

TOWNSHIP OF BERN
BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

August 4, 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
Bobby Turner, Road Foreman
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

Mr. Thompson moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Eveland **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

FINANCE REPORT

Balances as of August 4, 2025 General Fund: \$3,254,345.57, State Account: \$772,096.49, PLGIT: \$77,401.45, Certificate of Deposits: \$626,156.96, Expenses: \$95,577.62.

Treasurer's Report accepted subject to audit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC HEARING

Bern Township Comprehensive Plan Update – Mrs. Reed opened the floor for discussion. Attny. Mooney stated that comments were received from the City and the School District that the plan meets with their MPC. However, the Planning Commission offered several comments, but it is Attny. Mooney’s understanding that the intent is to amend the plan and come back to a second hearing. Mrs. Reed stated the recommendations were incorporated into the plan as requested. Attny. Mooney reminded everyone that the purpose of a Public Hearing is to educate the public. Mrs. Reed stated, future recommendations were looked at, and one of the major recommendations was to have a recreation budget. The Five (5) members of the Recreation Board will be invited to attend a Planning Commission meeting. Attny. Mooney explained that a Comprehensive Plan is a 10-year planning document which contains a plan for what the Board of Supervisors believes the Township should look like for uses in Zoning into the future, but it does not reflect the actual plan of today. Attny. Mooney stated Bern Township’s committee presented, by law, to the Bern Township Planning Commission, County Planning Commission, the City of Reading and Schuylkill Valley School District to review and provide comments. The comments from the County Planning Commission, City of Reading and Schuylkill Valley School District were insignificant. The Bern Township Planning Commission offered several amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, which Attny. Mooney read. Mrs. Reed asked if there were any more comments and closed the Public Hearing @ 7:10 p.m.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

Discussion / Approval to Advertise NO PARKING Ordinance – Mr. Potts stated, this pertains to Fifty-Eight (58) feet from West Leesport Road on Cathy Drive and Fifty (50) feet from West Leesport Road on Christina Drive both the South side of the street. This is to resolve traffic congestion issues along these roads. Mr. Eveland made a motion to advertise No Parking Ordinance along Cathy and Christina Drive, seconded by Mr. Thompson **YES:** Dr. Wagner, Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion / Approval of Ag Security District Modification Resolution – Mrs. Reed clarified this is at the Hey Residence which is part of this transmission line project. Mr. Potts agreed and added their property is in Ag Security District and a certain strip of land will need to be removed to allow the power line to be built. Mr. Eveland made a motion to approve Ag Security District Modification, seconded by Mr. Tobias **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Mr. Potts provided an update from last month’s discussion about the Heather Lane home that burned. Mr. Pflum did get in contact with their lawyer; it appears the residents are interested in taking steps to secure the home. Mr. Pflum provided the residents with photos and a list of items that need to be taken care of to secure the home. Mr. Potts stated a court hearing is scheduled for October 2025. Mr. Pflum stated the resident was receptive regarding repayment to the Township,

Mr. Pflum and Attny. Mooney for the time it has taken these parties to locate these residents. This civil complaint is in the court system for \$12,000.00. Mr. Potts added instead of collecting the money the Township is interested in getting this home secure and the situation resolved.

PUBLIC SAFETY & SERVICES

Muhlenberg Township Fire and Rescue - Chief Lupco stated last month the department received 198 calls for service and 46 of them were in Bern Township.

Emergency Medical Services – Supervisors received one (1) out of the two (2) reports.

Emergency Management – Supervisors received a copy of the report.

Police Department - Supervisors received a copy of the report. Chief Forry thanked the Bern Lutheran Church (Chris Becker) and the Schuylkill Valley School District regarding the intersection concerning Christina and Cathy Drive for the pick-up and drop-off of students. It was agreed the school bus will stop at the entrance of the church, which allows the students to board and exit safely.

Police Discussion / Approval of Officer Promotion to Sergeant - Chief Forry is requesting approval to promote Officer Johnson to Sergeant. Unfortunately, Officer Johnson was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve promotion from Officer to Sergeant Johnson, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Discussion / Approval to send Officer to Firearms Training – Chief Forry is requesting permission to send Officer Archutowski to firearms (red-dot) training. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve firearms training for Officer Archutowski, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Discussion / Approval to send Officer to Fire/Arson Investigation Training - Chief Forry is requesting permission to send Officer Heckman to the basic fire/arson investigation training. This training is due to the anticipated departure of Officer Lengel, who is currently our fire/arson investigator. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve fire/arson investigation training for Officer Heckman, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Discussion / Approval to Accept Bid for 2014 Dodge Charger – Chief Forry stated the 2014 Dodge Charger with approximately 120,000 miles on it, was put on Municibid and asking for approval to accept the bid of \$6,007.00. Mr. Thompson made a motion to accept the bid for the 2014 Dodge Charger, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Discussion / Approval of Annual Memorandum of Understanding with the Berks County Residential Center – Chief Forry stated this is a letter that needs to be written stating the Bern Township Police Department is the primary police jurisdiction for the residential center. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the annual memorandum of understanding with Berks County residential center, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Police Discussion / Approval to Accept Donation to Purchase Automated External Defibrillators – Chief Forry is asking to accept the generous donation from Tower Behavioral Health of \$10,000.00 to help pay for AEDs for all the patrol cars. This donation will help pay for about three-quarters of the bill, since the AEDs are very expensive. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the donation to allow the purchase of automated external defibrillators, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

PLANNING/ZONING/CODE ENFORCEMENT

Engineer (SSM) – The Supervisors received a copy of the report.

Planning Commission

Mr. Potts stated the Planning Commission met in July and took action on two (2) plans.

Discussion / Approval of Penske Truck Collision & Repair Center Final Land Development Plan – Mr. Potts stated the Planning Commission recommended approval of this plan subject to the SSM review letter of June 27, 2025. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the Penske Truck Collision & Repair Center Final Land Development Plan, seconded by Mr. Eveland **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. **NO:** Mr. Tobias. Motion carried.

Discussion / Approval of Berks Career & Technology Center Storage Building Preliminary Land Development Plan – Mr. Potts stated the Planning Commission recommended approval of the preliminary plan subject to the SSM review letter of June 27, 2025. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the Berks Career & Technology Center Storage Building Preliminary Land Development Plan, seconded by Mr. Eveland. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Time Extensions

Bernville Business Center – Plan date is 8/15/2025. Mr. Eveland moved that if an extension of time has not been granted by the applicant, prior to the expiration date of August 15, 2025, that the plan be rejected for the reasons set forth in the latest Engineering review letter. Mr. Tobias questioned the three (3) options for time extensions. Mr. Potts read the email regarding the 3 options, seconded by Mr. Tobias **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Code Enforcement

Discussion / Approval to Refund Variance Application Fee to 1317 Hilltop Road - Mr. Potts stated the Board advised this resident they would not take an adverse position against putting a salon in her summer kitchen. The resident submitted the application for a Zoning Hearing but paid the residential fee, not commercial fee. An additional \$200.00 was needed to be submitted for the commercial application. The additional fee was received. Resident decided to withdraw the application. The application had been processed by the Zoning Hearing Board Attorney with a cost of \$137.50, out of the \$2,000.00 that was paid \$1,862.50 would be the refund. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the refund for the variance application fee for 1317 Hilltop Road, seconded by Mr. Tobias **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion / Approval to Refund Rental Permit Fee for 2100 Peters Road – Mr. Potts stated this was simply an over payment and the refund would be \$50.00. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the refund of the rental permit fee for 2100 Peter Road, seconded by Mr. Tobias. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

STORMWATER MANGEMENT

MS4 Stormwater Report – Nothing to report.

ROADS

The Supervisors have a copy of the report.

Discussion of PennDOT Winter Maintenance Agreement - Mr. Turner stated he sent an email to the Board of Supervisors about a week ago asking for any further discussion or questions pertaining to the PennDOT contract. A letter was sent to PennDOT, regarding the Township denying the renewal of the contract for plowing state roads. Typically, PennDOT provides a 5-year contract, but this contract was a 10-year contract. PennDOT has not increased their allowance of money they pay us for lane miles each year and with the winters getting worse, cost increase of salt and manhours it is not beneficial for the Township to renew this contract. Currently the Township plows 22 miles of state roads for PennDOT, and unfortunately, we end up being in the red every year because of this. A question was asked, that in case of an emergency on a state road, is the Township willing to plow to allow emergency vehicles through? Mr. Potts responded yes, the Township has already spoken with the Chief about this, if there is an ambulance or fire truck needed, the Township would plow the road(s). Another question was asked if the liquid fuels allocations would be affected by this. Mr. Potts responded, no, this will not be affected. Mr. Tobias made a motion to terminate the contact with PennDOT, seconded by Mr. Thompson. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion of Stop Sign Placement at Ziegler and Center Roads – Mr. Turner stated at the three-way stop as you come up Ziegler to Center Road, there is no stop sign there currently, and it was brought to his attention for safety reasons to possibly put a stop sign there. Mr. Tobias

asked what the motivation was for this request. Mr. Potts stated this intersection causes confusion for the drivers; they don't realize Ziegler Road does not have a stop sign. Mr. Tobias made a motion to place stop sign at Ziegler and Center Roads intersection, seconded by Mrs. Reed. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried. **NO:** Mr. Thompson

SEWER/WATER/BERN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

Mrs. Reed reminded residents not to flush non-flushable materials down the toilets.

SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Mr. Potts reported the gates at the yard waste facility have been closed. Residents will need to use their issued key cards to access the facility. A question was asked about the renewal process, Mr. Potts responded that residents who purchased the card will receive a letter in November about renewing their cards by December 31st. However, residents will have a 1-month grace period, if card is not renewed by the end of January, the card will be de-activated.

ADMINISTRATION

Ratify Grant Support Letter to the Schuylkill River Greenway Association -Mr. Potts stated a letter needed to be responded to by July 25, 2025, and since there were no objections from the Board, a letter was written in support. They are applying to the William Penn Foundation to expand the circuit trails network grant program to put more trails throughout Berks County. Mr. Eveland motioned to approve grant support to the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, seconded by Mr. Thompson **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Discussion / Approval of Grant Writing Proposal - Mr. Potts stated, Greenfield Fire Company had their fire trucks up for sale and the newest truck has been sold. After the fire company had been de-certified, we asked the Officers to please allow us to have fire apparatus. Greenfields has decided to sell it all, so we will not have access to this equipment. The Township would like to apply for a grant to be able to purchase a fire truck and someday rebuild that fire station. The Airport is working to clear out the station and have been in contact with the fire companies' lawyer to come up with a date that they will be out. At that point we will have the First-Right of Refusal to secure the station for ourselves. The Airport has stated they are willing to give us the same lease deal of \$1.00 a year for 27 years. The Board has decided to hire a grant writer to write a grant to raise funds for the purchase of a fire truck. We have received two (2) quotes. One is from Entech Engineering for \$5,000.00 and the other is Barry Isett for \$2,600.00. Mr. Potts requested references for both companies and received outstanding recommendations for both. Mr. Becker offered his opinion regarding Barry Isett's company over the 9 years he has worked with them; they received over 9 million dollars in grant money and would highly recommend them. Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve Barry Isett for the grand writing, seconded by Mr. Tobias. **YES:** Mr. Eveland, Mr. Tobias, Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Reed. Motion carried.

Next Meeting- The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 2, at 7:00 PM at the Bern Township Municipal Building.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Discussion of Litigation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane DeJesus, Secretary/Treasurer