

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Stormwater Authority Meeting Minutes

May 21st, 2025, 5PM, 3 Weller Pl, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

a. Present: Robert Blanchfield, Robert A. Lammi, Kendall M. Mitchell, Matthew Gunther, Craig Swinsburg, David Pyle, James Farley, Rebecca Frederickson, Scott Kistler, Jamie Paetzell, and Zach Trexler.

b. Absent: None

c. The meeting was called to order at 5:00PM.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 16th, 2025, and May 13th, 2025.

a. Lammi made a motion to approve the minutes from April 16th, 2025, and Gunther seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously by voice vote.

b. Gunther made a motion to approve the minutes from May 13th, 2025, and Mitchell seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Public Comment, Other Communications

a. Robert Fehnel – 2049 Stocker Mill Road

i. Asked if a deck with rock underneath is considered impervious and Gunther confirmed. Gunther said it is something we are looking at, but it would take a lot of time to inspect every deck in the Township. He said it really comes down to the density of the soil and we would need to conduct soil testing as part of these inspections. Pyle said we consider decks impervious because that is what the Ordinance says, and we wish to stay consistent. He said in the future we could address the Ordinance if the Authority desires.

b. Bill McCreery – 3043 Swanson Street

i. Discussed the recent flooding on his property. He said every time it rains the swale overflows and water keeps getting closer to his and his neighbor's house. He said the water is not making it to the inlet in the street. Kistler said we received a call from the neighbor about the flooding who stated there was some debris that was causing the flooding, and very little was found. He said we could not do anything to alleviate the problem. Blanchfield asked if this has happened before, and Kistler said historically this area has had its flooding issues. He said it takes an extended period to empty itself out and relieve the entire system. McCreery said the neighbors continually clean the swale. Blanchfield asked where the water goes and Kistler said there is a private pond towards the end of Val Vista that it reaches, and that it is on private property. Lammi said the area is so flat that it has always been difficult to

move the water out of the area. Blanchfield asked if there is any kind of remedy for this situation. Kistler said it would be difficult due to the flatness of the area. He said we could possibly increase the pitch to try and help but we would need permission from the property owners. Kistler said the communication should run through Gunther because it is a drainage easement that we would need access to. Kistler said we would need to gather information prior to making any changes to the area.

- c. Blanchfield provided an update from the DeWalt family who shared that he is making progress through their credit process.

5. Reports

a. Solicitor

- i. Blanchfield confirmed with Gibson that the project assignment policy is being worked on between Gibson and the Township Solicitor.

6. Committee Reports

a. Engineering

- i. Pyle stated that the Old Nazareth Road project is still progressing through utility work and that we are still targeting the July PennVEST window. From there, we will go into the resolution and begin the LGUDA (Local Government Unit Debt Act) process.

b. Finance

- i. Nothing at this time outside of the agenda.

7. Township Staff Comments

a. Public Works

- i. Blanchfield said we received the monthly report from Kistler for the month of April. He said the bill totals \$79,734.80 and will be included in the quarterly transfer. Kistler said our team has been staying on top of it with all the recent rain as far as stormwater inlet cleaning is concerned, and we have cleaned the Hobson Street basin a few times recently since the current system clogs almost immediately when it rains. He said we have been very limited as far as street sweeping or inspecting inlets is concerned due to the weather. Kistler said we are getting closer to hitting the season average for rainfall after being in a drought the last 8-9 months.
- ii. Kistler stated the new Street Sweeper is expected around the first week or two of July.

b. Public Services

- i. Nothing at this time.

c. MS4

- i. Gunther said he has been working with residents lately with any issues coming to the Township.

- ii. Gunther announced that Trexler received a promotion to Deputy Director of Stormwater/MS4 and that he looks forward to working with him more in the future.

8. New Business

a. April Invoice Package

- i. Blanchfield stated the April invoice package was received with bills from HRG for \$136,921.31, Salzmann & Hughes for \$8,234.50, and the Morning Call for \$1,204.00 for a grand total of \$146,359.81. Lammi made a motion to approve the April invoice package and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

b. PTSA, Kobalt and Bondex MOU Approval

- i. Blanchfield said there are a number of items not yet completed for the Kingwood Street project. He said they include milling and paving, the basecoat and topcoat, flow channels, erosion control measures, and repairs to the bike path. He said Kobalt has subcontracted the work out to Haines & Kibblehouse for completion of the project. Blanchfield stated that construction will start the first week of June. Gibson said the MOU sets the roadmap for how everything will be finished. Lammi thanked Gibson for his work on the MOU. Gunther made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and Lammi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

c. Resolution 2025-3 – Portnoff Collection Contract Approval

- i. Farley explained that the Township uses Portnoff for the collection of fees and we assumed we could add stormwater fees to the existing process, but because the Authority sets and administers the fees, they will need a separate contract. Farley said they are a very reputable organization. He said up until this point we have not sent anyone to collections so that they had an opportunity to go through the appeals process. He said Portnoff uses multiple steps, and they communicate very well with the residents. Farley suggested to the Authority to call him with any questions. Swinsburg asked who would be charged for what. Farley said there is an upfront fee per customer sent to collections, but that Portnoff charges that fee to the residents. Lammi asked if Farley and his department would be responsible for handling this process and he confirmed. He said Portnoff sends a weekly file with all accounts that are eligible to be sent to collections, and that stormwater fees will now be added as an additional layer to this document and process that already exists. Blanchfield asked Gibson if there would be a resolution and agreement in place, and Gibson said there would be a resolution appointing Portnoff as the designated solicitor for collection and an agreement for the service contract. Lammi

made a motion to approve both the Resolution, and the Agreement and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

d. Fox Run Retrofit SCM Project Assignment Approval

- i. Blanchfield stated that this cost would get the project all the way up to construction. He said it is a retrofit of the existing stormwater basin swale that will protect and discharge the water going to the Schoeneck Creek. Blanchfield said the total cost for the Project Assignment is \$99,750.00. Lammi stated that for this project as well as the Parkview project, these areas have been engineered more recently, so there is a possibility that some of the work you are proposing to do within this project assignment has been done already. Pyle suggested this is a great idea and they will look into it further. Swinsburg made a motion to approve the Fox Run Project Assignment in the amount of \$99,750.00 and Gunther seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

e. Old Orchard Park SCM Project Assignment Approval

- i. Blanchfield said this one is a little more complicated because nothing currently exists in the park. He said this project assignment is the design of a new stormwater control measure to discharge water to the Lehigh River through either a basin or underground system. Blanchfield said the project assignment is valued at \$99,500.00 and would take the project all the way up to construction. Lammi asked how sediment is removed from an underground system, and Pyle said they can be designed to allow for entry for cleaning purposes. Kistler said we maintain an underground system that we enter and maintain annually. He said in 18 years, we have yet to have to clean any sediment from the inside of the system. Lammi asked where the discharge from this system will go, and Pyle said he can check with Ryan Cummings to get a definite answer. Lammi questioned whether the pipe going down Old Orchard would be large enough to handle all of this additional discharge. Lammi made a motion to approve the Old Orchard Park Project Assignment in the amount of \$99,500.00 and Gunther seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

f. Parkview Estates PRP SCM Project Assignment Approval

- i. Blanchfield stated this will be a basin retrofit project that will be discharged to Schoeneck Creek. This project will bring the existing basin up to current DEP standards. Blanchfield stated the project assignment is a total of \$89,500.00 and will take the project up to construction. Blanchfield stated if anything has to change in the future after this project is completed, it would be a relatively easy and less expensive change than

normal. Swinsburg made a motion to approve the Parkview Estates Project Assignment in the amount of \$89,500.00 and Gunther seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

g. Stones Crossing PRP SCM Project Assignment Approval

- i. Blanchfield stated this project is another existing basin retrofit to meet the current MS4 permit requirements through a revised outlet structure and revised grading to help aid infiltration. He said this project assignment is valued at \$86,500.00 and will take the project up to construction. Lammi made a motion to approve the Stones Crossing Project Assignment in the amount of \$86,500.00 and Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

h. ONR Project Update

- i. Gunther said we have had a couple on site utility meetings and there are additional follow up meetings to be had specifically related to the utility poles and existing guidewire locations. He said we are working on finalizing all the easements. Pyle said the PennVEST update will be happening in July, but we do not know which meeting in July it will be. In August we will provide an update to the Authority for your resolution and then the LGUDA (Local Government Unit Debt Act) process will occur. Lammi asked if we can start the work when we receive the approval, Pyle said no. All documentation will need to be into PennVEST by September 3rd, and the settlement date will be towards the end of September, assuming they approve the additional request. Pyle said if the updated loan amount does not get approved, you could cover the rest of the expenses through the budget while cutting other expenses. He said you could also descope the project to fit inside the approved loan amount. He said you could also resubmit to PennVEST in November for the full amount. Lammi said he would prefer looking through the budget to find the money if need be so we can continue pushing forward with this project. Blanchfield stated if we are going to do it, we should do it correctly. Pyle said a portion of the \$500,000.00 will need to be paid in cash because PennVEST will not approve pavement restoration. Lammi said he does not want to take any risks on prices rising. Blanchfield asked for the most up to date start time for this project, and Pyle said the notice to proceed can be given to the contractor prior to settlement so that they can begin ordering materials. Kistler said some of the delay will be due to UGI and their large project to upgrade their gas lines in the area. He said our initial discussions had planned to align our projects, so we don't need to do anything twice. Kistler said this is where the Spring start time originally came from. He said that ESWA also has a project planned but they will be

in and out pretty quickly. Lammi said in his opinion it might be easier to install some of the equipment and materials during the Winter as to avoid the rainstorms like we are seeing now. Kistler said the contractor does not see this as a major problem and they are confident they can convert from the old to the new system easily.

i. Wedgewood Update

- i. Blanchfield said we had a field meeting with HRG to inspect the area. Blanchfield said the engineering is about 60% complete at this time where they are looking at both the upper and lower portions of the project. He said the project cost is estimated to come in around \$4 million. He said we are still looking to split the project into two phases, with the lower portion being completed first. Blanchfield said the temporary repairs done by the Township are still holding firm. Lammi asked if we will be submitting to PennVEST for the full \$4 million, and Blanchfield said no, we will submit to PennVEST first for the lower portion, but we do not know what the cost will be for this phase yet as HRG is still working on it. Kistler said we should split the project because we have not even begun to look at the failed system on the Southwood side, so we should get the large pipe installed prior to investing into the Wedgewood side. He said if we do it this way, we can help both Wedgewood and Southwood first. He said this will fix the destruction that occurred in 2023 and that everything above this area is working as it should be. Lammi said he would like to take a site visit to the Southwood side. Kistler said there is a sanitary sewer interceptor in this area that is very vulnerable. He said if this Southwood system fails again, there is a risk that it could take out the 16-inch interceptor which would leave us all with a very big problem.

j. Schoeneck Creek WRPP Update

- i. Gunther said we are continuing to perform bank pin monitoring for the erosion study. We are looking to set up soil testing for the project as well. Gunther said he received approval from the Board of Supervisors to apply for the WRPP grant through the DCED. He said it is due by the end of the month, and we are requesting the full \$300,000.00.

9. For the Good of the Order

- a. Township Supervisor Charles Bellis III said HRG has been on site on Old Nazareth Road a lot lately, which is good to see. He also thanked the Authority for all that they have done for the residents of Kingwood.

10. Next meeting: June 25th, 2025

11. 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 6:14PM.