

MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

REGULAR MEETING

JUNE 9, 2025

The following were in ATTENDANCE:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jennifer Caron, President
Joshua Nagy, Vice President
Dean W. Villone, Commissioner
Charles Brown, Commissioner
Joseph Swartz, Commissioner

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Rebecca Davis, Township Manager
Steve Miner, Township Solicitor
David Holl, Public Safety Director
Alycia Knoll, Finance Director (via Teams)
Isaac Sweeney, P.E., CED Director
Benjamin Powell, P.E., Public Works Director
Anthony Deaven, EMS Captain
Douglas Foltz, Police Captain
Nate Sterling, Administrative Secretary
Sierah Emerson, CED Administrative Specialist
Reneé Greenawalt, Recording Secretary

President Caron called the June 9, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 6:01 PM. She announced Proof of Publication for the meeting was available for review. This was followed by a moment of silence and the pledge of allegiance.

MEETING MINUTES

President Caron requested a motion to approve the minutes of May 27, 2025, Regular Meeting. Commissioner **VILLONE** made the motion, seconded by Commissioner **SWARTZ**. The motion passed 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS:

Public Safety Life Saving Awards

EMS Captain Deaven presented Public Safety Life Saving Awards to honor several 911 dispatchers, fire, police, and EMS personnel for their swift and decisive response to a resident's urgent need. The resident and their family members attended the ceremony to extend personal gratitude to the responders. In addition, Police Captain Foltz presented Life Saving Awards and Unit Citations in recognition of exceptional excellence in responding to several incidents.

President Caron expressed appreciation and congratulations to all award recipients.

Police Lieutenant Appointment - RESOLUTION 2025-R-29

Director Holl presented the item for discussion and possible action, to consider for approval of **RESOLUTION 2025-R-29**, appointing Alex J. Milletics. as Lieutenant in the Lower Allen Township Police Department, effective June 9, 2025.

Commissioner **BROWN** offered the motion to approve **RESOLUTION 2025-R-29**. Vice President **NAGY** seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 5-0.

Police Lieutenant Appointment – Promotion Ceremony

Director Holl welcomed guests and extended congratulations in honor and recognition of Lieutenant Alex J. Milletics. Magisterial District Judge Christopher Delozier administered the Oath of Office to Lieutenant Milletics, followed by the presentation of the Lieutenant's badge and pin by Police Captain Foltz and Lieutenant Milletics' family members.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Any item on the agenda.

President Caron invited members of the audience to identify themselves should they wish to comment on any item on the agenda or any business pertinent to the Township. She noted that discussion would be limited to five minutes per person.

Township resident, Katie Hall expressed a desire to comment on agenda item 9A (Highland Park).

CONSENT AGENDA:

President Caron stated that any Commissioner, staff member, or anyone in attendance who would like to have an item on the Consent Agenda removed for further discussion could do so at that time. There was none.

Items on the Consent Agenda:

- a. Check Register of May 31, 2025, in the amount of \$1,206,726.97.
- b. Check Register of June 6, 2025, in the amount of \$149,230.68.

Commissioner **BROWN** moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Vice President **NAGY** seconded. With no further discussion, the consent agenda was approved by a vote of 5-0.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Removal from Probationary Status

Director Holl introduced the item for discussion and possible action, to consider for approval, moving Nathan McDowell, Police Officer from probationary to regular full-time status, effective June 10, 2025.

Commissioner **SWARTZ** made the motion. Commissioner **VILLONE** seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Highland Park Playground Update

Director Holl introduced the item for discussion. He reported that staff including Manager Davis, Director Powell and Police Captain Foltz met internally on June 6, 2025, to discuss the concerns and identify potential solutions. In summary, two weeks of camera footage from the park had been reviewed and as a result, the School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to West Shore School District was able to make some identification of students and contacted parents of several minors observed in the video. The SRO will spend time addressing the park concerns during the summer months. Directed patrol shifts of the park will be increased as time allows. All officers now have direct access to the cameras in patrol vehicles and their phones. Training has been provided to facilitate their use, and additional monitors have been installed in the patrol office to review camera activity in real time. Community members are encouraged to make reports as incidents occur. During an event in progress, reports can be made to 911. Otherwise, incidents can be reported to the Crimewatch website. Both offer anonymous reporting options. Public Works will be installing additional park rule signs and "Young Lungs at Play" signs in the park as an added deterrent. All Township parks are designated as tobacco free areas. The signage assists with leverage for enforcement. Director Holl also reported that staff discussed sidewalk connectivity along Chatham Road and the improvements planned for the replacement of the tennis court and extended sidewalk and fencing,

which will facilitate deterrence through environmental design. He noted that the situation at Highland Park will be continuously evaluated for opportunities to improve.

Police Captain Foltz added that there were 11 calls made this year with respect to Highland Park Playground incidents. He noted that assistance from the public is needed when there are active incidents in progress and reiterated the tools available such as anonymous reports to Crimewatch.

Commissioner Brown asked whether the cameras had facial recognition ability. In response, Director Holl noted they did not, but that images from the video could be captured and searched for purposes of identification.

Commissioner Brown referenced Township Ordinance Chapter 151 about enforcement of banning individuals from parks in the case of repeat offenses and suggested there was an opportunity for additional clarity on the criteria for penalty about repeat offenders and the enforcement of consequences.

Commissioner Villone expressed appreciation for staff working on the issue. He noted his preference for deterrence over penalty of banning through ordinance. He commended the utilization of the SRO who is someone familiar with the students and having that individual focused on the issue would be helpful. He also noted appreciation for the quality of the security cameras and the plans for additional signage.

Commissioner Swartz expressed appreciation to everyone involved for their efforts in finding solutions. He suggested leveraging the utility of the Adopt-a-Park Program to focus attention on the park. Director Holl encouraged groups interested in meeting through the vehicle of the program to submit information relevant to the public safety concerns through the existing infrastructure and systems of Crimewatch.

Commissioner Swartz asked about the idea of using the tennis courts for pickleball. Manager Davis noted that the Parks and Recreation Committee had discussed the idea, however concerns had been expressed related to parking and noise.

Vice President Nagy expressed support to explore inclusion of more forceful language in a revised park ordinance related to rules enforcement. Commissioner Swartz noted agreement to strengthen the penalty language and suggested adding cannabis to the definition of tobacco products.

Commissioner **SWARTZ** offered a motion to direct staff to prepare amendments to Chapter 151 of the Township Ordinance to provide for mechanisms to ban individuals from parks in the event of repeat offenses and to consider amendments to the definition of tobacco products to encompass cannabis.

Commissioner **BROWN** seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Public Comment

Katie Hall, 1403 Letchworth Road, expressed appreciation to the Board and staff for putting so much consideration into the park and noted her support for the solutions presented. She asked that the posted signage includes the non-emergency phone number to facilitate effective and timely reporting. She encouraged a comprehensive approach and noted support for the park improvements. She also suggested ideas such as providing resources to support temporary sports such as soccer, baseball, etc. to bring other activities to the park to help fill the park with people engaged in activity rather than those causing nuisance issues.

Commissioner Swartz proposed the idea of a community garden, or some other amenities, where one of the existing concrete pads is slated for demolition. Manager Davis recommended approaching the Recreation & Parks Board with a proposal.

John Hannon, 1496 Letchworth Road, also expressed his appreciation for the focus on the issues. He asked for clarification on what could be reported to Crimewatch. Director Holl said that active criminal activity should be reported to 911. Other incidents can be submitted to Crimewatch. Mr. Hannan noted some concern about activity taking place out of the sightline of where cameras are placed. He also asked for more information on the Adopt-a-Park initiative. Manager Davis noted that information is available on the Township website and that she would also follow up with him directly.

Resident, Mr. Pat McHenney, expressed appreciation for the Public Safety response and noted his opinion that there are insufficient amenities provided at the park, such that the environment lends itself to undesirable behaviors taking place. He suggested a formal review of the park design to determine what changes could be made at a fundamental level to facilitate the desired space for residents.

President Caron expressed her appreciation to everyone for their input and directed staff to provide an update at the next meeting, and to add the issue of brainstorming other uses and designs for the park to the agenda of the next Recreation & Parks Board meeting on July 23, 2025, providing a good opportunity for residents to engage with the members of that board. She thanked the residents for their neighborhood advocacy. Commissioner Swartz added that park tours, which are scheduled over the summer months, are also open to the public like other meetings.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Zoning Hearing Board Update

Director Sweeney reported that no new applications were received.

SLD #2024-08 Merritts Properties, LLC Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan

Director Sweeney introduced the item for discussion and possible action, to accept a 90-day extension for SLD #2024-08 Merritts Properties, LLC Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan.

Commissioner **SWARTZ** motioned to accept the 90-day extension for SLD #2-24-08. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **VILLONE** and passed by a vote of 5-0.

FINANCE

Approving Fee-in-Lieu Funds for Township Parks and Recreation projects

Director Knoll introduced the item for discussion and possible action, to approve Fee-in-Lieu Funds for proposed Township Parks and Recreation projects. Referring to her memo of 6/4/25, she explained that the Finance Committee had discussed several necessary projects and improvements for parks. Currently the Township holds \$799,695 of Fee-in-Lieu Funds for such projects and improvements. Of that, \$320,000 is earmarked for the Beacon Hill Park Project leaving \$479,695 available. The Finance Committee proposes utilizing funds for the following:

AEDs for Wass Park, Highland Park, and Pete’s Field	\$ 13,500
Cameras for Wass Park and Cedar Run Park	\$ 46,750
Cameras for Pete’s Field	\$ 3,500
Gateway sign and small passive park at 18 th and Hummel Ave	\$180,000
Highland Park Tennis Court reconstruction	\$110,000
Total	\$353,750

Commissioner Villone confirmed that the Fee-in-Lieu Funds were not reflected in the General Fund balance.

Commissioner Brown mentioned a donation to the Township from the Peyton Walker Foundation to fund an AED for Lower Allen Community Park (LACP). Director Holl noted that a press event would be held in coordination with the installation.

Vice President Nagy cited the gateway sign and tennis court projects and asked whether approval for the funds was administrative in nature or approval to proceed with the projects and asked whether there was feedback from the Recreation & Parks Board. Manager Davis explained that staff are requesting approval to proceed with starting the projects. The design for the tennis court project is complete and feedback on that project has been provided by the Recreation & Parks Board. The tennis court project has already been approved and budgeted for, but additional funding was necessary to complete the project. The pricing is current, and the contractor is available through COSTARS.

Commissioner Villone asked if the project at 18th Street and Hummel Avenue would be bid out as one project. Manager Davis confirmed it would be one project and that the Board would still have time to weigh in on the design for the gateway project. The \$180,000 is the engineer's estimate.

Vice President Nagy suggested delaying approval on the last two items (Gateway Project and Highland Park Tennis Courts) citing a desire to seek feedback from the Recreation & Parks Board leadership. Manager Davis noted concern about delaying the tennis court project as prices are rapidly escalating. She described the significant improvements in the reconstruction of the tennis court to make it regulation size with a tennis court surface, as well as the addition of ADA accessibility, stormwater infrastructure and fencing. She also noted the opportunity of replacing the second pavement surface with a rainwater garden and more open areas to be used for sports, creating more sustainability in the park.

Director Powell added that even a 2-week delay could make the project difficult to complete by the fall. There are two COSTARS vendors under consideration for selection. Director Powell shared his recollection that the concerns discussed amongst the Recreation & Parks Board members were focused on the proposed parking spaces and not the tennis court reconstruction.

With no further discussion, Commissioner **SWARTZ** offered a motion to approve the Fee-in-Lieu Funds for proposed Township Recreation & Parks projects as proposed. Commissioner **BROWN** seconded. The motion was approved 5-0.

MANAGER

Pennsylvania Municipal League (PML)

Manager Davis presented the item for discussion and possible action, to consider support for proposed legislation that would allow for the potential increase of the Local Services Tax (LST). A bipartisan co-sponsorship memo proposes to increase the tax cap from \$52 to \$156 and provides each municipality with the option to decide whether to implement an increase. Manager Davis noted that the current LST for the Township generates \$780,000 annually, which would amount to \$1.5 million if increased to the maximum amount.

Commissioner Villone said he would support the legislation due to funding needs of some municipalities and appreciation for the opt-in/opt-out options, but did not support tax increases generally. He also noted his confidence that the Board will continue to be fiscally prudent, and good financial stewards well into the future.

Commissioner Swartz echoed the comments of Commissioner Villone, noting appreciation for the flexibility to raise revenue in a way that is less regressive than raising property taxes or service fees. He noted that with few options to raise revenue, the proposed legislation offers flexibility for tailored increases, which he supports.

Commissioner Brown expressed his support on a statewide level but would not necessarily be in support of an increase in the LST for Lower Allen Township.

Manager Davis offered to prepare a draft letter to legislators for review. Commissioners urged that the letter should emphasize the importance of including the opt/in option to support municipal autonomy in making decisions that impact their constituency.

Auto Abandonment Hearing

Manager Davis presented the item for discussion and possible action, to authorize an auto abandonment hearing pursuant to the PA Vehicle Code. Solicitor Miner described the details regarding the situation whereby an out-of-state attorney representing M&T Bank requested the hearing. PA Vehicle Code provides such a hearing to give leverage in disputing costs associated with towing and salvage companies. He also encouraged the development of a policy to address this situation. He explained the need for a policy and procedure, noting that the situation had never occurred before in the Township, it is common in urban areas and requires a hearing conducted by a civilian officer for the municipality. It is an administrative, not a criminal matter.

Commissioner VILLONE offered a motion to authorize the hearing pursuant to the vehicle code and to authorize the solicitor to schedule the hearing; and directed staff to appoint a neutral party to conduct the hearing and to create a policy on auto abandonment procedures. Commissioner SWARTZ seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

Township Website Update

Manager Davis announced the unveiling of the new Township website, which was launched on Thursday, June 5, 2025. She commended staff members, Sierah Emerson and Nate Sterling for their work on the project. She demonstrated various pages of the website, highlighting several new features and services for residents. Some pages on the site will continue to be developed such as a FAQ section for each department. The new website provides significantly enhanced user experience and service offerings.

Commissioners expressed excitement and appreciation for the finished product and commended the efforts of the staff.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Commissioner Swartz wished residents a Happy Pride Month. He noted that the Traffic Calming Committee held their third meeting and expressed appreciation to Director Powell for his leadership in that work. He congratulated Lieutenant Milletics and all the public safety award recipients. Offering perspective as an attorney who works in government, he stated his philosophy that the fundamental purpose for government is protecting human life, emphasizing that the efforts of the public safety staff in accomplishing that makes him very proud and grateful. He thanked his Highland Park neighbors for taking the time to advocate for their neighborhood and expressed optimism in the measures discussed to achieve improvement. He also noted his desire to further consider the Adopt-a-Park Program.

Commissioner Villone expressed appreciation to the residents of Highland Park. He said that members of the Board are listening and want to help to make things better. He noted his confidence that positive changes would take place. Addressing the proposed LST increase, he noted his intent to gauge the interest of other municipalities when he engages during an upcoming meeting and would report back. He noted the Public Safety awards and expressed his gratitude for being able to recognize those accomplishments, continuing the tradition of recognition and the path of excellence. In closing he gave a shout out to staff for their efforts in developing the new website.

Commissioner Brown congratulated the Cedar Cliff High School baseball team, participating in the 6A State Championship, wishing them luck. He thanked Manager Davis and the Directors for their informative departmental reports. He expressed congratulations to Lieutenant Milletics on his promotion and all those receiving awards. He thanked residents for being community leaders and making their neighborhood safe. He cited the Township Comprehensive Plan and the associated surveys which indicated that residents resoundingly want more parks which are the greatest assets in the community and should be prioritized.

Vice President Nagy thanked residents for their comments on Highland Park, and the staff for looking at ideas for solutions. He commended all recipients of the Life Saving Awards, noting the extraordinary teamwork between Fire, Police and EMS. Referring to the earlier comments on the importance of parks as community resources, he noted that parks and green space have always ranked high in what residents want for their community. He shared that he hears common complaints about the continued development in the Township and the loss of green space and expressed a desire for the Township to pursue a green space preservation program to protect the land that has not yet been developed, and for that to dovetail with the current pursuit of rework of the zoning ordinance.

In response to Vice President Nagy's comments, Board members expressed consensus to pursue a green space preservation program in the Township.

President Caron echoed many of the sentiments shared by other members, noting special appreciation for those involved with the lifesaving event of a Township resident and friend, congratulations to award recipients, Lieutenant Milletics, and expressed thanks to the residents who participated in the meeting. She also recognized the accomplishments and work of Manager Davis and highlighted her role as the first female Township Manager of Lower Allen.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Caron announced the meeting would recess for the executive session to discuss two items: 1) Update on Merritts Properties, LLC appeal, and 2) Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) request appeal. The meeting recessed for the Executive Session at 8:37 PM.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:04 PM.

Commissioner **BROWN** motioned to authorize staff and the solicitor to negotiate a settlement of the Merritts Properties, LLC appeal matter. Commissioner **VILLONE** seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 5-0.

Commissioner **SWARTZ** motioned to authorize the solicitor to pursue mediation with the PA Office of Open Records to address a recent RTKL request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **BROWN** and approved by a vote of 5-0.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.