

Board of Supervisors Meeting

ATTENDING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	ATTENDING TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL
Thomas J. McLewee Jr., Chair	Joan Blatcher, Township Manager
Noreen Vigilante, Vice-Chair	Tom Goggin, Chief of Police
Steven F. Costa, Supervisor	Jennifer Wachsmuth, Township Secretary
Harold M. Hallman III, Supervisor	Vin Donohue, Real Estate Attorney
Bryan Maher, Supervisor	

September 8, 2026, 7:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

The West Pikeland Township Board of Supervisors meeting was called to order on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 7:30 PM by Chair Thomas McLewee Jr. at Chester Springs, PA.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair McLewee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair McLewee noted that several executive sessions had been held since the last meeting: on August 20th (real estate), August 26th (real estate), September 1st (personnel), and September 8th, 2026 (real estate and personnel).

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McLewee announced a modification to the agenda: the Proclamation of Heroism would be moved up, directly after the approval of the agenda. Vice Chair Vigilante requested the opportunity to make a comment under Unfinished Business regarding the history of the Pine Creek Park playground.

Supervisor Costa requested that two additional items be added to new business: (1) a discussion of how the township records its minutes and handles public comment, and (2) a discussion of financial reporting recommendations. Chair McLewee declined to add these items to the formal agenda, requesting that they be directed to the Township Manager for implementation. Supervisor Costa disagreed and pressed to have the agenda amended to include these topics. Chairman McLewee advised he could speak to them during public comment instead. Supervisor Hallman III indicated support for the additions in the interest of transparency, but the items were ultimately reserved for public comment. At this time, Supervisor Hallman requested the solicitor be excused from the meeting, as there were no real estate items on the agenda to discuss. Chairman McLewee disagreed and advised him to stay for any questions that might come up.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Vice Chair Vigilante and seconded by Supervisor Maher. The motion carried 3-2, with affirmative votes from Supervisor Maher, Vice Chair Vigilante, and Chair McLewee, and nay votes from Supervisor Hallman and Supervisor Costa.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. Proclamation of Heroism — Trooper O'Connor, Firefighter Kolb and Dr. Schiffer

Chief of Police Tom Goggin addressed the Board and members of the public, providing context for the proclamation. On July 11, 2026, a serious multi-vehicle collision occurred in the township resulting in significant injuries and the death of a young man, Damir Richet, whose mother and family were present at the meeting. Another individual, Brandon Gabrys, was also injured and attended with his father.

Chief Goggin recognized three individuals for extraordinary acts of heroism at the scene. Dr. Herbert Schiffer, a private citizen who was passing by, stopped and ran toward the wreckage to render aid. Trooper Brendan O'Connor and Firefighter Roger Kolb acted immediately to remove the victim from a burning vehicle. Chief Goggin noted that while the young man ultimately passed away, the heroic efforts of these three individuals allowed his family to be with him before his passing.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, plaques were formally presented to Dr. Schiffer, Trooper O'Connor, and Firefighter Kolb. The Board extended its gratitude to all first responders who were present that day.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Monday, August 17, 2026, Board of Supervisors

Discussion arose regarding the adequacy of the August 17, 2026 meeting minutes, specifically as to whether they sufficiently captured public comment, including the full extent of a resident Ryan Leithead's remarks and the dialogue between residents and supervisors.

Vice Chair Vigilante noted that public comment is historically summarized rather than transcribed verbatim and suggested that hiring a stenographer would be required for full verbatim minutes. Supervisor Maher, who had previously advocated for recording meetings since joining the board, proposed that a practical interim solution would be to record meetings using a phone and tripod, upload the audio file to a township YouTube channel, and continue to prepare the written minutes (in the same summary style format) as the official record. This approach would allow any resident to access the verbatim dialog via the recording, while relieving the secretary of the burden of full transcription.

Township Manager Blatcher confirmed that formal written minutes would still be required as the official record and that a new retention policy would be needed regarding the audio recording postings. The board agreed that this was manageable and directed staff to investigate the logistics—equipment needs, costs, and process—and report back at the next meeting. Supervisor Maher volunteered to assist in establishing the township's YouTube channel.

Regarding the August 17th minutes specifically, the board directed Township Secretary Wachsmuth to supplement the minutes with Ryan Leithead's public statement (electronic copy provided by Mr. Leithead) and by uploading the existing audio recording of that meeting so that residents could access the full dialog.

Motion to approve the minutes of the Monday, August 17, 2026 Board of Supervisors meeting, with proposed amendments, was made by Supervisor Costa and seconded by Vice Chair Vigilante. The motion carried 5-0 (Chair McLewee, Supervisor Costa, Supervisor Hallman, Supervisor Maher, Vice Chair Vigilante all voted yes).

VI. REPORTS

a. 2027 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO)

Township Manager Blatcher confirmed that the Board was provided the State mandated minimum to be paid into the pension for 2027.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Resolution 2026-18: Verbiage Update

Township Manager Blatcher reported that when Resolution 2026-18 was originally presented, it had included the Planning Commission as a recommending party; however, this Open Space resolution had never been

presented to the Planning Commission. The resolution was therefore amended to remove the Planning Commission from the relevant language. Supervisor Hallman III confirmed that the resolution was being amended, not replaced, and requested that the date on the document be updated to reflect today's date. Township Manager Blatcher agreed to make that correction.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-18 as amended was made by Supervisor Costa and seconded by Vice Chair Vigilante. The motion carried 5-0 (Chair McLewee, Supervisor Costa, Supervisor Hallman, Supervisor Maher, Vice Chair Vigilante all voted yes).

b. Snow and Ice Removal 2026-2027

Township Manager Blatcher presented the snow and ice removal bid package for the 2026–2027 season. Chair McLewee noted that Supervisor Hallman III had previously requested additions to the bid package as well as the information be presented on a specific PennDOT form. It was confirmed by Supervisor Hallman that the package had been assembled as he requested by Township Secretary Wachsmuth.

Motion to approve the 2026-2027 Snow and Ice Removal bid was made by Supervisor Hallman and seconded by Vice Chair Vigilante. The motion carried 5-0 (Chair McLewee, Supervisor Costa, Supervisor Hallman, Supervisor Maher, Vice Chair Vigilante all voted yes).

c. History of the Pine Creek Park Playground

Vice Chair Vigilante provided a detailed history of the Pine Creek Park playground project, tracing events from December 2022 when the Leithead family first approached the township following the loss of their son Cayden, through the construction of a dedicated sandpit ("Cayden's Corner"), determination that the existing play structure needed to be replaced, two successive grant awards, and the current status of the full playground replacement effort.

Vice Chair Vigilante explained that the township had committed \$25,000 toward what is anticipated to be a \$500,000 playground project. Two grants had been secured, the second being a matching grant that depends in part on the first. The combined grants significantly narrowed the funding gap. She emphasized that the timeline is critical: the playground must be completed and in the ground by the first quarter of 2027 or the grant funding will be forfeited entirely. She clarified that the proposed playground designs don't remove the sand play area but rather enlarge it and make it ADA accessible. She noted that the design process had produced multiple preliminary layouts—approximately eight—in efforts to balance safety, ADA compliance, grant requirements, and community desires within a constrained physical footprint.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

b. Sale of Retired Police Vehicles

Township Manager Blatcher reported that two recently retired police vehicles—replaced through grant-funded new vehicles—were proposed to be listed for public online auction through Municibid, in accordance with Section 1504 of the Second-Class Township Code, with the required public advertisement prior to the sale.

Supervisor Maher inquired about the expected proceeds. Chief Goggin indicated a minimum bid of \$1,000 per vehicle, noting that high mileage on these units presented risk of costly engine or transmission repairs as well as one of the vehicles has an expired inspection. Supervisor Maher raised the possibility of retaining one vehicle, but the Chief advised against it given the maintenance risk. Additionally, all police markings and equipment had already been removed from the vehicles.

Motion to declare the listed retired police vehicles as surplus and authorize their sale through public online auction on Municibid, in accordance with Section 1504 of the Second-Class Township Code, with required public advertisement prior to sale, was made by Supervisor Maher and seconded by Vice Chair Vigilante. The motion carried 5-0 (Chair McLewee, Supervisor Costa, Supervisor Hallman, Supervisor Maher, Vice Chair Vigilante all voted yes).

Supervisor Hallman raised a related question about surplus public works vehicles, noting that the township currently has four vehicles for three public works employees. Township Manager Blatcher shared that one additional vehicle was being retained as a backup. Supervisor Maher expressed comfort with retaining one backup, while Supervisor Hallman questioned the ongoing insurance and maintenance cost of an underutilized

vehicle, as well as the risk that an unused vehicle will decline functionally. Chair McLewee directed Manager Blatcher to gather information on the cost to maintain the vehicles, frequency of use, and insurance expense, and to report back.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair McLewee stated that public comments would not be treated as a question-and-answer session and that residents seeking answers should contact the Township Manager. Supervisor Hallman III disagreed, asserting that residents were entitled to answers during the meeting when possible, and that staff could follow up on items that could not be addressed immediately. Ultimately answers were provided when possible to questions posed.

Ryan Leithead of Bodine Road: shared that a previous Township Manager got an exception to pull the sandbox out of the 1st grant. He has documentation regarding that modification that he will share with the current Township Manager. He clarified that the Board voted unanimously to approve his sandbox proposal, after concerns raised about the cleanliness and maintenance were addressed. Mr. Leithead mentioned frustration surrounding the changing rationale for why the sandbox would need to be moved - requested transparency to alleviate this. He raised concern that at the 8/17/26 Board of Supervisors meeting, after his public comment the board deliberated on the sandbox, and that deliberation should be in the minutes. He noted that he and his family have received an abundance of support over this issue - he thanked all who stand behind his family. He spoke about what was discussed at last week's Parks and Recreation meeting, citing disappointment over the limited design options, the timeline for distribution to the committee and the foreign products being proposed. He stated that he current proposal for a "natural play area" unintentionally creates unsafe opportunities that need to be addressed. Mr. Leithead offered his services to help with the playground committee and alleviate some of the burden currently on the Township staff. He can assess the design plans across several categories including total cost of ownership, compliance with the grant requirements (once he has access), long term maintenance, and alignment with the original design specs that were used to garner donations. He suggests that his contribution to the committee would assist with transparency, effective timeline planning and ultimately generate the best results for the township and the Pine Creek Park Playground.

Vice Chair Vigilante clarified that the 2nd grant is a matching grant. A portion of the 1st grant will be used towards the match, therefore if we lose the 1st grant, we will have a shortfall and be unable to pay the required match to the 2nd grant.

Sue McElroy of Messner Road: asked if the public can see the Playground grants, requests that the grants to be made available for review. She attended the Parks and Recreation meeting last week and raised concerns about there being only one design for the playground and the possibility of the previously approved sandbox being changed. She also inquired about the Grant Portal - who has access and how the content can be reviewed. Would like to have that made public, if possible, as well.

Supervisor Maher acknowledged the feedback from the recent Parks and Recreation Committee meeting, confirming that all Parks and Rec members will be invited to participate in the ongoing playground working sessions. He affirmed that the expectation coming out of Parks and Rec was to pursue design proposals from additional manufacturers, not just the current vendor. Township Manager Blatcher confirmed that the first expanded working group meeting was scheduled for the following Wednesday and would be publicly advertised.

Vice Chair Vigilante shared that she has access to the grant portal. Welcomed residents to come to the township building to review it electronically. She added that what she has learned during this process is that playgrounds dedicate different spaces to specific age groups. The current proposed design has 3 distinct areas, with appropriate space between the areas to keep all safe as they play. The space available for the playground is limited, and maximizing its use is paramount.

Supervisor Costa recognized the design experts being sought for their recommendations but reminded all that they are suggestions. Suggested using the sandbox as it is currently and designing the rest around it.

Resident Carin Mifsud of Carolyn Drive: shared that she was previously involved in fundraising for the project and urged the group to move past procedural disagreements and focus on meeting the grant deadline, noting that the Parks and Rec committee's substantive concerns were heard and are being acted upon.

Resident Jeff Loudin of Meadow Creek Road: (Current Chair of the Parks and Recreation committee) clarified that there have been multiple sketches/designs proposed during this process. Effort is being made to keep the sandbox as it is, within the limited space availability.

Ryan Leithead added that the Parks and Recreation committee is requesting more design plan options rather than the two versions currently in consideration as they contain the same equipment just in different locations. Suggesting alternatives to Kompan such as Burke should be considered because of lead time and maintenance issues.

Both Supervisor Maher and Vice Chair Vigilante confirmed additional designs from another manufacturer have been sought.

Discussion returned to accessibility around the grant documents and the grant portal. Mr. Leithead was invited to come to the Township building to review the documents and portal. Township Manager Blatcher is currently experiencing portal access issues but is working to resolve.

Supervisor Costa proposed adding Ryan Leithead to the playground committee and it was confirmed that the meetings are now open to the Parks and Rec members to attend.

Dan Iannucci of Parker Hill inquired about the status of the Phase 2 environmental report and the due diligence period for the proposed purchase of 1001 Kimberton Road. The township's real estate attorney confirmed that the inspection and due diligence period expires at midnight on September 8, 2026, meaning the township could no longer terminate the agreement based on findings from its own investigations. He clarified other conditions discovered prior to closing—such as title issues or externally caused contamination—could still allow the township to exit the agreement. The Phase 2 environmental report found conditions no worse than a prior clearance obtained by a previous owner around 2016, with all readings below non-residential standards and no mitigation required. Township Manager Blatcher noted that Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports were available for review at the township office, though posting a document of approximately 758 pages (each) to the website was not practical.

Supervisor Costa noted that the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act permits the board to respond to public comment at its discretion and proposed that the board adopt a practice of answering questions during public comment when able, rather than deferring all responses.

Supervisor Costa presented a series of financial reporting recommendations. These included: (1) adding a separate page to the monthly bills list identifying all expenditures related to the 1001 Kimberton Road acquisition and current building sale; (2) directing staff to prepare a detailed rolling forecast through December 31, 2026, as had been done the prior year, given that the year-to-date net income advantage over budget had declined from approximately \$1.2 million at the end of May to approximately \$805,000 through July; (3) establishing a permanent quarterly rolling forecast for future years; and (4) creating a standalone budget cost center for the new building project to provide ongoing financial clarity and to substantiate the township's representation that the transaction would be tax-neutral.

Chair McLewee acknowledged that he did not disagree with the substance of the recommendations but maintained that the appropriate path was for the supervisor to meet directly with Township Manager Blatcher and Treasurer Guistwhite to work through feasibility before bringing the items publicly. Township Manager Blatcher noted that she had already responded to an earlier email on the subject, explaining that certain items—such as a quarterly rolling forecast—require approximately 2.5 days of staff time to prepare, and that with the treasurer working part-time and staff at full capacity, a prioritization discussion was necessary before new reporting could be added. She also confirmed that a spreadsheet tracking 1001 Kimberton expenditures had been available in a shared file since May. Supervisor Maher and others acknowledged the staff's significant workload in the current period, while agreeing that the underlying recommendations had merit.

Reagan Sarmiento of Fairfield Lane: Noted that this meeting has been laden with lots of aggressive, accusatory behavior and suggests all involved be more friendly towards each other.

Dan Iannucci: Reminded the Board that there is still time to get out of the purchase of 1001 Kimberton Road property. He noted that he had previously projected high construction costs for the project and felt those projections were being borne out, with early estimates now reaching \$1.5 million above initial figures. Chair McLewee responded that no contracts had been finalized and that the township was still investigating fully.

Denise Leithead of Bodine Road: expressed deep hurt over the threatened displacement of the sandpit memorial, stating that efforts to frame the relocation as an improvement were not experienced as such by the family.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair McLewee announced that the next Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Monday, September 21, 2026, and Monday, October 5, 2026, at 7:30 PM.

XI. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn was made at 9:27pm by Supervisor Maher and seconded by Supervisor Costa. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Wachsmuth
Township Secretary