

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Stormwater Authority Workshop Meeting Minutes

September 9th, 2025, 2PM, Upper-Level Conference Room, 3 Weller Place

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Robert Blanchfield, Robert A. Lammi, Kendall M. Mitchell, Craig Swinsburg, Scott Kistler, Jim Farley, Rebecca Frederickson, George White, David Pyle, Josh Sheetz, Ryan Cummings, Luke Gibson and Zach Trexler.
- b. Absent: None
- c. The meeting was called to order at 2:04PM.

2. Public Comment

- i. Ian Connolly – 3148 Val Vista Drive
 - 1. Discussed the stormwater fee and the possibility for it to be reassessed for his property citing the large retention pond on his property that collects runoff from a large surrounding area. Blanchfield acknowledged the uniqueness of the request and suggested he stay in contact with Gunther throughout the process and thanked the resident for coming. Gunther stated the Township would investigate deed restrictions, subdivision agreements, and BMP maintenance requirements in regard to the pond.

3. Discussion Items

a. HRG Project Updates

i. Old Nazareth Road

- 1. Sheets stated that the pre-construction meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 23rd, and the residential meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 25th. Blanchfield stressed the importance of advertising the meeting to affected residents. Gunther said all topics will be covered such as driveway access, mail delivery, trash collection and detours. Sheets stated the contractor is expected to attend the pre-con meeting but not the resident meeting.

ii. Wedgewood Update

- 1. White stated that the preliminary construction plans have been completed and that HRG is waiting for final sign-off. He confirmed that the new inlets were incorporated to increase runoff capacity. He stated that pipe velocity and material specifications are still under review and Gunther stated that the technical/design meeting is to be rescheduled to early next week. White confirmed that the survey team is preparing the legal descriptions for permanent easements and that the PennVEST application deadline

is October 29th. He said the Authority and Township Supervisors must adopt resolutions and approvals by early October.

iii. Schoeneck Creek Update

1. Gunther confirmed that one easement remains unresolved that is critical to the project's progression. Gibson stated that the next steps are to schedule a meeting with the property owner of Penns Grant Estates to discuss project description and goals. Blanchfield suggested that the Authority members attending the meeting go without the Solicitor so as not to intimidate the property owner. White confirmed that the survey work has been paused until easement direction is determined.

iv. Hobson Street Detention Basin Update

1. Cummings stated that additional maintenance access points were added since the original presentation. He said the plans are now being shared with the full Authority for their review. Cummings discussed some of the project highlights and design features such as removal of growth for improved maintenance, installation of underdrains between tiers and extensions of outlet pipes, and four bays to capture sediment and reduce maintenance footprint. He said the project is expected to increase sediment reduction by roughly 40%. He said the project aligns with current and future PRP crediting requirements. Cummings stated that HRG is moving forward with the NPDES permitting.

v. Meadow Avenue Update

1. White discussed this regional detention basin, roughly 6 acres, in Bethlehem Township to capture flows before reaching Meadow Avenue. He said the project would control discharge rates using flow control technology. He said the estimated cost is roughly \$4 million and requires intermunicipal cooperation and outside funding. For a short-term, more immediate fix, White suggested the cleaning and reestablishment of a 25-foot drainage swale, riprap, and reconnection to existing 30" pipe. He said it would require minor NPDES modification since the project would be within a conservation district. The Authority discussed which avenue to prioritize while also discussing possible funding. Farley stated that FEMA previously declined funding due to lack of County Emergency Plan approval. Blanchfield stated that Lower Nazareth may need to join the intermunicipal agreement since water flow spans across all three Townships.

vi. PRP Basin Retrofit Projects Update

1. Cummings stated that the surveys and environmental assessments have been completed with no issues found. He said the preliminary designs are underway, with the 30% design milestone expected by the end of September. He reminded the Authority that these retrofits will include features such as outlet structure modifications, amended soils and wildlife friendly plantings while simultaneously requiring significantly less earthwork than other projects such as Hobson Street.

vii. Broad Street Update

1. White stated that HRG found the existing 30" pipe to be undersized and inadequate for future needs. He said that with this information, a full replacement with larger pipe is the recommended solution with pipelining no longer a viable option.

viii. Storm Sewer Inventory & Assessment Update

1. White informed the Authority that field crews are assessing Township-maintained basins daily with the digital mapping showing real time progress. He said the data includes condition assessments, dimensions, in/out pipes and elevations. White said the field crews are not focusing on private or commercial basins at this time. White referenced a specific basin in the Southwood Drive & Chain Dam Road area and cited the project as critical to collect drainage from the Southwood Drive and Gordon Drive areas. He said this will be discussed further in the future.

b. Swanson Street Swale – Remediation Approach

- i. Gunther stated that the project is pending an easement from the property owner/owners. Trexler confirmed that the outreach letter has been prepared and is under revision prior to delivery to the property owner.

c. Clover Hollow Rd to Van Buren – Approach

- i. Gunther said that deed research at the County is necessary for this project to clarify responsibilities. He stated that a \$25,000.00 escrow check from an existing developer agreement has been identified as potential funding for this project. Farley stated that he has to confirm this dollar amount with the Finance Department. White stated that the project involves extending the pipe and inlets, with cost estimates ranging from \$55,000.00 - \$70,000.00 after factoring in inflation. White said he will work on providing an updated cost estimate before proceeding with anything.

d. Hickory Lane Swale Update

- i. Gunther discussed the illicit discharge incident at this property, reminding the Authority of the oily sheen that was reported by a neighbor after seeing it in the swale between Hickory Lane and Stones Crossing. Gunther said

the investigation traced the source to a sump pump discharging furnace heating oil into a catch basin on Hickory Lane. He confirmed that DEP conducted their own site visits, with reports dated 7/23/25 & 8/21/25. Gunther stated that additional remediation efforts are likely to occur. The Authority discussed the issue and decided that it is most likely a civil matter between the property owners and stated that it is the homeowner's responsibility to remediate the problem. Gunther stated that the DEP is overseeing the remediation efforts and the only efforts the Township is providing are to document the issue for the annual MS4 report as an illicit discharge. Blanchfield asked Gunther to maintain coordination and communication with DEP.

e. Township Staff Reports/Comments

i. Finance

1. Lammie stated that the 2024 audit has been completed and submitted to the Authority for review and acceptance. He said that formal acceptance is scheduled for the next Authority meeting. Farley stated that the signature pages have been updates for the stormwater accounts which removed outdated names and added the new PennVEST-related accounts.
2. Lammi stated that the 2026 budget process has formally started with the Finance Committee. He said the goal for 2026 is to develop a reporting system that provides detailed monthly breakdowns rather than snapshots. He said the Committee is looking to separate the budget into two separate categories, operating costs and capital project costs. Farley stated that Gunther has the ability to utilize activity codes in accounting to track expenditure on a project basis. Lammi stated that this will create more transparency, better project management, easier supervisor reporting and alignment with audit requirements.

ii. Public Works

1. Kistler stated that currently, Public Works staff is mainly focused on Township projects rather than Stormwater projects. He stated that routine maintenance, such as street sweeping and drain cleaning, is ongoing with leaf season beginning to impact scheduling.
2. Kistler stated that within the Lincoln Terrace Subdivision a total of 40 feet of failing corrugated metal pipe was replaced with plastic pipe. He said there is an additional, nearby section of pipe replacement planned before paving commences.

iii. Public Services

1. None at this time.

iv. Stormwater/MS4

1. Gunther announced that Trexler is transitioning from the front office to the stormwater department role. He said Danielle Goff was hired to backfill Trexler's position out front. Gunther laid out a few of Trexler's job roles including permit processing support, organization improvement, and implementing better workflows for residential construction related stormwater permits.
2. Gunther stated that the annual MS4 report is well underway with HRG assisting. He said the draft is to be submitted to staff for review within a week and the submission to DEP is expected to be on schedule by the deadline.
3. The Authority discussed an upcoming LSA grant application that is due by the end of November. They discussed the tight timeline for preparing proposals and acquiring all the proposals needed for the application. Gunther stated that he would consult with Township staff and confirm if the Township has the resources to manage the grant. He said if the Township cannot, HRG may have to take the lead.
4. Blanchfield asked if the ongoing issue with resolution numbering and tracking had been resolved and Gibson and Gunther confirmed. The Authority agreed to wait until the new year to implement the new numbering system to ensure consistency. Blanchfield suggested the inclusion of the month and year in the numbering system for easier historical reference.

f. New Business

i. Southwood Drive and Chain Dam Road

1. Kistler provided some background information regarding this issue, stating that a July 2023 storm caused catastrophic failure similar to what was seen on Wedgewood Drive. Currently, Kistler said there is roughly 25 feet of pipe missing which has left a crater. Kistler stated the nearby sanitary sewer interceptor is at risk. Cummings stated that this area drains roughly 128 acres, compared to Wedgewood's 55 acres. White stated that FEMA previously rejected funding, stating that they will only fund a like for like replacement of the 48" corrugated metal pipe. He said that the complications arise from the drainage area sections that lie on private property. Cummings stated that this project could begin the engineering process in 2026, after the current PRP and capital projects advance, and could potentially begin construction in 2029.

2. White took this opportunity to present the updated project schedule within the Capital Improvement Plan that separates regulatory projects from capital projects. He said the current CIP stretches through 2028. The Authority appreciated the additional clarity. White also introduced a new SharePoint live spreadsheet that tracks outstanding action items across the Authority, Township staff, HRG, attorneys and Public Works. He said that each item is marked to identify prioritization, with completed tasks being removed from the list.

ii. Old Nazareth Road: Pre-Con & Resident Meeting Status

1. Blanchfield confirmed that the pre-construction meeting is scheduled for September 23rd at 11am at the Township Building. He also stated that the resident meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 25th at 6pm at the Township Building as well. Kistler mentioned that the Authority will have little to no new information available before all of the contractor submittals are reviewed. He suggested waiting until the traffic control plans are finalized to provide more meaningful updates. Gunther stated that some businesses are concerned about driveway access which may be better addressed via direct meetings rather than broad resident meetings. The Authority agreed and decided to postpone the resident meeting, likely sometime in early 2026.

iii. PennDOT Coordination – LTAP and LVPC

1. Gunther stated that the Township is seeking better communication channels with PennDOT regarding stormwater issues on state highways. He said that PennDOT inlets are often clogged and not maintained, and that residents on state roads are paying the stormwater fees but are receiving lower service levels. Kistler stated that it would not surprise him if PennDOT eventually pushed stormwater maintenance responsibilities onto the Township, which could lead to the Township performing basic stormwater maintenance for PennDOT roads.
2. Blanchfield asked Gibson if any progress had been made in the litigation related to the stormwater fee. Gibson stated that no progress had been made and that the case is unusually stagnant.

4. Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 14th

5. Adjournment

- a. Swinsburg made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Blanchfield seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 4:45PM.