

**TOWNSHIP OF BERN
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

January 6, 2025

SUPERVISORS MEETING

SUPERVISORS PRESENT: Irene Reed, Chairperson
Brian Eveland, Supervisor
Daniel Tobias, Supervisor
Jeffrey Thompson, Supervisor
Dr. Boyd Wagner, Supervisor

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Potts, Township Manager
Diane DeJesus, Secretary/Treasurer
Chief Brett Forry, Police
Bobby Turner, Road Foreman
Keith Mooney, Esquire
Kent Morey, Engineer
Bradley Pflum, Code Enforcement

CALL TO ORDER-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Reed called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Wagner made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Thompson.
YES: Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

FINANCE REPORT

Balances as of January 6, 2025, General Fund: \$2,694,762.64, State Account: \$458,220.62,
PLGIT: \$75,720.53, Certificate of Deposits: \$597,313.37, Expenses: \$76,058.13.

Treasurer's Report accepted subject to audit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Thompson – Mr. Thompson presented a \$150.00 check from the Daniel Boone Coin Club to the Bern Township Police Department. Chief Forry thanked the Coin Club, and the check will be put into the Bern Township Police Equipment Fund.

Daniel Schlottman – Mr. Schlottman requested to reserve his time for later in the meeting.

Chief Forry - Chief Forry presented an award to Officer Jordan Heckman for saving a Bern Township residents life on January 1, 2025.

ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

Discussion/Approval of 2025 Tax Resolution – The resolution sets the rates for 2025. Dr. Wagner moved to approve the 2025 Tax Resolution, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval of Police Pension Resolution – The resolution sets the 5% contribution that the Officers pay into their pension. Dr. Wagner moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval of Building Permit Fee Resolution – Mr. Potts stated that there are no fee increases, just clerical error changes. Dr. Wagner moved to approve the Building Permit Fee Resolution, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval of BCERT Resolution – This officially names Chief Forry and designee Administrative Sgt. Edwin Noll for liability purposes when responding to BCERT incidents. Dr. Wagner moved to approve the BCERT Resolution, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval of Sewage Enforcement Fee Resolution – The resolution set the fees for Systems Design Engineering. Dr. Wagner moved to approve the Sewage Enforcement Fee Resolution, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Mr. Potts noted that we are still in search of a secretary. Also holding off on sending out letters regarding the Yard Waste Facility

PUBLIC SAFETY & SERVICES

Emergency Medical Services

Western Berks - Supervisors have the report.

Northern Berks - Supervisors have the report.

Emergency Management

Supervisors have a copy of the monthly reports. Mr. Hinkle also provided a Summary of Bern Township Hazards Analysis and a Summary of 2024 Events and Activities, 2025 Threat

Assessment for the township. Recalculated where high risks are within the township. Transportation and weather issues are what are faced on an annual basis.

Blue Marsh Regional will meet January 20, 2025.

Mr. Hinkle also mentioned that each of the municipalities will have to renew their Proclamation Resolutions and Emergency Operations Plan.

Mr. Hinkle is going to discuss with Blue Marsh Regional folks to work with him to get a vehicle router in the SUV. This is for real time data reporting for damage assessments and cad work. The cost will be divided by the four townships.

Mr. Hinkle stated he is missing reports from 2 Fire Companies.

Fire Company Monthly Reports

Greenfields – Dylan Heckman gave the Greenfields Fire Company Report and also the 2024 calls. Brent Wisniewski stated that it breaks down to 14% missed.

Discussion of Greenfields Fire Company Performance – Mr. Potts noted that 14% are for medical assists, trees down. Real calls missed brings it to 22%.

There were questions regarding finances. \$3,900.00 for T-shirts can come out of the allotment that is coming from the township, there will not be additional funding for them. \$30,000.00 for pumper payment will be written tomorrow. The Fire Company has received their Foreign Fire Payment. The \$5,000.00 is for when the financial report is submitted. You will receive \$2,500.00 before June 30th and the other \$2,500.00 before the end of the year.

There was discussion on the Heather Lane Fire and what wasn't done when the truck arrived at the scene. Terry Royce explained that the call that was given to them sent them to Wendy Road and what he did when he arrived on the scene at Heather Lane.

Justin Schlottman, 1 Jeffrey Road voiced his concerns, that 4 minutes lapsed from the time the engine turned around and before the hydrant was open. Mr. Royce explained the problem with the fire hydrant.

Mr. Hinkle and Mr. Potts asked questions about the fire hydrant hookup.

Mr. Schlottman stated that there has to be staffing at the Fire Company 24-7.

Mr. Potts voiced concerns about the fireman that was on the roof, and he jumped from 1 roof to another and the roof was icy.

Alice Hinkle – Mrs. Hinkle voiced her concerns about her homeowner insurance increasing and also the fire hydrant that is in front of her home. Mrs. Hinkle stated that the township has been working on the Fire Company issues for 9 years and it is time to move forward and do what is right for the residents of the township.

Mr. Schlottman stated that he would rather have his taxes go up to have coverage at the station, than his homeowner insurance going up.

There was also discussion regarding the fire on Cullum Drive.

There was also discussion regarding closing the ramp at 222 and 183. Mr. Royce also responded to this. Mr. Potts suggested that this be added to their training.

Mrs. Hinkle questioned when all of these issues are discussed. Mr. Royce stated that they do this after the call and at training.

Mr. Eveland asked if there is a way that the hydrants can be marked. There were labels placed on the hydrants in Leesport and the borough removed them.

Mrs. Hinkle stated that there should be records from training sessions on file.

Mrs. Reed asked how much training is given to the people on the roster and also noted everything should be signed and dated.

Mr. Potts went over what was in the agreement that was prepared. Mr. Royce questioned the stipend that was in the agreement and who was entitled to it.

Mr. Hinkle expressed his feelings and concerns.

Dr. Wagner recommended that the Fire Company prepare a budget.

Mr. Potts stated that the agreement stands as presented.

There was also discussion on the fire company reports that were not received.

Mr. Schlottman expressed his concerns with the fire company.

Atty. Mooney will make changes to the agreement and send it to Mr. Potts for signature.

Dr. Wagner moved that the Supervisors authorize Mr. Potts to sign the final agreement with the amendments that were discussed, seconded by Mr. Tobias. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Medical Services – Mr. Hinkle stated that we didn't receive one.

Emergency Management/Cancel Burn Ban – Dr. Wagner moved that the burn ban that was in affect be lifted, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Department Monthly Report – The Supervisors received a copy of the report,

Discussion/Approval to Release Officer from Probation – Mr. Thompson moved that Officer Brian Johnson be released from probation, seconded by Dr. Wagner. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

PLANNING/ZONING/CODE ENFORCEMENT

ENGINEER – The Supervisors have a copy of the monthly report.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Discussion/Approval to Appoint Special Counsel to the Bernville Business Center, LLC Project – Mr. Potts stated that BarleySnyder has a conflict and Special Counsel, Joselle Cleary was contacted and she will take the case.

Mr. Thompson moved that Atty. Joselle Cleary be assigned to this project, seconded by Dr. Wagner. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval to Release S&L Mechanical Land Development Plan Escrow – This project has been completed and the township received a request from S&L to release \$2,225.00.

Mr. Thompson moved to release \$2,225.00 to S&L Mechanical, seconded by Dr. Wagner. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

TIME EXTENSION – None

CODE ENFORCEMENT The Supervisors have copies of the report.

Discussion/Approval to Refund Zoning Variance Residue to Berkshire Property Management – The developer has decided not to go with the Zoning Variance and requested a refund.

Dr. Wagner moved that the balance of \$1,615.82 be refunded to Berkshire Property Management, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT – Nothing to report.

ROADS – The Supervisors have copies of the report.

SEWER/WATER/BERN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY -

Monthly Reports – None.

Discussion/Approval of 1147 Rick Road Sewage Module – Dr. Wagner moved to approve the 1147 Rick Road Sewage Module, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMISSION – Nothing to report.

ADMINISTRATION

Discussion/Approval of Uniform Pension Plan COLA – Mr. Potts reported that COLA is at 3.4% and it is optional to approve this or not. The Pension Plan is at Distress Level 2 at this time.

Hearing no motion, the COLA was not approved

Discussion/Approval to Accept Resignation of Zoning Hearing Board Member – Chris Becker resigned from the Zoning Hearing Board as of December 31, 2024.

Dr. Wagner moved to accept the resignation of Chris Becker from the Zoning Hearing Board, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval of Planning Commission Appointment - Dr. Wagner moved to appoint Chris Becker to the Planning Commission, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval of Zoning Hearing Appointment - Dr. Wagner moved to appoint Dale Eisenhoffer to the Zoning Hearing Board, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion/Approval of At Will Employee Salaries – Mr. Potts recommended 3% for all At Will Employees.

Dr. Wagner moved to approve a 3% increase for all At Will Employee Salaries, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Bern Township Board of Supervisors will be held on February 4, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

The new owners of the Hitching Post would like to continue doing renovations to the property while they are waiting for a waiver from Land Development.

Bradley Pflum stated that he told them to come to the Supervisors Meeting and discuss this with the Supervisors. The township policy has been that no work could be done until the land development waiver is granted.

Mrs. Reed asked if the change is greater than 150 square feet. Dr. Wagner asked the owner to describe what the changes are and what the type of restaurant it would be.

The owner stated that this would be a modern restaurant. They are the owners of Reverb in the City and there are rumors going around that aren't true. There will be no concert venues, night club, dancing. They explained what type of work that they were doing on the inside. They would like to enclose the patio area for private parties.

Atty Mooney explained that they need land development to enclose the patio area or ask for a waiver to continue to work on the interior.

Mr. Potts recommended that if they do get a “no” answer from the board, that they request to be on the Planning Commission agenda next week and ask for a waiver from land development.

Mrs. Reed preferred that they present the project to the Planning Commission and then Supervisors will hear back from them if they approved it or not.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An Executive Session will be held and there will be no vote taken.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane DeJesus, Secretary/Treasurer

