



Upper Mount Bethel Township
387 Ye Olde Hwy
PO Box 520
Mt. Bethel, PA 18343-5220
Phone: (570) 897-6127 Fax: (570) 897-0108
www.umbt.org

UPPER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' WS MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2026 – 7:00 PM

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

I.

Supervisor Bermingham called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance were Supervisor Bermingham, Supervisor Friedman, Supervisor Eckman, Supervisor Albert, Manager Graziano, Township Solicitor Karasek, and Township Engineer Coyle. Supervisor Erler was absent.

II.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

MOTION by Supervisor Friedman to approve the agenda, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 4-0.

III.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Bocko, Chairperson of the Open Space Advisory Board, announced they will be hosting an open house on Wednesday, June 24th, 7pm. The open house is a perfect opportunity to learn more about the Open Space Program and Land Preservation in the Township. Heritage Conservancy will be giving an update on the Preserve. Lots happening, a lot behind the scenes. Refreshments (cake) will be served.

Tara Mezzanotte, provided an update on the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic expansion project and possibly changing potential designated segments. The priority

was to make sure there was no adverse effect on the developer. Tara discussed the meeting that was held with Supervisor Bermingham, Supervisor Friedman, Lisa Pektor, representatives from Talon, and Sarah (NPS). At this time, it looks as though there is a possibility of moving forward, at the minimum, designating Jacoby Creek and above, and potentially Driftstone and down south. Tara is working on the Resolution and there will be a special meeting for Tara to over the history of how this has happened since the meeting. Tara also gave an update on NJDOT, the retaining wall and the rock wall project. Funding will not be available until after 2030.

IV.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Eckman reminded everyone of the 4th July event at the park on the 4th, gates open at 4.

Supervisor Friedman announced the township will be accepting letters of interest for the BACIDA representative that will be open in January 2027. The current representative's term expires this year.

Supervisor Bermingham announced that the 4th of July parade will also be held on the 4th, same route, starting at 11am. Prizes for best decorated vehicles and homes will be given out. Bids will be going out soon for the Mt. Bethel Emergency Shelter. A meeting will be scheduled to present Lindsey Manzi with his Resolution. There will be an UMBT clean up day in July. Retirement of the Colors will be held on August 9th at the American Legion. Beau's playground grand opening on Sunday 12-5, also on Sunday, the MBFD is having a wet down event at the park. Congratulations to girls 14U softball team, seated number 9 going into the playoffs, unfortunately they did not win the championship.

Manager Graziano announced the roads that will be done this year. Tree Smith will be trimming trees throughout the Township. There is a First Energy proposal for a huge project in the Township, they are looking to replace poles. The Township had their annual liquid fuels audit and there were no issues. We have been having a problem with dogs at the park. They must be leashed. We need an ordinance. Violators can be banned from the park. Stavros stated that Parks/Rec's rules and regulations does go into more detail about dogs, ATV's etc, at the park and if an ordinance was to be adopted it should include more than just dogs at the park.

V.

ACTION ITEM

1. Naming of the Park Softball Fields-Dave Baggett spoke on behalf of the family and friends of Ariel Beltrano and is here tonight to ask the BOS to approve naming the new softball fields at the Community Park in his memory. For about

17 years, Ariel served as a coach and local administrator for the softball program. Ariel gave his time and energy to help build and support girls' softball in a way that touched many people in our community. Ariel recently passed away after a battle with cancer, and this naming would be a meaningful way to recognize the impact he had on the program and to those around him. Dave stated they started an on-line petition, and in a little over a week, they collected over 500 signatures and over 100 comments. Dave read one of the letters of support, Mike DeMasi, former ELV Board Member and President. Mike stated that he represented UMBT with class, integrity, humility, and a wonderful sense of humor. He consistently demonstrated the values that our league was built upon-sportsmanship, respect, teamwork, and character. Naming these fields in his honor would be a fitting tribute to a man who gave so much of himself to the game, to the players, and to everyone fortunate enough to know him. Dave said they are not looking for any financial support from the township. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to approve naming the fields in honor of Ariel Beltrano and sending in on to Parks/Rec for their input, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Vote: 4-0.

2. Liberty Tree Dedication-Manager Graziano read a letter from Charles Baltic. The Township Auditors, led by Rod Rufe and Charles Baltic, and Emeritus Charlie Felker, are spearheading the planning and effort for Tree Planting. A granite marker has been secured, cost of \$1,400, with \$500 of this will be offset by the Auditors' donation. There are two options for the tree, "American Elm "Liberty Tree and a Red Oak. The American Elm Tree would be sourced from the Pektor's nursery, Mid Hill Nursery in Bethlehem at a cost of \$395. The installation would be donated by the Pektors/Mid Hill Nursery, valued at \$625. The Red Oak would be donated by Charles and sourced from his property, that would require some Township assistance in transporting and planting. Stavros stated that he is waiting to get a consensus from the other Parks/Rec Board members as to where to plant the tree. **MOTION** by Supervisor Bermingham to adopt the sign with the language as stated by Charles Baltic, then allow the Parks/Rec Board to determine which tree they want and the location of it, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 4-0.
3. Part-Time Public Works Hire-Supervisor Friedman stated an application was received from Steven Swanton. Steven has a CDL. He would be working 25 hours a week, more if deemed necessary in certain circumstances. Manager Graziano and Road Crew Chief Lindsey Manzi recommend hiring Steven. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to hire Steven Swanton, part-time road department employee, at the rate of \$24.96 per hour, 25 hours per week with additional hours if needed, no benefits, seconded by Supervisor Albert. Vote: 4-0.

VI.

NEW BUSINESS

1. United Way Contract-Manager Graziano stated that after a long year of putting this all together, it was finally finalized. Manager Graziano stated this is to help the community, providing short-term financial assistance and related support to eligible residents of Upper Mount Bethel Township. Slater Family network will do the qualification. Supervisor Bermingham asked about the termination clause in the agreement. Supervisor Bermingham feels as though it should state "if any of the parties fail to fulfill in a timely and proper manner". Solicitor Karasek stated the last sentence does state either party to the agreement has the right to terminate agreement with a 15-day written notice. There was a discussion on the statement regarding UMBT returning "unspent funds" to United Way. The remaining funds should come back to UMBT since we are giving them the funds upfront. Solicitor Karasek will amend the last paragraph of the agreement. Ron Angle asked why is the Township getting in the business for? United Way has been around for decades. Manager Graziano stated they know what they're doing, we don't. We have money in an account that is for people that need help. Fran Visicaro brought up the fact that United Way usually gets a percentage of donations. Manager Graziano stated that they get 5% for operating costs.

MOTION by Supervisor Friedman to table, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. Vote: 4-0.

2. Resolution No. 2026-14 Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant-Manager Graziano stated this is a DCED grant to do all the roads in Saddle Creek. This Resolution is one of the requirements for the grant application. The Township is requesting a Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant of \$1,200,611.50 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to adopt Resolution No. 2026-14, seconded by Supervisor Eckman. Supervisor Albert asked if a match is required, Manager Graziano stated there is no match. Supervisor Albert asked if we had to rank Saddle Creek's roads against any other roads in the Township, are they worse than any other roads? The other roads are being mitigated now. Vote: 4-0.
3. Donations for Rescue Effort-Supervisor Friedman discussed this request for the rescue efforts made for the little girl that was lost. North Penn Goodwill Services and Wolfpack Search & Rescue. **MOTION** by Supervisor Friedman to donate \$1,000 to both organizations for their efforts in locating the missing girl, seconded by Supervisor Bermingham. NBFD President Tommy Austin spoke highly of the North Penn Goodwill Services. They are a canteen that serves Northampton County, they are a non-profit/non-tax-funded entity, that serves food and drinks. Wolfpack Search & Rescue utilizes canines for search & rescue. They are 100% nonprofit/non-taxpayer funded. Tommy commends

Supervisor Friedman for making this request for donations. Manager Graziano stated these are one-time donations, not annual donations. Vote: 4-0.

VII.

TABLED ITEMS

1. Ground Water Survey- Supervisor Friedman stated that we have not received any response back from the entities that withdraw water out of the Township that were sent asking for contributions towards doing the Ground Water Survey. Talen Energy has shown interest in funding the Ground Water Survey. A meeting was held at Carroll Engineering with Talen Energy where they were given Carroll Engineering's proposal and without committing, they said they would review the proposal and provide an answer. At this time, we will wait for an answer from them. Engineer Coyle stated the new update would be a standalone addition of the groundwater availability study. It will incorporate a review of accessible data sources including the PA groundwater information system (PAGWIS), the PA Geologic Data, Exploration System, PA Department of Protection Records and the Delaware River Basin Commission Records.

VIII.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Recess to Executive Session at 8:18 pm to discuss the Stine Litigation matter.

The meeting reconvened at 8:29 pm. Solicitor Karasek stated discussed in Executive Session was the Stine/Czopoth Litigation. There was going to be a hearing on the Township's motion to hold him contempt. Dr. Czopoth's attorney, Gary Asteak, is on vacation, so the hearing has been postponed. Solicitor Karasek will follow up as to when it will be rescheduled.

IX.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Supervisor Friedman to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm, seconded by Supervisor albert. Vote: 4-0.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Beck, Recording Secretary