MAHONING TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S MEETING
MINUTES
September 9, 2026

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

PRESENT:
Deborah McGowan, Chair; Ronald Reeser, Vice-Chairman; Carol Etheridge, Supervisor; Mark Schwalm, Supervisor; Matthew Wentz, Supervisor; Natalie D. Haggerty, Secretary-Treasurer; Marc Fisher, Solicitor; and Nevin Frey, Roadmaster

ABSENT:
Ryan Wessner, Zoning Officer

Announced executive sessions were held on September 3, 2026, and prior to start of meeting for personnel and legal issues

Chair Announce to Public and for the Record
If there is anyone who wishes to speak at the public comment section of our meeting, please be sure to have signed the book. You will be recognized by the Chair and have approximately three minutes to speak. All comments will be made from the podium.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Barry Troutman 471 Mill Road Lehighton: Update on the dragstrip on Mill Road, this has been going on for years and nothing gets done. Apparently that speed limit sign mounted to the pole doesn't want to get moved. Chair McGowan will address speed issue with police.

Todd Wingert 220 Mahoning Drive East Lehighton: Where are we at with slaughterhouse? Chair McGowan advised it to be discussed later in the agenda.

Sandra Palinchak 2360 Mahoning Drive East Lehighton: Lehighton Area Heritage Alliance is having an event on September 27th honoring our veterans and having songs and stories at the mausoleum in Lehighton Borough. I ask to have posted at the township. Chair McGowan said we will place it on our website.

Shelly Mertz:1845 Hemlock Drive Lehighton: Follow, up to last meeting I heard back from PennDOT and they are going to send letters to resident across street from my mother's house and that will take care of the driveway issue; but there still remains the issue of the runoff throughout Hemlock Drive there are no gutters for the water to run. Who is responsible for gutters? Nevin responded PennDOT; it's a state road. We did look at the whole corner of that road, and it needs to be cut back. However, whose responsibility is to do it and pay for it? PennDOT contact information is John Merwarth, Assist. County Manager 610 377-1880.

Holly Heintzelman, 170 Mahoning Drive East Lehighton: Follow up to the notice of violation issued back in May and nothing has been done and I know you ask us to be patient but being patient is no longer an option. Zoning Officer needs to his work. Second question is about DATA Ordinances, but I see it's on your agenda.

Ram Narasimhan 247 Sage Court Lehighton: Just moved to Sage Court in June 2026. When I bought the home, I didn't know about the speedway. I found a schedule of races, but it lists no times of start and stop. Racetrack has been here since 1952, unfortunately you bought a home that you didn't know what was around you.

Jim Golden110 Mahoning Drive East: Present to discuss Heintzelman and Alif Market, my door is about 40 feet from there and some of the things we heard in the past year and a half: hey Holly Heintzelman no difference than what your family did back in the day; but it is different. Heintzelmans Market in its hay day didn't bring in truckloads of animals, it was a retail establishment. Alif Farms is a commercial wholesale business which involves truckloads of animals. Delivering animals to every doorway of that property. Mixing animals of cows and goats. Barrels of waste that was stored in the barn being removed by a team of guys; being moved to a dumpster.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION

Ronald Reeser made a motion to approve the Minutes of August 12, 2026, Board of Supervisors Meeting. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes; and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS:

MOTION

Ronald Reeser made a motion to approve the following transfers:

$18,232.22 Payroll Checking to General Checking 8/13/26
$17,410.97 Payroll Checking to General Checking 8/20/27
$16,369.98 Payroll Checking to General Checking 8/27/26
$16,844.84 Payroll Checking to General Checking 9/03/26
$537.97 Residential Street Light to General Checking
$595.20 Residential Fire Hydrant to General Checking

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

APPROVAL OF TREASURER REPORT:

MOTION

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

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:

MOTION

Carol Etheridge made a motion to approve the following bills and payrolls:

Bill List #550 in the amount of $351,934.95
General Checks #25860-#25883
State Checks #1937-#1938
Building and Land Checks #1141-#1142
Road Machinery Fund Check #1073

Fire Co. Check #1051

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

IX. APPROVAL OF REPORTS

Mark Schwalm made a motion to accept and place on file the following reports:
Mahoning Township Zoning and Building Report August 2026
Mahoning Township Road Department Reports July 26, 2026-August 29, 2026
Mahoning Township Municipal Authority Minutes for July 15, 2026
Mahoning Township Ambulance Director Report June, July, and August 2026
Mahoning Township Equipment and Fuel Log June and July 2026
Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ordinance 2026-2 Amendments to the Mahoning Township Zoning Ordinance Establishing New Regulations for Distribution/Fulfillment Centers, Truck Terminals, Warehouses and Ancillary Warehouse Uses, Commercial Solar power Generation, and Accessory Solar Collectors

Attorney Fisher entered into the record that the Ordinance has been properly advertised as the Board has already had a public hearing and the ordinance is here for the Boards consideration.

Ronald Reeser made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-2. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Resolution #2026-20 Police Pension Plan Contribution Requirement for 2027. Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) in the amount of $160,603.00

Carol Etheridge made a motion to adopt Resolution #2026-20 Police Pension Plan Contribution Requirement for 2027, Minimum Municipal Obligation in the amount of $160,603.00. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Non-Uniform Pension Plan Contribution Requirement for 2027. Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) in the amount of $51,336.00

Ronald Reeser made a motion to adopt Resolution #2026-21 Non-Uniform Pension Plan Contribution Requirement for 2027, Minimum Municipal Obligation in the amount of $51,336.00. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Consideration of Settlement Agreement between the Township and Chief of Police

Deborah McGowan moves to approve the settlement agreement between the Township and Chief Audie Mertz and to formally accept his tender of retirement, which is effective September 9, 2026. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, abstain and Mark Schwalm, abstain 3-2 vote. Motion carried.

Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding between the Township and the Police Association

Deborah McGowan moves to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Township and the Police Officers' Association. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, abstain 4-1 vote. Motion carried.

Consideration of Employment Issues/Status for Police Officer

Deborah McGowan moves to convert the employment status of Officer Jeffrey Frace from paid administrative leave to unpaid administrative leave pursuant to the Police Tenure Act, effective immediately. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, abstain and Mark Schwalm, abstain 3-2 vote. Motion carried.

Kate Durso, Land Use Attorney of Fitzpatrick Lentz and Bubba

Carol Etheridge made a motion to appoint Kate Durso Land Use Attorney, Fitzpatrick Lentz and Bubba at a rate of $250/hr. to serve as legal counsel for the township regarding the Alif Farm violation matters pursuant to letter dated September 8, 2026. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Resolution 2026-22-Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors make single application for assistance for Local Share Account Designating the Chair and Secretary-Treasurer Officers to Execute and Provide all Information for Application Mahoning Valley Vol. Fire Co Digital Radios in the Amount of $162,000.

Ronald Reeser made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-22-Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors single application for assistance for Local Share Account Designating the Chair and Secretary-Treasurer as Officers to Execute and Provide all Information for Application Mahoning Valley Vol. Fire Co Digital Radios in the amount of $162,000. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Resolution 2026-23-Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors make single application for assistance for Local Share Account Designating the Chair and Secretary-Treasurer Officers to Execute and Provide all Information for Application Mahoning Valley Vol. Fire Co Roof Replacement in the Amount of $48,000.

Ronald Reeser made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-23-Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors make single application for assistance for Local Share Account Designating the Chair and Secretary-Treasurer as Officers to Execute and Provide all Information for Application Mahoning Valley Vol. Fire Co Roof Replacement in the Amount of $48,000. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Bruce Steigerwalt Letter of Interest to Serve on the Planning Commission

Carol Etheridge made a motion to accept Bruce Steigerwalt letter of interest to serve on the Mahoning Township Planning Commission. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Authorize the Solicitor Walmart Assessment Appeal

Attorney Fisher shared historically the township has had the county handle tax assessment appeals on its behalf; recently the township became aware that Walmart filed an assessment appeal, and the township has a greater interest in the outcome. Nothing despairingly towards the county and the way they handle assessments, but if the Board wishes our firm to be involved, I need authorization.

Ronald Reeser made a motion to authorize firm Gross McGinley to represent the township regarding the Walmart Assessment Appeal. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Data Center Ordinance

Secretary shared we have an agreed upon Draft Ordinance that needs to be forwarded to the Township and County Planning Commissions and Gross McGinley for review and comment.

Ronald Reeser made a motion to forward ordinance to Township and County Planning Commissions for review and comment. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Oriel Planning Modules (Planning Commission recommends signing and forwarding to DEP the Oriel Planning Modules)

Ronald Reeser made a motion to execute and forward Oriel Planning Modules to DEP. Seconded by Mark Schwalm. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Police Department Regionalizing Discussion: Deborah McGowan shared it was brought to my attention by the Mayor of Lehighton, and the DA's Office and from various folks about regionalization. It's been discussed through the years, and it never got moving due to financing and who was going to do what. Asks the Board for its approval to move forward and sit with all neighbors to discuss. The entire Board provides ok.

Letters Requesting Re-Zone of Property

George Sholly-Fredericks Grove Road tax parcel #84-35-B
Suzanne Ebbert-Ashtown Drive tax parcel 84-35-A34 and 84-35-A34.05
What is the procedure? Attorney Fisher asked if the township has a fee for rezone and advised request for rezone goes to the Township and County Planning Commissions to make a review

and comment. After that it goes before the Board of Supervisors for a public hearing. Your first step should be to acknowledge receipt of rezoning request and direct they forward to the Township and Planning Commission for their review. The Board of Supervisors sits in a legislative capacity.

Carol Etheridge made a motion to acknowledge receipt of request for a rezone from Mr. Scholly and Ms. Ebbert. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mahoning Township Subdivision Plan

Deborah McGowan shared that the Planning Commission reviewed preliminary sketch plan, Township Engineer is working on final plan. We went from four lots to three lots. Moving ahead with the subdivision plan.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ronald Reeser made a motion to accept and place the correspondence dated September 9, 2026, on file. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes. 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

***GROSS McGINLEY LLP, MARC S FISHER, SOLICITOR

RE: MAHONING MANOR ESTATES, REMOVAL OF RECREATION AREA

***GROSS McGINLEY LLP, MARC S FISHER, SOLICITOR

RE: FINAL MINOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANT OVER LANDS OF MELO ENTERPRISES, LLC (ASHTOWN DR)

UNANIMOUS DENIAL NOTIFICATION AND SPECIFIC BASES FOR THE DENIAL

***LEHIGHTON AREA MEMORIAL LIBRARY, MELISSA HAWK, LIBRARY DIRECTOR

RE: THANK YOU LETTER FOR DONATION

***PSATS UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION GROUP TRUST 2026 BALLOT FOR ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

***STATION HOME & CABOOSE, MERCHANT VICTORIANS, VAN CAMBERIS

RE: RAILWAY VILLAGE EXCHANGE/AFFORDABLE STATION HOMES PROPOSAL FOR JIM THORPE, PA

***ZONING COMPLAINT – MAUCH CHUNK STREET, VACANT PROPERTY, RUN DOWN, HIGH GRASS

***ZONING COMPLAINT – MAHONING DRIVE EAST, SMELL

***RESIDENT REQUEST FOR DIRECTION OF POTENTIAL ZONING CHANGE OF TWO PARCELS LOCATED ON ASHTOWN DR (FROM R2 TO R3) DUE TO INTEREST IN BUILDERS

***RESIDENT REQUEST FOR DIRECTION OF POTENTIAL ZONING CHANGE OF PARCEL (FROM R1 TO R3-C) DUE TO DEVELOPER INTEREST

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Road: Nevin shared there is a drain in the Meadowcrest Development that a resident concreted a township pipe shut and placed stone in front. Guys were out cold patching and residents approached with concerns of water runoff. There never has been a resolve to these issues and block drains. Nevin doesn't think the township should do work off of right of away. They ran electrical lines right on top of our pipes. Pipe preexisted her home being built. She should be

sent a letter saying that she is responsible to fix this and may be liable for damages. Engineer to look into in addition to a letter. We are going to investigate and perhaps require complete removal of pipe if repair is not possible.

Tires needed for pickup. $240/each $960/total from Snyder Tire.

Mark Schwalm made a motion to approve purchase of tires from Snyder Tire at a cost of $960. Seconded by Ronald Reeser. Deborah McGowan, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes. 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Police: Deborah McGowan shared things are changing; new cops; do our due diligence and work on the new contract. Took care of things as a committee. We need to hire and that's what we are going to do.

OFFICIALS:
Mark Schwalm: Responded to resident comments I'm all about business in this township but run properly and right now it is not.
Attorney Fisher shared the township just hired conflict council to handle the matter to bring this to a conclusion as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT:
Ronald Reeser made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:57PM. Seconded by Carol Etheridge. Deborah McGowan, yes; Ronald Reeser, yes; Carol Etheridge, yes; Matthew Wentz, yes and Mark Schwalm, yes. 5-0 vote. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Natalie D. Haggerty
Secretary-Treasurer