

UPPER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020 @ 7:00 PM

PART I

1. Call to Order-Chairman Bermingham Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Roll Call-Present in addition to Chairman Bermingham Jr. were Supervisor Due, Supervisor Teel, Supervisor Teel, Supervisor DeFranco, Supervisor Pinter, Township Manager Nelson, Township Engineer Coyle, and Township Solicitor Karasek.
4. Approve the Agenda-Chairman Bermingham Jr. amended the agenda, adding to PART VII #1, Special Meeting with the EDC and Lou Pektor and PART VII #5. EDU Discussion to be removed, more research is needed. **MOTION** by Supervisor Teel, seconded by Supervisor Due, to approve the amended agenda. Vote: 5-0.

PART II (Public Comment-3 minutes)

Richard Wilford-Hunt commented on the Plan Slate Belt meeting he attended and stated the discussion was mainly on economic development. Richard stated that he would like to see the Township make an effort to amend our zoning ordinance, possibly hire a planner.

Judy Henckel commented that she also attended the Plan Slate Belt and it appeared that the surrounding municipalities were coming up with similar ideas. Judy stated that a faster broadband would help those working from home.

Elias Espinal stated he compiled a list of questions from previous meeting minutes but stated that Chairman Bermingham Jr. answered most of them. Elias commented on our ever growing township and stated a way to balance the budget is by periodic tax increases. Elias stated another way is to decrease expenses. Elias suggested that if you have a problem with your neighbor, try to resolve it without getting the township involved. Elias stated he would be happy to assist with the budget.

Janet Pearson asked if Solicitor Karasek had an update on the deeds. Solicitor Karasek stated that Northampton County came back with a few comments on the map, which Engineer Coyle has been addressing. Solicitor Karasek stated that once Engineer Coyle has addressed the County's comments, he will then file the deeds.

Ron Angle stated that he has worked and reviewed many budgets and is concerned about the current budget. Ron stated the budget that was prepared by the former manager, Rick Fisher, should be the one we use. Ron stated he would like to know that each of the five (5) board members reviewed each and every line item to verify a tax increase is justified. Ron stated he

does not know how all five (5) board members voted to approve the budget, but yet when it came time for the millage increase, it was a 3-2 vote.

Sylvano Azanedo stated his family moved here from New Jersey to escape the high taxes there. Sylvano graciously asked the Board to not raise taxes.

Renee Gale stated she agrees with Ron Angle, she does not agree with the budget. Renee stated she doesn't feel that the Township should be responsible to fund a traffic light. Engineer Coyle stated that PennDOT will not fund the project. Renee stated that we need to cut our expenses.

Josh Hawkins commented on the traffic light and stated why not make it a 3-way stop, much cheaper. Engineer Coyle stated that PennDOT will not allow a 3-way stop sign.

PART III (Public Announcement)

Richard Wilford-Hunt commented on the clean-up on River Rd and expressed his gratitude to whomever did the clean-up. Manager Nelson stated there is a Township resident who travels the roads of Upper Mount Bethel and picks up garbage.

PART IV (Presentations)-None

PART V (Approve the Minutes)

1. Meeting Minutes/January 6, 2020-**MOTION** by Supervisor Teel, seconded by Supervisor Due, to approve the January 6, 2020 meeting minutes. Vote: 5-0.
2. Meeting Minutes/January 13, 2020-**MOTION** by Supervisor Due, seconded by Supervisor Teel, to approve the January 13, 2020 meeting minutes. Vote: 5-0.
3. Budget Meeting Minutes/January 27, 2020-**MOTION** by Supervisor Pinter, seconded by Supervisor Teel, to approve the January 27, 2020 budget meeting minutes. Vote: 4-0-1. Supervisor Due abstained.
4. Meeting Minutes/January 27, 2020-**MOTION** by Supervisor Due, seconded by Supervisor Teel, to approve the January 27, 2020 meeting minutes. Vote: 5-0.

PART VI (Reports)

1. Financial Report-Bill List-Manager Nelson stated that due to the absence of our bookkeeper, the bill list is not ready. **MOTION** by Supervisor Teel, seconded by Supervisor Due, to table the bill list to the February 14, 2020 meeting. Vote: 5-0.
2. Monthly Reports
 - a. Manager's Report-Manager Nelson discussed his monthly report. Manager Nelson stated that Munilogic is up and running. Manager Nelson explained the program and how it will be beneficial to the Township. Manager Nelson commented on the recent snow storms and that he is tracking all costs related to any storms. Chairman Bermingham Jr. stated that we have an emergency notification system,

Nixle, and everyone should sign up for it. Manager Nelson stated that the basketball program had a very successful fund raiser, raising \$5,608. Manager Nelson discussed the new Lego Club, ages 5-12, starting on March 1st and meeting at the Mt. Bethel Fire House.

Chairman Bermingham Jr. stated the Board of Supervisors have decided to let the residents decide if they want a police force and that a police survey will be going out soon. Public comment-Dave Friedman stated that it's inevitable that every municipality will be getting charged for State Police coverage.

- b. Engineer's Report-Engineer Coyle discussed his monthly report, which included site improvements at the community park, continued correspondence with FEMA concerning River Rd, Act 537 Plan update, Rt.611/512 traffic signal project, River Rd. bridge culvert, 2020 township roads paving/chipsealing projects and a preliminary walk through of the Potomac Street property (wetlands and potential bog turtle habitat).
- c. Solicitor's Report-Solicitor Karasek discussed his monthly report, which included meetings attended, subdivision/zoning and other land use matters, outstanding litigation and misc. administrative matters.
- d. Supervisor's Report

Supervisor Due reported he attended the Comprehensive Plan Meeting and stated they are big on ecotourism/trails. Supervisor Due stated his personal opinion would be to combine all ten municipalities. Supervisor Due stated that Friends of Lake Minsi will be stocking the lake on March 24th and will be having a youth fishing day on March 28th. Manager Nelson stated there will be bridge over the spillway next year to walk around the lake.

Supervisor Teel reported that the Planning Commission meets next week and there are a couple of plans on the agenda. Supervisor Teel stated no formal plan has been presented for the River Point project yet. Supervisor Teel, as liaison Emergency Management, stated that having ambulance service is a top priority.

Supervisor DeFranco reported the EDC is coordinating a meeting with Lou Pektor on February 27th, to give a presentation of his development plans.

Supervisor Pinter has nothing to report.

Chairman Bermingham Jr. reported he is awaiting a proposal from Select Ambulance. Chairman Bermingham Jr. reported there has a lot of interest in the Senior Citizen Club and the first meeting will be scheduled at the end of February at Chelsea Sun. Chairman Bermingham Jr. reported on Sunday, February 23, at 11 am, the Mount Bethel Church is holding their annual recognition of Township Supervisors and Firefighters.

PART VII (Official Action-matters to be voted on)

1. Refuse Reductions, Application Refunds and Exonerations-None
2. PSATS Attendees-Chairman Bermingham Jr. wanted to confirm with all the Supervisors that they were still interested in attending PSATS. Supervisor Due and Supervisor Pinter will not be attending.
3. UCC Board of Appeals-Manager Nelson stated that since the Township withdrew from the COG, the Township will need to establish a UCC Board of Appeals, for building code violations. Manager Nelson stated Dan Christensen, Joe Battillo, and Randy Crane have volunteered until we can advertise. **MOTION** by Supervisor DeFranco, seconded by Supervisor Teel, to establish the UCC Board of Appeals, Dan Christensen, Joe Battillo and Randy Crane, as members of the Board of Appeals, alternates to be named later. Vote: 5-0. Solicitor Karasek stated he will prepare an Ordinance to have the three members formally appointed.
4. Lou Pektor meeting-Chairman Bermingham Jr. discussed a special joint meeting on February 27, 2020 with the Board of Supervisors and the Economic Development Committee, with Lou Pektor as a guest speaker, to provide an overview of their development plans for the River Road property. **MOTION** by Supervisor Teel, seconded by Supervisor Due, to advertise for the special meeting. Vote: 4-0-1.
5. UMBT Ex-Police Officers-Chairman Bermingham Jr. discussed the UMBT Ex-Police Officers and the effect it could have if the Township was to establish a Police Department. Chairman Bermingham Jr. asked Solicitor Karasek if he could draft a letter to the remaining officers to see if they would want to have their position back.
6. Township Two Door Pick-up-Manager Nelson discussed selling the two door pick-up because it is not practical. Manager Nelson would like to have a vehicle more efficient and economical. Manager Nelson would like a motion to sell the two door pick-up. No motion was made.
7. Advertise Zoning Officer-Manager Nelson stated that he and Supervisor Due created a job description for the Zoning Officer position. Manager Nelson stated we need someone here, part-time, to handle complaints. Supervisor Due stated that our alternate zoning officer is willing to work with the part-time zoning officer, who will be here concentrating on property maintenance. Manager Nelson is recommending the pay at \$16.00 an hour/20 hours a week. Supervisor Pinter would like to see the job description and qualifications before advertising. Chairman Bermingham Jr. asked for this to be on the February 24, 2020 meeting agenda.
8. Advertise Full-Time Road Crew-Manager Nelson stated he received a letter of resignation, effective March 6th, from a road crew employee and would like to advertise for a full-time CDL Road crew member. **MOTION** by Supervisor Due, seconded by Supervisor Teel, to advertise for a full-time CDL Road Crew member. Vote: 5-0.

PART VIII (Old Business)-None

PART IX (New Business)-None

PART X (Public Comment-3 minutes)

Renee Gale commented that Tina Serfass, our alternate zoning officer, is very knowledgeable, but has not addressed a complaint that she submitted.

Howard Klein commented that the Township may want to consider reaching out to adjoining townships that also have part-time zoning officers to get a feel as to what they are paying.

Ron Angle commented that we may find it difficult to find a competent zoning officer for \$16/hour. Ron stated that the Zoning Officer position is a very important position and we should be really looking at their qualifications before hiring anyone.

Wade Fredheim commented on the traffic study for the traffic light. He would like to see the results of the study that warrants a traffic light at the intersection of Rt.611/512.

Ron Angle asked how long the traffic light has been in the budget. Manager Nelson stated he believes two (2) years. Ron stated he would like to see the Supervisors go over each line item in the budget. Ron stated he does not see a need for an increase in taxes, he would like to see the expenditures reviewed.

Jimmy Potter asked about 1.5 million in the general fund. Supervisor Pinter commented that it is not surplus, there are transfers that occur.

Josh Hawkins asked about getting funds from the state for road maintenance.

PART XI (Executive Session)-Recess to Executive Session at 8:50 pm to discuss legal matters. The meeting reconvened at 9:10 pm. Chairman Bermingham Jr. stated discussed in Executive Session were litigation matters with the Staretz property. No action to be taken.

PART XII (Adjournment)-**MOTION** by Supervisor Teel, seconded by Supervisor Pinter, to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm. Vote: 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by Cindy Beck-Recording Secretary