



## Upper Mount Bethel Township

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UPPER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026 – 6:30 PM

\*This meeting was held in person and live streamed through the Upper Mount Bethel Township Facebook page.

### I.

Supervisor Bermingham called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance were Supervisor Bermingham, Supervisor Erler, Supervisor Albert, Supervisor Eckman, Township Solicitor Karasek, Township Engineer Coyle and Township Manager Graziano. Supervisor Friedman arrived at 6:55 pm.

### II.

#### APPROVE THE AGENDA

**MOTION** by Supervisor Bermingham to move item VI. #1 Alternate Solicitor to item VI, seconded by Supervisor Erler. Vote: 4-0.

### III.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Bermingham asked for everyone to pray for our military and those in the Israeli military who are risking their lives for the destruction of an Iranian missile production, Naval Power, Security infrastructure, and ultimately ending Iran's ability to move towards developing a nuclear weapon.

Charles Baltic, Laurel Hill Rd., cited two excerpts from the police feasibility study. One, the study reviewed similar size communities with police departments, reviewing the budgets and staffing levels. The study also reviewed other service deliver models, such as regional or contracted police services. In that the Township officials of Upper Mount Bethel Township wish to pursue a part-time, stand-alone, municipal police department,

very limited initial staffing was proposed. DCED hesitates to propose part-time policing due to operational and administrative issues that it may cause. It is recommended that this part-time agency begin full-time operations as soon as operational and financially practical. The initial budget for this police department includes anticipated start-up cost, which increased the operational budget substantially. However, these costs will decrease after this debt is paid off (not sure what this refers to) and/or grant funding is obtained. Charles went on to cite that, on May 22, 2025, a virtual meeting was held with Chairman Bermingham and Manager Graziano. During this meeting, it was disclosed that a large technology-based facility is scheduled for construction within the Township. The Township feels the need for police services to meet the needs of the current population and future growth of the Township. Suggestions for a part-time/limited-hour department were made with the possibility of a full-time Chief of Police and part-time officers being employed initially, with full expansion upon completion of the technology center. The report goes on to say that start-up costs are \$825,000 and annual costs are \$920,000. Charles asked Supervisor Bermingham, since he was the only policy making official that was part of that meeting, to clarify what he told them we wanted. Supervisor Bermingham stated that they went into the meeting and said let's try a part-time police force. That is what they discussed, to see if we could actually do a part-time police force. We can't afford a full-time police force. The police study was done to see if could even do a part-time police force. Supervisor Bermingham stated that his stance is he needs to talk to the people. When he looked at a police force 7-8 years ago, it was 30 for a police force, 70 against a police force, so he dropped it. Now he feels it's getting more even, that is why he wants to have the town hall meeting. Supervisor Bermingham stated that the way the winter has gone, the police budget is gone, so the discussion goes on the back burner.

Ron Angle, Million Dollar Hwy, stated that he would like to reserve his time until after they discuss the Alternate Solicitor.

#### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Supervisor Erler announced that he attended an all-day training seminar to further his education as a Township Supervisor. TAC is hosting a presentation on the Amtrak rail services at their meeting on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm.

Supervisor Bermingham announced that he is still working with Slater Baseball Association on their indoor training facility. The Emergency Shelter at the Firehouse is moving forward, and bids should be going out this month. Thank you to the Post Foundation, as always. The Prince of Peace Church is now looking to make their church a warming center. Supervisor Bermingham will be having office hours on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm at TK's.

Manager Graziano announced that road repairs will be starting at the beginning of April.

Secretary Cindy Beck reminded the residents that they need to call Republic Services for a bulk pickup. The number to call is 484.273.3940. The next bulk pickup day is March 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **V.**

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Recess to Executive Session at 6:47 pm, to discuss legal matters.

The meeting reconvened at 6:53 pm.

Solicitor Karasek stated legal matters were discussed in Executive Session. One on the lawsuit with respect to Mr. Manzi and the other was Attorney client privilege in regard to one of the agenda items. No action.

## **VI.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Alternate Solicitor-Supervisor Eler stated that he is strongly looking to replace our current Alternate Solicitor for a few reasons. Such as discrepancies on the conflicts check, discrepancies with billing in the past, ceasing our dissolution of the water authority without consent of the BOS and failing to provide a written rate for the firm and failing to appear at a meeting when asked by our Manager and the BOS. Supervisor Eler introduced Alex Marek, from Newman Williams, who provided the BOS with his letter of interest during our reorganization meeting. Attorney Marek stated that he is a municipal law and litigation Attorney. Their firm handles all kinds of municipal law. Supervisor Bermingham asked Attorney Marek if he would send the Board his resume. Supervisor Albert has if the conflicts check has been completed. Attorney Marek stated yes, there are no conflicts of interest. Supervisor Albert asked about his rate of \$225 an hour, is that set in stone. Supervisor Bermingham stated that our current Alternate Solicitor's rate is \$160 an hour. Attorney Marek stated that he is willing to negotiate. Supervisor Bermingham asked how he does a conflict check and how does he tell the client. Attorney Marek stated that they don't normally put on paper. Solicitor Karasek stated that he has work extensively with a number of Attorneys at the firm.

Ron Angle commented on the previous Alternate Solicitor had some problems and evidently hadn't furnished the documents for a conflict. We will never have the answer about the conflict and the Park Foundation. The residents deserve an answer as to where the money went from the foundation. What are we going to do about getting an answer. Supervisor Bermingham stated that Adrian recently sent a letter to all the Supervisors that stated he does not have a conflict of interest. Ron said that a forensic audit would answer all the questions. Solicitor Karasek stated that when he reviewed the documents provided to him, everything was accounted for up to February and a significant amount of that money went to pay Gross McGinley. He is not able to say what it went for, only that where it went to. Ron would like this to be on the agenda next month to further discuss. Ron would like to have a moment of silence for those 7 members of the armed forces that gave the ultimate defense of this country.

## VII.

### CONSENT AGENDA

1. February 9, 2026, Meeting Minutes
2. Exonerations/Refunds

**MOTION** by Supervisor Erler to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 5-0.

Chris Finan, Chief Mt. Bethel Fire Dept., thanked the road crew for doing an amazing job on the roads this winter.

## VIII.

### FINANCIALS

1. Bill List-Manger Graziano read the bill list totaling \$358,780.57. **MOTION** by Supervisor Albert to pay the bills in the amount of \$358,780.57, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Vote: 5-0.

## IX.

### LAND DEVELOPMENT

1. Lamtec Corporation Building Addition Project/Conditional Preliminary/Final Plan Approval-Solicitor Karasek stated this plan was heard before the Planning Commission at last month's meeting. There was an agreement for Conditional Preliminary/Final plan approval based upon various conditions that were agreed on and signed. Solicitor Karasek reviewed the conditions set forth in the agreement. The plan was recommended by the Planning Commission for approval. Supervisor Erler stated that he had the pleasure of getting a tour of the facility and the proposed location for the addition, and that it is not visible from the public road. **MOTION** by Supervisor Erler to grant Conditional Preliminary/Final Plan Approval, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Vote: 5-0.

## X.

### ACTION ITEMS

1. Philip M. Jones-Lot Consolidation Deed-Solicitor Karasek discussed the request to consolidate his three lots on Heiden Rd. Northampton County Assessor's office just wants to make sure the township agrees with the consolidation. The three lots were separately sold over the years to avoid the Act 319 roll back, and now Mr. Jones is requesting the lots be consolidated. Solicitor Karasek reviewed the Consolidation Deed but Engineer Coyle has not had the opportunity to review it yet. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to table the Lot Consolidation Deed to give Engineer Coyle time to review it, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Vote: 4-1. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.
2. Resolution No. 2026-04 LSA Statewide Grant-Manager Graziano stated the Board already approved this Resolution. A correction had to be made in the amount requested. The amount that was originally requested was \$192,000, the

corrected amount is \$220,000. **MOTION** by Supervisor Erler to adopt Resolution No. 2026-04, seconded by Supervisor Eckman. Vote: 5-0.

## **XI.**

### **TABLED ITEMS**

1. Ground Water Survey-Supervisor Friedman stated that at the request of the Board at the January meeting, he sent out letters to the PA American Water, Portland Borough Authority, and East Bangor Borough, asking for contributions in paying for the survey. One letter was received, Portland Borough, and unfortunately, funds were not available, as it was not budgeted. Engineer Coyle stated this survey is an update of 2011 survey. Engineer Coyle introduced Jessica, a geologist for Carroll Engineering. Jessica stated that the 2011 survey concluded there was adequate groundwater for current usage and anticipated growth. There were a couple of items to keep an eye on as things change within the township, the Slateford Creek Basin (drawing 50% of groundwater), and the Martins Creek Basin (due to PA American Water withdrawing large amounts from one concentrated area). The report is basically a desktop report. If Carroll Engineering were to do any additional studies, it would increase the cost. Supervisor Bermingham asked if there was any risk from using the 2011 report or should we be starting from the absolute beginning. Jessica stated the 2011 report is a guideline. Supervisor Eckman asked if we can slow down PA American Water from withdrawing or if we could monitor it. Supervisor Erler commented on having the other entities pitch in on the cost of the study. He was happy to see Portland did respond to the letter. Perhaps we could table this for next year in order to give them time to put it in their budget. Supervisor Friedman stated that this was already in our budget and with the Data Center that might be going in, we were just informed that the Slateford Creek is susceptible to drought and if we do have a water problem, at least we will know where the other water is, where we might have to get it from. Supervisor Eckman would like Solicitor Karasek to draft a letter to send to PA American Water, Portland Borough Authority, and East Bangor Borough to see if they are willing to contribute. Supervisor Friedman read the letter he drafted and sent out. Stavros asked if this is required to do ever so often. Engineer Coyle stated that he does not know of any regulation requirement, this is just the township being proactive. Stavros Barbounis stated that he is more concerned about the Act 537 plan being pushed forward. Judy Henckel stated that with the 2011 survey, they were trying to find out where the water is. The township was supposed to keep up a database of wells that were being drilled. Judy stated we know what our database is and work with the people that are drawing the water out. Marty Pinter stated that he sees the value of this study but there is no way to enforce it. Supervisor Friedman stated that it is not about enforcement, it's about knowing where the water is and isn't. Chris Finan stated that water is very important and he would like the township to talk to Portland and East Bangor to see if they would contribute. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to hire Carroll Engineering to conduct the ground water survey for \$21,820, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Supervisor Erler stated that there is a lot more that we

should be looking into. Supervisor Bermingham would like to give it one more try sending letters to the neighboring municipalities. Supervisor Eckman amended Supervisor Friedman's motion. **MOTION** by Supervisor Eckman to table, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham, to the July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Vote: 4-1.

## **XII.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Good Standing Resolution-Supervisor Erler stated that a lot of the neighboring municipalities have a Resolution/policy in effect and felt the township should have one as well. This policy is just to ensure that everyone that is appointed to a committee and all committee members are in good standing within the township, taxes and garbage fees. Supervisor Albert suggested criminal background checks as well. Supervisor Erler read the first few paragraphs of the Resolution. Whereas the Board finds that individuals serving in a public capacity should be in good standing with the township to ensure public trust and avoid conflicts of interest during the collection of municipal claims. Supervisor Friedman stated that a member should be vetted and then a committee chair can submit that to the office staff to see if they are current with taxes/garbage fees. Supervisor Erler stated that since the BOS appoints the members, it should be the responsibility of the BOS to do their due diligence, not the chairperson of such committee. Supervisor Erler stated elected positions would not fall under this resolution. Marty Pinter stated that he initiated this policy when he was Chairman. At that time there were 5 people that were delinquent on both garbage bills and property tax bills that served on our committees. Stavros Barbounis stated that as Chairman of the Parks/Rec, he had to let someone know that they couldn't stay on the Board, this was not a decision of Parks/Rec, it was the decision of the township manager at that time. There are extenuating circumstances. As Chairman of the Parks/Rec, he does not want to be the person looking into people's personal finances and whether they are in good standing. This should be done by the BOS. Moving forward, there should be a process in place. Mike Onufrak commented on a \$17 delinquent amount he owed. He agrees that the Chairman of a committee should not be responsible for checking whether a member is current with all their taxes. Supervisor Bermingham stated that the overall purpose is that we want people who respect fellow neighbors by paying their taxes, as for the Resolution, we are not quite there yet, there are too many questions. Stavros stated that his understanding is that if a member is voting on how to spend taxpayer money, then they should be current. Solicitor Karasek stated that the theory of the Resolution is a good one, it does define delinquency. Supervisor Albert would like to see some examples of policies that the neighboring communities have. Judy asked what is the objective, to collect money? **MOTION** by Supervisor Erler to table although he feels he covered a lot things and will provide all the Supervisor with examples of other municipalities policy, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Vote: 5-0.
2. Truck 20-Municipal Manager Graziano stated that Truck 20 is a 2008 Peterbilt Tandem, needs a computer that costs \$13k to fix it. The value is approximately \$15-\$20k, so it is time to sell it. We've applied for an LSA grant to replace the

truck. Supervisor Erler stated that he looked up the price for that truck, in bad condition it's worth \$35k and in amazing condition it's worth \$85k. Supervisor Erler feels that \$13k to fix it, is worth it and then get to that \$35k and sell it when we need to. Supervisor Erler stated that he spoke with Brian from Macmobile he has someone that knows Peterbilt and will look at it to see exactly what the problem is. Rich Klinge asked who looked at. A Peterbilt dealership will be able to tell you if it is the ECM, which may only be a couple bucks to fix. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to table, seconded by Supervisor Erler. Vote: 5-0. This will be on the agenda for the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

3. Softball Field Dugouts-Manager Graziano stated we received six (6) bids for the dugouts. Jaypro Sports, they are a sourcewell member, they bid came in at \$36,387. Manager Graziano had some questions regarding the CoStars program. Solicitor Karasek discussed the costars program and stated that it is a supply program not so much a construction program. Manager Graziano recommends approving the Jaypro Sports for \$36,387. There was a discussion on going with cinder blocks. Marty Pinter stated that he previously discussed with the Parks/Rec Board that he would see if his company would donate the blocks. Stavros commented on spending money on dugouts vs a ground water survey. Most of what has been done at the park is from grants and donations, not taxpayer money. **MOTION** by Supervisor Bermingham to move forward with Jaypro Sports for \$36,387, which includes 4 dugout kits and 4-15' benches, seconded by Supervisor Friedman. Supervisor Eckman feels we could do just a little differently. Vote: 5-0.

### **XIII.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Supervisor Erler to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 pm, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Vote: 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by Cindy Beck, Recording Secretary