

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Stormwater Authority Workshop Meeting Minutes

August 12th, 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, Jamie Paetzell, Phil Godbout, Jim Farley, Rebecca Frederickson, George White, David Pyle, Josh Sheetz, Brooke Semanchik, Luke Gibson and Zach Trexler.
- b.** Absent: Matthew Gunther
- c.** The meeting was called to order at 2:00PM.

2. Public Comment

- i.** None at this time.

3. Discussion Items

a. HRG Project Updates

i. Old Nazareth Road

- 1.** White stated that the final signed documents for the PennVEST loan were completed earlier this morning. He said there are no expected construction delays despite culvert lead times. Gibson said that the Township ordinance advertising and approvals are nearly finished. Blanchfield clarified that the PennVEST loan terms are 1% interest for the first five years, and then 1.75% thereafter. No objections were made and the Authority requested further clarification on budget allocations such as administration, legal and finance. Gibson stated that the resolution will be on the next agenda for board approval.

ii. Wedgewood Update

- 1.** White said the updated plans were submitted to the Township for review on July 22nd and that they are still working with the precast company to resolve the inlet/grate design issues. He said there is a zoom meeting scheduled with the precast company to finalize the acceptable solution. Pyle said the target date for the submission to PennVEST is October 29th. The Authority discussed the possibility of delaying the submission due to finances. Some argued that recent storms show an urgency to resolve the issue. White reminded the Authority that this is only phase 1 of the entire project, which is estimated to cost \$1.3 million. He said phase 2 is excluded from the immediate funding request. Kistler raised concerns for Southwood Drive citing this project as another high-priority repair.

iii. Schoeneck Creek Update

1. White said we are currently concerned over the lack of progress on easement negotiations with the developer. He said if negotiations fail, we may need to redesign the access. White also confirmed that the Conservation District is requiring an individual NPDES permit in addition to the Chapter 105 permit. Gibson stated he has prepared the easement agreements, and he is awaiting follow up from Gunther.

iv. Hobson Street Detention Basin Update

1. White said that the conceptual plans have been provided to the Township for review and that the project is expected to improve flooding on 25th Street. Conservation measures are being added to the plan in the form of erosion & scour control. He said they are waiting on the review to come back prior to releasing to the Authority.

v. Meadow Avenue Update

1. White said these plans are also currently under review by the Township and that the Conservation District permits have been obtained. White said the project aims to reduce overflow drainage into inlets at Meadow Avenue. He reminded the Authority that the long-term vision is to create a 5-acre detention basin at the same site. He said the current project is intended to provide short term mitigation and that the larger basin would provide larger scale storage but is dependent on grant/FEMA funding. Kistler asked if the temporary work would be removed if the larger project were to take place and White said not entirely, but that some of it would have to be removed but that it could mainly be integrated.

vi. 25th Street Project Update

1. White said the easements are currently pending and are critical for PennDOT approval. The Authority agreed that this project is not a top financial priority at this time, but we will move forward with easement acquisition anyway. Blanchfield confirmed that a grant was submitted to potentially alleviate the financial burden and elevate project priority. Pyle said a decision on the grant is expected in March or April of 2026. White said construction is likely delayed until 2026 pending funding.

vii. PRP Basin Retrofit Projects Update

1. White said the survey work has been completed and the engineers are working on grading and hydraulic calculations. He said it is an ongoing process with no major updates at this time.

viii. Camelot Drive Update

1. Kistler stated that the emergency repairs have been completed which included paving, pipe installation, stabilization and channel reshaping. He said the grass seeding is underway in the area and that the project is performing well during rain events. He said the swale is evenly distributing flow. Kistler said there are invoices pending from several contractors, with about \$200,000.00 still outstanding. He said Joao & Bradley quoted the project at roughly \$17,000.00 per day on site for five days. Kistler said that as a whole, Public Works expenses are unusually high this month due to this emergency repair. The Authority expressed concerns over escalating costs associated with Public Works, especially tied to this project. After discussion, the Authority agreed that Old Nazareth Road and Wedgewood Phase 1 remain top priorities, with Southwood Drive close behind.

ix. Broad Street Update

1. Kistler stated that the temporary repair has been completed after the pipe failure and collapse. He said the bottom of the pipe was rotted out and the interim solution was to fill the area with cement to stabilize. White said that HRG is currently reviewing 20-year-old plans to assess if existing pipe size, slope and grade are adequate for long term use. Kistler said if HRG finds deficiencies, lining the pipe may be viable.

x. Storm Sewer Inventory & Assessment Update

1. White said field crews made up of entry-level engineers are conducting assessments using 360-degree cameras to evaluate inlets and pipes. He said the data we receive will inform long-term capital planning and maintenance priorities.

xi. Capital Improvement Plan

1. Pyle said that CIP updates are paused until projects and financial priorities are finalized with the finance group. He said the HRG team created a finance model to project funding, invoicing PennVEST, and contractor payments. Lammi presented his idea to split the budget between operational and capital budgets. He said operational would cover routine and predictable costs while capital would cover large projects, infrastructure replacement and emergency responses. Pyle said the recommendation is to create a dedicated emergency fund account with Embassy Bank for rapid responses to storm damage. The Authority recognized that

emergencies are unpredictable but increasingly likely due to severe storms.

b. Township Staff Reports/Comments

i. Finance

1. Farley said the current account balance is roughly \$2 million. He said the plan is to create separate bank accounts for an emergency fund and PennVEST loan repayments which would include scheduled allocations each quarter. He stated that PennVEST requires a dedicated account for depositing reimbursements to allow for money to be transferred out for payments. Farley asked if PennVEST requires PEP forms, but HRG was unsure and would look into it. Farley announced that the 2024 audit was completed. He said they came back with a clean report and a recommendation that there be a second person reviewing bank reconciliations. Farley said he has been actively working on getting Frederickson trained to be the second person.

ii. Public Works

1. Kistler stated that emergency repairs dominated recent workload which caused routine tasks to be paused. He announced that the new street sweeper would be arriving this week and that training was already scheduled. He said both sweepers will be kept in service to increase coverage. He said regular maintenance is expected to return after community weekend wraps up.
2. Kistler brought up the fact that several recent emergencies have been tied to failing corrugated metal pipes. He stated that the original purpose of this Authority was to address this issue. He said the original focus was about 70% food mitigation and 30% regulatory compliance. Kistler said the realization is that precedence needs to be given to existing infrastructure repair rather than new flood mitigation projects. He said emergencies have shown weaknesses in the existing system that must be fixed first. Kistler said that the maintenance activities we perform directly improve flood resilience by preventing blockages.

iii. Public Services

1. Nothing at this time.

iv. Stormwater/MS4

1. The Authority discussed the importance of public perception and how they can improve their public outreach. The Authority discussed the importance of keeping the Board of Supervisors informed of Authority operations.

c. New Business

i. Peggy Lane

1. Kistler explained that while repairing Camelot, Public Works explored some downstream infrastructure which revealed three downstream crossings. The first one, Gary Street, is in poor condition but the crossing is under a private driveway so we may not be responsible for the maintenance. The second crossing is Peggy Lane which is a 48-inch pipe. He said the bottom of the pipe collapsed when walking on it. The third crossing on Howard Lane looks to be in pretty good shape. He said to control costs on Peggy Street, lining the pipe would be our best bet. Kistler said the proposal has been sent to Matt for his review. Farley asked what the estimate for the pipe lining is and Trexler said the quote came in at \$195,830.00. The Authority discussed whether to fix this now or wait until it potentially becomes further damaged. Blanchfield said it can be discussed at next week's meeting.

ii. Rosemont Court

1. Kistler said that during an assessment of the pipe it was discovered the pipe looked like Swiss cheese. At that time, we brought the camera truck to look at the pipes only to find the pipe has a severe sag and is filled to the top with water. We then went around the block to enter from a different direction only to find another section of pipe where they encountered the same sag. Kistler said we are already looking into temporary construction easements to figure out how to work on this issue. He said we then went to look at the lower 500' of pipe in the area that is already plastic, and we found that the plastic pipe is crushed. He said there is about a 300-foot section that we cannot access. He said this will involve direct excavation and replacement of the pipe, not lining. Kistler said this is a large and unfortunate problem. Kistler said we should continue with lining the corrugated metal pipe which is the direction we left with Matt.

iii. Monthly BOS Updates

1. The Authority discussed the idea that the Township Board of Supervisors may not fully understand the Authority's work and financial contributions. White proposed regular, meaning monthly or quarterly, written updates to the Board of Supervisors be produced. Blanchfield stated that other departments already do this. He said we could provide summaries of sediment reduction, emergency responses and financial impacts. He said doing these

reports would help reinforce the value of the stormwater fee and manage public expectations.

4. Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 9th

5. Adjournment

- a. Blanchfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 3:40PM.