

LEHIGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

April 14, 2026

- I. CALL TO ORDER. The Lehigh Township Board of Supervisors held their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 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 Backenstoe
Alice Rehrig
Mike Muffley
Roxann Colfer
John Henry
Frank Zamadics

Janet Sheats made a motion to amend the agenda to have a member of the public speak prior to moving forward with the remaining agenda items so he could address Chief Henry. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye.

Bill Weaver was involved in a motor vehicle accident on March 24th and taken to the hospital. The two officers, (Chief Henry and Officer Batihk), who responded to the accident did more than he would have expected to ensure his family made it home safely and called them to make sure that they were okay. They went beyond anything he would have expected and he wanted to thank them for everything they had done.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. March 24, 2026. David Hess made a motion to approve the minutes. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF THE BILLS

- A. General Fund Checks 29494 to 29525. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve the bills. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Cindy Miller questioned Check 29500 regarding lights at Indiantrail Park. Alice Rehrig commented the old lights were replaced after the new ceiling panels were installed. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- B. State Fund Check 1647. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve this check. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

IV. PLANNING RELATED ITEMS

A. Withdrawal of Plan

1. Billy M. Carter Minor Subdivision. Cindy Miller made a motion to approve the withdrawal of the Billy Carter Minor Subdivision Plan which expires on April 30, 2026. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

B. Request for Waiver of SALDO Section 147-17.D(4)

1. Joseph & Susan Ahearn Minor Subdivision. Mark Leuthe was present to represent this plan. This is a 10 acre parcel which is being subdivided into five lots. Because of the depth of the parcel, the lots are exceeding the required width to depth ratio. Cindy Miller made a motion to grant the requested waiver of SALDO Section 147.17.D(4). Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- C. Engineer's Report. Mike Muffley commented the Planning Commission has asked him to prepare a stand alone Data Center ordinance as a stop gap until the new zoning ordinance is complete. This will be coming to the Board shortly for final review and authorization to advertise it for adoption.

Pennoni is working on the final revisions to the new zoning ordinance and they should be forwarding it to the Planning Commission shortly.

He has been working on the Timberline Road projects with Alice Rehrig to develop a scope of work and some estimates. The project will be more than just a resurfacing project. His recommendation was to do cold in place recycling where they mill the existing pavement, add fresh oil, and place it down as a new base material, then pave the surface. There are also several culverts that need to be replaced. Jerry Pritchard questioned when this may be put out for bid. Mike Muffley commented he would expect it to be ready by the end of the month. Linda Roman questioned what the life expectancy would be for the milled road. Mike Muffley commented it would be about 20 years with the appropriate wearing course on top of it. Zach Szoke questioned if there was any inlet and outlet protection for the pipe. Mike Muffley commented they will be bringing the ones that are being replaced up to current standards.

V. DEPARTMENTAL/ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT

- A. Recreation Report. Keith Hantz reported the pavilions at Indiantrail Park have been completed. The dog shelter structures will be started shortly.

The events the Rec Board is currently planning are the Christmas Tree Lighting on December 5th with a starting time of 3:00 p.m. so it can be completed at dark and the Noon Year's Eve Balloon Drop event on December 31. The individuals who put the

event together last year are willing to do it again. Janet Sheats made a motion to approve the Christmas Tree Lighting and the Noon Year's Eve balloon drop. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

The Rec Board has been discussing the tennis court in Danielsville. The court basically needs to be reconstructed so it will be quite costly; the courts are beyond just doing simple maintenance. Cindy Miller commented the cost estimate that was previously provided was \$150,000.

The Rec Board is actively looking at playground equipment for Indiantrail Park as well as other parks and trying to find the best use of funds. Janet Sheats also suggested reaching out to the School District since they are looking at closing some of their schools. There may be something that could be dismantled and placed at one of our parks.

Katherine Mack questioned if there is an update regarding the Rainbow Bridge that a girl scout wanted to construct. Mike Jones commented the girl scout decided to do the project in Walnutport.

- B. Public Works Report. Frank Zamadics reported they are currently street sweeping and it will continue until the end of May. The water at the parks has been turned on, but the buildings will not be open until the required testing has been completed and reported to DEP.

Jerry Pritchard questioned how the two new employees are doing. Frank Zamadics commented they are both doing well and will be completing their first 90 days in the next few weeks.

- C. Zoning Report. Roxann Colfer reported 43 permit applications have been received; 31 of them have been issued. There currently is 20 open complaints, five of which are at the magistrate, one is with DEP, and one went to the Zoning Hearing Board for which the use was denied. There were two zoning hearings last week, one of them was continued and the other was approved.
- D. Police Report. Chief Henry reported 369 calls were logged, 12 reportable accidents, 16 summary violations issued, 12 equipment repair orders/warnings were issued, and four people were processed through the booking center. There were four arrests including simple assault, DUI, and unattended fires.

Chief Henry wanted to recognize Officers Collin Haupt and Craig Ball. They responded to a medical call with uncontrolled bleeding. Officer Haupt applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. The individual was transported to the hospital and is in good condition.

Sergeant Roth commented the Police Safety Grant (PTS) opened on April 1 and is due by May 31 and would like to again submit for that grant. The PTS grant is the combination of aggressive driving, impaired driving, occupant protection, and pedestrian safety grant. This time it will be a one year grant cycle. There is no match required of the grant. Jerry Pritchard made a motion to authorize Sergeant Roth with moving forward with the PTS grant. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Paul Nikisher questioned when police can enforce a trespassing matter as opposed to it being a civil matter that they can't enforce. Chief Henry commented when there is a neighbor dispute regarding a property line, they cannot determine who owns which property and it is a civil matter they cannot enforce. They work on trying to keep the peace amongst the neighbors. If it is clear who the property owner is and there is a person that the property owner cannot identify or doesn't want on their property, then trespassing would apply and if they have been told to leave and they refuse, then they could be cited.

John Knoblach questioned if there was any update on the encampment that was built on the PPL right of way. Chief Henry commented PPL hired a company to take care of it and when they came out the ground was too soft to get their equipment in and they will need to set up another date. Dan Ziegenfuss commented this needs to be resolved sooner than later because the individual is going through everyone's yards to get to the structures. Chief Henry will reach back out to the company and see if a new date has been set.

A. Fire Company Report. The Fire Commissioner was unable to attend the meeting.

Janet Sheats reminded everyone to follow the burning ordinance, watch the weather, and have a water source available if they are burning.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Resolution 2026-13, Establishing scheduling priorities, fees for use of facilities.

Cindy Miller questioned Item 7 and who was responsible for cleaning the stand. Alice Rehrig commented that item is older from when the stand was being used by multiple people. Right now, the stand is not being used and if it is used, it is by the Rec Board and they are responsible for the cleanup.

Cindy Miller also questioned Item #11 and if the keys are being returned. Alice Rehrig commented she is receiving about 75% of the keys and does have security deposits for keys that have not been returned.

Janet Sheats made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-13. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. Katherine Mack noted that Northampton just recently increased their pavilion rental fees to \$100. Are we charging an adequate amount for our pavilion rentals. Mike Jones commented we are currently at \$100 for pavilion rentals. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Resolution 2026-14, Miscellaneous Fees. Roxann Colfer did some research on what other municipalities are changing for short term rental and bed and breakfast licenses. Based on what the requirements are under our ordinance, it is recommended that our fee be established at \$500 as indicated in the resolution. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-14. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- C. Amendments to Noise Ordinances. All the concepts that were previously discussed have been incorporated into one document to make it easier to read. In addition to the previous discussions, language from Chapter 51, Animals, was incorporated. Chapter 51 mainly dealt with issues pertaining to dogs being allowed to bark excessively. If these items are incorporated into the new noise ordinance, Chapter 51 can be repealed and everything will be located in one ordinance. The decibel levels were also increased slightly. The Police Department also suggested including a provision that they be notified if someone was going to be using Tannerite targets to help eliminate emergency dispatches for explosions. Janet Sheats commented the notification to the police department could be helpful if they are being dispatched for explosions because that is a lot of resources being used unnecessarily.

Cindy Miller questioned how the timeframes for the barking dogs are enforced. Attorney Backenstoe commented it would have to be based on neighbor complaints and possibly videos. It could be difficult. This is a fair effort for a neighbor who has a concern about their neighbors animal. It's about as good as you can get with a difficult situation.

Cindy Miller made a motion to authorize these concepts, including the notification of the police for the use of Tannerite targets to be prepared into an ordinance. Janet Sheats seconded the motion. Dan Ziegenfuss questioned if the notification would be to the County Dispatcher or the Police Department. Chief Henry commented for something like that, it would be best to notify the Police Department and let the officer on duty know. All voted aye. Motion carried.

D. Amendments to Chapter 107-7, Consumption of Alcohol in Parks. Janet Sheats commented she is still leaning towards the Option 2 and not regulating alcohol and letting people be responsible for themselves and take the liability off the Township. Jerry Pritchard disagreed, no law invites lawless people. When talking about liability, a lawyer will take any case. If something happens, the Township will be named until we can get our name off it. No matter which way the Board goes, there will be liability. Society today does not live without liability. They chase it.

Alice Rehrig contacted the broker to reach out to Selective Insurance. Selective Insurance did not take a position one way or the other. The broker suggested language that restricts the type of alcohol and containers similar to what Moore Township and the City of Bethlehem does.

Cindy Miller commented she doesn't think there should be any alcohol permitted. Then there is no question.

Jerry Pritchard commented if we stay with what we have, there is some type of documentation that someone is taking the responsibility. That would be better than nothing.

Cindy Miller commented at a minimum she wants someone to take liability for the activities at the park. Alice Rehrig commented if the ordinance remains the same, she can work with Attorney Backenstoe to improve the language of the application to make sure the applicant is assuming the liability. Attorney Backenstoe commented it would be language where the applicant is indemnifying the Township and holding them harmless.

Janet Sheats made a motion to table the amendment until Attorney Backenstoe and Alice Rehrig can work out new language for the application. David Hess seconded the motion. Linda Roman commented she is still of the opinion that it is not proper or necessary to allow alcohol in the Township parks. No drinking will take care of the liability concern. Monica Brown commented it should be the insurance company making the recommendations, not the broker. Dan Ziegenfuss commented he has had friends who used their property for a party or reception and they required them to obtain a certificate of insurance; it can be done. Paul Nikisher commented the Board should take the course of the least liability to the Township. All voted aye. Motion carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution 2026-15, Building and Zoning Permit Fees. The fees for the grading plans and stormwater management plans have been adjusted to reflect the average cost of a grading plan which is \$1,600. Most reviews are just under or just over \$1,600. A

provision was added if the review costs exceed the fee by 10 percent or more, the applicant would be charged the additional fee. This would come into play if a plan is really inadequate or a site is overly complicated.

Cindy Miller questioned if the grading would apply to a driveway. Mike Muffley commented it would apply to most anything that is over 1,000 square feet that is not in a subdivision or land development plan. Cindy Miller commented \$1,600 seems like a lot for a driveway. Alice Rehrig commented if someone is getting a driveway permit for a new home, they would need to submit a plan regardless and the driveway would be included. Grading permits are not required if someone were to redo their driveway. Jerry Pritchard commented it seems like there should be a difference between a driveway permit and an entire house.

Roxann Colfer commented she believes that Mike Muffley is putting in more time on the grading review than what he is billing for. She believes the fees are warranted. Mike Muffley commented the other option would be to set up escrow accounts and send the applicants their invoices like you would for a subdivision, but that creates more tracking in the office.

Dan Ziegenfuss commented grading plans are required for the installation of an inground pool. Is there a way to not put the cost onto them? It seems crazy to require a plan for a pool. Mike Muffley commented the requirement for a grading plan is dependent upon the size of the structure and the size of the lot.

Mike Jones questioned how much we were in the hole last year because of the grading plans. Alice Rehrig commented she didn't have the information with her, but believes the engineering budget was over by \$10,000 or \$15,000. Janet Sheats commented it is not right that all the tax payers have to make up the overage because of individual costs.

Janet Sheats made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-15. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. Katherine Mack commented she would be in agreement with increasing the fees. The tax payers shouldn't be liable for other people's expenses. Jerry Pritchard commented he has a hard time requiring someone to pay for a permit for a deck on their home. It's their house. Katherine Mack commented the permits help build the tax base. Roxann Colfer commented the permits are also regulated by the State. Zach Szoke commented the permits also help ensure that the deck is constructed safely and future owners of a home know that the work was done properly. All voted aye. Motion carried.

- B. Resolution 2026-16, Adopting Bituminous Escalator Clause. Cindy Miller made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-16. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- C. Manager's Report. The Northampton County Grow NorCo grants will be opening up shortly. This is a matching grant up to \$50,000. It was agreed that an application should be submitted for a new sign for the front of the municipal building.

Stormie Fenner who is a worker at Teddy Bear Day Care had contacted Alice Rehrig to see if there would be consideration given to installing flags for the 250th Anniversary in the Berlinsville area by the Day Care and also if the Day Care building could be recognized since it is one of the oldest schools in the area.

Alice Rehrig noted that Roxann Colfer's probationary period will be ending on April 20th.

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

Paul Nikisher questioned what recourse there was if someone doesn't pay the fire tax. Attorney Backenstoe commented it becomes a collection matter and it could be appealed in court. Paul Nikisher commented the School has decided they were not going to be paying the tax. It is not right for the tax payers to have to pay for the fight by both parties. Attorney Backenstoe commented even if the School District were to win the right, it will have cost them more than if they would just pay the tax. The fire tax is to pay for the equipment for the safety and protection of the children. Jerry Pritchard commented he has requested the School District to place it back on their agenda for discussion. Monica Brown commented her concern is that if they don't pay, other entities will not pay and start a whole other problem.

- VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT. Linda Roman commented if drinking is permitted in the park, the Police Department needs to do their job.

David and Linda Beaumont own property at 3833 Dogwood Road. It is Lot 1 of the Mountain Vista Subdivision from 1978. They are in the process of building a home and find it to be a difficult process and have spent quite a bit of money and have yet to get a shovel in the ground. The lot has 18 percent grade at portions of it. It has a detention pond on it that has never been maintained and it is not written into their deed or any of the prior deeds. There is a disconnect between the recording of the plan and the recording of the deeds to alert property owners of the plan. He is hoping going forward, things are done better to let people know what is needed. The requirements are getting harder and harder and seem to be getting out of hand. The lot was approved in 1978

based on the requirements of 1978. Mike Muffley commented it is not uncommon for covenants from a subdivision to not be placed in the deeds for properties from a subdivision and a title searcher will most likely not go through multiple pages of a subdivision to look for covenants. They usually only look at the deeds and what are linked to them. Attorney Backenstoe commented the sellers of the property are responsible to disclose those types of items and responsibilities at the time of sale. Dan Ziegenfuss commented there should be a way for someone with common sense to take over when there is a lot from 1978 trying to be built on now. Mike Jones commented a lot of the stormwater requirements came down from the State and there is not much that the Township can do.

Zach Szoke commented he made a post on the Lehigh Township Community Page following the last meeting where he showed the difference between the Lower Macungie in 1999 and in 2022 and the difference in development. There were 79 positive reactions to the post and two negative reactions to the post which is a 97 percent positive reaction. He also posted the same information on the Save Lehigh Township Farmfields and Open Space page and there was a 100 percent positive reaction with 27 positive reactions. Preserving open space and farms is very important to a lot of people in this Township and the Board of Supervisors should make a plan to get this on the November 2026 ballot.

Janet Sheats questioned if the earned income tax rate was a mandatory fixed rate or could it be adjusted. Cindy Miller commented it can range from .1 percent to a maximum of .25 percent.

Merion Miller commented he and his wife have a three way partnership with his father and sister on a 110 acre farm on the eastern edge of the Township. He thinks preservation is a great thing and a great idea that we should be trying to preserve our farmlands and woods. It's the messaging and the marketing that he has been seeing that he has concerns with. It basically has become a marketing plan that is a prelaunch of a product. The most egregious example was used by showing Lower Macungie Township. Why not show pictures of Lehigh Township? You would see some changes like a few barns missing, the old Cherryville Post Office and Betty Seidels missing. The population of Lehigh Township in 2010 was 10,525 based on US Census data. In 2020, the population according to the census was 10,774. The estimates for 2024 are 10,815. That is an increase of 289 people in 14 years or 20.6 people per year. Lower Macungie has cluster housing, traffic jams, long waits at stores and restaurants. What they don't have is properties that resemble junk yards. He can go half a mile in any direction from his house and see old campers, boats, cars, farm equipment and even a toilet. The School District has a \$9.3 million deficit. There are 17,490 households in the school district. A simple breakdown equates the deficit to \$531 per household. The amount to Lehigh Township residents will be significantly higher based on the median home price and a

much lower rate of cluster and rental properties as there are in Northampton and Bath. Half of the households in the district earn under \$100,000. He is curious of the motives of the group knowing the County already has a land preservation program in place. 58 of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania have a farm preservation program in place. Since the State's inception of the program, 665,585 acres have been preserved at a cost of \$1.8 billion. As of 2026, Pennsylvania leads the nation in preserved farmland. He is not against preservation, but he is against the language of using fear and confusion to get all the Facebook likes. If this moves forward, who will manage the program, a salaried person? What other costs will be involved such as insurance and liability? What about lost revenue from lack of new builds? Will the Township be liable for any accident or events on any of the newly preserved properties? Look at the tragedy in North Whitehall when a woman was struck in the head by a stray bullet when she was going to work. There would need to be restrictions on these parcels. Before this goes any further, the Supervisors and public should know every detail and they need to be clearly defined. The current strategies of creating fear and confusion, targeting low information populus, and leaving out details and facts which could damage your position is a well know strategy. He doesn't think these tactics should be employed.

Paul Nikisher commented he was at the School Board meeting and asked how many new homes were expected to be coming into the district. Mr. Kovalchik told him it would be about 2,000. If each home is paying \$4,000 that will give them \$8 million which would take care of most of the deficit. We need to find a balance of growth and conservation. If this is going to become an additional earned income tax, should he be recusing himself from voting since he is retired and it won't affect him other than open space, but new homes also give additional tax revenue. The facts need to be given to the residents without the emotion. Once just the facts are out there, then he thinks it is a good idea to vote.

Linda Roman commented not everyone will have the right to vote. Those who are under 18 earning their first paychecks will have to pay the tax, but not have the opportunity to vote on it.

Wendy Kleintop questioned how the amount of money someone receives for placing their land in preservation is determined. Attorney Backenstoe commented an independent appraisal will need to be done and the payment is based upon the amount of the appraisal. Generally, if the property is being preserved in conjunction with another entity such as the County or Wildlands, they pay for the appraisal. If the preservation is being done solely by the Township, then the Township would have to pay for the appraisal. The Township can only offer the landowners the price listed in the appraisal. The appraisal costs could be paid with the open space funds.

Sandy Hopkins commented she has land that she is wondering what will become of it and she is also hearing that more housing will give more tax money, but you have to realize that the same houses that will be bringing you more expenses such as needing more police, more vehicles, and equipment to take care of the roads. You may be receiving more money, but you will also be spending more money so it balances itself out. Mike Hock commented the statistics show that for every dollar of tax revenue that is brought in, \$1.16 will be spent.

Merion Miller commented land is a commodity. It is saleable, it's tradable, just like stock, cryptocurrency, and everything else. This is America; you are free to do with your property as you choose to do so. If you want to preserve it, fine. If you want to develop it, fine. There are benefits to both. He just doesn't want to have someone telling him or his neighbors what they should be doing with their property.

Tom Szoke commented we are struggling to improve one road in the Township.

Katherine Mack commented you need to look at the amount of traffic there is going to be, and the wear and tear on our roadways. She has a friend who lives on a dead end road and there are three different garbage trucks going in and out on that road. The roads are getting damaged. She is glad to see some of the tax money is going into the material for the roads.

Zach Szoke wanted to apologize for not getting the appropriate material out to people earlier so they can make an informed and responsible opinion on the preservation matter.

- IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel. No action was taken.
- X. ADJOURN. Janet Sheats made a motion to adjourn. Cindy Miller seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.