

LOWER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER 5, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER - The October 5, 2026 meeting of the Lower Mount Bethel Township Board of Supervisors was held at 6984 S. Delaware Drive, Martins Creek, Pennsylvania, 18063. The meeting was called to order by Chairman D. Ascani at 7:00 P.M. Also in attendance were C. Cook, M. DeBerardinis, J. Mauser, E. Richards, M. Fisher, J. Lemak and M. Mastrogiovanni. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were approximately 50 members of the audience present.

Announcement of Executive Session - Chairman Ascani announced an executive session was held tonight to discuss legal matters.

Chairman Ascani made the following announcements:

- Zoning Hearing Board Vacancy - 5-year term until Jan. 2030
- Planning Commission Vacancy - 4-year term until Jan. 2028
- Sandt's Eddy Fire Co. Car Show - Sunday, 10/18, 26, from 8 A.M. – 3 P.M. at Riverton field
- Bell Tower Cultural Center - 10/11/26 – Professor Louie with the Woodstock Horns
- Bell Tower Cultural Center – 10/17/26 – “The Two Maries” Prepare your lunch.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Tuesday, October 20, 2026 6:30 P.M. at Chelsea Sun. Petition of Martins Creek LLC, Triple Net Investments XCIX, LLC, RCM Properties XV, LLC, Rt 173 Investments Partners I, LLC, PD 6411 MBH, LLC to Amend the Lower Mount Bethel Township Zoning Map and change the zoning classification of properties identified at Northampton County Parcel Nos. G11-3-3, G11-3-7 and G11-3-6 from AP-Agricultural Preservation Zoning District to I-Industrial Zoning District.

Approve Board of Supervisors minutes – September 14, 2026. MOTION by J. Mauser, second by E. Richards to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote: 5-0.

Presentations:

G. Terpstra – Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) Presentation.

G. Terpstra presented the results of an EAC survey that received 76 responses from Township residents regarding environmental concerns and development priorities. She explained that the EAC is a volunteer advisory group that assists the Township Supervisors with environmental research, policy recommendations, grant opportunities, and public input.

The survey results showed that residents' primary concerns include water quality, wildlife habitat preservation, air quality, open space preservation, and noise pollution. Respondents also expressed strong opposition to data centers, sludge and biosolids applications on agricultural land, and industrial growth, while indicating support for agricultural growth. Popular outdoor activities included gardening, walking, hiking, birdwatching, and wildlife observation. Although the survey had a limited number of responses, the EAC noted that the findings provide useful insight into community priorities. Terpstra offered the EAC's assistance with future research, studies, surveys, and environmental policy recommendations. Chairman Ascani thanked the EAC for the presentation.

J. Mauser – Tour of Data Centers update and sound studies. Supervisor Mauser provided an overview of Talen's Martins Creek and Lower Mount Bethel power plants along the Delaware River, which supplies water to approximately 14.2 million people. He reviewed the plants' operating units, fuel sources, and combined generating capacity of 2.24 gigawatts.

J. Mauser also presented preliminary noise measurements taken at various locations using a calibrated sound-level meter in response to residents' concerns. Readings varied based on plant operations, location, and other noise sources. Martins Creek Units 3 and 4 were identified as louder than the newer Lower Mount Bethel facility. J. Mauser noted that the noise measurements were preliminary and not intended for legal use. He will discuss potential noise mitigation measures with Talen, conduct additional nighttime noise surveys, and research the court case and agreements related to the plant's construction. He will report his findings at the November 2026 meeting. The proposed data center tour discussion was tabled for further research.

New Business

1. Resolution 2026-16 – A Resolution to reinstate intermunicipal agreement to the Borough of Portland's appointment of Christopher Cook as LMBT designated representative to the board of the BACIDA. The resolution pertained to an amendment to reinstate an agreement and appoint Christopher Cook as Lower Mount Bethel's Designated Representative. **MOTION** by D. Ascani, second by J. Mauser to table the Resolution until the next meeting to get answers to their questions. Vote: 4-0-1, C. Cook abstained.

2. Ongaro - ASA application – 1382 Good Rd. Bangor, PA, 18013. BOS Acknowledge receipt of application to move forward with the process. **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by D. Ascani to acknowledge receipt and direct the Solicitor and staff to begin processing.

3. LMB Sandt's Eddy MOU – G. Russo, Fire Chief, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): G. Russo emphasized that the agreement with the fire company must retain sufficient detail to protect the township, fire company, and residents. The solicitor shortened the MOU from 9–10 pages to about four pages, but exhibits listing township assets, fire company assets, and requested operational expenses remain incomplete. The board agreed that George and the Solicitor should meet to review the agreement, with Supervisors involved as needed. The proposed two-year termination notice will be referred to the board for a policy decision. The MOU was tabled for further discussion.

G. Russo presented the 2027 fire company budget of \$147,363.77 and requested Township funding, accounting for the prior year's Township contribution of \$18,267.10. The fire company also proposed purchasing a used rescue truck for under \$200,000, with potential funding from donations, fire tax revenue, and grants. Additional equipment and storage needs were discussed. Vehicle maintenance and testing were nearly complete, grant applications had been submitted for rescue tools and radios, and a joint training exercise was completed at Talen Energy Martins Creek.

G. Russo and the Solicitor will review the MOU, and the fire company will provide the outstanding asset lists and itemized operational expenses. The Board will consider the fire company's budget and funding requests during budget discussions beginning October 19, 2026. Manger Mastrogiovanni and G. Russo will pursue the LSA Statewide grant for a rescue truck.

4. Disabled Veteran Tax Exoneration request – Ryan 6423 Front Street – M. Fisher explained this letter indicates the application is already approved. **MOTION** by D. Ascani, second by J. Mauser to approve the request detailed in the letter dated August 5, 2026, from the State Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Vote: 5-0. The approval letter will be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

5. 2027 Budget wish list – 1st Budget Meeting – Monday, October 19, 2026. The first budget meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 19, 2026. The BOS suggested preparing the initial budget presentation with no tax increase as a starting point, noting further discussion would be required

Old Business

1. Farmland Preservation Policy – P. McNerney presented the Open Space Committee's proposal to use Earned Income Tax (EIT) funds for secondary, zoning-neutral farmland appraisals to ensure fair preservation payments. The proposal would cover appraisal costs and differences in property values, with landowners reimbursing appraisal costs if they chose not to preserve their land. Legal review is needed to determine whether the proposal conflicts with the existing Open Space resolution. EIT funds cannot be used to retroactively increase payments for completed preservation agreements.

MOTION: J. Mauser moved, seconded by D. Ascani, to table the proposal pending Solicitor Mark Fisher's legal review of the existing Open Space ordinance/resolution. **Vote: 5-0.**

During public comment, K. Brewer criticized the "90/10" act, stating that its restrictions negatively affect farmers. He asked the Board to determine how many other Pennsylvania Townships have similar restrictions.

2. Gravel Hill Enterprises (GHE) request to modify hours of operation Gerald Domenico, owner of Gravel Hill Enterprises was present requesting to change operating hours to start and end one hour earlier. A previous temporary request in August was to add an hour of operation, which differs from the current request to simply shift the existing hours. Solicitor Fisher mentioned A 2015-2016 court order and agreement explicitly define the current operating hours and prohibit operations outside those times and advised that any change would require court approval and notification of prior objectors.

D. Ascani mentioned he went on a tour of the property with J. Mauser and M. Mastrogiovanni. The property is cleaned-up and the owner has been cooperating with issues such as trucks going the wrong direction and posted proper signage. An escrow account funded by tipping fees exists for the repair of Gravel Hill Road. The account balance is \$75,110. An initial \$30,000 was set aside for legal expenses, leaving a current balance of approximately \$45,000 generated from operations. It was clarified that the proposed time change would not increase the contractually agreed-upon number of truck trips. **MOTION** by D. Ascani was made to proceed with the court approval process for the time change, contingent on Gravel Hill Enterprises covering all associated attorney fees. **MOTION** died due to a lack of a second.

Correspondence - All correspondence are located in the Township office.

Approval of Bills: **MOTION** by J. Mauser, second by C. Cook to approve the bills in the amount of \$86,879.90. (5-0 vote).

Reports

Township Solicitor – No report.

Township Engineer - The Planning Commission meeting will be held on October 20, 2026 to address a petition for a zoning classification change. Township engineer sent a review letter to the Planning Commission.

Chairman: D. Ascani mentioned that the front of the Township office needs to be repainted and landscaping in front of the Centerfield building is overgrown and needs to be removed. He suggested to either pave the area for two additional parking spots or implement another solution after ripping out the old landscaping.

Board Reports

J. Mauser: J. Mauser announced his upcoming attendance at two events: A Lehigh Valley Planning Commission meeting on "How To Plan For Data Centers" on October 7, 2026 at 3:00 P.M. And a Karst Geology conference at Northampton County Community College on October 16, 2026 from 8:30 A.M. to 12:15 P.M.

M. DeBerardinis: M. DeBerardinis reported that J. Lemak, M. Mastrogiovanni, M. Hess and himself met to begin preliminary work on the next year's road department budget. Mike also toured the Public Works Building with E. Richards, the new Assistant Roadmaster, and reviewed a couple of on-site projects.

C. Cook: No report.

E. Richards: No report.

Township Manager: M. Mastrogiovanni reported two grants have been submitted for the Fire Company and her and G. Russo will apply for a Statewide grant. She further reported that J. Lemak and herself have taken courses related to the budgeting process and QuickBooks.

Township Secretary: J. Lemak reported the township newsletter was finished and, after minor tweaks, is expected to be sent out either at the end of this week or beginning of next week.

Road Department: M. Hess indicated the installation of drains in Martin's Creek is planned before winter, utilizing donated materials. The specific locations identified are Center Street and behind Rome's garage. M. DeBerardinis noted there is a plan to install at least two of the drains before winter. It was noted that all necessary materials are now on hand. M Hess mentioned a donation from H&K was provided, which included pipes and grates, and provided additional grates for use on other roads. M. DeBerardinis indicated three existing drains on Fairview Avenue need to be cleaned out. The City of Easton has provided their vacuum truck for this purpose in the past. Emergency repairs were completed on Little Creek Road and Upper Little Creek Road due to a sinkhole and road depression, with the latter prioritized for school bus safety. D. Ascani suggested additional safety training for road department employees, particularly in excavation and trenching.

Fire Company: No further report.

Courtesy of the Floor/Public Comment for Taxpayers & Residents Only

Dominic Buscemi – Mr. Buscemi raised concerns about potential data center development, citing environmental protections under the Pennsylvania Constitution's Green Amendment and the need to comply with state regulations.

Arlene Tishuk – A. Tishuk provided a prayer asking for divine guidance for the board. The plea focused on protecting the township, community, farmland, and "peace of life" from a large industrial footprint. She urged the Board of Supervisors and Zoning Committee to recognize the permanent harm such projects would cause and to have the courage to say "no" to protect the community.

K. Brewer – K. Brewer shared positive observations from a data center tour, reporting that a newer facility was quiet and used a water-recycling system that reportedly limited water use to 20 gallons per month. He noted that the facility generated less noticeable noise than the local power plant.

R. Hart – R. Hart mentioned the full version of Genny's presentation will be posted on the Township website. A traffic study on Front Street was completed in August but nearby roadwork potentially affected the results. Melissa has requested LTAP do a follow-up study.

Adjournment: The Public Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Juli Lemak

Township Secretary / Planning Administrator

Lower Mount Bethel Township