MINUTES

LEGISLATIVE MEETING: APRIL 16, 2025

The April 16, 2025, Legislative Meeting of the Lower Swatara Township Board of Commissioners was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by President Jon G. Wilt. President Wilt called for the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

Roll call was taken with the following officials in attendance:

- Jon G. Wilt, President
- Todd F. Truntz, Vice President
- Ronald J. Paul, Assistant Secretary
- Michael J. Davies, Commissioner
- Christopher DeHart, Commissioner
- Zachary Border, Manager
- Tracey Bechtel, Township Secretary
- Michael McAuliffe Miller, Eckert Seamans, Solicitor
- Shawn Fabian, HRG
- Thomas Bell Jr., Police Chief

Residents and visitors in attendance: (see attached sign-in sheet)

HIRING OF MACKENZIE BATTLE AND MICHAEL STROHECKER TO POSITION OF POLICE OFFICERS:

A motion was made by Commissioner Davies, seconded by Commissioner DeHart to approve the hiring of Macenzie Battle and Michael Strohecker to position of police officers. The motion was unanimously approved.

SWEARING IN OF OFFICER MICHAEL STROHECKER:

Chief Bell thanked the Board of Commissioners for their support and level of encouragement throughout this hiring process. Chief Bell also thanked the public, staff, friends, and family who are here this evening to support these officers. It is a family here at Lower Swatara Township and we are excited to expand the family with the addition of these two officers.

Chief Bell presented Michael Strohecker's Bio: Michael Alexander Strohecker is a graduate of Cedar Cliff High School in 2014. After High School Officer Strohecker joined the US Army and served honorably from 2014 through 2018. Officer Strohecker was a member of the esteemed 82nd Airborne Division. After his active-duty years Officer Strohecker continues his service in the PA National Guard. Continuing his life of service, Officer Strohecker has also served as a member of the New Cumberland Volunteer Fire Department since 2011.

Officer Strohecker began his law enforcement career with the PA State Capital Police Department in

2019 after he graduated from Harrisburg Area Community College Municipal Police Academy in June of 2019.

Officer Strohecker is joined today by his mother Suzan Strohecker, his half-sister Amy Dando, his half-sister Lindsey Peterson, her husband Alan Peterson, as well as his half-sister's parents Tammy and James McQuaid.

The Lower Swatara Township Police Department is excited to welcome him to our department and look forward to a long and illustrious career here in Lower Swatara Township.

The Honorable Michael J. Smith swore in Officer Michael Strohecker and congratulated him.

SWEARING IN OF OFFICER MACKENZIE BATTLE:

Chief Bell presented Mackenzie Battle's Bio: Mackenzie Dale Battle of Mount Joy Pennsylvania graduated High School in 2010. After High School Officer Battle attended several colleges and universities and for a time did mission work for Youth with a Mission.

Officer Battle has worked construction and owned his own business prior to becoming a police officer. Officer Battle began his career in Law Enforcement with Lebanon City Police after graduating from Harrisburg Area Community College Municipal Police Academy in June of 2024.

Officer Battle is joined today by his wife Rebecca and his two children Billy and Louise Battle.

The Lower Swatara Township Police Department is excited to welcome him to our department and look forward to a long and illustrious career here in Lower Swatara Township.

The Honorable Micheal J. Smith swore in Officer Mackenzie Battle and congratulated him.

Vice President Truntz commented that the Board had the pleasure of interviewing these two young men last Tuesday evening. We found them to be very impressive, great additions to our department as well great assets to Lower Swatara Township, we congratulate them and thank them for joining our force.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Commissioner DeHart, seconded by Commissioner Davies to approve the Minutes of April 2, 2025, Workshop Meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

A motion was made by Commissioner Paul, seconded by Commissioner Davies, to approve the Payment of Bills – Warrant No. 2025-3. The motion was unanimously approved.

TREASURER REPORT:

A motion was made by Commissioner DeHart, seconded by Commissioner Davies, to approve the Treasurer's Report for March 2025. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORTS:

Police Department

Chief Bell presented the summary of the monthly statistics for March. There were 1997 total calls, 27 total cases, 8 arrests, 10 total vehicle accidents, 94 citations, 89 traffic warnings, 6866 patrol miles driven, 454-foot patrol minutes, 577.5 total overtime hours and 104 training hours. Co-responder stats included 0 new contacts, 4 repeat contacts, 4 follow-up contact, and 0 mental health commitments.

Fire Department

Chief Taylor presented the Fire Department's monthly statistics for March. There were 74 calls in total. 28 number of responders, 5 average personnel per response, 36:17:16 time in service. 13 fire incidents, 1 Over pressure rupture, explosion-no fire; 15 rescue & EMS incidents, 5 hazardous conditions incident, 4 service calls, 16 good intent calls; 6 false alarms. Mutual aid was provided to Highspire Borough (5), Hummelstown Borough (2), Londonderry Twp (7), Lower Allen Twp (1), Lower Paxton Twp (1), Middletown Borough (4), Monroe Twp (1), South Hanover Twp (1), Steelton Borough (7), and Swatara Twp (15).

Chief Taylor noted a very rare occurrence in Lower Swatara Township in the month of March where we had two major fires in Lower Swatara Township within four (4) days of each other.

Bill Leonard, President of the LSVFD commented on Chief Taylor's report regarding the 74 calls in the month of March, he recalled back in 1979 they were running 20 calls per month. The department is averaging over 500 calls a year.

Mr. Leonard reviewed the Fire Department's Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss for the 1st Quarter of 2025. He noted that Vice President Truntz and Commissioner DeHart get detailed financial statements each month. The cash accounts, current assets $519,176.00. The checking and savings account, when they get tax revenues this is where it goes to help fund the monthly operations. Under the fixed assets, vehicles are at 1,460,080.64 this is for the current fleet. They are expecting in the next six to nine months to get the new engine, which is about 1.3 million dollars and next up is a rescue truck, which could be another 1.5 to 2 million dollars in the next two or three years. Liabilities are significantly lower than they were last year at this time. There was an additional $800,000 fee on which was the mortgage payment from us to the Township which we negotiated with the Township to eliminate. The Township taking full ownership of the building and all the maintenance repairs and the Fire Department answering the fire calls, buying the

vehicles, staffing and training etc., this restructuring of the lease has helped us out significantly. The $100,000 liabilities that are there now will go up in the next two to three years because of vehicle purchases.

Mr. Leonard indicated that the good news is, with the restructuring in place, we are taking the $80,000 a year that we gave the Township in the past and putting it into our Capital Fund for major building improvements and purchase of vehicles. Mr. Leonard pointed out the 1.4 million dollars in investments. The Fire Department started putting money away about 30 years ago. The interest that we get from these investments we were able to pay over the course of two years for our fire chief's vehicle, simple from the interest of the investments. When we go for loans for apparatus the fact that we have over a million dollars in assets we get a significantly better interest rate.

Commissioner Truntz commented that the 1.5 million dollars that the department has in assets generates about $50,000 a year. Mr. Leonard added that they commit to putting 4 percent into the Capital Reserve account. Without the restructuring, he doesn't think they could have paid for the two trucks that they are going to be purchasing.

Chief Taylor just wanted to note with the support of grants and gaming grants they are anticipating based on questions that we have gotten that the tanker will be paid off prior to the new engine coming. Operational costs have just been skyrocketing. He wanted to also thank the Board for their support and the restructuring and pulling the burden off the Fire Department.

Vice President Truntz stated that the crisis we are running into is the volunteers. These guys are getting burned out from doing everything. The lease restructuring was the Township's way of saying we can cut the financial burdens so it's less work for you guys to do outside of fighting fires and other stuff you have to do. The crisis is real, and he is not sure if a merger would solve it, it might be an interim solution, but eventually we are looking for at least a partially paid fire department. Chief Taylor agreed and noted that there are conversations with other mutual aid chiefs and we're all in the same boat. The big question is what happens when nobody shows up. We are trying to be proactive, and we have a responsibility to communicate with the Board ahead of something like that happening. Mr. Leonard stressed that we talk about funding because we need the money to run the fire station, but he is not sure if money is the major issue anymore, its recruiting and not just to run fire calls, they need people to do treasurer work, secretaries, fundraising people, there are so many other areas where they need help.

Mr. Leonard noted that last month he came to the Board with concerns regarding the building, and since then the contract has been signed. They took a look at the building; we were to do some interior upgrades next year but because of the damage that was caused from the water leak this presented an opportunity to do enhancements now. That water damage may have covered twenty percent of the costs that we would have had to cover next year. The carpet is going to be replaced with tiles which will last

much longer. Price quotes range from $40,000 to $70,000 to $95,000 to do this. They decided on the $70,000 approach that has been paid for by those capital dollars that the Township is helping us with. These improvements will increase the longevity of the building. The contractor is scheduled to start tomorrow.

Mr. Leonard reported that with the Catherine Hershey facility coming online soon they need an emergency evacuation location in case something happens. Fortunately, the Fire Station is right down the street. If something does happen primarily from 7 AM to 5ish Monday through Friday, they will come to the Fire Station. They have a contract that they sent us; we reviewed it and would like to send it to the Board since the Township owns the building. One of the things in the contract is if there is an emergency evacuation they are going to contact us to open us the Fire Station, but if it's an emergency none of the people from the Fire Station will be at the station to open it. In any case there are some minor things in the contract, like the contact list, that we need to look at.

Commissioner Davies asked if there will be a need to make adjustments to the Fire Department's Insurances to cover having that many civilians in the Fire House. Mr. Leonard indicated No because when they have events like bingo they have 200 people at the Fire House, so that is more than the 120 kids and staff from the school. He also added that they don't need to change anything structurally, the Fire Department has liability coverage as well as Catherine Hershey having their own insurance coverage. The Fire Department is not accountable for them, it is just the use of the facility.

Vice President Truntz expressed his appreciation to Mr. Leonard for everything he had done.

ENGINEERS REPORT:

Mr. Fabian updated the Board on the following in addition to his monthly report: **Richard L. Shireman Park:** The contractor continues to prepare for pavement, unfortunately the weather has not been cooperating. Part of the Eagle project started this past weekend. **Fiddler's Elbow Box Culvert Replacement**: HRG has been working with DQE, the last remaining utility relocation. They are in the field right now and should be completed by the end of this week. **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program**: The bid was successfully opened April 8, 2025, with 6 bidders submitting. **2024 CIP Stormwater Improvement Project:** The 3rd party utility coordination continues with productive discussions with Veolia on their replacement and relocation schedule, as well as conflict resolution options review. **Municipal Bond Stormwater Projects:** Reviewing through the preliminary report from the field, nothing out of the ordinary from what they expected, but anytime they have a discharge down near streams they like to look at wetlands, so they know what kind of permitting they're getting into with those. The Georgetown section is high and dry, but on the Turnpike Industrial where we discharge into the

basin, there are some wetlands that they will have to contend with.

Commissioner DeHart asked Mr. Fabian for an update on the waterline at the Shireman Park. Mr. Fabian indicated they had a couple of follow-ups, but nothing has been confirmed as to when they will be installing the hydrant there.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

2026-2029 Paving Plan

Mr. Border reported that he, Mr. Washinger, Mr. Fure and Mr. Burkholder met and started looking at the 2017 map from HRG to get a start on a 4-year plan for the roads. They noted the projects that are upcoming that will include paving roads, they are also looking at stormwater pipes underneath the ground and other utilities to make sure we're not paving a road that will need stormwater or sewer replacement. They will be meeting again at the beginning of May to continue to work on the plan with additional information that they are gathering. The plan will be presented to the Board once completed.

Vice President Truntz recalled that a few years ago the Township paid a contractor with some type of high-tech van with equipment that drove around the Township and gathered information. Mr. Border indicated that the map they are using is the result of that information that was gathered.

Old Firehouse

Mr. Border advised the Board that in the furnace room of the old firehouse the pavement sinks down. Mr. Burkholder looked at it and thought we could repair it. The building is old and is starting to fall apart so there are repairs that we will have to do, and we can get estimates, but he didn't know how much the Board wants to invest in that building.

Trash Contract

Mr. Border informed the Board that the Township has a one more year option to renew the trash contract with only a minimal increase. What that increase will be, he is still waiting to hear but should have that information for the Board at the next meeting. The other option is for us to bid out the contract which expires on December 31, 2025.

Solicitor Miller commented on Commissioner DeHart's question that based on other municipalities that he works for, Hummelstown for instance, they only had one bidder for their recent contract. Susquehanna is currently in the bidding process, and they might get two bidders. He went on to explain that there are a couple of problems, the trash companies don't want to give you the same level of service and number two they want to get away from the billing and put that on the municipalities to do. There are basically three entities, Lower Swatara is probably a more attractive area than some smaller boroughs because it's easier to get around, but the competition isn't what it used to be and the prices are clearly going up and if you have a cheaper price for another year, it is definitely something to think about. The Commissioners noted that

between being forced to take the trash to one location, fuel prices, labor shortage and delinquent or non-existing accounts are all factors contributing to the higher costs.

FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS:

May 7, 2025	7 PM	Board of Commissioners Workshop Meeting
May 7, 2025	6 PM	Recreation Board
May 19, 2025	7 PM	Municipal Authority Meting
May 20, 2025	7 PM	Civil Service Commission Meeting
May 21, 2025	7 PM	Board of Commissioners Legislative Meeting
May 22, 2025	7 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
May 28, 2025	7 PM	Zoning Hearing Board

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Public Safety Committee: Commissioner Paul noted that he has been taking notice that property owners are not taking care of their properties as well as in previous years. He understands it is unfair to dump all of this on the Codes Department, but he is curious about how the rest of the Board feels or if there is more, the Township can do other than send letters out. He notices many properties with trailers, boats, cars as well as other junk and he hates seeing the Township get a bad reputation because of those maintenance issues. Mr. Border noted that the Code office is reactive to complaints about those issues, but we currently don't have the personnel to go around the Township and note the violations as they occur. If the Board is looking for someone to focus solely on property maintenance, we can certainly discuss that as an option. Commissioner Paul suggested having ordinances to try to control some of these issues might be helpful.

Commissioner Davies commented that there is a different way we could consider addressing this, but it would involve expenses. That would be to use one form or another of social media to reach out to property owners in the Township and encourage them to take pride in their property and try to go at it from a positive public relations outreach point of view. If we are a little more of a carrot and a little less of a stick perhaps residents would be more cooperative, although he doesn't know how we would sweeten the carrot. Commissioner Davies stated that he doesn't know if there is any company out there who specializes in this ad buying, but it would be a way of sensitizing people to the issue without penalizing them as well as something we would need to budget for. Commissioner Davies thought this would be an interesting idea to try and get a handle of what the cost would be to do something like this but has no idea where one might start. It is just a suggestion as a possible means of building community pride and sensitivity without having people feel like we were just getting on them for their failings. He also added that he is not nuts about the vehicle storage situation either and everyone has different sets of abilities of caring for vegetation on their properties.

Budget and Finance: Commissioner Davies noted that they are going to be getting together with Ms. McClain to look into better ways to portion our money storage circumstances so that we can perhaps garner additional revenue but also maybe come up with a way of apportioning our money that makes more sense than putting it all in the general fund account and having it sit there in a giant lump. He added that we are seeking some experts' advice on this matter and will keep the Board informed.

Public Works Committee: Vice President Truntz reported that about ninety percent of the dam, brush and tree clearing in parks is completed and they are patching potholes.

Community Development: Commissioner DeHart updated the Board on MARA, they reorganized the position and changed some requirements in hopes of getting more applicants. In the meantime, the person who did the before and after school daycare is temporarily running the program.

Commissioner DeHart also reported that he and Mr. Border attended the Dauphin County presentation of the reopening of TMI. The estimated time is in the second quarter of 2027 to be operational. PEMA wants the Emergency Management Plans in place by April 2026. They will have a full drill before it fully opens. They are not going to put the sirens back out, instead they are going to use wireless emergency alerts. They are still going to require routing teams, which is a challenge because if something were to happen most of the volunteers will be leaving and not staying to assist with routing so it is something that we will need to talk about down the road.

Commissioner DeHart requested an executive session following tonight's meeting on personnel matters.

Personnel Committee: President Wilt commented that he was glad that we were able to swear in two new officers this evening they will be a great asset to our Police Department and thanked Chief Bell for all his help.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 2025-R-7 – Approving list of signatures for submission to Univest Bank

A motion was made by Vice President Truntz, seconded by Commissioner DeHart to approve the list of signatures for submission to Univest Bank. The motion was unanimously approved.

Resolution No. 2025-R-8 – The Township of Lower Swatara setting the criteria for the eligibility of volunteers serving Lower Swatara Township in service with the Lower Swatara Fire Department to benefit from certain tax credits for tax year 2024

A motion was made by Commissioner DeHart, seconded by Vice President Truntz to approve Resolution No. 2025-R-8 – The Township of Lower Swatara setting the criteria for the eligibility of

volunteers serving Lower Swatara Township in service with the Lower Swatara Fire Department to benefit from certain tax credits for tax year 2024. The motion was unanimously approved.

Purchase of Caselle Project Accounting from Dallas Data Systems, Inc

A motion was made by Vice President Truntz, seconded by Commissioner DeHart to approve the purchase of Caselle Accounting from Dallas Data Systems, Inc. in the amount of $4,050 annually for grant tracking purposes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Application for payment #10 to Horst Excavating for the Richard L. Shireman Park

A motion was made by Commissioner DeHart, seconded by Vice President Truntz to approve the application for payment #10 in the amount of $5,862.50 to Horst Excavating for the Richard L. Shireman Park. The motion was unanimously approved.

Retainer Agreement with HRG to perform a Traffic Analysis for N. Union Street near Longview Dr to evaluate the traffic around the UPS facility

President Wilt inquired if UPS is kicking in any money towards this. Commissioner DeHart indicated not now. He explained that we will do the traffic study and then compare the numbers to what UPS indicated on their plan and if they are way under what they told us we can go back to them. We already know that there is an increase in accidents at the employee entrance and that will only increase as the number of employees increases by moving other locations to this location. We need the data to justify that they are creating a problem with traffic out there.

Commissioner Paul noted that he agrees with President Wilt and suggested that the Township sends a letter to UPS Corporate Office to let them know that we think there is a problem and we're going to be spending some money to fix the situation, so they are well aware of what is going on.

Commissioner Davies inquired under the scope of services and analysis mentions the counts will occur on a typical weekday from 6 AM to 6 PM. This is a 24-hour, 7 days a week business, what good is it going to do us to have numbers for only 12 hours a day. Mr. Fabian commented that these hours are when you generally have the highest intensity of traffic. Mr. Fabian acknowledged that traffic is not his forte, but he will ask for some justification for those hours or if it would make sense to have a 24-hour span. Mr. Fabian pointed out that they are going to set up an automatic counter as well. Commissioner Davies stated that it would be nice to see 24-hours for 7 days, he understands that might not be realistic or necessary, but he feels like a simple 6 AM to 6 PM is inadequate. Commissioner DeHart asked if we should table this till next month, so Mr. Fabian can go back and get more information.

Vice President Truntz made a motion to table this Retainer Agreement.

Conditional Award of the 2024 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to A.T.O. Excavating, Inc.

Mr. Fabian noted that HRG recommends the Board award this contract to A.Y.O Excavating, Inc, subject to the following conditions:

1. Complete bid review by the Township Solicitor.
2. Execution of the Agreement between Owner and Contractor.
3. Receipt of required insurance documents, and
4. Receipt of acceptable Performance and Payment Bond.

A motion was made by Commissioner DeHart, seconded by Commissioner Davies to approve Conditional Award of the 2024 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – Home Demolition Project to A.T.O. Excavating, Inc. for the Total Base Bid in the amount of $54,500. The motion was unanimously approved.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

Commissioner DeHart congratulated the two new officers and is hoping we will have a few more coming in the next several months.

Commissioner Davies echoed those comments and thanked the Chief for his efforts to make this happen. He also thanked the Fire Department for the numbers that the Board can look at so we can understand the financial challenges.

Commissioner Paul wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Vice President Truntz thanked the Fire Department for their report. He congratulated and welcomed Officers Battle and Strohecker. He thanked the Chief not only for his recruiting efforts, but we are tracking some good candidates and a good part of that is the culture and the job he is doing in the Police Department. He wished everyone a Happy Easter.

President Wilt noted his sentiments exactly and wished everyone a Happy Easter.

ADJOURN AND CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Hearing no other comments, a motion was made by Commissioner DeHart, seconded by Commissioner Davies to adjourn the meeting and convene into executive session. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

ATTEST:

Tracey Bechtel
Township Secretary

PLEASE PRINT NAME CLEARLY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APRIL 16, 2025
LEGISLATIVE MEETING (7:00 PM)

Name/Organization	Address/Contact Information
Bill Lenard	Lower Swatara VFD
Jackie Leonard	LSVFD
Sean Taylor	FDLS