

Bethel Township
Board of Supervisors
Meeting held December 14, 2023
Meeting was recorded

The Bethel Township Board of Supervisors met on December 14, 2023, in the Township meeting room 6:00 PM. In attendance and voting were Supervisors: Chairwoman Robbi Lane, and Supervisor Jay Bicksler. Vice Chair Mike Graby was absent.

Also, present were Township Solicitor Elizabeth Magovern; Township Engineer Jeff Steckbeck and Alex Kauffman; Chief Murphy; EMC Brian Blouch; Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Bobbi-Jo Peiffer and several interested residents

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Lane called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The meeting continued with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS Nothing at this time

ACTIONS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION Advertisement of a short term rental ordinance that was approved by PC on December 12th was put into motion to authorize the Solicitor to send to Berks County Planning Commission to review. The motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler and seconded by Chairwoman Lane and passed unanimously (2-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Supervisor Bicksler made a motion to approve the minutes from November 9, 2023 Board of Supervisors meeting. The meeting was seconded by Chairwoman Lane and passed unanimously (2-0).

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

1. Chairwoman Lane-
 - a. advised there was an executive session held on December 14th, 2023 at 5:30pm for personnel reasons, 2 members were in attendance.
 - b. informed there was an executive session held on 12/12/23 to discuss potential litigation for the ZHB application for 850 Meckville Rd. The Solicitor informed that the meeting will be continued on February 14th, 2024 due to the length of the meeting and that the Twp Engineer did not have the opportunity to speak. The solicitor made known that there will be an executive session prior to the February 14th meeting to discuss the ZHB app. further. A motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to authorize the Solicitor and Twp Engineer to oppose the ZHB application re 850 Meckville Rd on behalf of the Twp. and to have a traffic study done, seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - c. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to adopt the 2024 budget and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).

- d. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the Tax Levy resolution 2023-20 and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). This states that there will be no tax increase for the residents in 2024.
 - e. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the LST payments to Bethel and Frystown fire companies in the amount of \$14,990.71 to each company and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - f. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve a time extension for 550/551 Brown Rd and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). The new extension is July 15, 2024.
 - g. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the lease purchase for body cameras and tasers and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - h. informed that the fire suppression system in the office was never hooked up. We are waiting for quotes from the service tech.
 - i. informed that there was an incident at the office and they will be looking into bullet proof glass for the vestibule. They have spoken to Dale Stump about the modifications.
 - j. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the annual donation to the fire companies in the amount of \$20,000 each and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - k. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to appoint Arthur DeMille, a township resident, to the vacancy position on the Planning Commission and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - l. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the annual contribution to the Bethel ambulance in the amount of \$7,500 and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
2. Supervisor Bicksler-
- a. informed there was a discussion on vacating a portion of Old Rt 22. There was an ordinance prepared and Twp Engineer conducted a survey. There was a motion made by Supervisor Bicksler to authorize Solicitor to advertise the ordinance for February 2024 and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). The Twp Engineer informed that three property owners will inherit the land.
 - b. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the estimates from C.M. High for the maintenance repairs to the RT 501 and Rehrersburg Rd signal as well as the Old Rt 22 and RT 501 signal and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - c. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the appreciation dinner for Saturday Jan. 27, 2024 @ 6pm at the Mt. Aetna banquet hall and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - d. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to ratify the purchase of a blower attachment and install for \$6,975.00 and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). The purchase was made quickly through Zimmerman Farm Services because it is one of a kind and it was in stock. It will be used to prepare for winter cleanup and drainage issues.
 - e. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to ratify Tile work done for Martin Forestry by Jeff Brubaker and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). The water on the road was causing hazardous conditions. The cost was under the bidding threshold, so no bidding was required.
 - f. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the Christmas and New Year holiday closings for the Twp office and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
 - g. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the meetings for the year and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). The meetings will continue to be held the 2nd

Thursday of each month at 6pm except the January meeting which will be January 2nd after the reorg meeting @ 5pm.

- h. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to pay the invoice for the PSATS membership for 2024 and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).
- i. a motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve the 2024 Commercial Service agreement 3-year term for Deangelo Contracting Services in the amount of \$3,805.00 per year totaling \$11,415.00 and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). The contract is for undesirable vegetation.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT – Chief Murphy

Chief Murphy read the November 2023 Police Report as follows:

Mileage	4608	Fuel	311.011 Gallons
Domestics	03		
Thefts	05		
Traffic Citations	99	Non-Traffic Citations	01
Warnings	44	Criminal Arrest	02
Phone Assignments	18	Parking Tickets	04
Residential/Commercial Alarms	21	Reportable Accidents	05
Non-Reportable Accidents	15	Reckless Driver Complaints	02
Motorists Assists	06	Traffic Stops	120
Fire & EMS Advisories	34	Other Law Agency Assists	19
Suspicious Situations	12	Disorderly Incidents	23
Miscellaneous Complaints	45	Court Appearances	03
Repos	-	School Zone	00
Follow up		Security Checks	-

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR REPORT – Brian Blouch

Requested a Knox box for the library at a cost of \$554.14. A motion was made by Chairwoman Lane to approve the purchase and seconded by Supervisor Bicksler with a unanimous vote of (2-0).

Brian Blouch made a suggestion to get an alarm system for fire/smoke. The Twp Engineer was asked to look into pricing. A motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to authorize Steckbeck Engineering to look into pricing and quotes with EMA coordinator for Library fire alarm suppression and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – Michael Graby

Nothing at this time

SOLICITOR’S REPORT – Elizabeth Magovern

Nothing at this time

ENGINEER'S REPORT – Jeff Steckbeck

Engineer Steckbeck's report dated December 14, 2023. Alex Kauffman will be at the Jan.2 Reorg meeting.

1) Roads & Transportation Capital Improvements Plan

- a) *Route 501 & Airport Road Intersection Realignment Project* – Traffic engineer ELA Group, is working on responses to PennDOT's tedious comments.
- b) *Midway Road improvements on south side of I-78* – Survey work was completed, and design drawings are underway. Wetlands study completed. Proposal for east side guard rail reconstruction obtained by William Moore. Two additional quotes are in process. Cost will be less than bidding threshold, so Twp may accept the low quote of the three. Bidding documents for west side will be for more than guard rails. There will be work going out for fill so the bids will be for early spring.
- c) *2023 Paving Projects* – Responding to PennDOT Charlie Paris comments. Payment was made to Pennsy.
- d) *Martha Drive Reconstruction* – Construction work is complete. Reviewing contractor's application for payment. **Motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to make a payment of \$738,847.33 to Kinsley and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0). Payment will be coming from Traffic Impact Fee account and not from the township budget.**
- e) *Frystown Road speed control project* – PennDOT application for approval of radar detector speed signs is ready for Chairwoman's signature
- f)

2) Bridges

- a) *Old Rt 22 bridge east of Gravel Pit Road* – SESI survey work has been completed. Geotech consultant, ECS, has completed their fieldwork and report. Wetlands study completed. Design drawings are in process.
- b) *Old Rt 22 bridge, east of Midway Road* – SESI survey work has been completed. Geotech consultant, ECS, has completed their fieldwork and report. Wetlands study completed. Design drawings and DEP permitting are in process.

3) Drainage

- a) *Martin Forestry* – Burkholder SWM Easement Agreement signed and received. Mike coordinated construction of the drain tile system, which is now complete.

4) Zoning

- a) We continue to work with Robin when she consults with SESI. Participating in the 850 Meckville Rd zoning hearing as requested by the BOS.

5) Conditional Uses and Hearings

- a) No active conditional use applications or hearings.

6) Subdivision / Land Development Applications Under Review

- a) *Country Cottage Gardens* – Revised Final Plan was previously conditionally approved. Still waiting on Applicant to comply with conditions, sign agreements, and provide financial security. **NO CHANGE IN**

STATUS IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS. Contacted Zook's engineer and requested that he expedite widening of the driveway before he opens in Spring.

- b) *550 & 551 Brown Road* – Revised plan was reviewed, and a comment letter was issued on July 11. The Applicant provided a 6-month time extension through January 2024. No response to our review letter has been received. NO CHANGE IN STATUS. Late 2024 before any permits issued.
- c) *MB Investments (Route 645 warehouse project)* – PennDOT Traffic Impact Study comments received from PennDOT. Applicant's traffic engineer is working on revisions. Study recommends construction of a traffic signal at intersection of Route 645 at Central Boulevard.
- d) *RLP Martha* – Still monitoring Applicant's completion of the 10 conditions of Final Plan Approval. Applicant has received plan approvals from the water and sewer authorities. PennDOT permit application to extend the sewer line has been filed.
- e) *R&L Carriers* – Applicant is preparing to submit a new application with new filing fees. The BCCD issued approval of the Chapter 102 NPDES permit and GP-4 permit earlier this month.

7) Subdivision / Land Development Inspections

- a) *Central Logistics West Run* – Maintenance bond reduction to \$15,000. Repair work is still pending for one section of depressed concrete apron in roadway.
- b) *Helena Ag* – Site work is approximately 99% complete. Awaiting as-built and request for release of financial security. Owner is contemplating a change in building size and location. This would necessitate a drainage pipe relocation.
- c) *Airstate Group* - Construction is underway, approximately 90% complete.
- d) *Musser Ag (Bordner Road)* – Site work is substantially completed. Awaiting request for financial security reduction or release. Awaiting As-built drawing and NPDES permit.
- e) *Sheetz* – SWM revisions completed. BCCD has performed inspection and approved the revisions. Awaiting Sheetz engineer to file BCCD Notice of Termination along with as-built drawing prior to recommendation for release of financial security.

8) Recreation, Parks, Open Space

- a) *Airport Road Park* – Clearing of area for construction of pickle ball courts is pending.
- b) *Frystown Park* – Pavilion roof replacement is pending. Advertisement will be posted on the website for roof removal.

9) Library Project

- a) Pay Application #10 received. This has been forwarded to the Library Board for payment from the DCED grant funds. Project is approximately 90% complete with payments of \$1,451,000 of the \$1,678,000 contract having been approved.
- b) Front section insulation and drywall completed. Painting and flooring underway.
- c) HVAC mechanical work in front section is nearly complete. APR invoices for the majority of front half work, in amount \$21,487.48 are pending approval by Supervisors. **A motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to approve payment to APR and seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).**
- d) Construction progress meetings are being held every two weeks. Reports and pictures are available to Supervisors upon request.
- e) Construction completion is targeted for January 24th. A “grand opening” celebration will be planned.

10) Act 537 - Sewer Planning

a) DEP Planning Module work is still underway. Some design changes of the route of the piping are under consideration. The two developers provided the needed information for environmental investigations earlier this month: R&L Carriers permits for NPDES and GP-4 as noted above: and Blue Rock sent us the wetlands and bog turtle studies this week. We now have data to allow us to finalize the study for Supervisors approval in the first meetings of the New Year.

LIBRARY BOARD

Motion to approve payment to APR supply HVAC invoices in the amount of \$21,487.48

RECREATION BOARD

Calvin spoke about the uncooperative weather for the tree lighting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nothing at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Nothing at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Nothing at this time

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Board was provided the Treasurer's Report for December 14th and a list of all checks written between meetings also.

MOTION TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS

Supervisor Bicksler made a motion to approve payment of the bills. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman Lane and passed unanimously (2-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Dennis Seiverling brought attention to water along the road on Old 22 across from the dam. There was 70-80ft of ice in the right lane coming towards Bethel. Tile work was done on North side, should be done on South side. The location is about 3/8 of a mile before 419. He also brought attention to the potholes in the alleys of Bethel. Chairwoman Lane mentioned talking to Mike Graby to get done in Spring. Dennis made mention that the alleys leading to the auction house need taken care. Supervisor Bicksler said they should be able to cold patch them. Dennis also asked about the blower and what it attaches to. Supervisor Bicksler and EMC Brian Blouch replied a skid loader.

Calvin Macijewski asked the Twp to reevaluate the Flying J sign, that was approved at the ZHB, due to height and brightness. Solicitor said the ZHB has 45 days to issue a decision. The BOS has the opportunity to appeal once the decision is issued.

Supervisor Bicksler announced he was given Lebanon Valley booklets to hand out for tourist attractions. They are in the Twp lobby.

Chairwoman Lane announced it was the last meeting of the year and wished everyone a Merry Christmas, safe travels and good health.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

A motion was made by Supervisor Bicksler to adjourn the meeting at 6:45pm and was seconded by Chairwoman Lane with a unanimous vote of (2-0).

The next scheduled regular meeting is to be held on Tuesday January 2, at 5:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi-Jo Peiffer
Secretary/Treasurer, Bethel Township