

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Stormwater Authority Meeting Minutes

April 16th, 2025, 5PM, 3 Weller Pl, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room

1. Executive Session – 4:30pm

- a. Blanchfield announced that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss litigation matters, and that no action was taken.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

- a. Present: Robert Blanchfield, Robert A. Lammi, Kendall M. Mitchell, Matthew Gunther, Craig Swinsburg, George White, David Pyle, Brooke Semanchik, James Farley, Phillip Godbout, Scott Kistler, Jamie Paetzell, and Zach Trexler.
- b. Absent: None
- c. The meeting was called to order at 5:00PM.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 19th, 2025, and April 8th, 2025.

- a. Lammi made a motion to approve the minutes from March 19th, 2025, and Swinsburg seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously by voice vote.
- b. Gunther made a motion to approve the minutes from April 8th, 2025, and Mitchell seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. Public Comment, Other Communications

- a. Blanchfield asked if it would be okay to move public comment to the beginning of the meeting to match what is done in the Workshop meetings and to make sure that anyone attending had a chance to speak. Everyone agreed that Public Comment should be held at the top of the meeting.
- b. Steve Dewalt – 1270 Tatamy Road
 - i. Asked if anything was needed from him or if any updates could be provided. Blanchfield asked if he could assist in getting the County some of the required paperwork and Dewalt stated that he would give it a shot.
- c. Supervisor Charles Bellis III
 - i. Asked if we were on track to collect the annual \$5 million from the stormwater fee. Farley confirmed that everything was on track.

6. Reports

- a. Solicitor
 - i. No report at this time.

7. Committee Reports

- a. Engineering
 - i. White said the Engineer's report has been submitted for the month of April.
- b. Finance

- i. Lammi said we were surprised when Gunther notified us of money received from PEMA in the amount of \$243,750 from our work with Steve Gallagher and HRG in 2023. Farley said the money will be deposited into the Stormwater general fund and White said it will be delivered in 30-45 days.

8. Township Staff Comments

a. Public Works

- i. Kistler had no additional report at this time.

b. Public Services

- i. Godbout said him and Gunther met with PennDOT to discuss the Northwood Avenue issue, and that they were informed that PennDOT will investigate the issue. Godbout said it is good that we are opening these lines of communication. Lammi asked if Gunther had been in communication with the residents and he confirmed.

c. MS4

- i. Gunther discussed the Northwood Avenue issues in further detail. He said PennDOT has access to all the Township's information and documents related to the issue.
- ii. Gunther stated he met with Don from HRG to discuss the process for outfall inspections. He said a lot of good work has been done already by HRG, and that he is looking forward to continuing. Blanchfield and Gunther discussed details of the outfall inspection process. Gunther said a template is being developed to implement into the GIS software to attach attributes to specific infrastructure. Blanchfield asked if a work order could be developed and sent to Public Works, and Kistler said that it has not been developed that far out yet.
- iii. Gunther said that HRG and the Authority Solicitor hosted a webinar last week to discuss upcoming changes to the DEP MS4 General Permit, not the Individual Permit. He said they went through the draft outline and discussed what the changes might look like. He stated that the Solicitor and HRG will continue to pursue this matter moving forward as more information comes out. White said this was a statewide webinar. Blanchfield said that everyone did an excellent job.

9. New Business

a. March Invoice Package

- i. Bills included invoices from CMT, HRG, and Salzmahn Hughes. Lammi made a motion to approve the bills in the total amount of \$107,480.14 and Gunter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- ii. Blanchfield said we also need to approve the reimbursable costs for the first quarter, which include \$240,000.00 for Public Works, \$68,000.00 for

Administration, and \$11,000.00 for Miscellaneous. Blanchfield said the total reimbursable cost comes to \$384,479.16. Lammi made a motion to approve the reimbursable expenses in the total amount of \$384,479.16 and Swinsburg seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- iii. Blanchfield said we have collected funds for the quarter that need to be approved and transferred in the amount of \$1,316,972.18. Mitchell made a motion to approve the transfer of funds and Lammi seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

b. Funding Update

- i. Brooke Semanchik, HRG, introduced herself to the Authority. Semanchik said that the Authority's PennVEST funding settlement date is set for September 24th with bids coming in higher than anticipated. The plan is to submit a request for additional funding to cover the gap. She said she will continue to work with Mary to gather all required info for settlement. Lammi asked how confident she is that PennVEST would approve the \$500,000.00 additional request, and she said they have always accepted the requests in the past and that she has no major concerns. Lammi asked what would happen if it were not approved. Semanchik said we could look at other cost categories in the budget to see if we can pull money from them to put it towards construction, or we would work with the Authority to identify other funding sources like a bank loan. She said the final option would be to reject the current offer from PennVEST and submit a whole new request to encompass the correct total cost, which would start the process all over again. She said this would probably result in having to rebid the project. Blanchfield asked what the next steps are, and Semanchik stated the request should be ready to be submitted by mid-July for the next PennVEST Board meeting. She said as long as everything goes to plan with settlement, we would be able to start construction the very next day. White said we can minimize the delay to one month by pushing our milestones. He said we knew the additional paving would not be covered through the PennVEST loan. He said the additional work going up the side street was also added after the fact during the final phases of design. He said we are very confident the additional funding will be approved.

c. Authorization for Agreement between Doli and PTSA to issue NTP by 10/1/25

- i. The Authority agreed that with discussion still ongoing, it is best to table this item for now. Lammi made a motion to table this item and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

d. Award of Old Nazareth Road Drainage Improvements to Doli

- i. Blanchfield made a motion to authorize the award of the Old Nazareth Road Drainage Improvements to the lowest responsible bidder of Doli Construction in the amount of \$3,358,340.00. He said the award letter will be sent to Doli no later than May 23rd in accordance with the contract documents. The authorization of the award is subject to further review of the bid and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- e. **Resolution 2025-2 – PennVEST Financial Assistance Application**
 - i. The Authority agreed that with discussion still ongoing, it is best to table this item for now. Lammi made a motion to table this item and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- f. **Resolution 2025-3 – 25th St. CFA Small Water & Sewer Grant Assignment**
 - i. White said we feel we can get a nice chunk of funding for this project and recommend a grant application be prepared for this funding. Blanchfield said the grant is for \$381,551.00, with at least a 15% match from the Authority which comes out to a total of \$67,333.00. Farley said the Township is holding roughly \$75,000.00 in escrow from developments along 25th street which is available for the authority to use as a match. Lammi made a motion to approve project assignment R010473.0442 and Gunther seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
 - ii. Blanchfield said we have in front of us Resolution 2025-02 which will allow us to submit the request for the funding for this project through the CFA Small Water & Sewer Grant for total funding of \$381,551.00. Swinsburg made a motion to approve the resolution and Gunther seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Blanchfield stated that there are endorsements needed for this grant from the County, LVPC, and local elected officials. Gunther said he will coordinate with the Township Planning Department on how to progress forward.
- g. **Authorize GIS Upgrade Package and Two iPads – NTE \$7,000.00**
 - i. Blanchfield said this will be used by Gunther and Public Works to monitor and document outfalls and other conveyance systems throughout the Township with a proposal totaling \$6,920.04, with a not to exceed cost approval of \$7,000.00. Gunther said this will provide us with an avenue for effective collection of data and pictures, and it will improve the efficiency of the Authority. He said Public Works is already familiar with the software, and that he has confirmed with HRG that they can assist him with training on the software. Gunther mentioned there is a monthly data cost of roughly \$100.00. Lammi agreed that this is a great tool and Kistler said that this is a necessary tool to continue improving. Lammi made a

motion to approve the NTE of \$7,000.00 and Swinsburg seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

h. Authorize Salzmann Hughes ONR Financial Review & Support Proposal - \$32,750

- i. Blanchfield said this was discussed at a previous meeting with our Solicitor and we have the proposal dated March 26th, 2025, in the amount of \$32,750.00 in front of us. Lammi made a motion to approve the Financial Review & Support Proposal in the amount of \$32,750.00 and Gunther seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Pyle said there typically are additional expenses incurred through costs that the Township incurred, which will bring the total to the \$50,000.00 that we have budgeted. Swinsburg asked if the additional costs would be reimbursed through PennVEST, and Pyle said he does not want to speak for them, but in the past he has seen the costs be reimbursed.

i. Fox Run Retrofit SCM Project Assignment

- i. Blanchfield asked how the Authority members are feeling in regard to all four of these projects. Swinsburg said he believes we will be tasked with completing some of these projects, but not all of them. Swinsburg suggested tabling for another month and discussing at the next Workshop meeting. Gunther agreed with having to complete some of these projects as well as agreed to table all four items for the time being. Gunther stated he would like to hear more from DEP in regard to how the permit requirements will change in the future. Lammi said that his concern is how the changes to the permit requirements will affect these four projects. Lammi stated that he has the same concern with the Hobson Street project currently being finalized. He said he does not understand why the DEP is changing from water quality requirements to volume-based requirements. He said we really need to focus on this discussion at the next Workshop meeting. Mitchell agreed with Lammi's statements. Godbout echoed the concerns over how the credits will be considered in the future. Swinsburg said if we move forward with the design of these projects now, we will be able to stay on schedule to get them completed within the current permit cycle. White said these projects are being proposed under the current permit, not the next cycle with the new requirements. White said we are pretty confident that at least three of these projects will be required in order to meet the current permit requirements. Swinsburg asked if it would be possible that we would complete these projects now and then have to alter the projects in a different way again under the new permit requirements, and White said no because we are maxing the water quality in these basins and in the future, we will be looking for additional sites to

work with. Lammi expressed his concerns over how much this is going to cost the Authority and residents of the Township. White agreed and stated that we are all working through this unfunded mandate together. White said DEP is looking at regional opportunities where you would be teaming with other municipalities. Farley stated that some of the confusion stems from being told originally that we would only need three of these projects to meet the permit requirements and now it is all four. White said that regardless of the design, most of the credits will be counted the same way, which means that the work we do under the current permit will count almost the same for the new permit requirements as well. Kistler said that he is concerned that the Authority is making long term financial commitments to satisfy capital projects within this permit cycle and that you are going to have to continue to take on more large projects in the next permit cycles which you will have to finance again. He said he is worried that it will balloon at some point in the future and the Authority agreed. A resident stated that if all four projects are solving a problem, they should just be fixed regardless of the current permit requirements. Gunther said there are not necessarily problems at these locations, we are just completing them to meet the permit requirements. Blanchfield said the initial cost to begin these projects is \$378,000.00 in engineering costs for all four. Lammi made a motion to table all four project items until a more detailed discussion can be held at a future meeting and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

j. Old Orchard Park SCM Project Assignment

- i. Tabled under item 9.I

k. Parkview Estates PRP SCM Project Assignment

- i. Tabled under item 9.I

l. Stones Crossing PRP SCM Project Assignment

- i. Tabled under item 9.I

m. Updated 2025 Budget/Re-Approval

- i. Lammi stated that we are on our third version of the Budget which was sent to the Authority for review. Lammi said the bottom line has continued to not change. Lammi made a motion to approve the third version of the 2025 Authority budget and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Lammi said he will send the updated Budget to Gunther to post on the website.

10. For the Good of the Order

- a. Blanchfield stated that Earth Day was coming up this Saturday from 10am-2pm at Fairview Park and it is shaping up to be a big event. Bellis said it is going to be a great and well-attended event.

- b.** Gunther stated that the Authority and Township staff would be switching to Granicus to better manage all data and documents related to the Authority. Gunther said that the software is already widely used across various Township groups. Blanchfield asked if this will replace SharePoint and Godbout said they will be used together with SharePoint being the home for document storage.

11. Next meeting: May 21st, 2025

12. Adjournment

- a.** Lammi made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Gunther seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 6:18PM.