

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

August 13, 2024

- I. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board held an executive session to discuss a personnel matter prior to the meeting. No action was taken.
- II. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport Pa. 18088. Cindy Miller called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Cindy Miller
Janet Sheats
Jerry Pritchard via telephone
Mike Jones
David Hess
Attorney David Backenstoe
Alice Rehrig
Mike Muffley
Scott Fogel
Frank Zamadics

Absent: Liz Amato

Janet Sheats made a motion to amend the agenda and move New Business Item F, Tax Collector Resignation, to the first item on the agenda. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- III. TAX COLLECTOR RESIGNATION. Janet Sheats made a motion to accept the resignation of the tax collector, Mary Louise Trexler. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Janet Sheats wanted to thank Mary Trexler for her decades of service to Lehigh Township. Her dedication to the residents and putting them first has not gone unnoticed.

- IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
A. July 23, 2024. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these minutes. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- V. APPROVAL OF BILLS.
A. General Fund Checks 27958 to 28007. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these bills. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. State Fund Checks 1607. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve this bill. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

VI. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Extension of Time

1. Zachary Bittner Minor Subdivision. Brad Rock and Zach Bittner were present to represent this plan. The developer granted the Board an extension of time until December 31, 2024. During review at the Planning Commission meeting, they recommended accepting the extension of time until October 31, 2024. Brad Rock commented there were some testing issues with the storm water management design. He has two alternative sites if there are suitable testing results. Unfortunately, their tester has retired and they are in the process of getting someone else on site to do the testing.

Jerry Pritchard questioned what type of business Mr. Bittner has on the property. Mr. Bittner commented it is a nursery.

David Hess made a motion to accept the extension of time until October 31, 2024. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. Linda Roman questioned what type of problem they ran into. Brad Rock commented the initial testing area was too close to an already saturated area so they will need to move it further away from there. David Hess, Mike Jones, Janet Sheats, and Jerry Pritchard voted aye. Cindy Miller was opposed. Motion carried.

B. Plan for Approval

J & T Enterprise Land Development. Mark Leuthe was present to represent this plan. It's the same plan which was previously before the board. They now have obtained an abstract of title. The only thing they need is Lehigh Valley Planning Commission approval. From an engineering standpoint, everything has been completed. The only item remaining is the payment of rec fees.

Cindy Miller made a motion to grant this plan conditional approval subject to the outstanding items in the engineer's letter dated July 8, 2024, Sewage Enforcement Officers letter dated June 10, 2024, payment of rec fees, and confirmation of approval by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- C. Lehigh Valley Resort & Spa Update. Nichole Galio of Jaindl Corporation was present to represent the project. Ms. Galio indicated they are currently working through the architectural drawings and are close to finalizing the interior of the project. As part of this, some of the exterior utility connections have changed a little bit and they will need to make sure to mesh with what will be required on the site.

There will be some utility relocations that will be required later this year. The bids for construction are expected to go out the first half of next year and the plans are expected to be recorded at the beginning of the year. Ebert Engineering has resubmitted plans to LTMA regarding the water and sewer lines. The waste water will be worked on over the next few weeks. The final location of the event barn still needs to be determined. This is part of the final architectural design.

- D. Engineer's Report. Mike Muffley reported the fuel island construction has started. The pad is currently being worked on. The tanks and equipment will have a 14 to 15 week delivery time period.

There were several plans reviewed at the Planning Commission meeting:

Michael & Karen Habern Minor Subdivision. This is a very large parcel being divided into three parcels. They will be back at Planning Commission.

Keith and Karen Hantz. This is also a minor subdivision. There are some additional discussions needed for the access at the end of a cul-de-sac. They will be coming back to Planning Commission.

CMH Consolidation Plan. This plan consolidates two smaller lots into one lot which will be used as a building lot

Blue Mountain Minor Subdivision, Lot 2. They are looking to build a home on a lot which was previously designated as a non-building lot. In order to make it a building lot, they need to go through the land development process. They received conditional approval.

Top of the Mountain Estates Major Subdivision. This is the same basic plan which was previously before the Board by a different developer. This plan received conditional approval at the Planning Commission meeting.

Janet Sheats questioned when the current fuel station is due for inspection. Frank Zamadics commented it is due in 2025.

VI. DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT

- A. Recreation Report. Sandy Hopkins reported that an All Star Game was held in Berlinsville. The Rec Board had the stand open. The leftover hamburgers were donated to National Night Out and the hot dogs will be used by the Lions for the Christmas Tree Lighting. There was a profit of approximately \$325 from the event.

The next event they will be working on will be the tree lighting which will be held on Saturday, December 7.

- B. Public Works. Frank Zamadics reported July was a busy month and August looks to be equally as busy. They are currently completing the repairs on the roads that will be part of the oil and chip project. They should be done by the end of the week and the contractor will be moving in next week depending upon the weather.

David Hess questioned if there will be lines painted on Cottonwood Road. Frank Zamadics commented the line painters come into the Township once a year. Once they know the completion date for the oil and chip project, he will call the line painters so the work can be scheduled. Barry Frey questioned if there is a date and time when the line painters will come in. Frank Zamadics commented the line painters pick the date according to their schedule.

David Hess commented he had heard something about a sinkhole developing. Frank Zamadics commented he was made aware that someone felt something move while they were walking on Peach Drive. He checked the area and found that water got between two layers of blacktop and it separated, giving the impression that something was moving.

- C. Police Report. Chief Fogel reported that there have been quite a few truck traffic complaints received for Cherryville Road and Indiantrail Road. Unfortunately, the Department's truck inspector is out injured, but they do still have individuals who can do weight enforcement and they will get out as they are able.

The Department hosted a speed timing class today for 19 officers, four of which were our newest officers. This will help the officers to be able to do more enforcement and hopefully alleviate some of the issues.

Chief Fogel is currently working on a grant application which is due the end of this month. The application is for upgrading their in-car cameras which are aging. The current cameras are approximately 6 to 8 years old and they already have one that is not working. Parts are no longer available because the cameras are being phased out. The new equipment is far better with greater capabilities for when they need to provide camera footage to the DA's office. In addition, the new cameras are cloud based which means that the Department will not be required to store all the video footage on their server. The grant is a 2 to 1 match through the County Emergency Services. The maximum grant award is \$20,000. In order to get three new cameras, the Township would need to provide a match of \$14,000. The \$14,000 match can be made up in part from another grant. Between the two grants, we would be able to obtain four new cameras which is half the amount that is needed.

Chief Fogel wanted to remind residents that when there is something happening or they see something in process, they need to call directly to the 911 Center. Calling the station is not the best way to notify the officers of an issue. The secretary may not know where the officers are or reach them if they are on a call and would have to call the 911 Center which could waste valuable time.

Chief Fogel wanted to thank everyone for coming out to National Night Out. The night was started an hour early trying to beat the weather. Everyone seemed to have a good time during the hour before the rain started.

Chief Fogel commented the cadet in the academy is doing well and will complete the academy in December. Hopefully by March, they will be back to the full staff of 12 officers. Although there are 12 officers, that doesn't mean there are 12 officers on at one time. Usually, there are only two officers on duty, or if they are lucky, there are three and that is only if there is no one out sick or on vacation. Right now, there are a lot of times they are running with only one officer on duty. With 30 square miles of Township to cover, there are times when they are stretched thin to the point where they need to have other departments come in and cover calls. This is something to keep in mind with the call volume and size of our Township. A lot of departments around us are growing.

- D. Municipal Authority Report. Phil Gogel commented he did not have anything specific to report; he wasn't able to attend last month's meeting. In reading the notes of the meeting, the Authority did put a lien on a property for non-payment of fees.

Janet Sheats suggested that since the Authority has been asked to give a quarterly report, a schedule should be set so they are aware as to when they are expected to be at the meeting.

- E. Fire Company Report. Rick Hildebrand reported the Fire Company has been busy with accidents, mostly involving cars hitting telephone poles resulting in road closures. He wanted to remind residents to not drive around the barricades when they come across them. Besides being illegal, it could be dangerous.

The rescue truck developed an engine issue and has been taken out of service. It is believed it could be related to the diesel particulate filter.

The Fire Company is up to 325 calls for the year. They also participated in a water movement drill in Palmerton with units from four different counties.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Maintenance Building

1. Billitier Electric, Payment Request #10. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve Billitier Electric Payment Request #10 in the amount of \$7,186.50. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Resolution 2024-14, Resolution amending 2024 Budget. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-14. David Hess seconded the motion. Bill Hart questioned what the delta was in the resolution. Alice Rehrig commented it is increasing the budget by \$2,351,563, most of which is the result of receiving reimbursement from the State for the building. Katherine Mack questioned how the budget was revised based on the payment that was required as a result of paying for the lawsuit with the female police officer. Alice Rehrig commented there are approximately 25 different items that have changed based upon the actual receipts and expenditures through July 31; it's not just one line item that is changing. Katherine Mack questioned where the money would have come from if it were not for the grant money. Cindy Miller commented the grant money is the grant money—it is specific to the building. Alice Rehrig commented without the grant money, the overall budget would be changing by approximately \$300,000. All voted aye. Motion carried.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. 3824 Mountain View Drive, Request for Well Septic Isolation Distance. Bret Keiper was present to represent this property. He currently has a failing septic system and the only suitable area for a replacement system is within the well septic isolation distance. A letter of support for this request was received from the Sewage Enforcement Officer. Mr. Keiper noted that he has a small lot and the new system is actually further from his well than the existing field. Cindy Miller made a motion to grant the well septic isolation distance. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Public Hearing—Ordinance 2024-2 for Adoption, Establishing Requirements for Recreational Marijuana if legalized. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-2. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard questioned if this ordinance will put the use in the Industrial Zoning District. Cindy Miller confirmed it will be in the Industrial Zoning District and the ordinance mirrors the Medical Marijuana Ordinance. Attorney Backenstoe commented the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission reviewed the ordinance and provided the following comment in their review letter: “The application proposes to amend the Lehigh Township Zoning Ordinance to provide zoning requirements for cannabis business establishments and the sale of recreational marijuana at such a time as the Commonwealth permits it. The proposal adds definitions, use regulations and standards for cannabis business

establishment facilities certain Cannabis Business Establishments, and adds Cannabis Business Establishments as a special exception use within the Industrial Zone (I). The LVPC commends the Township for taking a proactive approach in regulating anticipated new land uses, which demonstrates 'evolution and adaptability of government' (FutureLV: The Regional Plan Policy 1.1).” Attorney Backenstoe noted the one caveat to this ordinance is that it is a proactive ordinance. It does not go into effect unless and until the State legalizes it. When and if this happens, the State may have certain criteria that may require the board to amend the ordinance, but the Township will have a base ordinance in effect immediately to protect the Township’s interest. Bill Hart commented this ordinance came out of the ad hoc committee. He wanted to let people know this because he is aware people question what they do as the committee. All voted aye to approve Ordinance 2024-2. Motion carried.

- C. Awarding of Bids for Leasing of Delps Park. Two bids were received for the leasing of the farm field. Lorah Farms bid a price of \$150 per acre. Daniel Ziegenfus bid a price of \$75 per acre. The current farmer did not submit a bid to lease the land. Jerry Pritchard made a motion to lease the Delps Park Farm Field to Lorah Farm at a price of \$150 per acre. David Hess seconded the motion. Mike Jones commented he believes there should be a caveat added that there is no biosolids permitted on the field. Attorney Backenstoe commented it is noted in the bid document and in the lease. Mike Jones commented his concern was because the fertilizer listed on the bid is general in nature. David Hess noted he would be required to follow the bid and lease agreement. Sandy Hopkins questioned how many acres were being leased. Mike Jones commented it is 20 acres. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- D. Official Maps for Borough of Slatinton and Washington Township. Cindy Miller questioned how it would work with the Lehigh River and storm water management. Mike Muffley commented ultimately all the stormwater gets covered by Act 167 Plan which is a county wide plan. Whenever there is a required stormwater plan, it also goes to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. The Act 167 Plan has everything broken up into small areas and each area has specific requirements for managing the stormwater.

Cindy Miller also questioned how it works with the MS4 since the maps show the Lehigh River as being part of Lehigh Township. Mike Muffley commented the limits of the MS4 stop once it reaches a regulated water body. The river itself is not part of the MS4. The MS4 only covers what is taken to the Lehigh River. The MS4 is basically a giant permit for the Township to discharge water into a stream or river. If everyone is following their pollution prevention and control plans, there is testing and monitoring of where pollution may be coming from and then an enforcement process if there is an issue.

The Board did not have any input into the official maps for either Washington Township or the Borough of Slatington.

- E. Yard Waste Center Regulations. With the installation of the gates at the yard waste site, Alice Rehrig provide the Board with a draft copy of regulations for the site and how the program would be instituted. The cost for the access card will need to be determined. Alice Rehrig suggested a one time \$10 fee for the card. Cindy Miller suggested \$20 in hopes that people would take care of the card and not lose them. David Hess suggested \$15. Mike Jones suggested an annual fee that the cards be renewed annually at a rate of \$10. Everyone agreed an annual fee of \$10.

It was agreed that the carded access would be phased in by the beginning of the year. Once the gates are fully active, they will open and close automatically and then on January 1, the card will be required for access. For the initial distribution of the cards, dates will be set for people to pick them up based upon their last name.

Cindy Miller suggested adding cell numbers, home numbers and email addresses to the forms to make it easier to contact people if necessary. She also suggested changing the second last paragraph to read the cards will be deactivated if the above regulations are not followed.

The new hours for the yard waste site will be 7:00 a.m. to sunset Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The site will be closed on Wednesday, Sunday, and Township holidays. By closing the site on Wednesdays, it will give the road crew the opportunity to load the containers without having to be concerned with vehicles and people coming in behind the equipment, making it safer for everyone. The main yard waste center on Weaversville Road is open on a Wednesday so residents would have the ability to go there if they needed to dispose of material.

Janet Sheats questioned how it will be handled if there is a resident who owns a landscaping business. Mike Jones commented only waste coming from their residence may be dropped at the Lehigh Township site. Alice Rehrig commented it is stated that the site is only for material coming from your residential home. Even if a resident has a large amount of material because a tree came down on their property, it is encouraged that they take the material to the main site because the Township site is limited in size. Janet Sheats questioned what happens if the home based landscaping businesses start saying everything is from their homes. Alice Rehrig commented commercial businesses are to take the material to the main site. If someone were to be bringing material into the site several times a day, for several days, week after week, giving the indication that they are a business, their card can be deactivated. Mike Jones commented it should state that the material is only from the address that is listed on the form.

Mike Jones also suggested placing a sign at the yard waste site indicating that effective January 1, a card will need to be obtained.

Frank Zamadics suggested that commercial vehicles should be prohibited from dumping at the site to alleviate concerns about the commercial dumping. If no commercial vehicles are permitted, then anyone with the commercial vehicles would need to go to the main site. This would eliminate the question of where the material came from. It has been noticed that some of the landscapers will tell you it is coming from their yard, but they are in and out of the site six times a day. If no commercial vehicles are permitted, then they have to go to the main site. The Board agreed with this.

Frank Zamadics commented the shutting down of the site during February and March does help because if there is bad weather, you don't have to worry about someone either slipping and falling or getting stuck. Janet Sheats commented "weather pending" could be added. Cindy Miller commented she knows residents do not like having the site closed for the two months, but there are reasons that it is done. Frank Zamadics commented the main site would be available for people to get rid of material.

Mike Jones commented the Township site originally started out to be a satellite site for when the main yard waste center was not open. It was never designed to be open every day of the week. The Township has gone above and beyond what this was intended for.

Phil Gogel questioned if it will be for after hour use or all the time. Mike Jones commented a card will be necessary in order to access the site anytime. Phil Gogel commented the Township receives about \$19,000 per year in grant funding to operate the site. Alice Rehrig commented the Township does not receive any grant funding for the operation of the site. The Township does receive about \$4,000 to \$5,000 per year for the recycling material (glass, plastic, aluminum, etc) that the garbage haulers collect.

A resident commented her husband owns a business and they use his truck to take their yard waste to the site. It doesn't seem right that someone cannot use a truck with decals on it if it is for personal use. They are only using the site about two times per year. Mike Jones commented the problem is that when one commercial vehicle comes in, others believe they can come in and the material may not be from their residence in Lehigh Township. Janet Sheat commented she understands the concern, but doesn't know how else to curb the problem after others have ruined it for everyone.

Marc Kerksmar commented he can understand a one time fee for the access card; he doesn't agree with an annual charge. He has also used the site to bring material from him home and his mother-in-law's home in the Township. Does she need to obtain a card even though she is not bringing the material to the site. The Board commented a second card wouldn't be necessary. Mike Jones commented the site is for material that is coming from the homes of Lehigh Township residents. Cindy Miller commented the other thing that the Township is trying to eliminate is having residents from other municipalities coming here and using our site. Mark Kerksmar commented there are other ways of monitoring who and what is coming into the site than restricting someone who owns a business from accessing the site for their personal use. It will be a learning experience for the first year. He also suggested there be additional hours provided for individuals to obtain cards if they are unable to get to the Township office during regular business hours. Maybe it could be sent in mail once the application is completed. Cindy Miller commented sending it in the mail does not seem to be a good idea with the way things have been getting stolen from mailboxes. Cindy Miller questioned if a Saturday could be made available for residents to come in for the card. Alice Rehrig commented office staff is at the Township building on several nights during a month for meetings. If someone cannot make it into the office during regular hours, they could obtain a card prior to one of our meetings.

David Hess commented he thinks we should try it for a year without restricting the vehicles. If there is a problem, then restrict the vehicles. If it doesn't work, the Board at least can say they tried to make it work for the residents. The Board agreed to try it at least for a month or so.

Katherine Mack questioned if the Board considered charging more for dumping for people who have landscaping businesses. Jerry Pritchard commented you would be opening it for them to dump as much as they want which is what we are trying to avoid. Alice Rehrig commented the landscaping businesses are not supposed to be dumping here. They are to go to the FRCA site on Weaversville Road. The Township site is just for residential use.

Phil Gogel questioned how large the material can be that is brought to the site. Mike Jones commented it can be up to 8 inches in diameter. Phil Gogel also questioned about stumps. Frank Zamadics commented stumps or anything in contact with the ground are not accepted at the Township or the FRCA site. Alice Rehrig noted Scott Farms in Saylorsburg has a large incinerator and accepts stumps.

- F. Manager's Report. The Board was reminded that the next meeting on August 27 will be starting at 5:30 p.m. with the conditional use hearing for the Solar Farm on the McBride property. The regular meeting will start at 7:00 p.m.

G. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe reported he is continuing to work with the Authority's counsel on the refinancing of their loan. He has asked them to classify the loan as self-liquidating debt. By doing this, it is better for the Township if they need to obtain a loan in the future because the Authority's debt will not count against the Township.

The Poplar Drive Solar Field has filed an appeal of the Zoning Hearing Board's decision. Attorney Backenstoe has entered his appearance of intervene on behalf of the Township. He did this to protect the Township interests and the integrity of the ordinance because part of their appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board was that our ordinance was exclusionary zoning.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT. Diane Muthard of Pennsville was present because she has some neighbors who she has issues with and wanted to make the Board aware of the situation. They do not have water or electricity and are starting to stockpile garbage. They also burn, but have no water source and also burning Styrofoam. They are constantly burning and there is no water. They have to live in fear every day that something will catch fire. She has also filed a complaint with the Zoning Officer. Cindy Miller commented that the Zoning Officer is already working on it and has sent out notices. Based on the law, they have 30 days to respond. If they don't respond, then she can cite them at the magistrate. Unfortunately, there is a process that must be filed and it does take some time. Mike Jones commented when they are burning, the fire company should be contacted. Mrs. Muthard also noted a different neighbor has built a roof, attached it to their home for a back patio without any permits or inspections. They have also added onto several sheds to house a person with no job or permanent address. He is a homeless squatter. Mr. Muthard commented he goes to work at 2 or 3 in the morning and sees him out there working and using power tools. Janet Sheats noted if they are making noise in the middle of the night, the police can be called. Rick Hildebrand commented when there is a potential hazard, they should call 911. If it is believed that something is wrong and not a hazard, call the non-emergency number at the dispatch center. The Fire Company was at this address yesterday, but at that time, they did not see anything that was a violation. They did give the property owner information regarding what is and isn't legal. Phil Gogel commented he used to own the property but sold it because everyone was watching everything he did. He tried to make things look nice, but the neighbors gave him grief so he sold it and really didn't care who he sold it to.

Mary Trexler wanted to thank all the residents for giving her the opportunity to serve them. She truly will miss the people. She apologizes for anything she did not follow through with; residents can still call her. She is always available and will try to help. She also wanted to thank Janet Sheats for her kindness and understanding when reaching out to her; she only wishes Cindy Miller would have followed suit and treated her with the same respect. Mary Trexler is leaving with mixed emotions after serving for 39 years,

but due to serious health issues in her family, she unfortunately cannot finish out her term. She will follow through until her job is complete and provide everything that has not yet been turned in. She appreciates everything that anyone has ever done for her.

Phil Gogel commented he was looking back through the minutes and didn't find anything when the forensic audit was voted upon. The Board commented they definitely voted on it, but don't recall the exact date. Janet Sheats commented they did vote on it but didn't disclose the details so as to not embarrass Mary Trexler. Phil Gogel questioned what the cost of the audit was. Jerry Pritchard commented it was around \$14,000. Phil Gogel questioned if there was any wrong doing found. Cindy Miller commented there was wrong doing found. The Board needed to act the way they did based on the circumstances and results. Phil Gogel commented there is a difference between things being late and things being missing. He doubts, knowing the caliber of a person that Mary Trexler is, that there was something missing. He believes there is more being made out of something that there is. Jerry Pritchard commented he wouldn't classify it as a wrong doing as much as mismanagement of taxes. Phil Gogel questioned if there was more money than there should have been, such as double payment of taxes. Cindy Miller commented there was a list of items. The audit is subject to right to know. Phil Gogel commented she shouldn't be bashed for being late with a few things. She had family issues and COVID a few times. Nothing was done maliciously.

John Knoblach questioned how the tax collector position will get filled. Mike Jones commented the opening is advertised and the Board has 30 days to fill the position. If it is not filled at that time, then the Vacancy Board has another 15 days to fill it. If it is still not filled, then the Courts will have to fill it.

Katherine Mack commented according to the regulations, the tax collector can be fined by the Township if they are late with their reports. Cindy Miller commented the Township did impose the fine. There is a maximum of up to \$250 per month. Katherine Mack commented she was told by Mary Trexler that there was around \$4,000 taken out of her pay. Alice Rehrig commented it could be close to \$3,000 because she has not turned in any reports on time. Last year, she only turned in February's report which she believes was turned in sometime in May and this year the only report she turned in was for February. Katherine Mack commented it was previously stated that the 2023 audit couldn't be completed because of the taxes, but it did get completed and posted. How did it get completed if you didn't have all the reports and information. Alice Rehrig commented as part of the forensic audit, the auditor obtained as much information as she could get from Mary Trexler and had to recreate all the tax reports. Katherine Mack commented then Mary Trexler had the information, but she didn't report it. Alice Rehrig commented the auditor has to obtain copies of checks that were deposited to the bank and match that information to the bills that Mary Trexler provided to determine what the actual amount of taxes that were collected. Some of the information pertaining to cash

was not provided; some information could not be tied out. They did the best they could with the information that was provided. Katherine Mack questioned if the audit determined if Mary Trexler absconded with any funds. Alice Rehrig commented from what they could tell with the information provided, no. Janet Sheats commented the part she found the most concerning was that several people were turned over to the County as delinquent when they did in fact pay their taxes. Cindy Miller noted the office has fielded anywhere from 60 to 75 calls since January from tax payers.

Monica Brown questioned how the Township can function if they don't know how much money is coming in. Cindy Miller commented one of the issues they are currently having is with the real estate tax because the Township doesn't know how much money should be transferred to the fire tax fund because there were no reports turned over. Phil Gogel commented that was because she had to do her own program to do the fire tax. The Township should have helped to facilitate that. Mike Jones commented she is like a subcontractor for the Township. She is responsible for what she needs for the job. Phil Gogel commented you knew she had issues, but you didn't want to help her. Cindy Miller commented that is far from true. There was help offered many times.

Katherine Mack commented the Welcome to Lehigh Township sign in Treichlers is in poor condition. It should either be removed or replaced. The Board agreed it should be removed.

Katherine Mack again commented she really believes the Board should give some consideration to enacting Act 172 to provide an incentive to recruit and retain volunteer fire fighters. She did some research on volunteer firefighters. About 10 years ago, there were 300,000 volunteer firefighters in Pennsylvania; now there are only 37,000 volunteer firefighters. In reviewing the audit, it showed there was \$1 million extra last year. That could be used for the incentive. If we are forced to pay for firefighters, it will a whole lot more for fire service. The Board needs to think about the future. Monica Brown commented she too believes it would be a good idea to do something to retain our firefighters. Years ago, the fire company held a lot of events and many things were centered around the fire company. We don't have that anymore because they are busy doing other things. A small reward to keep them as a volunteer fire company would not cost much now, but without the volunteers it can cost that much more in the future.

Jerry Pritchard commented anyone is welcome to donate towards the fire company. He personally has no problem with donating to them. He believes the mindset of people should be that they donate to them. The Board shouldn't have to enact something. People should care enough to do something on their own through donations. Katherine Mack commented they just sent out the donation letters; how many of them did they get back? Rick Hildebrand commented it will take a while to go through them. They will be doing a comparison of this year to last and reporting those results to the Board. People

need to remember that the fire tax basically pays for fire trucks and the basic essentials: fuel, workers comp, and insurance. None of that money goes directly to the Fire Company. It stays with the Township and paid out based upon bills presented. Things are tough because everyone is fighting for the dollar, not just them, but civic organizations, churches, and other organizations.

Katherine Mack noted that when the Fire Tax was initiated, the Township used to give the fire company a mill or about \$200,000 out of the general fund. That money is still there and be in the budget every year. The cost of Act 172 could be taken from that amount in the budget. Mike Jones commented that money is also being used for other items, such as roads. They don't want to spend every time because you don't know what could happen.

Marc Kercsmer commented he did notice on Facebook there was a very nice comment regarding the fire company and the misconceptions pertaining to the fire tax. Rick Hildebrand and Brian Krische provided them with a two hour tour of the fire company so they could understand thing. Mike Jones noted there was also a misconception regarding the fire tax going to other agencies. As long as there is a Lehigh Township Fire Company, the fire tax would be used for them.

- IX. ADJOURN. Cindy Miller made a motion to adjourn. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.