

# BERN TOWNSHIP

*in the news.....*



WINTER 2020

## 2019 in Review

Another decade is finished. This past one was certainly better than the previous decade. It seems we had good, steady growth through the last ten years. We currently have low unemployment, a reasonable inflation rate and the stock market seems to be generally moving in the right direction. What will the 20's bring us? Bern Township wishes for you and your family a happy, healthy and pleasantly memorable 2020.

This newsletter will report to you the accomplishments and activities of Bern Township during the year of 2019. The end of the year brings transition to the township on various personnel and service contract matters. There were some challenges in the township during the year including First Energy's final selection of the route for the proposed transmission power line, the successful effort to save the one-room schoolhouse at Van Reed Road, and the citizen protests at the Berks County Residential Center. The year included the return of Christmas in the Air at the Reading Airport, the establishment of U.S. Congressman Dan Meuser's office at the Reading Airport, the Camel Trot 5K race at the Reading Airport, a minor earthquake in the township in July, the Reading Fair and the World War II Weekend events.

We again thank our committee / board members and paid staff for their service to our community. We thank those who volunteer their personal time to serve our community for no compensation. All of you are very important to Bern Township and we recognize your dedication to the quality of life in your community. We also thank those who support the township in other ways, such as purchasing newsletter ads, giving words of thanks

and encouragement, or simply offering suggestions on how we might be able to improve our programs.

At Bern Township, in everything we do, we believe in providing the best service possible to our residents. We do this by continually training and learning, coming to work inspired and making our best effort. Welcome to Bern Township!!

For those of you new to Bern Township, residents and businesses, we welcome you to the community. Together, we can continue to make Bern Township a great place to be. ❖



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# BERN TOWNSHIP

1069 Old Bernville Road  
Reading, PA 19605

Hours: Mon-Thur 8:30 am to 4:30 pm  
Fri - 8:30 am to 12 pm  
Phone: (610) 926-2267  
Fax: (610) 926-9028  
www.berntownship.org

## TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Brian S. Eveland	610-587-0077
Irene Reed	610-926-7621
Jeff Thompson	610-371-9411
Dan Tobias	610-375-1664
Boyd C. Wagner	610-372-2121

## SUPERVISORS MEETING

1st Tuesday of the Month - 7:00 pm

### Township Staff

Brian Potts	Manager
Diane DeJesus	Secretary / Treasurer
Wesley Waugh	Chief of Police
Steve Edwards	Assistant Road Foreman

### Township Contacts

LTL Consultants 610-987-9290	Building Inspector / Zoning Officer
Lori Hozza 610-916-9919	Municipal Authority
Jamie Neuin 610-916-8955	Tax Collector
Berks Envirotech 610-375-7640	Sewage Officer
Kevin Hinkle For emergencies call 911	Emergency Management

**Non-Emergency** for Police, Fire, Rescue & Medical  
610-655-4911

### Township Monthly Meetings

Planning Commission	2nd Tuesday at 7:30 pm
Municipal Authority	4th Wed. at 11:00 am
Solid Waste Commission	Meeting dates as needed
Zoning Hearing Board	Meeting dates as needed
Recreation Board	Meeting dates as needed

### POLLING PLACES

1st Precinct	Bern Township Municipal Building
2nd Precinct	Ontelaunee Grange Hall
3rd Precinct	Greenfields Fire Co. Social Hall

## TRASH COLLECTION INFO

**Bern Township Trash Collection Districts:**  
**Greenfields / Riveredge Acres**

**Orchard Hill Area**

(West Leesport & Rick Road)

**Bern Manor Area**

(Prison Road, Kercher & Mull Ave, Burdan Drive)

**Willows Area**

(Cathy & Christina Drive, Almark Way)

**Northwest Area**

(Ziegler, Park Roads, Brossman Court)

### About Bern Trash Collections:

*Every week - six (6) 35 gallon bags or cans per household, one (1) bulk item per week allowed  
NO items containing Freon, automotive tires, hazardous waste or construction material*

### Collection Dates:

**Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Apr. 6, 13, 20, 27;  
May 4, 11, 18, 26; June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29;  
July 6, 13, 20, 27; Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31;  
Sept. 8, 14, 21, 28; Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26**

**CALL 610-926-2267 the day of collection to report a missed trash collection - messages can be left on the answering machine until midnight**

## RECYCLING COLLECTION INFO

**About Bern Recycling Collections:**

*Every other week*

### DO NOT USE PLASTIC BAGS!

*Place #1 and #2 plastics, tin, Bi-metal and aluminum cans in your recycling container.*

**NO GLASS.** *Place newspapers in paper bags or bundle. Cut cardboard and place in paper bags or bundle. Items NOT collected for recycling: glass, paint cans, tires, styrofoam, plastics #3 thru #7, batteries or large appliances.*

### Collection Dates:

**District #1:**

**Mar. 12, 26; April 9, 23; May 7, 21; June 4, 18;  
July 2, 16, 30; Aug. 13, 27; Sept. 10, 24;  
Oct. 8, 22**

**District #2:**

**Mar. 5, 19; April 2, 16, 30; May 14, 28;  
June 11, 25; July 9, 23; Aug. 6, 20; Sept. 3, 17;  
Oct. 1, 15, 29**

**CALL 610-926-2267 the day of collection to report a missed recycling collection - messages can be left on the answering machine until midnight**

# 2019 in Review

## 2019 Finances

The township's General Fund revenue / income for the year totaled \$3,786,994. This amount is \$130,722 (3.5%) more than 2018. The following is a breakdown of the General Fund revenue amounts for 2019:

Real Estate Tax	\$1,483,051	39%
Act 511 Tax	\$1,520,214	40%
Permits & Licenses	\$186,480	6%
Fines	\$50,351	1%
Charges for Service	\$86,834	2%
State Pension Aid	\$163,856	4%
Gov't Revenue	\$79,004	2%
Reimbursements	\$169,867	5%
Police Services	\$47,337	1%

The General Fund expenses for the year came in at \$3,649,132. This amount is \$46,030 (1.2%) more than the expenses for 2018. The following is a breakdown of the township's General Fund expenses for 2018:

General Government	\$386,755	11%
Debt Service	\$4,336	0%
Fire Companies	\$43,568	1%
Police Protection	\$1,231,303	34%
Building Inspections	\$84,793	2%
Roads & Highways	\$545,736	15%
Recycling Center	\$38,622	1%
Pensions	\$408,435	11%
Insurances	\$855,134	24%
Equipment Escrow	\$50,450	1%

The general fund tax was adjusted for the 2020 calendar year by an increase of ¼ mill. The breakdown of the total 4.186 mill tax is:

General Fund	3.92 Mills
Capital Improvement	0.116 Mills
Fire Protection	0.15 Mills
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.186 Mills</b>

**How do we compare with our neighbor's tax rates? The City of Reading (17.689 mills), Muhlenberg (5 mills), Leesport (5.72 mills), Lower Heidelberg (6.036 mills) and Spring (4.45 mills) are higher. Ontelaunee (4.05 mills), Penn (1.5 mills) and Centre (0.36 mills) are lower.**

The township's current five-year financial, capital improvement and strategic plan continues to be refined and updated. ❖



**You Can Help Children  
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[www.fccy.org](http://www.fccy.org)

## 2020 Census - Be Counted!

Why should you participate in the 2020 Census? We'll give you 675 billion reasons! If you suffered damages from the flooding rains last year, you need to be counted! If you drive on roads or over bridges that need to be repaired, you need to be counted! If you send kids to school or subsidized daycare, if you get free lunches at school, if you go to the senior center or use our playgrounds, you need to be counted! There are approximately \$675 billion in small business loans, federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities distributed annually; all based upon Decennial Census counts. This money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs and infrastructure. This money will end up in someone's community. Do all you can to make your claim so we can have those dollars – **OUR DOLLARS** – end up here in Bern Township!

It's **CONFIDENTIAL!** Even those who are not U.S. Citizens need to be counted to ensure proper allocation of these funds. With all applicable laws and privacy policies nobody should fear completing the census. Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households or businesses, *even to law enforcement agencies!* The information collected can be used for statistical purposes only. Additionally, all Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information and any violations comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000.00 and / or up to 5 years in prison. Learn more about the Census Bureau's data protection and privacy program at [www.census.gov/privacy](http://www.census.gov/privacy).

It's your civic duty and completing the census is mandatory! Respond this year, or Census Enumerators will come knocking on your door! If a response is not received for your address by the end of April 2020, you will likely see a Census Bureau worker knocking at your door! Do your part and **BE COUNTED!** ❖

# 2019 in Review

## BTMA NEWS

### MAJOR SEWER PROBLEMS

In January we had a big, expensive problem at BTMA's Pump Station on Schifferstein Lane in Greenfields.

Rags, grease and other "flushable" debris formed a clump that continued to grow as it moved through the sewer pipes. By the time it reached our pump station, it completely blocked the sewer pipe. The clog was nearly the size of a watermelon and it was as hard as cement!

It took more than 7 hours just to clear the blocked sewer pipe. Then clogged valves had to be cleaned before pumps could be run again. Removing the clog and fixing damaged equipment has cost BTMA thousands of dollars.

Clogs cause our pumps to malfunction, and grease corrodes our equipment, which is expensive to clean and repair. For example, one pump costs \$6,000 to \$8,000 and we have 12 pumps.

The clog was completely avoidable. Grease and fat should never be poured down a drain. Remember only human waste and toilet paper should go in a toilet. Nothing else is "flushable," no matter what it says on the package!

We are asking all our customers to please be considerate of your neighbors by helping us keep costs down. Take a moment to think about what gets flushed in your toilets or poured down your drains.

By taking care of our sewer lines and other equipment we can control the cost of our service to you.

The alternative we want to avoid is never-ending sewer rate increases to cover the cost of expensive but necessary repairs.

### ACH CUSTOMERS

A reminder for customers who pay by ACH transfers each month, if you close the bank account associated with payment of your BTMA bill, please notify the office (610-916-9919) as soon as possible. Neglecting to notify us results in fees and penalties being added to your account. ❖

## Emergency Management Committee

The township updated the emergency operations plan including the Notification and Resource Manual and the Continuity of Operations Plan. This plan guides us in how we continue to provide our services to the community even if we lose our township building, staff or other vital equipment or infrastructure. These updates were provided to Berks Department of Emergency Services.

Staff participated in the monthly Berks County Emergency Services training meetings. Items of discussion included pipeline safety, damage reporting, emergency management coordinator roles and training for elected officials. Staff also attended a meeting to discuss the Ontelaunee Dam disaster planning. If the dam were to fail, portions of Bern Township would be affected with flooding issues. Staff also received active shooter training presented by Chief Waugh.

Staff attended the planning / preparation meetings for the World War II Weekend and staffed the Emergency Operations Center during the show.

Staff conducted drive-by evaluations of storm damages and reported to Berks Emergency Services their findings. Staff responded to or monitored incidents including snow emergencies, hydraulic spills, water main breaks, protest events, water contamination, Blue Marsh water releases, earthquake, road closures and highway sinkhole.

Staff also created a social media policy for the department and continued to create material for posting on the township website. The Emergency Management Operations Center in the township building continues to take shape with the installation of furniture donated by the emergency management coordinator, the installation of electrical outlets, computer lines, phone lines and cable TV.

Please remember the "Bern Township Guide to Emergency Preparedness" guide is available on our website. We encourage you to print or save a copy of the guide for yourself.

The 2020 goals of the emergency management staff is to work on a social media platform, complete the improvements to the emergency operations center, continue to receive training and continue to provide educational materials to residents at the township building, on the website and through social media. ❖



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# 2019 in Review

## Police Department

The Bern Township Police Department responded to 7,807 events and requests during 2019. The department continued to provide training opportunities to the public, institutions and businesses during the year. A presentation on Drug Awareness at home and work was created and presented to the public at the Reading Airport. The presentation was intended to aid people not familiar with drugs or the drug culture in recognizing indicators of drug activity. The 2019 Citizen Police Academy was planned and presented to the public in partnership with Muhlenberg Township, Northern Berks Regional and Laureldale Borough Police. The Bern Police partnered with Northern Berks Regional Police to participate in National Night Out in August at the Schuylkill Valley High School Campus. The department also conducted active assailant training to various businesses and agencies during the year.

While staff provided training, they were also receiving training during the year. The department also received first aid, CPR and AED update training. A department member attended a two-day course on constitutional, legal and management issues associated with the use of social media by a government agency. This was to support the police department's social media activity with the public. The Detective Sergeant attended two days of financial crime investigation training as well as training on child abuse investigations at the Pennsylvania Police Academy. Department members also attended two days of training to transition from summary-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

For the seventh year, the department continued its *Operation School's In* school bus and bus stop safety program. The department also continued its participation in SafeBerks' Lethality Assessment Program, which provides protocols and tools to identify at-risk victims and provide immediate measures to involve them in domestic violence programs.

Members continued to work hard at keeping our community safe. A 2018 home invasion was solved with charges being filed against three individuals. Department investigators also developed intelligence on the Felony Lane gang and provided the information to the FBI, which resulted in the arrest of a person in Georgia that was responsible for criminal conduct in Bern Township. The department hosted

a commercial motor vehicle inspection detail during the year. Ten local police departments, Pennsylvania State Police and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration participated in the detail. A total of 51 trucks were inspected, 40 violations were noted and 15 citations were issued. Two drivers and three trucks were placed out of service.

The department secured a grant to implement body cameras. The department also received a license plate reader from the Berks County District Attorney's Office. We thank the District Attorney for his support of our program.

The department continues to contribute two department members to the Berks County Emergency Response Team and remains active with the Berks County Drug Task Force. ❖

## Road Department

During the year the road department completed road renovation projects, replaced storm pipes, attended training classes, rebuilt the street sweeper and designed a drainage system for Washington Road. This work is in addition to their usual responsibilities, including leaf and yard waste collection, drop-off center material management, patch potholes, mow vegetation along roadways, street sweeping, clean storm drains, plow snow and salt, repair signage, trim trees and painting lane lines, arrows and stop bars at intersections.

The road department received training on risk management, spotted lanternfly eradication, establishing speed limits, work area traffic control, work zone safety, lift safety, reducing rural roadway departures, probable cause, records management, bridge inspection and training to become certified, until 2024, in the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program, which allows us to apply for state grants to do certain road projects. The department members continued to participate in the Berks County Public Works Association.

The completed road renovations included replacement of stormwater pipes at North Tulpehocken Road, West Leesport Road, Mill Road and Ziegler Road. A new stormwater pipe and catch basin was installed on Ziegler Road near the nursery. A section of Penn Bern Road was rebuilt to stabilize the roadway. A new stormwater infiltration facility was installed on Ziegler Road. This is the first of

(Continued on Page 7)

# 2019 in Review

## **Berks County Recycling News:**

*www.co.berks.pa.us/swa*

### **Electronic Waste & Tire Recycling:**

**Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays**

**8:00 am to Noon**

**Fees apply for tires**

County Recycling Center

1316 Hilltop Road, Bern Township

### **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Dates:**

**8:00 am to 2:00 pm rain or shine**

April 18, 2020

Governor Mifflin Intermediate School

October 24, 2020

Berks County Agricultural Center

### **Paper Shredding:**

**8:00 am to 2:00 pm rain or shine**

April 25, 2020

Governor Mifflin Intermediate School

October 17, 2020

Berks County Agricultural Center

## **Bern Township Committees**

The various Bern Township Committees met during the year to conduct business on behalf of the township.

### ***Ag Security Commission***

The Agricultural Security Commission met to review and recommend approval of an application for a property located along Sillman Lane next to the Stonehedge development. The property was entered into the agricultural district.

### ***Solid Waste Advisory Commission***

The Solid Waste Advisory Commission met two times through the year to discuss methods of educating residents on the benefits and requirements of recycling and to discuss the request for proposal on the next three year solid waste and recycling collection and marketing contract.

The township completed and submitted the 2018 Recycling Performance Grant application to DEP for 1,299 tons of recycled material and received an award of \$12,912.00 for our recycling efforts. This amount was \$1,695.00 more than our 2017 grant award. The township curbside recycling program collected a total of 293 tons of material during 2019. This was approximately 30 tons more than 2018's amount, which was 263 tons.

The township released a request for proposals for solid waste / recycling collection and processing. The new contract began January 2, 2020 and lasts three years. A.J. Blosenski was awarded the recycling

collection contract, Republic Industries was awarded the solid waste collection contract and J.P. Mascaro was awarded the processing contract. Solid Waste collection in the districts is now on Mondays. Recycling collection is still on Thursdays, however the township has been split into two districts.

Clear, green and brown glass and plastics 3 through 7 are no longer collected for recycling due to the state of the recycling industry markets.

The township continues to participate in the Berks County Cooperative Purchasing Contract for leaf and yard waste removal.

The township purchased a five ton dump truck in 2019 and submitted a \$75,125 repayment request to DEP for the new truck and for the truck purchased in 2017.

### ***Planning Commission***

The Planning Commission met 11 times through the year to review Land Development and Subdivision Plans to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission reviewed and recommended approvals of the BCTC Welding Shop, Berks Park 183 Phase 1 Final Plan, Berks Heim subdivision. U.G.I. Training Facility, Peacock Kennels Sketch Plan and four residential subdivisions. The Commission also reviewed plans for Reitnouer Trailers Preliminary Plan, G&T Industries Preliminary Plan and a residential subdivision on West Leesport Road.

The Commission also served as the traffic study committee during the year and recommended the approval of an updated traffic impact study for the township.

Kelly Wickersham and Jim Colflesh were appointed to an alternate position on the planning commission. We welcome them aboard and look forward to working with them. The township regretfully accepted Jud Ackelson's resignation from the commission. He faithfully served on the planning commission for over 17 years. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.

### ***Zoning Hearing Board***

The Zoning Hearing Board reviewed three projects or issues during 2019. The Board rendered decisions on a residential garage addition, signage for Eagle Metals and a recovery group home.

We thank all of the committee members for devoting their time on behalf of the township. ❖

# 2019 in Review

## **Road Department (Continued from Page 5)**

three projects we will do to satisfy our stormwater permit with DEP. The department completed in-house paving projects on Mill Road, Possum Lane, Homestead Drive, Ziegler Road, Stinson Drive, Strauss Lane and West Leesport Road.

The 2019 Road Project was successfully completed \$34,240.00 under budget at a total cost of \$366,809. The project included repaving the following streets in Greenfields: Green Lane, portion of South Tulpehocken and North Tulpehocken Roads, Golf Road, Sunshine Road, and Egle Road. The project also included repaving the following streets in Prison Heights: Kercher Road, Mull Avenue and Burdan Drive. Since 2008, we have now repaved a total of 41 road sections involving over 17 miles of roadway, not including seal coat applications.

The road department prepared bid specs in-house for the 2020 road project to repave Park Road, Center Road and a portion of Ziegler Road. The project also includes seal coating a portion of Hilltop Road, a portion of Leiscz's Bridge Road, a portion of Van Reed Road, Seidel's Run and Snyder Road.

David Scholl resigned his position with the department during the year and we wish him well in his future endeavors.

Projects on our list for 2020 include stormwater pipe replacements, Washington Road drainage project, Tobias Lane stormwater piping project and the installation of our second stormwater infiltration project at Snyder Road. ❖

## **Board of Supervisors / Administration**

The Board of Supervisors voted on various legislative items, including accepting Robby Drive and Belfair Drive into the township street system, the creation of a Light Commercial Zoning District in the Greenfields area, the adoption of the 2015 Property Maintenance and International Fire Code Ordinances, approving the re-zoning of lands by Leesport Borough, creating the street light district for Belfair Drive and approving the adoption of the Reasonable Rules for Video Recording of Public Meetings Resolution. The Board approved the hiring of the Albright College Center for Excellence in Local Government to conduct a study of the Greenfields Fire Company. This study is intended to find ways on how the township can better support the volunteer fire company and to develop

a plan to strengthen the company and make it more efficient in the future. We thank the fire company for working with us on this study. The Board also approved a balanced budget of \$4,506,880.00 for 2020 that included a ¼ mill tax adjustment.

Mrs. Lucille Brady finished her term with the township. She served the township as Supervisor for 24 years. Mr. Jay Dailey also finished his term with the township after serving for four years. We wish them both the best in their future endeavors. Mr. Brian Eveland and Mr. Dan Tobias were elected to the Board. We welcome them aboard and look forward to working with them.

The township recognized savings to residents during 2019 in the amount of \$334,572.81 by securing grant funding, completing certain work in-house instead of paying consultants, bulk purchasing, staffing economies, working safely and re quoting services for savings. **The total dollars saved since 2006 is now at \$4,632,100.00.** We continue to prepare five year financial plans to maximize the power of your tax dollars. Our non-taxable land value remains at 32%, causing a real estate tax loss of over \$780,418.00.

Administrative staff attended a total of over 34 webinars / seminars on subjects including stormwater topics, crisis or disaster communications, wireless facilities, 2019 economic forecast, attracting retail business to your community, human resource training, long range seasonal weather forecasts, leadership training and strategic planning for fire service operations.

Staff also participated in the county stormwater steering committee, the county cooperative purchasing council, the Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Association, Berks Census 2020 Complete Count Committee, Berks Municipal Partnership meetings and the Reading Behavioral Health Community Advisory Council. Four Bern Township residents remain on the community advisory council and have been attending the meetings.

**Please contact the township office if you would like to be added to our email address list. All email addresses are kept confidential.**

Staff projects in 2020 include facilitating the recycling grant program, the completion of the fire company study, the negotiation of a new police contract, maintaining and improving our stormwater program, continuing our financial planning and monitoring our revenues and expenses. ❖

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## **Important news inside that affects YOU!**

### **Greenfields Fire Company**

The all-volunteer staff of the Greenfields Fire Company has been protecting Bern Township since 1953. The fire company responded to 494 calls during 2019, including 86 EMS calls and 408 fire calls. There were 202 calls to incidents in other municipalities for the fire company. There were 198 calls that other fire departments responded to in Bern Township. The average response time was 4 minutes and 58 seconds. This includes travel time from the volunteer's homes. The average time that it took the fire company to arrive at the scene after getting dispatched was 14 minutes and 24 seconds. The average time the fire company spent at the scene was 62 minutes and 48 seconds. The majority of calls (114 or 23% of the total) received by the fire company were false alarms or false calls. The fire company also responded to calls for fires, rescue and emergency medical services, hazardous conditions, service, good intent, special incidents and severe weather or natural disaster.

Mahlon Auker served his first term as Fire Chief during 2019. He has been a member of the company for over 14 years.

The fire company assisted with the annual World War II Weekend event at the Reading

Airport. The officers and crew prepared an emergency action plan for the event and participated in a mock plane crash during the event. The ARFF crews and crews from the fire company managed to arrive at the scene of the "crash" in 21 seconds, well under the requirements of the FAA. The Fire Chief and the Emergency Management Coordinator staffed the Emergency Operations Center during the event.

In usual fashion, the Greenfields Fire Company and the Bern Township Police, gave Santa's reindeer the day off on December 14 while they gave Santa a ride through the neighborhoods on their fire truck to the delight of all.

Finally, Greenfields Fire Company is always looking for new volunteers. Would you like to make a difference in your community and be part of a volunteer team that saves lives from fires or accidents? Would you like to be the person who others turn to in their time of need? Would you like to be part of a second family, and work with individuals who feel the same way you do about the safety of your community? If so, then please visit the fire station at 2339 Bernville Road on any Monday night, call 610-374-9283 and leave a message, or email the Chief at [mauker@greenfields55.com](mailto:mauker@greenfields55.com) ❖