

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

August 11, 2026

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport. Vice Chairman Jerry Pritchard called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Cindy Miller
David Hess
Janet Sheats
Jerry Pritchard
Alice Rehrig
David Backenstoe
Mike Muffley
Roxann Colfer
Jon Roth
Frank Zamadics

Absent: Mike Jones
John Henry

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. July 28, 2026. David Hess made a motion to approve these minutes. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF THE BILLS

- A. General Fund Checks 29828 to 29855. David Hess made a motion to approve these bills. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. State Fund Check 1658. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve this bill. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Extension of Time for Plan Recording

- 1 Timothy Pitts Land Development Plan. Mark Leuthe was present to represent this plan. The deadline for the recording of this plan is August 31, 2026. On advice of counsel, the developer provided the Board with a request to extend that deadline until May 31, 2027. They are still working through the PUC process. They have submitted all their paperwork but have not heard back from the PUC and are not sure when that may occur. Although a nine month extension was requested, the Board typically only grants six month extensions for the recording of a plan. Cindy Miller made a motion to grant an extension of time until February 28, 2027. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Engineer's Report. Mike Muffley reported the Timberline Road project has been advertised and the bids will be before the Board for approval at their next meeting.

There are several construction projects that continue in which they are overseeing. Top of the Mountain continues with home construction, Northwoods Phase II is moving along with their improvements, and the Waste Water Treatment Plant is also underway and is expected to be wrapped up by September or October.

The Planning Commission discussed the new Zoning Ordinance at their last meeting and have found some inconsistencies that need to be updated so the process will continue. Cindy Miller commented the Planning Commission has scheduled additional meetings to continue to work through the ordinance. As they work through the ordinance, there are some areas which were never addressed.

V. DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT

- A. Recreation Report. David Hess reported that Alice Rehrig met with Lyons Recreation regarding playground equipment for Indiantrail Park. Pricing on the equipment has not yet been received and the Recreation Board will be discussing this in greater detail at their next meeting.
- B. Public Works Report. Frank Zamadics reported the Maintenance Department is currently working on finishing repairs to the roads prior to the oil and chip project which is expected to begin in the first two weeks of September. They are working their way through the Township with roadside mowings as time permits.
- C. Zoning Report. Roxann Colfer reported there were two hearings last month, one for a special exception for a short term rental which was approved and a second hearing was continued to September 10th. So far, there will be two hearings scheduled for September 10th. The deadline for filing for the September 10th meeting is on Thursday.
- D. Police Report. Sgt. Roth reported in July, the Department has 438 calls for service, 9 reportable accidents, 5 non-reportable accidents, 15 summary traffic violations, 12 warnings, and six individuals processed through the booking center. There were also 6 arrests for the month which included confinement of dogs, DUI crash, simple assault, indecent assault, corruption of minors, and theft by unlawful taking.

On July 29th, there was an officer involved shooting. There is limited information that can be provided because everything has been turned over to the Pennsylvania State Police and they are the investigating agency. The Department responded to Heritage Village following a 911 call reporting a domestic violence incident. Because an officer discharged a firearm, there are established protocols which must be followed, which includes contacting the Pennsylvania State Police to conduct the investigation into the officer-involved shooting and notifying the Northampton County District Attorney's office. The original domestic violence investigation was also turned over to the

Pennsylvania State Police which subsequently resulted in the male being charged with Strangulation, Simple Assault, and Terroristic Threats. On August 7, 2026, the Pennsylvania State Police completed an additional criminal complaint charging the male with three counts of Aggravated Assault on Police, Possession of an Instrument of Crime, and Terroristic Threats. All of the Lehigh Township Police officers involved in the incident are currently on administrative leave which is a standard procedure following an officer-involved shooting and does not indicate or imply any wrongdoing on the part of the officers. In situations like this, there are a number of administrative, investigative, and other requirements that must be completed before the involved officers can return to duty. The Department continues to provide police coverage for the residents of the Township. Officers have stepped up to ensure that shifts continue to be staffed and the service to the community continues. The dedication of the officers during this difficult period is commendable. They have worked longer shifts, adjusted schedules, and volunteered to ensure that our community continues to receive uninterrupted police protection. The Department would also like to sincerely thank the residents of Lehigh Township who have stopped by, dropped off cards, and brought food and other goodies for the officers working these extended shifts. They would especially like to thank the Lehigh Township Lionesses, who have provided officers with home-cooked meals. Everyone's generosity and support have meant a great deal to our officers. It has not gone unnoticed, and it is very much appreciated.

Unfortunately, National Night Out had to be postponed until October 6th because the Department is currently operating under circumstances that require our officers to work extended shifts and focus on maintaining adequate police coverage. The Department felt this was the responsible thing to do given the circumstances. The officers look forward to October 6th and hope to see everyone then.

Paul Nikisher questioned if there were any officers injured in the incident. Sgt. Roth commented there were two officers taken to the hospital, treated, and released. Mr. Nikisher also questioned if it is known how long the administrative leave will be in place. Sgt. Roth commented it is hard to determine how long that will be. There are a lot of steps required by the State and policies and processes which need to be followed and completed.

- E. Fire Company Report. John Knoblach, vice president of the Fire Company, reported that the Fire Company has been busy because of the weather. He believes there were no injuries, only property damage.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Public Hearing, Ordinance 2026-3, Amendments to ordinances pertaining to Noise. The review of this ordinance by the Lehigh Township Planning Commission and Lehigh Valley Planning Commission have been completed. The ordinance was advertised and is ready for approval by the Board. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-3, amending ordinances pertaining to noise. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. Phil

Gogel questioned what the changes were. Alice Rehrig commented this ordinance will put all the existing requirements into one ordinance under nuisances which will make enforcement easier and more consistent. It also adds definitions for clarity. The times listed within the ordinance are not changing. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Open Space Land Preservation. Janet Sheats made a motion to not move forward with any of the Land Preservation process at this time. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Zachary Szoke, 4467 Timberline Road, questioned if it is known why Supervisor Jones was not in attendance. Janet Sheats commented he had a family emergency and was hoping that he would be able to make the meeting. Mr. Szoke asked for a show of hands as to who in the room wants to see this go to the ballot. Based on the show of hands, he would say that there was a greater portion of the people in attendance who want it on the ballot, than those who don't. Why not give the citizens the opportunity to vote? Jerry Pritchard commented there are 11,000 residents in the Township. Do the masses want to move this forward? He realizes there are quite a few people here; he has seen more, he has seen less. He still believes in the ballot box, and he can't speak for others, but they may feel that the constituents who voted for them would not want to see this move forward. Larry Szoke, 4339 Wood Drive, questioned what gives the Board the right to take away their right to vote. Cindy Miller commented it is the way the law is written. Zach Szoke commented the majority of the Board voted on July 8 to move this to the ballot box, and now they are going back on their vote. It was previously voted to move this to the ballot box. Attorney Backenstoe clarified he was authorized to prepare the appropriate paperwork in order to move it forward. Once the paperwork was prepared, in order for it to move forward, the Board would need to authorize the ordinance to be advertised for adoption and they would need to vote to adopt that ordinance so that it could be placed on the ballot. The paperwork was prepared, but that is where it ended. Jerry Pritchard commented the Board has to vote to advertise any ordinance and then they need to vote to adopt after it has been advertised. Janet Sheats commented when the vote was originally taken, she wasn't aware that minors would also be taxed. That wasn't disclosed at that time. Zach Szoke commented it has always been stated that all W2 earners would need to pay the tax. Janet Sheats commented she also watched Video #3 which states that it reduces crime; Zach Szoke commented it reduces the crime *rate*, which is different than overall crime. Janet Sheats commented it also was said that it will reduce the amount of money that will be needed for apparatus to the fire company. This is not true: there are three major thoroughfares in the Township and 75 percent of the accidents in the Township are not involving people who actually live here. There are over 100,000 people who visit Blue Mountain Ski Area each year and they are not from here. Open space will not reduce the amount of accidents in the Township. Zach Szoke commented at the last meeting Supervisor Miller stated the State statute says the Board may put it to the vote. That may be the case, but why is the Board not choosing to allow it to go to a vote. That is severely disappointing. Tom Szoke, 4471 Timberline Road, questioned why the numbers really matter. If there are 10,000 people who attend the meeting, will you still vote no? Jerry Pritchard commented he can't speak for the rest of

the Board, but he feels that the Board should be honoring the masses. Tom Szoke commented his point is that the citizens should prevail. Tom Budihas, 1131 Walnut Drive commented we have a beautiful Township. We are not like Trexlertown, Alburtis, North Whitehall, Whitehall, and the other Townships around us. We don't want to look like them. If they don't want to put this on the ballot, that is up to them, but in a few years, they will be up for a vote and if the people don't agree with them, they can vote them out. That is the way justice goes. He feels it should go to the ballot to see if it passes or fails. Lou Heller, 4210 Cashew Drive, commented for how good the program is, he cannot understand this, other than a conflict of interest. He believes there are other things on the Board's mind, like real estate. Someone needs to change this. Linda Roman commented she has been listening to a lot of things in the room, and it is stacked like a deck of cards. It was stated that the Board is taking their right to vote away. No, what they are doing is protecting the rights of our young people who will be affected by this. They have no say on the ballot and they will be taxed; that is not right. The Board is protecting the people who are not present at the meeting and don't have a say. The necessity of what is being proposed for land preservation is not there. We have County, State, and Federal programs. There are also other ways of preserving land through trusts. The Township doesn't need to set up another board who can do whatever they want. This will be an endless tax for everyone. The information that is being provided is not transparent. She asks that you think about what you are doing. Phil Gogel, 1365 Nectarine Road, commented his family and many others have been here a long time. As a kid, he has seen the Township grow and grow. He would think most people in the room don't want more neighbors, but they were neighbors to him, his family, and others he knows. There are other alternatives to preserving land. You can do it through a trust, write it into a deed restriction, donate it to the State Gamelands. We are seeing a communist creep in the country where they want to take everyone else's money. Young kids working won't have a say in this. His son who busted his butt to pay for college, doesn't have the extra money to pay for this type of stuff and give it to someone else he doesn't know. If he wants to preserve something, he will buy it himself or put it in a deed restriction that it can't be further divided. He won't lay the burden on other taxpayers. This country has gotten to the point where people want a handout to preserve something. Whatever happened to working hard and preserving your own property, rather than reaching into his or someone else's pocket to preserve your stuff. Why do we have to always reach out to the taxpayers? He doesn't mind funding the Police Department, Fire Department, and Maintenance Department. These are things we all use. He will not be able to go onto the preserved property and use it. The Board is the gate keepers. The bantering that is beating into their ears every meeting is just that. It's beating in the ear to attack his pocket and he doesn't feel like giving his money away. Out of 11,000 residents, there may only be .02 percent representing for preservation. The charts show a savings to a point, but when you don't have anything further to build your tax base on, the resident's taxes are going to increase quickly, rather than having a slow incline. Sheila Archer, 27 D Street, commented it seems like people on both sides are putting the cart before the horse. All that is being asked of the Board is to place this on the ballot. They are not actually approving anything. The debate about whether people want it or

not can take place once it gets to the ballot. Debating whether or not people want it or not cannot take place until it actually gets to the ballot. Right now, no one is approving land preservation. It just needs to get to the ballot, then the discussion of whether it is good or bad can take place. Chris Amato, 755 Stone Hill Drive, commented we live in a unique country. Our forefathers used 10 to 15 different government styles to design the country that we are. Millions of people have sacrificed their youth in order to give us the country we live in today. There are very few issues that they as citizens have can have a say in. This is one of them. They are not asking for support for land preservation. They are asking for the choice and let them have their say. To deny that say would be a travesty. Brandon Korpics, 3811 Cedar Drive, commented as a young person, his biggest fear is that this Township would look like Whitehall Township. He is stacking his money as much as he can so he can afford something because prices are outrageous. He is asking that the Board don't take what is most beautiful about this Township, which is the farm fields and woods he enjoyed as a kid. He likes the Township as it is and feels everyone should have a vote on this. Leann Wechsler, 4682 Poplar Drive, commented it was stated that the younger kids who are affected by this will not have a say in it. She looks at it as once the woods and open fields are gone, it can't be undone. If we wait until the younger kids are old enough to have a choice, there won't be a choice. She also heard someone say they don't mind paying for something that benefits them, but not for something that doesn't. That is just the way it is in this county. Everything is for the good of the majority. She does not have any children in the school district, never has, but she has paid school taxes ever since she has lived here, and she was born here. David Hess, Janet Sheats and Cindy Miller voted aye to not move forward with the land preservation at this time. Jerry Pritchard was opposed. Motion carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Meeting Agendas. Cindy Miller provided the Board with a proposed outline to help structure meetings. After public comment at the last meeting took over two hours, she felt more structure was needed. The meetings need to have more order so we can get to everything on the agenda. Last meeting, we didn't get to the budget and we are usually working on it by this time because it needs to be adopted by the end of the year.

Janet Sheats commented things start to spiral when multiple people are stating the same things and start talking to each other. When this starts happening, the Board can't get to the items they actually should. A majority of municipalities place restrictions on the time for this reason. Tom Szoke commented it was stated earlier that they have the time that it takes. Attorney Backenstoe commented there is no question that public comment is permitted and required, but many municipalities adopt a resolution that restricts the amount of time per person. David Hess questioned if a limit is set, and there is something that is taking longer, the Board could allow the additional time. Attorney Backenstoe commented the Board could, but it becomes a slippery slope because of the perception people may have and feel if the Board likes the comment, they will allow it

and if they don't like the comment, you stop them at the end of the time limit. If the Board sets a time limit, it should be a time limit for everyone regardless of the topic.

Jerry Pritchard commented when there is a topic that is running high on emotion, you are going to have these situation. You can't control people's emotions. When things start running off course, you need to channel things and bring it back. Attorney Backenstoe commented strong leadership helps keep things on task. Jerry Pritchard commented he has attended many school board meetings with time limits. It is not something he would be in favor of. He would prefer to steer the meeting.

Janet Sheats suggested that Attorney Backenstoe be given a copy of the outline to review and have the Board also come back with thoughts and ideas for next meeting and table this for tonight. Jerry Pritchard commented he doesn't blame Cindy Miller for bringing this up. Taxpayers are paying for the engineer and the Attorney to sit at these meetings. Cindy Miller commented so is the staff as well. This was discussed four years ago and didn't move forward with it, but there needs to be more order.

- B. Manager's Report. Alice Rehrig reported the Data Center Ordinance has been advertised and will be on the agenda for adoption. She also provided the Board with a revised draft of changes to be made to the Park and Recreation Ordinance for the Board to review. She will be placing the ordinance on the next agenda for discussion and possibly authorization to advertise it.
- C. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe did not have anything specific to report. He continues to work with Alice Rehrig on some of the complex issues she has been faced with between Right to Know requests, ordinance revisions, and other items. He also has been working with Roxann Colfer who has been getting inundated with some complex zoning issues.

- VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT. Cody Budnick, 3737 Lehigh Drive, commented people have the right to address their government and the right to free speech. He feels both of these items were suppressed this evening. He came to speak on land preservation and was not able to do so. The Board complains the meetings are taking to long; it is because they are not listening to the people. If you want it to go faster, put it to a vote and let it be dead. If it passes it passes, if it dies, it dies. The Board may have suppressed his right to speak on land preservation, but they can't suppress his right to vote them out at the next election.

Tom Budihas commented if a time limit is set, couldn't a clock be placed on the wall so everyone knows how much time they do or don't have. Attorney Backenstoe commented some Township's have a check clock and others just use a simple hour glass. As far as him knowing what is going on in the Township, he has to look it up or ask someone. He gave up using Facebook because of the nasty things people were posting.

Phil Gogel commented overall, he agrees with land preservation. He doesn't like taking money out of people's pockets to fund it. The Board is the gatekeepers and he feels they did an excellent job tonight and the right thing for the whole community. There are different ways of preserving land which he had pointed out.

Zach Szoke commented he believes that the reason the Board is looking at the time limits on public comment is because of the land preservation. As he previously stated, he will stop talking at meetings and having people come to meetings to talk about land preservation if the Board were to put it to a citizens vote. It's not the people who are coming to meetings fault, it is the Boards. Janet Sheats commented the meeting agenda topic came up four years ago. Zach Szoke wanted to remind the Board that the majority of the people in the room wanted to be able to vote on land preservation. They didn't say whether or not they wanted it, but to be given the opportunity to vote on it.

Tom Szoke questioned if the Board is working through the process of paying the Zoning Hearing Board attorney. Alice Rehrig commented she had sent him a letter and has not heard back from him.

Tom Budihas questioned what the process is to come into the office to obtain information on a property and is there a limit on how many properties he can submit a request for. Attorney Backenstoe commented there is no limit and you can come into the office or go on line and complete a Right to Know request form. It can be submitted on line or at the Township office. Mr. Budihas questioned what the Township regulations are on tall grass that is two or three feet tall. Roxann Colfer commented if a complaint form is submitted, it will be investigated. Mr. Budihas felt a form shouldn't be needed. Why not just drive by and see it? Why leave it up to the citizen to file a complaint when it is someone's job? Roxann Colfer commented the Board had decided that they didn't want her policing the Township and all complaints would need to be in writing. She would only act immediately on something that was a matter of life and safety.

Cody Budnick questioned what happened four years ago when the discussion regarding the agenda was brought up. Janet Sheats commented nothing happened. It was a split vote.

Attorney Backenstoe commented these issues go in waves as boards change. He has seen boards institute limits on public comment, then a new board takes them away. Six years go by and there is another new board and they institute them again. Likewise, with zoning, he has seen boards determine they want their zoning officer to go out for a set number of hours looking for violations. Then the board changes and feels that it too abusive and that the zoning officer should only react to a written complaint. This too goes in cycles. This Board instituted a policy where they only want the zoning officer to address written complaints unless she is driving by and sees an issue that is a matter of life and safety. The Board can change this policy if they choose. They could one day decide they want to hire a second

zoning officer to go out three hours every day looking for violations and citing people. It is whatever a particular board wants. Every Township, Borough, and City is different. If there is a complaint filed, it will be acted upon.

Tom Budihas questioned if someone files a right to know request, can they find out who turned them in. Attorney Backenstoe commented if there is an active investigation, the information is protected and cannot be turned over. Depending upon the circumstance, if someone files an appeal of the Zoning Officer's decision to the Zoning Hearing Board, the complainant may be called as a witness to support the decision of the Zoning Officer.

Phil Gogel commented the policy for zoning enforcement started when he was on the Board. Everyone would be calling in reporting this, that and the other thing and the Zoning Officer ends up running all over the place and no one is held accountable. By having a written complaint, there is a name attached to it and not just part of a feud where people are trying to get people in trouble because they are mad at them. Attorney Backenstoe commented it used to be where people would turn their neighbors into the police but now it is turning them into the zoning. It is virtually impossible for any zoning officer to handle every verbal complaint because everyone is calling on their neighbor trying to get them in trouble. With a written complaint, there is a name attached to it and it makes it more valid. It could also provide a witness to a complaint.

Sherri Szoke commented she feels that the July 8 vote was deceptive based upon what has taken place today. She thought land preservation was going to go on the ballot. She could have asked, but didn't know the legal steps that needed to be taken. She felt it was deceptive and disrespectful to her. She also commented that if the land preservation were to go through, it could end in three years, it didn't have to be .25 percent, it could be .15 percent. None of that is set in stone. Maybe there would be an option to not tax the individuals who are under the age of 18. It is whatever the Township would decide. Attorney Backenstoe commented once the land preservation is in place, it would be in effect for a minimum of five years and then it would take another referendum to discontinue it. Ms. Szoke commented she does believe the public should have the right to speak. If there are concerns regarding the ability to get to the budget, why is the budget not before public comment? Cindy Miller commented with the new agenda that she is proposing, it would be towards the beginning of the meeting. Ms. Szoke also questioned if there was another way to get land preservation on the ballot. Attorney Backenstoe commented there was not. There is no provision for a petition under the law. The Board must adopt an ordinance which needs to be sent to the governor of elections at least 13 Tuesdays before the election.

Zach Szoke commented there are other vehicles in which funding for land preservation can take place from a community standpoint. It would only take a discussion with him. He also wanted to verify that land preservation had nothing to do with placing meeting agenda on the agenda tonight. Cindy Miller commented she has been bringing this up to the Board for several years. Zach Szoke commented it was stated earlier that there was a two and a half

hour discussion about land preservation. Cindy Miller commented it was just an additional point as to why a change was needed. Jerry Pritchard commented this was brought up before land preservation.

Monica Brown commented she agrees that public comment should be at the end of the meeting. The Budget which is more important is again at the end of the meeting.

Dan Ziegenfuss commented tonight the Board voted on something that was asked to be voted on for several meetings. The vote was 3-1 and if Mike Jones was here, it wouldn't have changed the vote. He also noted that the Vandling family was evicted and five arrests were made and he no longer owns the property. They appreciate the Township efforts with the matter.

- IX. 2027 BUDGET AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS. Alice Rehrig questioned if the Board had any feedback regarding the information they received from the Police Department regarding the cameras and tasers. Janet Sheats commented she would like to see a quote for with all the features that were discussed and a separate quote without the report writing and see where things come in at. The Boards agreed the tasers should be included. Alice Rehrig also provided the Board with a preliminary quote. If the Board were to review Option 1 in the quote, it will give them an idea of what would be included. Option 3 does not include the tasers. The quote does not include redaction or report writing. Alice Rehrig also provided the Board with a summary for the capital improvements plan where they can see the impact of the cameras and tasers. The ten year program does stabilize the capital in the budget.

The sign for the Municipal Building will be built into the 2027 budget. There currently is a grant pending that the results should be known by the end of the year.

There was a question as to whether there would be grant funding for the cameras or the tasers. Alice Rehrig commented the pricing is good through the end of the year. The cameras would be difficult because the greatest expenses come from licensing and programming which are not covered under most grants. The tasers could be delayed a year and then we could apply for a LSA grant or she could submit the tasers through the County EMS grant instead of a vehicle because that grant award will be known before the end of the year. The Board agreed that the grant application should be for the tasers.

It was agreed that the August 25th meeting would start at 6 PM with the budget being the first item of discussion. Alice Rehrig commented the insurance information will not be known until mid-October.

- X. ADJOURN. David Hess made a motion to adjourn. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.