

# LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

January 13, 2026

6:00 p.m.

- I. EXECUTIVE SESSION. An Executive Session to discuss personnel was held prior to the meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- II. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Lehigh Township Municipal Building, 1069 Municipal Road, Walnutport. Chairman Mike Jones called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

Present: Cindy Miller  
David Hess  
Mike Jones  
Janet Sheats  
Jerry Pritchard  
David Backentoe  
Alice Rehrig  
Mike Muffley  
Roxann Colfer  
John Henry  
Frank Zamadics

The Chairman requested a moment of silence for David Shulman who passed away on December 23. David Shulman served as Chairman and a member of our Planning Commission for 45 years. He was also active in other aspects of our community.

The Chairman requested a motion with regard to the Executive Session which was held prior to the start of the meeting. Cindy Miller made a motion to extend an offer of employment to the successful candidates. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- III. POLICE DEPARTMENT PROMOTION & SWEARING IN OF NEW OFFICER
  - A. Chief of Police. Janet Sheats made a motion to promote Sergeant John Henry to Chief of Police. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Chief Henry began his law enforcement career with the Lehigh Township Police Department in 1999 and was promoted to Sergeant in 2008. In March 2025, he transitioned to the role of Detective Sergeant and has been serving as Officer in Charge since June 2025. Prior to his career with Lehigh Township, John served

with the Jim Thorpe Police Department and the Carbon County Sheriff's Office. District Magistrate Robert Hawke was present to administer the Oath of Office.

- B. Patrolman. The Police Department began the process of hiring a new police officer in August. After conducting interviews and background investigations, Jarett Honea, a recent graduate of the Allentown Police Academy, was the successful candidate. District Magistrate Robert Hawke was present to administer the Oath of Office.

Chief Henry also noted that Officers Batihk and Stinemire responded to a medical alert notification call where an 84 year old lady slipped into her pond while she was trying to clean it. The cold weather and water caused her to become hypothermic as her body temperature dropped to 88 degrees. With the help of a neighbor, the officers were able to get her out of the pond. She was then transported to the hospital. She is currently doing well, but her condition was quite serious at the time.

- IV. PUBLIC COMMENT—REORGANIZATION. Keith Hantz commented he attended the Reorganization Meeting and found it upsetting that the Board of Supervisors could not finish their agenda. The meeting started with four supervisors and one had left everyone know they needed to leave the meeting, then another left partway through the meeting for no reason. He believes it was disrespectful to the Township residents and makes the Board look bad. It is not a good start for the Township and a bad start to 2026.

Katherine Mack commented she was glad to see that the Board recognized David Shulman; however, she felt it should have been done at the Reorganization Meeting which was the first meeting of the year.

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. November 25, 2025. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve these minutes. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. December 9, 2025. David Hess made a motion to approve these minutes. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- C. January 5, 2025. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve these minutes. David Hess seconded the motion. David Hess, Janet Sheats, Jerry Pritchard, and Mike Jones voted aye. Cindy Miller abstained from the portion of the meeting that she was not present for. Motion carried.

VI. APPROVAL OF THE BILLS

- A. General Fund Checks 29240 to 29341. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve these bills. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

VII. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Request for Waiver of Land Development

1. Collin Perkins, Lots H4 13 11 and H4 13 12. Mike Muffley commented this property is currently under review for a single family dwelling. During the review of the grading plan, it was learned that there is a separate parcel in the middle of the large tract which is not usable, nor is it described in the deed. It is the recommendation that the Board grant a waiver of the formal land development process and send a letter to Northampton County authorizing the combination of the two parcels into one parcel. Cindy Miller made a motion to send a letter to Northampton County authorizing them to combine both parcels into one parcel. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Engineer's Report. Mike Muffley reported construction is continuing on Northwoods Phase I as the contractor is working on completing the items on the punch list for the first phase of the project. Top of the Mountain has completed most of the improvements for the development and will be ready for starting the building permit process in spring.

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT

- A. Recreation Report. David Hess did not have anything specific to report. The December meeting of the Rec Board was canceled.

- B. Public Works Report. Frank Zamadics reported he is in the process of obtaining quotes for trucks. The Township received funding for a tandem truck and there was a single axle truck included in the budget. He is looking to see if there is any type of savings if two trucks are purchased at the same time. Once the pricing is received, this can be discussed further.

Mike Jones questioned if the cost of a lighted stop sign could be obtained to see if that would help with the amount of accidents that are happening at the Locust Drive and Cherryville Road intersection. Frank Zamadics commented he previously has looked into them and the price was \$2,500 for each one. There currently is two stop signs and a stop ahead signs at the intersection when you approach it from Route 248. There is a single stop sign and a stop ahead sign at the intersection when you approach it from Blue Mountain Drive. All signs are visible as you approach the intersection. Rick Hildebrand commented the stop bars at the intersection need to be repainted.

Frank Zamadics commented there have also been concerns regarding the hard turn on South Cottonwood Road. There already are chevrons and curve ahead signs posted on the roadway. He can add additional signs if the Board wants.

- C. Zoning Report. Roxann Colfer reported in December there were 45 permits issued, and 6 complaints were closed out. There are 12 active complaints with three of them at the magistrate level. There were no zoning hearings in December and none are scheduled for January. There will be one hearing in February.

Paul Nikisher questioned if the Zoning Hearing Board still meets if there are no hearings. Roxann Colfer commented they only meet if there is a hearing.

Jerry Pritchard commented he noticed the format of the zoning report changed in that the names and addresses were removed from the complaint log. Roxann Colfer commented they were removed because there could be privacy issues if the names and addresses are disclosed.

Wayne Kleintop questioned what was happening with the property at Becky's Drive In. Roxann Colfer commented they have submitted a permit application and it is under review. Because the wall is over four feet in height, it is subject to review under the PA Building Codes. There are also concerns with setbacks because of its close proximity to the roadway.

- D. Police Report. Chief Henry reported for the year 2025, the Department had 5,410 calls, 137 reportable accidents, 83 non-reportable accidents, 311 traffic citations, 39 non-traffic citations, and 180 written warnings. In December, the Department had 464 calls, 20 reportable accidents, 13 non-reportable accidents, 31 summary violations, 12 equipment repair orders, and 6 individuals were processed through the booking center. There were also 8 arrests including aggravated assault, simple assault, DUI, and harassment.

Cindy Miller questioned what the outcome was of the homeless person who was living on Wood Drive. John Henry commented they went out to the site with PPL and PPL was going to remove the structures at the site that day, but the contractor did not come out. He hasn't had a chance to check if they came out. It doesn't look like the individual has been back to the site because there have not been any footprints in the snow. Dan Ziegenfuss commented that nothing has been removed and the individual is now coming in from Butternut Drive. John Henry will reach out again to PPL.

John Henry reported the Department has received 20 employment applications and the submission period goes until February 3. They will be administering a test on February 21 and is hoping to have a good candidate pool.

John Henry commented that with him moving into the position of Chief, there is an opening for a Detective. Right now, the only individual interested in the position is Phil Mirabile. If Phil Mirabile becomes the Detective, then there will be a Sergeant

position open which means the testing process for that position will be needed. He would like authorization to begin the process for filling these two positions.

Janet Sheats made a motion to amend the agenda to add the position of Detective to the agenda. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

1. Detective Position. Janet Sheats made a motion to move forward with filling the position of Detective and begin the process of testing for Sergeant if Sergeant Mirabile becomes the Detective. David Hess seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard commented he agrees with moving forward with the process, but he doesn't believe we should be authorizing the testing for Sergeant if we don't know who is going to be getting the position of Detective. Cindy Miller commented she believes the Board should look at filling the Detective first. Janet Sheats and David Hess voted aye. Cindy Miller, Mike Jones, and Jerry Pritchard were opposed. Motion did not carry.

Janet Sheats made a motion to move forward with scheduling interviews for the Detective position. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- E. Fire Company Report. Rick Hildebrand reported the Fire Company responded to 542 incidents. There were 60 overlapping incidents in which there was more than one call at a time. They provided mutual aid 88 times and received mutual aid 56 times. There were 122 fire type incidents and 220 rescue/emergencies which includes accidents and EMS calls. There were 86 hazardous condition responses, 47 good intent calls and 41 false alarms.

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, they will be having final inspection on the new ladder truck. The truck will then go to Campbell Supply for about 30 days for final adjustments. They will also be receiving training over the next six months on the pumps and systems of the truck.

They will be having their flower sale on February 12, 13, and 14 and their Sportsman Night will be on March 28. This will be a large event and there will be more items available on the day of the event.

## IX. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Sewage Enforcement Services. Alice Rehrig provided the Board with a chart comparing the 2025 rates for sewage enforcement services with the 2026 rates. The greatest change in rates was for a single per test which increased by 27 percent. After reviewing the rates, the Board felt it would be best to have Alice Rehrig do an RFP for services to get competitive rates.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolutions for Adoption

1. Resolution 2026-2, adding 522 Blue Mountain Drive into Ag Security Area. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-2. David Hess seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard questioned if this resolution moves this to the County level. Attorney Backenstoe commented they are applying to the Township to add this property into the Ag Security Areas of Lehigh Township. The Township adopted the Ag Security program years ago and individuals with 10 acres or more of land can apply to be included in the areas. There are a number of reasons why people may want to be included such as defending against nuisance violations and getting into other County programs. Some Counties requires you to be part of the Ag Security Areas before you can be eligible for other County programs. Cindy Miller questioned **if this property had active farming on it. ~~there has to be active farming in order to apply for Ag Security.~~** Attorney Backenstoe commented the only requirement is to have 10 contiguous acres. Dan Ziegenfuss commented there currently is farming taking place on this property. All voted aye. Motion carried.
2. Resolution 2026-3, Establishing Sewage Enforcement Rates. Alice Rehrig commented this resolution will cover the costs based upon the current SEO rates. Depending upon the results of the RFP, this resolution will need to be updated. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-3. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. Jerry Pritchard questioned if these rates are the rates that the Township is being charged. Alice Rehrig commented it is the rates we are being charged plus an administrative fee. These rates are necessary in order keep the overall costs of the sewage enforcement program from being borne by all the taxpayers. The costs of the services are borne by the users. All voted aye. Motion carried.
3. Resolution 2026-4, Establishing Miscellaneous Fees. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-4. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. Cindy Miller questioned if the Township is still selling recycling containers. Alice Rehrig commented there are very few being sold because most of the companies have gone to the toter systems. Cindy Miller questioned if it is necessary to include the fee in the resolution. Frank Zamadics commented there are about 40 containers left. It was agreed that the fee would remain in the event someone wanted to purchase a container. Keith Hantz questioned the rates for the equipment. He didn't think the Township equipment left the Township. Mike Jones commented those are the rates that would be charged if the Township had to use their equipment to clean up after something. Alice Rehrig commented they are mostly used when there is damage to street signs as a result of an accident.

Wayne Kleintop commented the rates are very low. Mike Muffley commented the Township could adopt the current FEMA rate schedule which is published by the Government. Cindy Miller amended her motion to adopt the fees in the resolution along with the current FEMA rates for the equipment. All voted aye. Motion carried.

4. Resolution 2026-5, Establishing Police Department Report Fees. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-5. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. Noise, Fireworks, and Alcohol Ordinance. Cindy Miller commented in speaking with some of the police officers, they are having a difficult time with the enforcement of some of the ordinances because of the way they are written. For example, there is no alcohol permitted in Berlinsville, but players are drinking alcohol after the games in the parking lot. As a Township we need to decide what we want to do as far as allowing it. Right now, it is permitted at Danielsville, Delps, and Indiantrail Parks because there are pavilions there that are being rented and a permit is being issued. If these teams are drinking after games, there is no permit. As a Township we will be on the hook if someone drives away and is in an accident. She thinks as a Township we need to decide as a Township what we want to do as far as alcohol and work with the police as to how we enforce it. It would also be the same with noise and fireworks. The State changed the laws with fireworks and our ordinance is not consistent with the new laws.

Janet Sheats questioned what liability the Township would have if someone drinks alcohol at Berlinsville park, leaves, and gets into an accident. Attorney Backenstoe commented if the Township is regulating it, then you are taking on a responsibility that you may not otherwise have. If you have an ordinance that alcohol cannot be consumed at a particular facility and it is being consumed and someone gets hurt because you didn't regulate it or take initiative to regulate it, there could be a liability. On the other hand, if alcohol is permitted and insurance or a waiver is provided, it releases the Township from some liability. If you are going to regulate it, then you need to regulate it fully and completely. There is a less chance of liability if there is no regulation whatsoever. If someone takes alcohol onto public property, he doesn't know if you necessarily have liability at all. Once you decide to regulate it and adopt a regulation and ordinance which says no consumption of alcohol and people are doing it all the time, you will have liability and possibly a lawsuit.

Mike Jones questioned if things are getting out of control at the park with alcohol. John Henry commented he doesn't believe it is out of control. It is mostly at the end of the night when the guys are hanging out, they have a beer. Janet Sheats questioned if there was a complaint. John Henry commented the officers have been looking at

the ordinances because there have been instances where there would be better language for them to do what they need to do. Using fireworks as an example, the officers are not going to know what was shot up into the air or the size of what it was in order to do any type of citing. It really needs to come down to hours and time that it happens and look at it as more of a noise or nuisance. Cindy Miller commented when you look at the noise, it is a civil issue and there is only so much that our police can do. Attorney Backenstoe commented he would be happy to work with the Chief, look at the firework ordinance and the State law to try to bring things up to date.

Mike Jones questioned if teams could sign a release to allow the consumption of alcohol. Attorney Backenstoe commented if you want to allow it, you would permit it with insurance and release. If you want to prohibit it, then it is prohibited. It needs to be clear so the Police know how to enforce it. Jerry Pritchard questioned if we could just simply permit it at the parks and let the teams get a permit, provide insurance, and have them sign a waiver. Janet Sheats questioned how you would get the insurance and waiver if the individual consuming the alcohol is not part of the team.

Roxann Colfer commented it probably would be best to have herself, the Chief, Alice Rehrig, and Attorney Backenstoe review the ordinances and bring it back to the Board.

Dan Ziegenfuss commented it seems that the Township needs to determine whether or not they want to permit alcohol and if so, how will it be enforced if it is not allowed so the Township is not liable.

C. Manager's Report. Alice Rehrig did not have anything additional to report.

Cindy Miller questioned the status of the tax collector documents. Alice Rehrig commented the tax collector has made two trips of documents which contained the most recent years. Over the next month, she will be working on a resolution to destroy the old tax records. In reviewing the Records Retention Act, the tax receipts only need to be retained for two years so we really only need to have 2024 and 2025. The only thing that needs to be retained longer is the monthly tax reports which we do have on file.

Cindy Miller questioned the status of the three to five year budget. Alice Rehrig commented she has been slowly updating it based upon what has been established through the 2025 budget. She should be able to provide the Board with the updated draft within the next month or so.

D. Solicitor's Report. Attorney Backenstoe did not have anything specific to report.



- X. PUBLIC COMMENT. Paul Nikisher commented it was nice to see the Department heads sticking around for the entire meeting. Sometimes there are questions that come up after they have left. He was also disappointed that there was no more media coverage for the appointment of a new chief.

Keith Hantz questioned with regard to the executive session at the beginning of the meeting, which department was the candidate being hired for and how many individuals. Mike Jones commented it was for public works and there are two individuals.

Keith Hantz questioned what rates were set for the non-union employees. Mike Jones commented they have not yet been set.

Keith Hantz thanked everyone on behalf of his daughters for the Noon Years Eve Event. For a first time event, it went well. He appreciates the communication between Alice Rehrig and his daughter, as well as some Board members. He would hope if the event happens again, there would be additional cooperation by the Township. The Fire Company also allowed them to blow up the 2,000 balloons for the drop in the fire hall which was a great help.

Katherine Mack questioned if the rates for the all the solicitors will be in the minutes. Janet Sheats commented she believes it was included. Attorney Backenstoe commented he charges \$160 per hour regardless of what type of work he does. If he reviews plans for developers or does developer agreements, there is a separate statement submitted and it is paid from their escrow account.

Katherine Mack recommended to the Board that individuals who have served on served on various Boards and committees who are no longer serving be recognized in some official way. They have given a lot of time and service to the Township.

John Knoblach commented he sees Officers Batihk and Stinemire, along with other young officers on the road and sees them engaging with the public. It is great to see them engaging with the public.

Connie Mushko commented she owns a farm at 835 Cork Road. She is in favor of the initiative for a local preservation program. A portion of the farm is in preservation, and they are in the process of preserving the remaining portion; however, she needed to include a smaller 8 acre parcel with the large area of the farm in the County preservation program. If there would have been a local program, she could have kept that parcel separate for a separate homesite. She had to include it because she was concerned that since it abuts the Schaeffer Farm and if it was ever developed, her property could be annexed. She also learned that it could potentially still be annexed because the rights can

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be transferred on preserved land since there would be access to a sewer line through the other property. She is concerned about the Township and what will happen and would appreciate consideration being given to the preservation process.

- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel. Upon returning from the Executive Session, Janet Sheats made a motion to approve the wages for non-union personnel for 2026. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried
- XII. ADJOURN. Janet Sheats made a motion to adjourn. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.