received, 39 permits issued and 15 new

complaints submitted in addition to the ongoing active complaints. She and Attorney Backenstoe are scheduled to appear in County Court on Monday for one of the older cases. There is a use variance on the agenda for the Zoning Hearing Board on Thursday to add car sales to Green's Garage and she has already received two application for May, one for a new communication tower and the second one is for the storage of commercial vehicles on a residential property. She also has two applications for June.

1. Kevin & Lori German, Request for lot consolidation and waivers of subdivision requirements. Mr. and Mrs. German own two properties which are oddly shaped on Myrtle Drive, both of which are over five acres. The one lot is vacant and the other lot has their home on it. The County recognized this as a farm and has entered the property into Act 319. Mr. and Mrs. German are requesting authorization to combine the two parcels into one without going through the formal subdivision process. There is no development being proposed outside of an ag building which will be used for their farming operation.

Cindy Miller made a motion to authorize the consolidation of the two lots owned by Kevin and Lori German. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- D. Police Report. Chief Fogel reported the crash reports continue to be at a historical low. They had 17 crashes for the month of March. Citation are in line with what they had been in previous months. The arrest numbers are on par with what they had from month to month.

They are starting to work on the RMS system. Over the next several months, they will be transitioning to the new system. The data conversion will take quite a bit of time. Then they will start building out some of the new forms that will need to be incorporated into the system.

1. PTS Grant. Officer Roth was present to discuss this grant. He received the funding requirement from PennDOT. It will be a three year grant which covers 2024, 2025, and 2026. The application period is open April 1 through May 31. The awards will come out around July 1. The PTS funding is for four areas of enforcement: Impaired Driving, Occupant Protection, Aggressive Driving and Pedestrian. Typically, PennDOT has allotted \$37,000 per year for the Impaired Driving, \$20,000 for the occupant protection, \$28,000 for aggressive driving and \$1,600 for the pedestrian safety. The also provided a proposal builder tool which took crash data from 2018 and 2022 which is what they used to divide up the funding across the State.

Phil Gogel made a motion to approve the application for the PTS grant. David Hess seconded the motion. Cindy Miller commented it was mentioned previously that there are budgets that are provided to the different departments that work under the grant. Are those budgets available for the Board to look at. Jon Roth commented he could provide the proposal builder which breaks down the crashes by percentage. PennDOT assigns their own numbers. Jeff Bowman, a Law Enforcement Liaison with PennDOT, indicated that PennDOT starts with a budget which is strictly based upon crash data based on the disciplines of the grant that Jon Roth had mentioned. From there, you have the municipal police departments who participate. There are times where you may want to propose to budget money for a department, but due to manpower or staffing issues, they can't participate. It is something that comes out as it goes because this is something that changes a lot. If people are not participating, you need to redivide the money up amongst the people who are participating. David Hess questioned what the total of the grant is expected to be. Jon Roth commented it would be \$260,000 over the three year grant period. When looking at the proposal builder, the Township has a higher percentage for issues in various areas. Jerry Pritchard questioned what percentage of our officers participate in checkpoints. Jon Roth commented it depends. Generally, there are three officers from the Township, but it could be up to five depending upon who is working and who is willing to work the checkpoint. Jerry Pritchard commented he wants the public to understand that this is not a Lehigh Township program, but a program that is coordinated by Lehigh Township. Jon Roth commented the Township receives the funding and there are details that do take place in Lehigh Township. Jerry Pritchard commented he wants people to understand that this is a State program which Jon Roth, who works as a Lehigh Township officer, serves as the coordinator. Jeff Bowman commented in the State of Pennsylvania, there are 50 traffic service grants. The money for these grants is funneled from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to PennDOT's State Highway Safety Office. Their whole project goal is to reduce crash fatalities. The most recent data they have for the State is 1230 fatalities which is why these programs are initiated throughout the State and they need to have people locally that run them. Some Police Departments administer the grant for just one department, some counties run the program and others are similar to what Officer Roth is doing. Each one is unique, but you need someone on the local level to run it. This is the third round that Officer Roth is coordinating the PTS. He was one of the first ones to do the PTS grant. Jerry Pritchard commented Bob Hawke used to serve as the coordinator. Jon Roth commented prior to the PTS grants, there were impaired driving grants. PennDOT decided that they would rather have the local departments that are partnered up in the impaired driving grants do details for aggressive driving. The goal of PTS is to have departments work together like they did for the impaired driving grants. David Hess questioned if the grant follows the crash data. Jon

Roth commented that it does when they are divvying out the funding. He does it fairly where he goes through each department and assigns a percentage which should go to that department. If a small department gets a minimal amount of funding, he may need to move money around to another department where it can be better used. If he knows that there is a particular issue in Lehigh Township or another area, he can divert money to that issue. Jerry Pritchard commented his point is that this program is not just to protect Lehigh Township. There are other departments involved. Jon Roth commented Lehigh Township does not have enough officers to run their own checkpoint with only 12 officers. Cindy Miller noted she believes Jerry Pritchard is saying that this application for the grant is for Lehigh Township to coordinate the program, but the program encompasses different police departments within municipalities in Northampton County. Jerry Pritchard commented he wants the people to understand that this program is not just for Lehigh Township residents, but for Northampton County, through a State grant. Jon Roth commented it is not for the entire County, but there are several departments from the County that are involved in the grant. When they have a checkpoint, they pull manpower from surrounding agencies in order to efficiently run the checkpoint. Jon Roth commented it is to lower crashes through the entire area. People don't come into Lehigh Township and hit the brake. It is a change in behavior for everyone surrounding the Township as well. David Hess questioned if the participation is on a voluntary basis. Jon Roth commented the officers are paid at their overtime rate. He will send out an email that there is an impaired driving weekend or so much funding available for aggressive driving. Since he is coordinating the program, he can push the funding deadlines out. If a waiver is ending on the 15th, he can put it to the end of the month or alter the enforcement weekend if officers are not available. He uses a data driven approach for this. He looks at the stats and the information that is available to see what nights you have the best opportunity to get an impaired driver off the road. He does the same thing with aggressive drivers and occupant protection, where and when they have the greatest problem and then direct the funding towards that. Phil Gogel commented this program makes Lehigh Township residents safer with this program running and he appreciates it. Jerry Pritchard questioned how it is making Lehigh Township safer. Phil Gogel commented Officer Roth holds checkpoints throughout the Township with the grant money. Through that program, it is taking drunk drivers off the road along with aggressive drivers. It is also combined with the seatbelt enforcement. All in all, it is helping Lehigh Township residents more than if we didn't have a program at all. Anything we can do to provide an extra layer of safety, especially in law enforcement in this time and environment, he thinks it is paramount. Jerry Pritchard commented he believes the most important thing is our schools and our kids. That is what we should be talking about for safety, not a coordinator. He worries about our children in school. Phil Gogel commented he does too, we are not the School

Board. Mike Jones commented he does have to agree with Phil Gogel, that this grant does directly help Lehigh Township. The whole grant may not be for Lehigh Township, but there is different activities that are run in Lehigh Township and also in neighboring Townships which will help us out as well. Rich Rehrig commented he worked in the Township for 28 years. We have been doing this program for at least 20 of those. It has been going on for a long period of time. He has worked the line, made the arrests, and seen how many DUI people have been arrested over the year. There shouldn't be a question as to why our police department is out enforcing DUIs. Cindy Miller commented the question is not whether we want our officers participating in the program, but whether or not we should be coordinating the program. Rich Rehrig commented he understands, but it is something that the Township has been doing since the beginning when the program started. Jerry Pritchard commented he doesn't have a problem with the grant coming to Lehigh Township, but the Township needs to be aware that it is a State, County funded program. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- E. Municipal Authority. Carl Sharpe, Chairman of the Municipal Authority, reported there is nothing in particular going on with the Authority right now, but there are three projects that do effect Lehigh Township: Lehigh Valley Resort, which is Mr. Jaindl's project, will be a complete renovation of the Mary Immaculate Center along with a hotel and entertainment venue. The Northwoods Development which is located along Route 946 and has been ongoing for many years. The sewer lines are basically in at this point so he would expect they would be looking to start moving the module homes in this summer. The Pitts Development is a relatively small development which will be tacking onto Northwoods. There is a lot of development going on which will help with tax dollars and possibly employment in the area.

Cindy Miller questioned if the Authority had heard from Turkey Hill. Carl Sharpe commented they hadn't heard from Turkey Hill for approximately six months. The last he heard was that they had problems with their HOP. Mike Muffley commented he noticed there was a submission to PennDOT to change the owner of the project. He doesn't know who the new owner would be; it may just be a corporate change.

- F. Fire Company. Rick Hildebrand provided the Board with the first quarter report. There were 99 calls for the quarter. There were 16 fires, 50 accidents and medical calls, 12 hazardous conditions which could be powerlines down or hazards in a house. Service calls are traffic control and the good intent calls are where someone believes there is a problem, but there is not.

Cindy Miller questioned how many of the 99 calls were in Lehigh Township. Rick Hildebrand commented 18 of the calls were out of the Township. There were two

calls for the tanker in Hanover Township at the airport for aircraft emergencies, Lower Towamensing Township for a house fire, Lynn Township for a house fire, Moore Township for two house fires and a medical assist, North Whitehall for an accident with injuries, Northampton Borough two building fires, a cooking fire, a fuel oil malfunction, carbon monoxide and a smoke scare, Walnutport Borough two times and Washington Township, Lehigh County one time. These calls are usually for either an engine or a tanker. With Northampton having a lot of the high rise structures, they sometimes are called for the ladder truck. With the size of the buildings and the elderly population, they need more than just the one ladder truck that Northampton Borough just got. Over time with mutual aid, they have already been down to Hopewell, Pennsylvania, the Poconos, and out to Reading. Their forestry crew also travels. They also were just down to West Easton with their tanker for the warehouse fire which is not noted on the report because it was in the second quarter.

A resident questioned how many times outside companies need to come into Lehigh Township. Rick Hildebrand commented there were three incidents where they received mutual aid. This is typically when there is a house fire or structure fire. They have a large box set up because depending upon the time of day or day of the week, you don't know what you are going to have so they have a heavy assignment for structure fires to have additional tankers and manpower coming. Other communities have a similar system set up and Lehigh Township gets called there as part of their box. Everyone works together. The reason their numbers are so low for people coming into the area is because they have about 60 to 70 people rostered in their department so they can pretty much take care of themselves for accidents and small fires. When there is a dwelling fire, they make sure to utilize mutual aid. There are a lot of departments who don't even get an out during the day because of manpower shortages.

Cindy Miller questioned how it is determined which companies will be sent out when a call comes in. Rick Hildebrand commented the County operates on a computer aided dispatch. Each municipality determines their own responses and the information from each municipality is inputted into their system. For example, Moore Township works with Bath; that's all they have. As soon as they get a hint that something is on fire, then they call Lehigh Township and Bushkill right away. Everyone does it differently.

Rick Hildebrand provided the Board with the results from when they put the ladder truck to bid. They received bids from three manufactures. The pricing for the vehicles is only good until May 9th. There are savings that can be realized by paying the chassis in advance. They are concerned that if they don't lock in to one of the proposals, the pricing will go even higher, based upon the price increases they have

been seeing. They are looking for communication tonight as to how this can be worked out. If the chassis is paid at time of signing, there would be a \$56,476 savings.

Phil Gogel commented in order to move forward with the purchase of the truck, he spoke with Rick Hildebrand and other members of the Fire Company, along with Alice Rehrig. There is \$875,000 in COVID relief money. In theory, the money is supposed to go for the benefit of the whole community and he feels it is very important to move forward with the purchase of this truck. He thinks it would be wise to use \$800,000 of this towards the truck. There is \$300,000 in the truck fund, and if we go two or three years down the road, it will put another \$600,000 into the fund because we put about \$200,000 to \$225,000 each year into their fund. That will get us real close to the fire company's total if we do this. We may need to do a short gap loan. Rick Hildebrand commented the loan from the State is a 30 year loan at 2%. They have done this in the past where they have taken the 2% loan and a lease for the purchase of a vehicle. With the plan, they have tried to get ahead of the financing so that the money would be there when it is needed for apparatus. The 2% State loan for this type of apparatus is \$378,000 over 30 years. Phil Gogel commented this would be enough to fill in the gaps if needed. If there is any grant money received, then we wouldn't need it. He also knows that we have pledge \$75,000 of the truck fund towards the other vehicle that is pending.

Jerry Pritchard questioned if the COVID money was already allocated for something else and what would we be taking it from. Phil Gogel commented the \$875,000 is what if left in the fund and it is not allocated for anything and he is suggesting we use \$800,000 of it towards the truck. Jerry Pritchard question of any of this was obligated to other projects. Alice Rehrig commented there was a list of potential projects that was previously discussed, but there is not a commitment for a specific project. The security upgrades were part of the COVID funding and there was also some discussion of utilizing some of the money if needed towards the Maintenance Building. The funds need to be committed by 2024. Phil Gogel commented if there is grant funding that is received, then we can reduce the amount of COVID money.

Jerry Pritchard commented he doesn't want to see any of the Maintenance Building funding be reallocated. Phil Gogel commented that is not what is being suggested. We took out a \$2 million loan to be used as a match towards the grant funding and there is also \$800,000 in the building fund that will also be used towards the building. Mike Jones commented agrees that the COVID money has not been specifically committed to a project, but the COVID money could also be used towards the building so we don't need to have a loan or to reduce the loan.

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Phil Gogel commented we are going to need the ladder truck regardless. We can wait on the ladder truck and end up spending \$3 million on it and spent \$6 million on the building and then you are out \$9 million. If you get the truck now, it will be \$2 million and either hold off on the building for another couple of months until commodities come down. There is a different price in loans. Mike Jones commented he is not holding off on the building. We have waited long enough to get the building done. Phil Gogel commented he agrees and doesn't believe would need to. We have \$2 million at 4% and \$800,000 in the building fund. Mike Jones commented he does want the Fire Company to have the truck they need, but does not want to give all the COVID money towards the truck. Phil Gogel commented the issue comes in when you are looking at interest rates. If the Fire Company needs more than the 2% loan from the State and they have to outsource the loan, you will be paying 6% or 8%. You need to keep things in line and prioritize things on a level for the residents. Mike Jones commented there were several items on the list that we were looking at. Phil Gogel commented things were allocated which is why we are down to \$875,000. Phil Gogel questioned if the list can be completed for \$75,000. Cindy Miller commented one the items was the fueling station which is estimated to be around \$100,000.

Cindy Miller commented if the truck is ordered now and we end up receiving a grant, we will not be able to utilize the grant. You cannot order or put money towards an item prior to the grant money being awarded. If you do that, you will lose the money. We applied for \$750,000 in grant funding and we don't know whether or not we will receive any of it because they did not make the announcement yet.

Phil Gogel commented we could set aside a certain amount; it doesn't have to be \$800,000. It could be \$600,000 and set it aside. With the \$300,000 that is in the truck fund it would be enough to start the process of the purchase. Jerry Pritchard commented we have been working on this maintenance building for 20 years. Get the building built and go from there. Phil Gogel commented if things get out of order in operation, it will cost you a lot more. He is for building the building and there should be more than enough money there. There is \$3.5 in grant money, \$2 million in a loan and \$800,000 in the bank. The Township can pledge the COVID money for the truck and get the cost locked in. If we get the grant, we don't need to use the COVID money. Mike Jones commented if the truck is ordered, we can't utilize any grant money that we receive. Phil Gogel commented the Fire Company would need to wait for a few months to order the truck. Mike Jones noted that the Fire Company raised a concern about holding off on the order because of the pricing.

Rick Hildebrand commented another option would be financing through the truck companies as well. They can rebid the truck down the road, but the price will go up, possibly substantially. They will need to do something. Between the two primary pieces of equipment at the station, they are taking turns breaking down. Phil Gogel

questioned how much money the Fire Company spent on the trucks in the past year. Rick Hildebrand commented in the past four years, they put \$200,000 in the apparatus maintenance, most of which went to the two main pieces of equipment.

This is all fundraising money that is used to repair the vehicles which is why they are looking for the support to replace the ladder truck. Their fundraising money is going back out the door in vehicle maintenance.

John Haggerty commented there is a 2 ½ year build time on the truck. If the Township wanted to pay the \$600,000 up front for the chassis, they would have 2 ½ years until the final payment is due. Cindy Miller questioned what happens in 2 ½ years when the Fire Company is looking for an engine. It was estimated that it would be around \$800,000, but in 2 ½ years it could reach a million. We are trying to figure out how to afford all of this. Mike Jones commented if the truck is ordered now, we will lose the funding if we get the grant. John Haggerty commented it is a gamble. If you delay the signing of the truck and don't get the grant, it could go up 5%.

Phil Gogel commented his position is to make sure the money is there and not that it gets spent on who knows what. We have a track record of buying something when we should have bought something else. We are going to need a truck regardless and it is only going to get more expensive. We know they will need another vehicle as Cindy Miller had pointed out. These vehicles are for our community, for every resident here, not just specific to certain group, person, or area. These guys need to show up when your house is on fire. We have 65 volunteer personnel with the Fire Company. How many Fire Departments are not big and giving that much effort? You don't hear of that anymore. Mike Jones commented no one is arguing that fact at all. Everyone knows how active they are. Phil Gogel commented, what he is saying is, without wheels under their feet and the equipment they need, the community is less safe. Mike Jones commented he understands that, but it will still be 2 ½ years until they get a vehicle and they will still have to fix the old one.

Rick Hildebrand commented it seems like making the number go anywhere isn't a reality. Mike Jones commented he is hoping that we will hear something on the grant in the next three weeks whether we get it or not. If we get it, then the chassis can be ordered immediately. If not, we will have to figure out what to do. Phil Gogel questioned if Mike Jones would be okay with using \$300,000 from the truck fund and \$300,000 from the COVID money for the Fire Company to get the chassis. Mike Jones commented he is not sure. He wants them to get their truck, but he doesn't want to use all of the COVID money. We have always tried to pay the chassis up front to save the money; there is no point in wasting the \$56,000. Phil Gogel commented since they can't lock the purchase in, the escalator on the cost of the truck will eat up that savings. It would be worth the gamble with waiting for the grant

since it may be \$750,000. Mike Jones commented he would much rather lose the \$50,000, than pull the trigger and lose \$750,000. Phil Gogel commented he would agree. Cindy Miller noted that we applied for \$750,000, but that doesn't necessarily mean that we will get the \$750,000. David Hess commented he would also agree to using some of the COVID money, but not all of it.

Phil Gogel commented we need to understand that we have to shift funds in order to make this happen. Phil Gogel commented with regard to the building, it will take time, but the costs go up and down. He can buy a roll of copper one month for \$35 and the next month it will be \$150. Mike Jones commented nothing is going down. If anything, it is leveling off a little bit; it's not going to drop. Phil Gogel commented it may a little; you never know.

John Haggerty commented they can go back to the manufacturer they chose and open some lines of communication and try to negotiate the deadline to order the truck, but they are going to want to know that we are buying the truck. If the grant doesn't come in until June, how far do you kick the ball? Phil Gogel commented if the deadline is extended and the grant comes in, if we pledge \$600,000 of the COVID money, they would still be on target to get the truck because of the amount of money we fund the Fire Company.

Doug Vaughn questioned if the Board could make a motion to purchase the fire truck from the manufacturer that the Fire Company recommends without signing the contract. Then the Fire Company can go to the manufacturer and say the Board has approved the purchase of the firetruck, but the Board can't sign the contract until the grant is approved. Cindy Miller commented she will not do that until she knows exactly where the money is coming from. John Haggerty commented he is just looking to be able to go to the manufacturer with a promise and say, yes, we will buy a firetruck, but we just don't know the timeline.

Rick Hildebrand wanted to remind the Board that everyone should work together on an apparatus plan because it got away and we need to get it back to the point where everything is identified and prepared for by the time it is due. Mike Jones commented things should be back on track once we get through the purchase of the ladder truck and pumper. Rick Hildebrand commented he believes that by the time they get to the engine, they will be around \$1.1 million or \$1.2 million. There should be some type of escalator built into the plan to keep up with reality.

Phil Gogel commented in reviewing the numbers, the Township still will have to pledge \$600,000 towards the truck with the grant money because of the time line in which we put money into the fund. If we get the \$750,000 from the grant and pledge \$600,000 from the COVID money, and then with three years until the truck is

delivered, it will give another \$600,000 with us putting \$200,000 into the fund each year. That would give us the \$1.9 million so we will be needing to allocate some of the COVID money.

Phil Gogel made a motion to set aside \$600,000 of the COVID relief money for the Fire Department to utilize for the purchase of their ladder truck. If they don't use it, the Board can readdress the number. David Hess seconded the motion. David Hess questioned what happens if we don't get the grant. Phil Gogel commented if we don't, then we need to figure it out from there. The Fire Company can apply for the \$300,000 loan, the amount in the truck fund, and the timeline to delivery. If we don't get the grant, we would have \$600,000 from COVID relief, \$300,000 in the truck fund, we would have another \$600,000 available in three years which would put us at \$1.5 million. They would loan the \$378,000 from the State at 2%. This would put us right on the edge of being able to get the truck. We also have emergency funds of which we allocated \$75,000 towards the other truck. Cindy Miller raised a concern about taking more money from contingency. Phil Gogel commented it would be three years down the road. If you look at things from a larger perspective, an aerial view, you want to make sure there is a base for you to work off of, not that it gets spent. Rick Hildebrand commented he understands that we are at a stale mate with this; he is not trying to push anybody. He did want the Board to know that they potentially will have to go back to rebidding the truck and is fairly certain the prices will go up and have to go through the process of reviewing proposals again. Cindy Miller questioned if the Fire Company does get the 100 foot ladder truck, will there be enough room in the fire house to store the truck. Rick Hildebrand commented they did include specifications on height within their bid package. They have 12 foot doors and set a maximum height of 11 foot, 7 inches. One manufacturer told them they will be at that high consistently. Another manufacturer commented their height could fluctuate four inches. David Hess questioned if, when we go to build the Public Works Building and we'd have to tap into the COVID money, and there wasn't enough left, would we run a chance of losing the grants we have for the public works building. Cindy Miller commented we wouldn't lose the grants. \$2.5 million of the grant funds are a match. The \$1 million grant through LSA is no match and we can use that as match towards the \$2.5 million. There is also \$1 million in the building fund which will go towards the match and we can use the appraised value of the land as match as well. Phil Gogel commented there really is no need for using the COVID relief money. Cindy Miller commented she believes what everyone is saying is that the public works building needs to get done and to commit to something else right now without knowing what the cost will be, makes people on the Board uncomfortable. She wants to support the Fire Company and get the truck, but at the same time, this building has to get done. Phil Gogel commented if there is \$3.5 million in grants of which \$2.5 million needs a match, we have a \$2 million loan that we can use towards the match and the land on top of that. Jerry Pritchard commented

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we don't know the costs because we haven't placed the building to bid. Cindy Miller commented that is the concern. We don't know what the bids will come in at and need to anticipate that the costs may go up on the building. Phil Gogel voted aye. Cindy Miller, David Hess, Mike Jones, and Jerry Pritchard were opposed. Motion did not carry.

Cindy Miller commented she wants to support the Fire Company, but is just uncomfortable with not knowing the costs of the building and the details on paying for the truck. Phil Gogel commented there is \$5.5 million available for the building plus a reserve of \$1 million with the loan; we were hoping we would only need a loan of \$1 million for the building and that we would be able to turn the remaining \$1 million back to the bank at 4%. Mike Jones commented he would rather not have a loan at all. Phil Gogel commented exactly, but would you rather have someone's house burning down and a fire truck blow an engine on the way there. Mike Jones questioned how we would find this money if we didn't have the COVID money. Phil Gogel commented by the Grace of God we got \$1 million in COVID money. It came in as a blessing. We should utilize it. Mike Jones commented if we didn't have it, what would be do. Phil Gogel commented we would have to figure out how to make it work. Mike Jones commented that is what they want to do.

Rick Hildebrand commented the bids that were received are all from CoStars manufacturers. Since they are CoStars vendors, would they be able to have the vendor update their pricing rather than having to go back out to bid. Cindy Miller commented the same three vendors would only need to update their pricing. There is no need to rebid the truck. Rick Hildebrand commented one vendor doesn't meet the height restriction and the other vendor is not taking orders and they are already at a four year build. They believe they have the best price from the best vendor. Mike Jones questioned if the Fire Company is comfortable with LTI and have they used them in the past. John Haggerty commented they are comfortable with them, but haven't used them before. There are neighboring municipalities who have used them and are satisfied with them. Catasauqua has an LTI and they have been to their station several times and they are satisfied with them.

Phil Gogel commented you are telling them to go ahead and have the pricing updated, but where will we get the \$600,000 from. Mike Jones commented we would have 2 ½ years to figure it out. Cindy Miller commented it is not only the \$600,000. We have to figure out how we will pay for the next one as well. Mike Jones noted there is a lot of figuring that needs to be done. Phil Gogel commented you are buffing this over; kicking the can down the road. You're appeasing. Mike Jones commented he is not committing; Phil Gogel is appeasing to make them happy. Phil Gogel commented that is where the money is. Mike Jones commented there are other things

that the money can go to besides them. It needs to be divvied out amongst everyone, not just one entity. Rick Hildebrand commented the last thing they would want to do would be to take something away from the Public Works Building.

Phil Gogel questioned if Cindy Miller was going to represent the Planning Commission since the Planning Commission was the only Board not listed on the agenda. Cindy Miller noted the Engineer discusses what takes place at the Planning Commission. Phil Gogel noted it is listed as the Engineer's report. The Planning Commission is the only Board that is not listed for giving a report. Cindy Miller commented she can provide a report, but it would be the same as what the engineer is reporting.

Jerry Pritchard commented he would agree that if every other department is being represented, Planning Commission should also be represented. Cindy Miller commented the Planning Commission is represented through the Engineer and his report. If the Board wants a specific Planning Commission item on the agenda, she can reiterate what the engineer has reported. Liz Amato commented a lot of the items are also covered under Planning Related Items on the agenda. Phil Gogel commented he believes someone from Planning Commission should be present to go over the Planning Related Items. Cindy Miller commented she will speak with the Planning Commission to see who they would want to represent them. She also questioned if the Zoning Hearing Board should also be included on the agenda separately from what Liz Amato reports. Phil Gogel commented there already is a Zoning Report on the agenda.

Katherine Mack noted not everything was covered from the Planning Commission meeting. They had a general discussion regarding the Landscape Ordinance and Cluster Developments. Maybe there is something that could be said about that. Liz Amato commented the Landscape Ordinance was already before the Board and advertised. At the Planning Commission meeting, it was just a discussion of when the ordinance will be adopted. The Cluster Ordinance was the review of the second draft of the ordinance. The completed ordinance will be coming back to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Cherryville Intersection. The seeding and stabilization need to be finalized. The final closeout of the PennDOT HOPs for the Amey's property, Cherryville Pizza, and the existing Turkey Hill have not yet come through. Alice Rehrig has completed the final paperwork that is needed for DCED. Cindy Miller commented she it at the point where she believes the grant needs to be closed out. Alice Rehrig commented she has also spoken with DCED to let them know the status and there is nothing that needs to be submitted until it is all complete, but the deadline is still June 30.

- B. Maintenance Building. W2A provided the Board with the draft revised bid package for the Maintenance Building. If the Board is satisfied with the information, the project is ready to be put to bid. Overall, the updated Building Codes did not impact the plans. Mike Jones questioned why they would be charging us to make changes if none had to be made. Alice Rehrig commented the bill hasn't be received yet, but it should be reduce from what as quoted. They did need to make some changes since the excavation was pulled out as a separate contract. If authorization is granted at this meeting to advertise for bids on the project, the bids would be able to be awarded at the second meeting in May.

Cindy Miller made a motion to authorize the advertisement for bids for Maintenance Building project. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Over the next month, Alice Rehrig will have to complete the formal application and business plan for the second RACP grant that was received. She will be able to make it a joint application with the first grant which will be beneficial because then there would only be one timetable that is followed for the reimbursements. Cindy Miller questioned if we will have the same project manager that we had for the first grant or will it be someone different. Alice Rehrig commented she is not sure. The project manager is assigned after the application is received. She did let the individual that she has been working with know that we received the second grant, hoping that they may be willing to step forward for the second grant as well.

Cindy Miller also noted that we may want to consider having a ground breaking with the legislators. She knows we need to place a sign at the building during construction and when the building is complete, we will have a ribbon cutting and invite the legislators; sometimes the Governor attends the ribbon cutting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Manager's Report. In spite of the weather, the FRCA had success with the Mulch Madness they held in March and will be holding another one for Earth Day on Friday, April 21st and Saturday, April 22nd. Everyone will be able to have unlimited loading of mulch each day for \$10.

A while back, there was discussion regarding having the ability to accept on line payments or credit cards. Neffs Bank has been working with a company called Elavon. Elavon would be the company who provides the service, but we would have local support from the bank if there is an issue. Elavon would charge 3% for credit card transactions and \$.5 for ach/checks. The fees can either be charged to the individual using the service or absorbed by the Township. If an ach is returned, there would be a \$3 fee, but the Township would be responsible for collecting the money,

similar to a returned check. Their program can be integrated into the website and they will also provide up to two credit card machines to accept payments at the window. She will be receiving a formal proposal from them. Cindy Miller questioned if company who designed the webpage was contacted. Alice Rehrig commented she hasn't at this point, but it seems like all that is needed is to have a link installed on the website.

B. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe did not have anything additional to report.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT. Rich Rehrig questioned if the open position for Public Works was advertised. Mike Jones commented it was. The Board has interviewed individuals, but they didn't accept the position for a variety of reasons. Rich Rehrig questioned if our pay scale is up to where it should be based on other Townships. Cindy Miller commented the wages are set in the contract. Rich Rehrig suggested that the Board meet with the union to try to work something out so the position could be filled. Phil Gogel commented there was an individual previously hired under the new pay scale and he is perfectly happy. The job market is tight right now and everyone wants a lot of money. The Township can only pay so much. We have to extract money from the Township residents to pay the bills. If we have to extract more money from the Township residents, they won't be happy. We have to design the contracts accordingly.

An individual, who is a real estate developer specifically for multi-family dwellings and townhomes was present to let the Board know about a project he is considering. He knows there are people who want to live here, but are having a hard time finding housing. It is also difficult to find a location in the Township where multi-family dwellings are permitted by right. There is a parcel of land located below where the proposed solar farm will be going that is zoned commercial, but in looking at the area, commercial may not be the best use for that land. He knows that he would need to obtain a use variance from the Zoning Hearing Board in order to move the project forward, but wanted to make the Board aware of what he is doing. They build a higher end product. Everything they do has nine foot ceilings, granite countertops, and stainless steel appliances. It is not low income housing; they have a property management company. Mike Jones commented one of the problems is that you need public water and sewer for the multi-family dwellings and a majority of the Township does not have it available. The gentleman making the presentation noted that there is public water and sewer available from Walnutport. One of the reasons they wanted to come to the Supervisors was to see how the Township felt about a project like this—market rate housing, center hall access with elevators for handicap accessibility. Katherine Mack commented the discussion should be cut off. This is a zoning matter that is decided by the Zoning Hearing Board. Presenting to the Board of Supervisors is not part of the process. There should not be any pressure until the Zoning Hearing Board hears the specifics.

Paul Nikisher commented no one likes taxes, but they are something that happens. He thinks we should start entertaining a fire tax. He thinks it would make it easier for the Fire Company and the Board. Cindy Miller commented if a fire tax were initiated, the Fire Company would be receiving the same amount of funding as what they currently are receiving. The Fire Company is already receiving the equivalent of a 1 to 1.1 mill tax. Paul Nikisher commented if you had the fire tax, it would take the Fire Company out of the equation. Cindy Miller commented the fire tax rate would be set by the Board. Mike Jones commented the only difference between what the Fire Company is getting now and a fire tax is that the amount of money would be increased if there is development and the tax base increases. Charlie Perich commented the Board could make it a special services tax to include fire, police, ambulance and EMTs. It would be the easiest way to do it because it would include everyone. Cindy Miller commented the maximum amount of a fire tax is 3 mills. The Second Class Township Code is specific as to what taxes the Board can enact and what the maximum amount would be unless they were to put it to a referendum. Janet Sheats commented it is something that needs to be discussed with the community as well. David Hess commented he wouldn't consider adding a tax without the community having the opportunity to be involved. Jerry Pritchard commented if the fire tax is instituted, then that is the dedicated funding that is available and they must make do with what comes in. Janet Sheats commented people do not understand what a fire tax is and that is what is causing the uproar. You need to have a discussion and explain to people what it is, what it means. Mike Jones commented there are people who already think there is a fire tax in the Township. David Hess commented a lot of people do not realize that the Fire Company is volunteer. Mike Jones commented several years ago, the Fire Company held a meeting to discuss funding and a fire tax and hardly anyone came to the meeting. David Hess commented at least if a meeting is held, it gives people the opportunity to come out to it. Cindy Miller commented if a fire tax ever were to be implemented, it would be done through the budget and the Tax Collector would be the one who collects it. There is a lot more involved than just having the fire tax. Katherine Mack questioned if a fire tax were instituted, could the Board still allocate money above and beyond what the fire tax would generate? Mike Jones commented the Board could, but why would you do that? Katherine Mack commented it is the duty of the Township to have that service. Phil Gogel commented she is suggesting that the Township continue to allocate the funding like they currently are in addition to the fire tax. That is a good thought. Katherine Mack commented it is the obligation of the Township to provide the service. Mike Jones commented the Township is providing more money to the service than what most of the Townships around us are doing. Katherine Mack commented it seems like the Board is always robbing Peter to pay Paul. Mike Jones commented you can't just keep taxing the residents. Katherine Mack questioned when the last time was that taxes were increased. Mike Jones commented it was eight or nine years ago. Katherine Mack commented instead of rehashing this all the time and robbing Peter to pay Paul, and worrying about the roads, you are constantly talking about flipping money around. Mike Jones

commented other than Phil Gogel talking about using COVID money, besides that, we don't flip money around. Katherine Mack commented if something comes up where Frank Zamadics or the Police Department needs something beyond their budget, you have to get the money somewhere. Mike Jones commented that is what the contingency money is for. He doesn't want to spend, spend, spend; he wants to save money so we have it when we need it. Phil Gogel commented sometimes there are line items that need to be adjusted mid-year or at the end of the year; there is a process. Katherine Mack commented she would like to see the process run more smoothly and have a little more equity rather than worrying about raising taxes. She knows as elected officials if you raise taxes you may not get re-elected. Cindy Miller commented if you do a small tax increase, such as a .1 mill or .2, it will bring you \$25,000. How much more can you buy for \$25,000? Katherine Mack commented the price of everything goes up; you may need to raise taxes. Salaries have to go up so people can live. Cindy Miller commented we haven't been showing a deficit in our budget. We have been bringing in grant money to help supplement our budget.

- IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel. Upon returning from the Executive Session, Phil Gogel made a motion to hire Walter Gursky and Bruce Kemmerer for summer help at a rate of \$13 per hour. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- X. ADJOURN. Cindy Miller made a motion to adjourn. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.