

TOWNSHIP OF BERN
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

July 1, 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
Keith Mooney, Esquire
Brett Forry, Chief of Police
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 moved 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 July 1, 2025, General Fund: \$3,174,373.38, State Account: \$383,312.71, PLGIT: \$77,124.63, Certificate of Deposits: \$626,156.96, Expenses: \$50,217.26.

Treasurer's Report accepted subject to audit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brandon Krott, 1001 Christina Drive, stated he will hold off comments until later when Christina Drive is discussed.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Mr. Potts commented that the HVAC unit for the 2nd floor of the Township Building is a 1992 Model. The compressor is not working and has been giving the Township trouble for the last couple of years. Mr. Potts has asked for a quote to have the unit replaced and for the cost of having

the compressor replaced. If the compressor is replaced, the refrigerant will also need to be changed, due to the age of the unit. Mr. Potts reviewed the Capital Improvement Fund and did some analysis, and found there would be money available, if needed, to replace the unit. The other unit that is there, which is for this Meeting Room, the compressor is loose in its mount and not bolted down. Mr. Potts also asked for a quote to have this fixed. The unit on the roof, on the first floor, is for the administrative area, the economizer, is bad. This device allows outside air to come in and mix with the inside air, and this has been cut out, currently this is being bypassed. This unit is either 2009 or 2010, we would like to entertain having this repaired instead of a replacement. These items are considered replacements; these are not new purchases and will be handled under the Capital Improvement Fund.

Mr. Potts visited the walking trail with Kameron Boyer. He did his Eagle Scout Project by building two benches along the walking trail. He will be going to Council, possibly in August to receive his badge. Mr. Potts suggested inviting him here so we could present him with a Certificate of Achievement.

Mr. Potts would like to give credit to several people regarding the World War II weekend. Alex Lupco and the Muhlenberg Fire Company did a great job. Alex developed a plan for the weekend, and there were no incidents. Bernville brought their tanker. Special credit to Chief Forry, Sergeant Ed Noll, Kevin Hinkle and the rest of the police department for managing the area with all the visitors that attended the weekend. This is a significant event for our area, and this is done every year without any special recognition expected by those who manage the event. Mrs. Reed also commended Mr. Turner for getting the lines painted on West Leesport Road before this event.

Mr. Potts stated Mr. Whitman from Berkshire Greens called and asked if the Township would be open to putting street lighting on Woodward Drive. Mr. Whitman received complaints from his residents about the street being dark. In years past it has been up to the developer to install the streetlights and if the Township would do this, it is setting a precedence for future developers. Mr. Potts recommended that the Township does not do this, and Mr. Whitman would be told that he would have take care of installing the streetlights himself. Mr. Potts asked if Mr. Whitman does this himself, does he need to keep the streetlights out of the Right of way? Atty. Mooney responded to this question by stating, yes, he would need to keep the streetlights out of the Right of way. Mr. Potts stated he will inform Mr. Whitman of this decision.

PUBLIC SAFETY & SERVICES

Muhlenberg Township Fire and Rescue- Mrs. Reed stated Chief Lupco is not in attendance this evening, due to the storms in the area, but Supervisors received a copy of the report.

Mrs. Reed acknowledged, which is stated in the report, that on average 9 personnel per event, which is a significant improvement from Greenfields. Mr. Potts agreed and added that in 2023 Greenfields averaged 2 personnel per event. And in 2024 it averaged 1.8 personnel per event. Mrs. Reed stated that despite all the time, effort, money and stipends there was no improvement with Greenfields from January to April, and Muhlenberg Fire Company has been doing an outstanding and professional job.

Chief Lupco did attend the meeting at some point and wanted to add to his report. There were 40 calls for Bern Township, and 187 service calls overall last month.

Emergency Medical Services – No report was received by Western or Northern Berks, due to it being the 1st of the month.

Emergency Management – Supervisors received a copy of the report.

Police Department – Supervisors received a copy of the report

Police Discussion / Approval to send Officer to Firearms Instructor School - Chief Forry is requesting permission to send an officer to attend this training. On July 10th there will be a competition between two officers. Whoever “wins” will attend the training. Chief Forry is requesting permission at this time so he can move ahead with the process. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve sending an officer to Firearms Instructor School, seconded by Mr. Tobias. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Discussion / Approval to Ratify Commencement of Hiring Process – Chief Forry will gather a list together and when ready present the information. Dr. Wagner made a motion to approve the commencement of the hiring process, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Discussion / Approval to Accept Sergeant’s Resignation - Chief Forry requested the acceptance of Sergeant Wiley’s resignation. Dr. Wagner made a motion to approve the resignation of Sergeant Wiley, seconded by Mr. Tobias. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

PLANNING/ZONING/CODE ENFORCEMENT

Engineer: Craig Momose attended tonight’s meeting in place of Kent Morey. The Supervisors received a copy of the report.

Planning Commission: Mr. Potts stated the Planning Commission did meet in June, however, there were no plans submitted by the deadline. They discussed the Comprehensive Plan, which they will be revisiting at their July meeting and hopefully it will be ready for the Boards execution in August.

Time Extensions: Mrs. Reed stated there are no time extensions needed.

Code Enforcement: The Supervisors have a copy of the report.

Mr. Pflum stated the only pressing item still is the Heather Lane fire. Mr. Pflum did contact Judge Strand today about getting the constable to serve the Civil Complaint which is still outstanding for \$12,000.00. Mr. Pflum’s concern is the roof has a giant hole and is exposed and is becoming a public hazard and safety issue. Mr. Pflum’s suggestion is to have a quote from

Berks Fire and Water to come in and have it boarded up properly or have the left side of the building taken down. Mrs. Reed stated this fire happened on December 18, 2024. Mr. Potts commented the Township had been unable to locate the residents of this property, until recently, so the citations were unable to be served prior to the recent new location of the residents. Mr. Pflum stated it is his understanding that the insurance claim has been denied, so there is no insurance money, and it appears the owners are not working on getting this fixed up. Mr. Pflum believes the Board should discuss if they want to take the next step to have this boarded up professionally or have it demolished. Atty. Mooney would counsel to have this boarded up, due to it being a safety hazard. Atty. Mooney added he would not counsel to have it demolished without going into court and getting permission. Dr. Wagner questioned what is the process to condemn this property, and should an engineer look at the structure? Atty. Mooney replied, going to court and filing for an Equity Action would be the next step to get permission to tear it down. Mr. Potts added that he would like this resolved by winter, so the home is not exposed to the elements for another season. Dr. Wagner inquired who would be responsible for paying Berks Fire and Waters bill. Atty. Mooney stated it would be the Townships' responsibility and then have a lien placed on the property. Mr. Pflum also commented that the front door is unsecure and the possibility of having unwanted trespassers becomes an issue for first responders, especially for the police. Mr. Potts added that since the owners have been located, the citations can be served. Dr. Wagner inquired, once the citations are served, and the residents take no action, what happens next. Mr. Potts explained the serving of the citations is the first step in getting the process started, then there is a hearing that will be held at the District Justice Office. The Township will continue to push the Judge to get the residents served. Mr. Potts will contact Berks Fire and Water to get a quote to cover the roof and secure the front door. Mr. Pflum stated the Blighted Properties Committee aren't going to be helpful until it has been proven that all efforts have been exhausted before they come to our aid. A question was asked about this property's taxes. Mrs. Reed stated that the fire happened only one week after they purchased the property, so the payment of taxes is a gray area. It was noted that the residents were living somewhere else until the home was able to be occupied and their homeowner's insurance denied the claim because no one was living in the home at the time of the fire, so it was considered an abandoned property. A resident asked about a Sheriff Sale, and it was stated this could take a while until that happens.

STORMWATER MANGEMENT

MS4 Stormwater Report – Mr. Potts stated he started working on the Annual Stormwater Report for DEP which is due at the end of September. Mr. Potts has all the documents ready, but he needs Mr. Morey's help with some items and then it will be submitted.

ROADS

The Supervisors have a copy of the report.

Mr. Turner stated that the 2025 Road Project is complete. Mr. Turner would like to thank Allan Myers L.P., for doing a great job and noted they were very easy to work with. The bid project was \$391,438.05, upon the completion of the project the amount was \$388,738.90, which is

\$2,700.00 cheaper. A question was asked as to why there are patches in the new road. Mr. Turner responded that on Rick Road there was a base failure that happened after the road was completed, which needed to be fixed.

Discussion of Parking Locations at Cathy & Christina Drive – Mr. Potts stated that he received a call from a concerned resident regarding Cathy Drive. The concern is when two cars are parked on either side of the road, it does not allow for two cars to pass each other safely going in opposite directions. The concerned resident was forced to back out onto West Leesport Road, because the other driver coming out would not let her enter. Chief Forry, Mr. Turner and Mr. Potts went out and took some photos of this area. Mr. Potts is proposing there be no parking allowed from the first driveway apron up to West Leesport Road on one side of the road. Whatever is decided for Cathy Drive, will also need to be done on Christina Drive. Right now, on Christina Drive this is not an issue, because residents are only parked on one side of the road. There needs to be a way to allow residents in and out of the development without causing too many traffic issues. Mr. Potts did pull the police reports, and the police did an analysis of the calls since June 2023, they filed three civilian complaints during this time regarding parking issues at both intersections. As a result of the period of this static collection eight reports were filed where one or more vehicles were cited or warned for parking violations. Thirteen occasions, when Operation Schools-In was monitored, one or more vehicles were warned or cited for parking violations. Cathy Drive and West Leesport Road is a designated school bus stop. The buses stop there instead of Christina to allow more “stacking” for the vehicles before they get to Route 183. Bern Township is entertaining the idea about approaching Bern Lutheran Church to see if they would allow the buses and cars on their parking lot during pick-up and drop-off times. Mr. Potts added Bern Township would propose there would be no parking on the west side of those streets, that would be the side as you are going out. On the incoming side they would be able to park along that side of the street. In addition, the duplex on the corner of Christina Drive only can park 1 car in each driveway, so finding additional parking would be a challenge. On Cathy Drive, it is partially painted yellow from where the fire hydrant is, so we are only taking away one spot in order to get free access for 2 vehicles to pass each other. Resident Katie Mauger has lived on Cathy Drive for the last 10 years stated there are morning and afternoon school bus runs for both elementary and middle & high school, and a private school stops for pick-up and drop-offs. This is not just a school bus safety issue, but she has spoken with the Captain of Mt. Pleasant Fire Company who lives in this development, he has concerns if there is a fire, getting the apparatus down the street if vehicles are parked along both sides, they wouldn't be able to get through. Ms. Mauger thanked Mr. Potts for looking into this situation. Mrs. Reed stated that back in the 90's the developer asked to be able to put in a width of 30.6' and the standard now is 36' for roads. Clarification was asked by a resident if this is only at the intersection, is there a problem with people parking on both sides of the street in other areas as well? Another resident stated, yes, a little bit. The problem is people are coming down West Leesport Road and turning in, and if there is someone coming down and with the parked cars and the driver is not paying attention, they will hit each other. Mr. Potts again is proposing to have No Parking signs posted from the first driveway to West Leesport Road on one side of the road, if the Board is agreeable to this, and see if this works and if it does not, we will need to revisit this. In the meantime, we will see about relocating the bus stop to the Bern Church parking lot. Mr. Turner asked Mr. Potts if just a No Parking sign would be installed, or would

the curbs be also painted? At this time, Mr. Potts prefers having the “No Parking from here to corner” signs installed. Mrs. Reed asked why both the painting of the curb, and the sign can’t be installed. Dr. Wagner asked if an ordinance needs to be made. Mr. Potts responded Section 170.51 of the No Parking Ordinance would have to be amended. Mr. Thompson proposed, when amending the ordinance, to list both sides of the streets, and not post or enforce one side for now, then we don’t have to amend the ordinance if we need to change it. Mr. Potts would rather not take this approach. This Board agrees with this arrangement, but any future Boards might not agree.

Discussion / Approval to close Fairview Drive and Old Bernville Road for Pipe

Replacement Project – Mr. Turner stated at this intersection there is an orange circle with an X on it, there is a hole in the road. This was caused by the concrete pipes separating. Mr. Turner would like to remove those pipes and replace them with plastic pipes. Fairview Drive would need to be closed, because the catch basin is halfway in the middle of the road and traffic would not be able to pass through for this work to be done. This work would be a one-day project. Dr. Wagner made a motion to allow the closing of these roads for the pipe replacement project, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

SEWER/WATER/BERN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

Mrs. Reed noted that someone flushed a dish towel which caused major issues to the system. There is a list available on the Township website of items that should not be flushed down toilets. This is a new pump station, and it is very expensive to have someone to come in to fix it. The location of this was West Shore, so the situation was able to be isolated. Please be aware if you purchase items that say “Flushable” these do not disintegrate and actually shreds and tangles in the system.

SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Supervisors have a copy of the report. Mr. Potts has nothing to add.

Discussion / Approval to Issue Request for Trash & Recycling Collection Bids - Mr. Potts stated this would be collection of recyclables for the entire Township accept on private streets. There are two options, the first option is Dual-stream, as it is now, where residents separate their material at the curb, the company manually comes by and picks it up. The second option is an automated system where every resident receives a tote/cart, the truck has one person, and a mechanical arm picks up the tote and dumps it. The thought process behind the second option would reduce costs significantly because there is only one person on the truck, verses multiple people in the truck, and less workers’ compensation insurance. There is a third option for recycling to add glass back into collection, on the processing side it was not much of a factor to include glass. As far as the trash collection and the trash district, it’s the same theme. One option for collecting trash as it is being collected now, a maximum of six bags or cans of trash plus one bulk item. And the other option is to go to an automated system where the tote or cart are put at the curb, plus one bulk item. The bids will be due August 28th, so at the September meeting we

should know the direction we will be going. It was asked if the second option for recycling would be Single-stream, Mr. Potts confirmed yes. One item that people don't understand with Single-stream is there will be contamination. If jars, containers and plastics are not washed properly, and then mixed with the papers, the paper will get contaminated. Another question was asked if smaller totes/carts will be available to residents? Mr. Potts stated yes, when he spoke with one hauler smaller totes/carts were available, but he does not know if other companies also provide them. The hauler will start every resident with the 95-gallon tote and if a resident requests a smaller container they would change it out. Mr. Potts asked if the Board would authorize the release of the request for proposal. Dr. Wagner made a motion to authorize this request, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion / Approval to Ratify DEP Section 902 Grant Extension – Mr. Potts stated that the Township would like to extend the grant to November of this year. This grant will expire in August, it's a 3-month extension. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve Ratify DEP Section 902 Grant Extension, seconded by Dr. Wagner. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATION

Discussion / Approval of 18-Month Trial Agreement with Berks Fair- Mr. Potts stated instead of two (2) events per month for a total of twenty-four (24), this will allow four (4) events a month, in the warmer months, with a maximum of twenty-four (24) for the year. Dr. Wagner made a motion to approve the 18-month trial agreement with Berks Fair, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion of Request to Re-Name County Welfare Road - Mr. Potts stated the Township received a letter from a person who lives in New Jersey who wants to re-name County Welfare Road in honor of the Shell family. Mr. Potts stated that changing the name of a road is not as easy as it sounds. Any business or resident along that road would need to change mailing addresses, letterhead, business cards, insurances, passports, driver's license, and mortgages. Presently this would affect the County Facilities in changing their address for everything. Dr. Wagner knows the Shell family very well and means no disrespect, but this could "open a can of worms" and is not feasible. Mrs. Reed recommended having a bench placed in the playground in honor of the Shells. Mr. Potts will respond to this letter politely declining their request.

Discussion / Approval of Non-Uniform Pension Resolution – Mr. Potts stated the Township needs to satisfy the State Pension auditor. This has never been done before, but the Township has a new auditor, and they are pushing this to be done. They want a resolution that states the non-uniform members of the Non-Uniform Plan will contribute a certain percentage of their pay to the pension plan. This is strictly to satisfy the auditor. This along with the Police Pension Resolution will be done every year. Dr. Wagner made a motion to approve the Non-Uniform Pension Resolution, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Next Meeting- The next meeting will be held on Monday, August 4, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Bern Township Municipal Building. This change is due to National Night Out which is being held on Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 6:00pm – 9:00 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

This will be for a discussion of a personnel matter and there will not be a vote after the Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane DeJesus, Secretary/Treasurer