

MAHONING TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

MINUTES

March 11, 2026

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Deborah McGowan called the meeting to order at 6:00PM at the Mahoning Township Building 2175 Blakeslee Blvd Dr. West, Leighton, PA 18235.

**PRESENT:**

Deborah McGowan, Chair; Ronald Reeser, Vice-Chairman; Carol Etheridge, Supervisor; Mark Schwalm, Supervisor; Matthew Wentz, Supervisor; Thomas Nanovic, Solicitor; Megan Nanovic, Attorney; Natalie D. Haggerty, Secretary-Treasurer; Audie Mertz, Chief of Police; Nevin Frey, Roadmaster and Ryan Wessner, Zoning Officer

Deborah McGowan announced that the Board of Supervisors held an executive session on March 2, 2026, for personnel.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Jared Soto, Economic Development Specialist with the Carbon Chamber and Economic Development Corporation, provided informational materials and business cards. He explained that his role involves visiting municipalities throughout the county, with a strong focus on community development. While the county has a comprehensive plan and other guiding documents, he emphasized that the primary goal is to support each community's vision for its future and to ensure that county services align with and complement local priorities. Mr. Soto noted that his organization seeks to assist municipalities in identifying and pursuing opportunities that can strengthen the local tax base, create jobs, and expand opportunities for residents. He expressed a willingness to collaborate with communities to support these efforts. He also highlighted available resources, including assistance with small business loans, and noted an ongoing partnership with the Wilkes University Small Business Development Center. Through these resources, support is available for individuals looking to start a business, develop a business plan, or adapt an existing business to changing circumstances.

Todd Wingert: I am here to ask a few questions and share concerns regarding the slaughterhouse. First, is there any update on the status of the previous owner and the sale of the property? Second, several neighbors, myself included, have noticed that as the weather becomes warmer, odors from the facility have become more noticeable. Yesterday, the odor was particularly strong and persisted until the evening, when a shift in air currents moved it westward. Other nearby residents continue to experience these conditions more directly. There is concern that, depending on wind direction, these odors could travel further into the community, potentially reaching the elementary school and raising additional public concerns. Additionally, there was a recent incident in which a goat escaped from the facility. This raises safety concerns for both employees and the public, particularly given the proximity to Route 902 and Heintzelman's Turn. Lastly, I have observed that garbage is sitting out on-site again, which is also a concern.

Mark Schwalm addressed the concerns regarding the garbage on-site. He stated that he visited the property at approximately 6:00 a.m. and observed that the material in question was standard household-type garbage. He further noted that it was removed later in the day. He added that placing garbage out for collection is a common and routine practice and suggested this may have simply been a missed pickup.

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Mark reiterated that, based on prior reviews, the facility remains in compliance, and all operations have been found to be legitimate. He indicated that unless conditions change, there are no new updates to report at this time. Drawing on his experience as both a farmer and a butcher, Mr. Schwalm emphasized that the property is not located within a residential area and that such operations are a normal part of agricultural and food production processes. He noted that the site has historically been used as a butcher shop, including under previous ownership.

Public Response:

They haven't slaughtered there for more than 30 years. If you knew anything about zoning, you would know that when you stop using a property, whether it's for slaughtering, whether it's for retail, whether it's for selling fence posts, you are considered to have abandoned that under the zoning ordinance after a year. He's coming in 29 years later trying to revive a use that has expired. We are not against farmers. That's the frustration we are very, very frustrated where it's like, it's too bad, so sad. It's not my problem.

Mooed Malik owner of Alif Meat Packing

You all keep saying that it's a residential area. And some might argue that it's been abandoned and you haven't slaughtered there for 30 years. When Holly's family owned the property, there's no doubt in anyone's mind that they slaughtered there. Was this not a residential area 30 years ago? I sympathize, but the people that live in the surrounding areas, all the neighbors, I offered to buy their houses. Addressed the comment of a goat that was on the run. That's not true, there's not been a goat on the run in the last 10 to 12 months since we've opened.

Holly Heintzelman: Comparing what my family did and what his family are doing are two different things. We butchered for exactly four hours per week, seven in the morning until 11 a.m. on a Monday. That was it. They're doing it five days a week, many hours. My question has to do with property usage. On Tuesday morning at about 3:15AM, they're having goats delivered, and they're going into the barn. I thought your original ruling was they couldn't have animals overnight; it occurs often they're having animals delivered in the middle of the night. The original permit gives them a right for a slaughterhouse. It doesn't give them a right to use any of the other buildings for that purpose or to change any other uses.

It says applicant is to continue non-conforming use. It's a use permit only, doesn't pertain to building, electric, plumbing, mechanical, or energy. So therefore, if it's a use only, and the company wants to use other buildings for other purposes, I think they have to come back to you and get another permit. Because they only have a permit for the use itself, for the slaughterhouse part. They don't have a permit to keep animals in barns. They don't have a permit for anything else, just a slaughterhouse.

Ryan Wessner: When you get a use permit for a property, the use is for the property itself. If you have the use of ag on a property, the buildings would be accessory to that use. I'm just simply stating, if you came before me with a use, just like if you have a single-family use on a property, that is the use of that property. Example, your garage, a detached garage, would be accessory to that use. If you have a business and you're running ag, the house and the barns can be accessory to that ag. If it's that use on that property, barns can be accessory to what that use is. Because

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you're not going to separate everything. If you have a farm, every single barn is not in a separate use. The use is to the parcel itself.

Holly: I understand that you're the new zoning officer, and I understand that you might have a new viewpoint, and I understand perfectly about accessory uses and things that you can do. I'm saying you're bound by the permit that the township has given. If you're not going to take the position that you're bound by this permit, then you're not bound. You're either bound by this permit, which indicates no buildings, no electric, nothing else is included. It's only the slaughterhouse part of it, or you're not bound by it.

Ryan: I don't think you're reading that correctly, to be honest with you. It says use permit only. No building, electric, plumbing, mechanical, included; that would be the building code. You're looking at a missing term which is completely separate.

Holly disagrees and questioned the animals being delivered at night and then there until the next day of slaughtering? The original position of the board was that there were no animals overnight, no animals on the property for extended periods of time. Is there any agreement to that effect?

There was discussion, but there is no agreement or anything sent to them saying, this is what you have to do.

Mooed Malik: You asked me not to keep anything there overnight, and I told you guys I would comply.

Patricia Seyford: I just have two questions regarding the slaughterhouse. First, was the property fined at one time and they did not comply? Because my understanding was that it wasn't complied with, nobody enforced it.

I believe you're talking about the enforcement notice that the last zoning officer sent, possibly in June with a list of about five things. Mr. Malik would you be willing to answer.

Mooed Malik: On the plan, I slaughter in a certain time frame which I believe is six to four or something like that and there's some precautions I have in there to help with the odor like I have a carbon air filter.

Ryan: So, a notice of violation was sent on June 9, 2025. I'm assuming because on June 17, 2025, the former zoning officer met with the Department of Ag and went over violation letter for inspection confirmed. Noted the presence of the USDA inspector on site and a report to follow. I don't know what report followed that. I'm getting my own report, but that'll have something in it. I'll find out.

Does the USDA inspect randomly or is it scheduled?

Mooed Malik: They're scheduled. We have only eight hours a day. That's why the animals get there ahead of time, because if we waste an hour unloading the animals, then we lose that hour.

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Can you submit exactly what you're doing with regards to the odor control, what filters you're using?

Mooed Malik: The board has that; it was sent to previous zoning officer. I don't know if you have it.

Ryan: I'll get it, I also have a letter into USDA to request items.

The township does have an odor ordinance and up until now, nobody's really been controlling the odor abatement plan or checking on it.

You have to submit something called a HESA plan to the Department of Agriculture, which allows you to operate. Would you be willing to submit that plan to the board? Response of no.

Why would I submit that? That's confidential and trade secrets.

Sir, do you also have an inspector that ensures you're complying with sharia? Yes. We are audited a few times throughout the year.

Tom Nanovic shared it would be nice if you could continue coming to meetings because I think this is helpful. I think one of the problems we had before is people coming to meetings and just weren't getting answers to questions.

Deborah McGowan: We received a letter from you saying that you were dropping your appeal and you were going to remove the fence. He has to the end of March to remove the fence. Ryan asked to note that.

Jerome Scarpati: 495 Deiter Hill Drive

Every year around December, a plow truck comes through and pops up every pothole on Deiter Hill Drive, and then we suffer through it until March when they fill potholes. Thank you to the roadmaster who filled them. My question/suggestion would there be any possibility of public servants, local citizens have the ability to fill those potholes themselves with conjunction of the township. Could we make an agreement with the township to use your cold patch and fill these potholes as they open? My suggestion is allowing the townspeople to take care of that on a case-by-case basis at no cost to the township.

Ronald Reeser: You want to use our cold patch. I'm quite certain that would get us into a whole bunch of insurance issues with you working out on the road on your own. I mean, we're not even allowed to let residents' plow. I don't think that should be entertained, but Nevin can elaborate.

Nevin Frey: Regarding shallow potholes, such as those only an inch or two deep. They cannot be effectively repaired with cold patch material. This is because the material is likely to be dislodged during plowing. Unfortunately, this means we often need to wait until the potholes deepen sufficiently before applying a temporary cold patch. Cold patch is intended as a temporary solution and if it does not hold, the area must later be excavated and properly repaired with hot asphalt. With respect to residents entering the township facility to obtain cold patch material, this is not permitted. While this is not directed at any individual, there could be concern that publicly funded materials could be misused, for example, being taken for private driveway repairs. Call and leave a message to report potholes, we will make fill.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

MOTION

Carol Etheridge made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 11, 2026 Board of Supervisors Meeting. Seconded by Mark Schwalm. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS:**

MOTION

Carol Etheridge made a motion to approve the following transfers:

\$19,419.47 Payroll Checking to General Checking 2/12/26

\$18,002.72 Payroll Checking to General Checking 2/19/26

\$18,235.90 Payroll Checking to General Checking 2/26/26

\$18,111.34 Payroll Checking to General Checking 3/5/26

\$537.97 Residential Street Light to General Checking

\$595.20 Residential Fire Hydrant to General Checking

Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF TREASURER REPORT:**

MOTION

Ronald Reeser made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for February 2026. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:**

Bill List #544 in the amount of \$208,613.26

MOTION

Ronald Reeser made a motion to approve the following bills and payrolls:

General Check's #25630-#25673

State Check's #1912-#1913

Building and Land Check #1128-#1129

Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF REPORTS**

MOTION

Carol Etheridge made a motion to accept and place on file the following reports:

Mahoning Township Road Department Reports February 1, 2026-February 28, 2026

Mahoning Township Road Department Equipment and Fuel Log February 2026

Mahoning Valley Ambulance February 2026 Directors Report

Mahoning Township Municipal Authority Minutes for Jan 21, 2026, and Reorg. Jan 21, 2026

Mahoning Township Building and Zoning Report February 2026

Mahoning Township Alt. Sewage Enforcement Officer Report Oct 23, 2025-Jan 13, 2026

Mahoning Township Alt. Sewage Enforcement Officer Report Jan 9, 2026-Feb 20, 2026

Mahoning Valley Fire Co. Year End Fire Report Profit Loss 12/31/25

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Mahoning Township Police Department Fuel Log February 2026

Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Decision of the Board of Supervisors regarding Mudrick Meadows Banquet Hall Application for Conditional Use (Board of Supervisors only need to sign, previously approved)

Motion to Advertise to receive bids road materials and fuels

MOTION

Carol Etheridge made a motion to advertise to receive bids for road materials and fuels. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Motion to Advertise Zoning Workshop April 13 and May 11, 2026

MOTION

Ronald Reeser made to advertise Zoning Workshops for April 13 and May 1, 2026, at 5:30PM. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Handicap Parking Sign Request from Kevin Maehrer, 114 Jamestown Street TABLE

Grant of Right Away Agreement -PPL-TABLE

Part Time Winter Road Department Workers Applications

(Paul Davis, Terry Everett, and Darrell Lueders)

MOTION

Carol Etheridge made a motion to set up interviews with applicants; road committee will conduct interviews. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Police Pension Proposals

TABLE

Diaz Land Lease

Discussion took place regarding land lease. Deborah McGowan shared that in previous years, the township has leased the rear portion of the property, which consists of 14–16 acres, including about 9.5 acres of farmable land, to local farmers. Currently, we are considering alternative uses for the property. Potential options discussed include developing a dog park, a community park, or a community garden. The prior lease arrangement did not work out as intended due to conflicts, and as a result, I do not believe continuing to lease the land is the best course of action. If these community-focused options are not pursued, another possibility would be to subdivide

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and sell a portion of the property. Proceeds from such a sale could potentially offset a significant portion of the cost of this building. As I understand it, this was part of the original intent when the property was acquired. I would like to hear the board's thoughts on discontinuing the lease of this land and how they would like to proceed moving forward. Additionally, if the decision is made to no longer lease the property, I recommend installing "No Trespassing" signage to discourage unauthorized access, including hunting or other non-permitted uses.

I would like to better understand the benefit of the municipality continuing to lease this land. At this time, I do not see a clear advantage, and I would appreciate it if someone could articulate that. Otherwise, I believe we should consider either disposing of the property or repurposing it for a community use, such as a public park.

My understanding is that leasing the land was originally intended as an interim solution while the building project was being completed.

However, if we discontinue leasing without having an immediate alternative plan in place, the property may become overgrown and poorly maintained in a relatively short period of time.

Leasing the land to a local farmer provides ongoing maintenance of the field at no cost to the township, while also generating some revenue. In contrast, if the township assumes responsibility for upkeep, that will require the use of taxpayer funds for mowing and maintenance. It is also important to recognize that alternative uses such as developing a dog park, creating a community space, or subdividing and selling the land will take time to plan and implement. These are not short-term solutions that can be completed within a matter of months. Let somebody farm the field for a year while we work through all of this stuff, and then we visit it whenever.

Given these considerations, I would like to hear the board's thoughts on whether it makes sense to continue leasing the land as a temporary measure until a long-term plan is finalized.

MOTION

Deborah McGowan made a motion to no longer lease the land to farm and investigate selling. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, abstain; Mark Schwalm, no and Matthew Wentz, no 2-2 vote. Motion fails.

MOTION

Mark Schwalm made a motion to maintain it as a leased property for farming. Seconded by Matthew Wentz. Deborah McGowan, no; Ronald Reeser, no; Carol Etheridge, abstain; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 2-2 vote. Motion fails.

Public comments/concerns: this area of Mahoning Valley is, first and foremost, agricultural land. It's farmland; but what I'm seeing now is a shift away from that. We're talking about economic development, and I understand that matters. We even had a representative here tonight from the Chamber of Economic Development. But at the same time, we're considering taking usable farmland, land that a farmer could actively work and earn income from and turning it into things like a dog park or a community garden. People can walk their dogs elsewhere. They can plant tomatoes in their own backyards. That's not the best use of productive agricultural land. What concerns me is the bigger picture. It feels like we're heading toward the gradual loss

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of farmland in Mahoning Valley. Are we watching the end of this area as an agricultural community? When this property was originally purchased, the intent at least as I understood it was to help recover some of the township's investment. The idea was to potentially sell off part of the land and use those funds to improve the existing building, maybe turning it into a community center. That was the plan discussed by previous board members. In the meantime, the property has been unused for three years. We keep delaying decisions, tabling discussions, and losing valuable time; especially when it's already the farming season. Farmers can't plan or plant if they don't know what's happening with the land. And no one wants to invest in crops if there's a chance that construction or testing could disrupt everything. If the township decides not to lease the land for farming and doesn't actively maintain it, there will be consequences. We're already seeing issues of rodents, snakes, and other pests inside the building. If the land is left unmanaged and overgrown, those problems will only get worse, and the township will end up paying more for maintenance and pest control. At the very least, using the land for farming keeps it maintained and productive. There's even the possibility of leasing it for crops or livestock, which would benefit both the township and local farmers. Let's use this land responsibly and in line with what it is farmland and let's make a decision soon, because continued delays help no one.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mahoning Valley Fire Co. License Agreement TABLED

Discussion

Mark Schwalm, Audie Mertz, Mark Ebbert and Ryan Wessner met at the old township building to evaluate. The building is in poor condition and needs significant work; it should be gutted, inspected for mold and structural issues, and then repaired. The Mahoning Fire Company has offered to do much of this work using volunteers. Mark Schwalm believes we should allow them to use the building and move forward with cleanup and repairs. However, the agreement needs to be rewritten to clearly define responsibilities; specifically, what work the fire company will handle (like roof, interior gutting, and repairs) and what the township will remain responsible for (such as water, electric, and the generator, possibly shared). Before any interior work begins, the priority should be fixing the building's exterior shell and roof to prevent further damage. The mold issue also needs to be properly addressed with ventilation and remediation. The long-term goal is to have the fire company use the building as a more central location to improve response times, which has already shown benefits. The structure itself is solid and valuable, so it makes more sense to reuse it than let it deteriorate. Tom will re-write formal agreement outlining responsibilities, to prevent potential liability issues, confusion and risk of future legal problems.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

MOTION

Carol Etheridge made a motion to accept and place the correspondence on file dated March 11, 2026. Seconded by Mark Schwalm. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

\*\*\*ALIF MEAT PACKING, MOEED MALIK, PLANT OWNER

RE: LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW APPEAL REGARDING REVOCATION OF FENCE PERMIT AND TO PROCEED WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE FENCE STRUCTURE.

\*\*\*CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, RYAN MACKENZIE, US CONGRESSMAN 7<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT OF PA

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RE: WELL WISHES AND OFFER OF SUPPORT

\*\*\*PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, CHETT PESTA, TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DIVISION

RE: NOTIFICATION OF TRAFFIC COUNTING ON MUNICIPALLY OWNED ROADS, MARCH 2 – NOV 19, 2026

\*\*\*PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MICHAEL CARROLL, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

RE: NOTICE OF PAYMENT LIQUID FUELS, \$212,673.79

\*\*\*RMW INSPECTION LLC, RYAN WESSNER, CODE OFFICIAL

RE: NOTICE OF VIOLATION, ABANDONED PROPERTY (2) 1461 & 1511 BLAKESLEE BLVD DR E

\*\*\*RMW INSPECTION LLC, RYAN WESSNER, CODE OFFICIAL

RE: FINAL NOTICE OF VIOLATION, GARBAGE, RUBBISH, JUNK VEHICLES, 54 CHAPEL DR

\*\*\*RMW INSPECTION LLC, RYAN WESSNER, CODE OFFICIAL

RE: WARNING LETTER, HOME IN DISREPAIR, WARNING TO REPAIR HOME IMMEDIATELY. 388 LAUREL RD

\*\*\*RMW INSPECTION, LLC, RYAN WESSNER, CODE OFFICIAL

RE: ZONING VIOLATION CLOSURE LETTER. ALL MATTERS RESOLVED, 1020 BEAVER RUN DR

\*\*\*RMW INSPECTION, LLC, RYAN WESSNER, CODE OFFICIAL

RE: NOTICE OF VIOLATION, DILAPIDATED CAMPER, JUNK, 1480 BLAKESLEE BLVD DR

\*\*\*RMW INSPECTION, LLC, RYAN WESSNER, CODE OFFICIAL

RE: NOTICE OF VIOLATION, COLLAPSED BARN, REMOVAL OF BUILDING REQUIRED, 153 MAUCH CHUNK ST.

\*\*\*EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION - ROAD DEPARTMENT – PAUL DAVIS

\*\*\*HANDICAPPED PARKING SIGN REQUEST, 144 JAMESTOWN ST, MAEHRER – SEE NEW BUSINESS

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Road:

Nevin Frey shared we set up a new account for future truck repairs. An issue we need to address is parking on Jamestown Drive. Right now, the way cars are parked, emergency vehicles, especially fire trucks, cannot safely get through certain turns, particularly around curves and intersections. We're already seeing problems during snow removal, and if a fire happens in winter, access could be severely limited. In some areas, vehicles are also parking near hydrants and ignoring existing restrictions. For public safety, we should consider adding more parking restrictions in key spots especially around tight curves. We already at the church side have restrictions. I would like to restrict on the inside of the curve, where you go around and they park at the point where you will not get a truck around there. So, if we restrict, like I said, we might be looking twenty-five to thirty feet. This wouldn't eliminate much parking, maybe a few spaces; but it would improve access for emergency vehicles. That said, we recognize residents have multiple vehicles and limited parking options, so this needs to be studied carefully. We should review the area, take measurements, and determine whether solutions like restricting parking on one side, revamp the size of the parking spaces or adjusting specific zones would work best. Questions regarding handicap sign, when you place that handicap sign, is there going to be a restricted area? We haven't done that in the past. We try to put it right in front of their house, and it all depends on what we find as far as where the gas lines, sewer line and the water lines are located.

Police: Carol Etheridge requested an executive session for CBA discussion.

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**OFFICIALS:** Nothing

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION**

Mark Schwalm made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Mark Schwalm, yes and Matthew Wentz, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Natalie D. Haggerty  
Secretary-Treasurer