



West Pikeland Township

ATTENDING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	ATTENDING TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL
Thomas J. McLewee Jr., Chair	Joan Blatcher, Township Manager
Steven F. Costa, Supervisor	Tom Goggin, Chief of Police
Harold M. Hallman III, Supervisor	Dorene Guistwhite, Township Treasurer
Bryan Maher, Supervisor	Jennifer Wachsmuth, Township Secretary

Mr. McLewee called the meeting to order on May 4, 2026 at 7:30 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. McLewee reported an executive session will be held this evening, May 4, 2026 after the meeting regarding real estate.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Costa made a motion to approve the April 20, 2026 Board of Supervisors agenda, with the addition of an additional item.

Mr. Costa proposed adding: Discussion around forming a real estate and financial advisory committee to assist the township with the current real estate project. Mr. Maher advised he would second the motion.

Mr. Maher advised that a precursory conversation should happen to identify what the committee would do as well as potential members. This allows time over these next two weeks to prepare and formally establish it at the Board of Supervisor's meeting on May 18th, when Ms. Vigilante is present.

Mr. Costa stated that to Mr. Maher's point, he would like to read some additional information to give some clarity to the forming of this committee and what it would do, so it would be in the minutes so Ms. Vigilante could be up to speed by the next meeting. Mr. McLewee advised Mr. Costa to proceed.

Mr. Maher pointed out that the board had not voted yet. Mr. Costa made a motion to add this to the agenda. Mr. Maher seconded it.

Before the vote continued, Mr. Hallman inquired where the meeting would be held on the 18th?

Ms. Blatcher advised that the meeting would be held in the township meeting room on the 18th.

Mr. Hallman was concerned that the meeting room would be set up for the election and not available for the meeting.

Ms. Wachsmuth advised that arrangements have been made for the voting machines to be stored onsite on Monday May 18th and set up the morning of Tuesday May 19th for the election.

The vote resumed, motioned by Mr. Costa, seconded by Mr. Maher. The Supervisors voted. Mr. Hallman voted in favor and Mr. McLewee stated that the motion passed.

Mr. Maher asked that the new motion be added to the agenda as item E under new business and addressed at that time. Mr. Costa agreed.

Mr. Costa made a motion to move the discussion scheduled for tonight's executive session regarding real estate to the Board of Supervisors meeting to the ongoing Board of Supervisors meeting (i.e. "right now"). He stated that as supervisors they have the right to discuss real estate in public meetings for transparency. Mr. Hallman seconded the motion.

Mr. McLewee stated that legal counsel will be in attendance at the Executive Session, and they are not here now. Our solicitor is scheduled to arrive about 8:30pm.

Ms. Blatcher stated in fairness to Ms. Vigilante, who specifically requested this topic be discussed at the meeting on the 18th when she would be present, this passing the motion would circumvent her request.

Mr. Maher also suggested tabling this until May 18th would allow all interested parties to attend, not just the public present tonight. Additionally, it would allow for proper preparation to present facts in an organized fashion.

Mr. Costa requested that his proposed motion go to vote.

Mr. Costa again motioned to move the discussion regarding the real estate project scheduled for the executive session after the Board of Supervisors meeting be moved to the Board of Supervisors meeting currently in session ("right now"). Mr. Hallman seconded the motion. Mr. Costa and Mr. Hallman voted yea, Mr. McLewee and Mr. Maher voted nay. The motion did not pass.

Mr. McLewee asked for approval of the minutes of the Monday April 20th 2026 meeting. Mr. Costa made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Maher. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. McLewee asked for approval of the minutes from Thursday March 19th 2026 Working session discussion about the Burn Ordinance.

Mr. Hallman questioned if it was a supervisor's meeting. Ms. Blatcher advised that since three supervisors attended, it needed to be treated as such. Mr. Hallman raised concerns about required publication. Ms. Blatcher said that it was announced at 2 Board of Supervisors meetings prior to the meeting and it did not have to be published in the newspaper.

Mr. Costa requested that the minutes list the dates when it was promoted. Ms. Wachsmuth confirmed it is captured at the top of the document.

The vote resumed. Mr. Maher motioned, seconded by Mr. Costa. Mr. McLewee. Mr. Maher and Mr. Costa voted yea, Mr. Hallman voted nay. The motion passed with a vote of 3-1.

Mr. McLewee asked if there was any unfinished business. Ms. Blatcher reported no.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Blatcher stated the first order of new business was a proclamation for Mr. Joseph L. Romano III, honoring the former township Manager for his excellent leadership and commitment to the township during his tenure.

Mr. Maher made a motion to approve the proclamation for Joseph L. Romano III, seconded by Mr. Costa. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Blatcher stated the second order of new business was Resolution 2026-13 regarding the Electronic Recording Use and Disposal Policy. This resolution defines the use and disposal of electronic recordings of the Board of Supervisors meetings. Mr. Costa made the motion to approve the Resolution. Mr. Hallman stopped the vote and requested a rewrite of the document to eliminate inconsistencies. The areas of concern were identified by Mr. Hallman and Ms. Blatcher proposed modifying the document with consistent language and still proceeding with the motion for approval. Mr. Hallman agreed and thanked everyone for making these changes.

Mr. McLewee asked for a motion to approve resolution 2026-13 with the changes requested by Mr. Hallman. Mr. Costa made the motion, seconded by Mr. Hallman. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Blatcher proposed new business item three, the addition of a pollinator garden to Pine Creek Park in the area of Meta's Garden. Mr. Glenn Wenger of the EAC was present to answer any questions. Mr. Hallman asked about the plans for the replacement of the broken bird bath. Mr. Wenger advised he plans to replace it with concrete one.

Mr. Hallman made a motion to approve the proposed improvements to Meta's Garden, seconded by Mr. Maher. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Blatcher raised item number 4, Resolution 2026-14 Tax Collection Committee Commission Delegate Appointment. This Resolution replaces Mr. Romano with Ms. Blatcher. Mr. Hallman remains the primary voting delegate, with Ms. Blatcher as the first alternate and Ms. Guistwhite as the second alternate voting delegate. Mr. Maher made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Costa, and the vote passed unanimously.

Mr. McLewee turned the floor over to Mr. Costa.

Mr. Costa stated that he has a written statement he'd like to read to the public. He also requested to clarify something from earlier. He noted that when you have 5 supervisors, 3 constitutes a

quorum. He was not trying to go around the supervisor that is absent. Since he has been a supervisor, they have voted often with less than 5 people.

Mr. Costa advised that he wanted to share excerpts from an email that he sent to Mr. McLewee as Chairman of the Board.

Ms. Blatcher asked if the email was a privileged document that included counsel or an email just to Mr. McLewee. Mr. Costa said that it was just to Mr. McLewee.

Mr. Costa began: "As you know the township has been considering a significant potential property acquisition - a transaction that contemplates a purchase price in excess of 3 million dollars of public funds, with millions more in renovation costs. Throughout this process I have raised concerns about the adequacy of the information available to the board, including the absence of reliable appraisals using appropriate comparable properties, lack of a cost analysis for renovating our current police building and the absence of any comprehensive financial plans, rolling forecasts and 5-10 year forward looking, budgets addressing purchase prices, deposits, mortgages, and the use of township funds. These concerns remain unresolved and underscore a broader need for a more structured and transparent approach to real estate decisions going forward. The mission of the proposed real estate and financial advisory committee would be to advise and assist township leadership by developing and recommending industry standard policies, procedures, analysis tools, evaluation matrixes for real estate and financial decisions affecting the township. The committee would ensure that any significant real estate transaction, whether an acquisition, disposition, or renovation, is supported by thorough due diligence, sound financial analysis and informed deliberation before the board is asked to take action. Among other things, the committee could help the board address the types of foundational analytical work that should proceed any step towards a major transaction including independent appraisals, engineering and structural review, environmental investigation, comparative cost analysis and fiscal impact assessments. Such appraisals, review, investigation analyses and assessments should be conducted currently, not ten plus years ago. Also, and critically, the committee would help ensure that any real estate decision is supported by a comprehensive financial review and long-term budget plans that demonstrate the township can proceed without raising taxes or depleting reserves.

In regard to Transparency and Stakeholder involvement: A central objective of the committee is to move the township to greater transparency with our residents and to encourage their input and participation in decisions on how their tax dollars are spent. While real estate matters may be discussed in executive session, the board has the ability to waive that protection and conduct these discussions publicly when appropriate. The committee should be comprised of key stakeholders including residents of the township, who bring relevant professional experience in the areas such as real estate, finance, construction, municipal planning and related fields. By drawing on the knowledge and perspective of the people we serve, we can make better informed decisions and foster public confidence in our stewardship with township resources. I want to emphasize that I believe establishing the committee is not merely good governance, it is something we owe to the residents and taxpayers of West Pikeland Township as part of our fiduciary duty. Under the PA 2nd class township code, township supervisors owe fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, and good faith to residents and taxpayers of the township. We are required to exercise a degree of care that a reasonable prudent person would use in managing township affairs including its financial resources. We must act as prudent stewards of taxpayer money and

significant decisions involve expenditure of public funds must be made transparently and with adequate opportunity for board deliberation consistent with the code. Forming the committee is a concrete step toward fulfilling those obligations and keeping us on the right track, ensuring that no financial commitment is made without a clear understanding of how it will be funded and a plan that protects our taxpayers from tax increases and safeguards the township's financial reserves. I will end it with I respectfully ask that this item be placed on the agenda for our next Board of Supervisors meeting on May 18th. I look forward to a productive discussion and working to establish the framework that serves the best interest of our community.”

Mr. McLewee added that the township is working very hard to answer every one of the questions that Mr. Costa raised, citing that Ms. Blatcher has talked with engineering experts, environmental specialists, real estate appraisers, and legal counsel so we will be able to answer every one of those concerns, and it will be presented to Mr. Costa and the public on May 18th.

Ms. Blatcher clarified that Mr. Costa (and all the supervisors) will have it in advance of the meeting on the 18th.

Mr. Maher asked Mr. Costa if he wanted to continue the conversation. Mr. Costa said this is just for public information and for Ms. Vigilante, so when she reads the minutes, she knows in advance that we're going to expand on this at the next meeting on May 18th.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comment 1: Mr. Rob Kocher of Hunt Club Lane, reminded the Board that the Pickering Estates community continues to wait for necessary road improvements. Requests that considering the potential property acquisition that 1. This need for road maintenance remains high on the list of priorities and 2. Any potential property acquisition be fully vetted in public prior to action.

Mr. Maher requested the opportunity to respond. He understands what public comments are supposed to be, but proposed it be more of a dialog. Mr. McLewee advised that he would like to keep it strictly public comment. Mr. Costa added that if there is something we want to change to the agenda process, we should do that with Ms. Vigilante present. Mr. Maher suggested we add another section called Q&A.

Mr. Hallman added that we are working with the Township Engineer on preliminary plans for Pickering Estates.

Mr. Costa stated that he has a public comment that may sound repetitive, but he wants it added to the public comment.

Mr. McLewee requested that we finish with the public comment from the audience first. Mr. Costa agreed.

Comment 2: Mr. Jeff Kern of Pikeland Road asked if he could hold his public comment until after Mr. Costa's comment. Mr. McLewee advised that he could.

Comment 3: Ms. Reagan Sarmiento of Fairfield Lane asked if she could know the parcel of land being discussed. Ms. Blatcher advised that it is privileged information at this time.

Comment 4: Mr. Costa stated that he always wants to be positive but wishes to share this in public comment. He advised that some details are being redacted from the written copy he will provide to Ms. Wachsmuth. “As a member of the Board of Supervisors and a resident of West Pikeland township I want to address the significant real estate transaction currently being contemplated by the township and share my assessment and options under consideration. By the public context of this discussion, I want to outline how we arrived at this point. The former township manager initially presented plans for upgrading the current police station, which the new chief reviewed, (I’ve talked to him about this) and endorsed the presentation to the board. Subsequently one of the supervisors suggested that the township purchase another piece of property and consolidate Police, Administrative and Library operations on that site. The board agreed to evaluate both options in good faith. However significantly more time and effort of township resources have been directed toward the 2nd option than toward the original tear down and rebuild plan. The core issue that we are solving is that our police station requires upgrades to meet current standards. Some examples are the facility needs a new detainee area, upgraded staff locker rooms, and approved facilities to properly accommodate for female officers in the future. The former township manager presented the architect's design/plan to address those needs to tear down and rebuild of the current building in approximately the same square footage – approximately 3000 square feet on the current footprint. The architect supplied a cost estimate for the tear down/rebuild (not sharing that figure now). The former manager suggested we move forward and engage architects and contractors to create a shovel ready construction plan that be part of a grant process that pays for the construction costs. Providing such a plan could lead to an increased probability to obtaining funds. The supervisors took the plans and the suggestions of the manager under advisement. As mentioned, a few weeks later, a supervisor suggested we look into purchasing another property and to move the police department, administrative staff and the library to that location. That current asking price is significantly higher than the rebuild price. Based on most recent cost estimates for renovations to this additional site would cost significantly more dollars, water remediation for this site would also bump this number up significantly well beyond the price of option 1. There remain unknown costs for environmental remediation. This project with a total cost (I’m just going to say it) in excess of 5 million dollars. Even assuming the current township building be sold a certain dollar amount, The net cost would still be an exorbitant amount. Some supervisors have mentioned obtaining financing for the project utilizing cash reserves and open space funds to acquire the property. (That is why I wanted to come in right after you Sir.) Paying down a new loan and replenishing any cash reserves for open space Funds utilized would require increased taxes. There are significant and unresolved environmental concerns with the 2nd property that have not been fully assessed. These issues represent additional potential substantial financial risk to the township. Separately, residents have been waiting for essential road repairs, for example the cost of repairs for the Hunt Club community, (sorry, I used the wrong road) estimated to be greater than a million dollars. The evaluation process has already departed from the path agreed upon during prior exec sessions. The board agreed to certain procedures and engaging certain professionals, and that has not been done. Additionally, proposal to have certain costs vetted by professionals at no cost was not given adequate consideration. With those facts as a background I wanted to share my assessment. As elected supervisors we have a fiduciary duty to manage all township funds

and transactions in the best interest of and needs of our residents. Every significant financial decision must demonstrably benefit all residents of the township. The Board has demonstrated its commitment to public safety, approving the 2026 budget, providing 24/7 West Pikeland police coverage, funded new vehicles, equipment and training and recently negotiated a long-term contract in support of our new police chief and officers. An improved police facility is a reasonable objective, but only through sound decision making that includes reasonable timing and fiscal responsibility. There is no emergency requiring the relocation of police or administrative staff from the current offices. The Chief of Police has confirmed a replacement facility of the same size is adequate for future department needs. There is no demonstrated need for a facility that increases the current footprint by over 50%. Relocating the library to the site is not a sound proposal as the library recently completed a full renovation of its current building and it's presence draws visitors to our Historic Yellow Springs community. Administrative staff similarly do not have a demonstrated need for additional space. Spending in excess of BLANK million dollars on this 2nd option or even the net cost of BLANK after a speculative sale of the current building does not meet the fiscal obligations or duty of reasonable stewardship of taxpayer funds. Public safety and good roads must maintain our priorities and diverting resources of this magnitude only from those needed is not justified. We can use the current police station, make minor repairs in the interim, apply for grants, allocate net access operating cash for the next 2-3 years and then build a new police station. In other words, save for this project, just like we do personally. If we don't have the money, we save for it, then we do it. The township must ensure complete transparency through the process, residents deserve a seat at the table for all significant financial results. If the residents determine that the significantly less cost of tearing down and rebuilding is not best use of township funds, that input should be heard and considered before any commitments are made. I recommend the township cease further actions and no longer consider any financial or long-term commitment on property #2. I further recommend that no further additional expenditure be made from now until the 18th when we get a detailed 5-year budget demonstrating the ability to pay down any new debt, replenish all cash reserves, and open space funds utilized. And accomplish these objectives without any increase in taxes. This last comment isn't self-serving – I'm trying to make a point here. As both a supervisor and a concerned resident of the township and a CPA with 45 years of professional experience including mergers and acquisitions and managing the construction and operation of corporate facilities in excess of 500 thousand square feet, in my professional and fiduciary judgement this is the most responsible path forward for all residents of the township.”

Comment 5: Jeff Kern of Pikeland Road, previously requested details surrounding the real estate conversations taking place at several Executive Sessions. Appreciates Mr. Costa bringing information to the public. Concerned about costs associated with a property acquisition, as we reported to be struggling for police funding last year. Still have debt from Walnut Lane project. Requests disclosure of any relationships that are related to the possible property acquisition to avoid conflict of interest.

Comment 6: Janet Spaventa of Springhouse Road is a Member of the Board of Directors of the Chester Springs Library. She was not aware of moving the Library. Advised they have a rental contract in place with Historic Yellow Springs.

Comment 7: Gordon McElroy of Messner Road requested to see a copy of the Working Session Burn ordinance meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Monday, May 18th and Monday, June 1, 2026 at 7:30 PM.

ADJOURN

Mr. Hallman motioned to adjourn at 8:14 PM, seconded by Mr. Costa. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Wachsmuth
Township Secretary