

**I. OPENING**

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Announcement of Executive Session (if applicable)
- E. Public Comment Procedure

**REVISED**

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT – TOWNSHIP RESIDENT ONLY – 3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**III. PRESENTATIONS/HEARINGS**

- A. McMahon Associates – WalkWorks Grant – Status Report of Draft Active Transportation Plan
- B. Eagle Scout Project at Heller Homestead Park

**IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS**

- A. ~~Cobble Creek Authorization to End Maintenance Period~~ Tabled

**V. TOWNSHIP BUSINESS ITEMS**

- A. Discussion of Senate Bill No. 597
- B. Discussion of Tax Collection Services
- C. Discussion of Fire Company Funding
- D. Discussion on Re-Opening Township Offices
- E. Resolution #55-2021 – Authorizing Execution of Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Roads Grant

**VI. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ITEMS**

- A. Approval of June 2, 2021 Council Minutes
- B. Approval of May 2021 Financial Reports

**VII. COUNCIL & STAFF REPORTS**

- A. Township Manager
- B. Council/Jr. Council Member
- C. Solicitor
- D. Engineer

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – NON-RESIDENTS ONLY**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- Hellertown Area Library Board: June 22, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m.
- Planning Commission: June 24, 2021
- Saucon Rail Trail Oversight Commission: June 28, 2021 @ Upper Saucon @ 6:00 p.m.
- Zoning Hearing Board: June 28, 2021
- Environmental Advisory Council: July 13, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m.
- Landfill Committee: July 17, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.
- Township Council: July 21, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m.
- Parks & Recreation: August 2, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m.
- Saucon Valley Partnership: August 11, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

**I. OPENING**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The General Business & Developer meeting of Lower Saucon Township Council was called to order on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 6:33 p.m., via Zoom, with Mrs. Sandra Yerger, presiding. Mrs. Yerger said the Township building remains closed to the public. This meeting is being held through Zoom. Information to join the meeting is provided on our website.

**ROLL CALL: Present:** Sandra Yerger, President; Jason Banonis, Vice President; Thomas Carocci, Kristen Stauffer and Priscilla deLeon, Council Members; Leslie Huhn, Township Manager; Cathy Gorman, Director of Finance; Jim Young, Zoning Officer; Linc Treadwell, Township Solicitor; Brien Kocher, Township Engineer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)** – Mrs. Yerger said Council did meet in Executive Session to discuss possible property acquisition.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to hold a hearing at the July Council meeting and to offer the difference in the respective prices for parcel No. 2020-6.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. deLeon

**ROLL CALL:** 4-0 (Mrs. Stauffer – Abstained as she wasn't present at the Executive Session)

**PUBLIC COMMENT PROCEDURE**

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT – TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS ONLY – 3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS** – Mrs. Yerger said we do welcome input from everybody but we ask that you keep your comments to three minutes per item. If you want to speak, please raise your hand.

**III. PRESENTATIONS/HEARINGS**

**A. MCMAHON ASSOCIATES – WALKWORKS GRANT – STATUS REPORT OF DRAFT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Mrs. Yerger said Natasha Manbeck with McMahon Associates will present Council with a status report of the Active Transportation Plan (ATP).

Ms. Manbeck said she was here in April which was the public kickoff for public involvement in the program. They have some draft improvements and wanted to provide an update. What is an Active Transportation Plan (ATP)? Quick refresher, they are identifying strategies to better accommodate hiking, walking and public transit in the community. Specifically for Lower Saucon, they are focused on improving walkability in a way that supports healthy lifestyles and access to recreational opportunities as well as positive economic growth in the community. This project is being funded through a grant provided by the PA WalkWorks Program. She showed an overview of their schedule and they are halfway through. They have completed the “Existing Conditions Analysis” and are wrapping up “Identification of Infrastructure Improvements”. Over the coming months, they will be summarizing all of this in the draft report, which will be presented to Council in September.

Ms. Manbeck said the Township at the outset of the project with the help of our Steering Committee identified some of our focus areas for the plan. Obviously, the Saucon Rail Trail (SRT) is an incredible asset for the Active Transportation Network and for walking and biking. Two of the focused areas, multiple ones, are related to connecting people, residents and areas to the SRT, particularly the 412 corridor and Meadows Road area as well as the Polk Valley corridor and the residential area sandwiched between Route 378 and the SRT. Another focused area is the Route 378 corridor which is a broader focus for the Township and we are looking at how to create a consistent cohesive and existing streetscape that can support the Township plan and envision for continued economic growth along that corridor. In April they opened an interactive map and an opportunity for public comment. They accepted public comment through the month of April and May and received over 80 different comments. It was a great response and they've used a number of the comments to inform the recommendations she will be sharing this evening.

Ms. Manbeck said you will see from the cluster map, it shows the points that people submitted comments related to many of them which are aligned with the focused areas so we do have a cluster of comments down in the Meadows Road and Route 412 area; and also in the residential area and Route 378.

Ms. Manbeck said one of the things they developed for the ATP is a toolbox and this identifies different types of infrastructure that supports walking and biking, so some of these are probably very familiar to you like the SRT and marked crosswalks. There are some types of facilities that may not be as familiar to you and you may not already have in LST. They've evaluated whether there are locations where these other types of facilities might support where biking and walking are appropriate. There are some examples included shared travel lanes or sharrow which the picture in the bottom left is Broad Street in Bethlehem. Another one is a bicycle lane which is a dedicated typically 5' to 6' wide striped lane along the road for bicycle use and then yield roadway where low travel speeds, low volume and cars and bicycles and some pedestrians have shared some space and yield to each other. The ATP toolbox will be included and include these and a number of other different types of infrastructure that might be appropriate in LST that might support walking and biking.

Ms. Manbeck said she will go through draft maps that show potential connection in the focused areas. She wanted to emphasize this is a plan, so they are identifying potential connections and infrastructure improvements but each of the connections they identify will have to go through further study, evaluation, design and construction before it could be implemented. As part of that process, funding may have to be identified and secured and you may have to secure with partners like PennDOT, neighboring municipalities and maybe even adjacent property owners. Some of them are a lot easier to implement and others may take a longer time. All of that will be reflected in the plan and captured in the implementation plan. They wanted to share some of the ideas for the potential connections. One of the Township priorities is connection to the SRT and this map shows the SRT, Meadows Road and the Polk Valley area. Building upon the focused area, we identified some improvement for Meadows as well as 412, additionally a trail connection and yield roadway connection from Polk Valley Park to the SRT and supporting Hellertown's plan for Polk Valley Greenway Trail connecting from the school to Polk Valley to the SRT. Bicycle lanes along Skibo transitioning into potential sections and are going into the Borough. Focusing on Meadows Road and 412 corridors, for Meadows Road the key is the bridge that is currently closed. PennDOT as well as the county are currently working on plans to reopen or replace the bridge and the Township is in close coordination with PennDOT projects. Any improvements along Meadows Road would be tied and linked directly with the bridge plans and dependent upon the design and solution elected for that bridge.

Mr. Banonis said there's been a development today that you and everyone else may find interesting. Lehigh Valley Live has reported today as of late this morning that funding was approved for officials to move forward with removing the crumbling Meadows Road Bridge in LST. The LV Transportation Study members on Wednesday morning approved \$350,000 in Federal funds for an emergency situation. The bridge is scheduled to go out for construction 2024, but the collapse of the stone arches this year meant the bridge had to come down sooner.

Ms. Manbeck said thank you for chiming in as she knew the Township was in coordination with PennDOT and project partners. That's good news to make it a safer situation given the current condition of the bridge and she knows that PennDOT and the county will be moving forward with this.

Ms. Manbeck said the Township would work with PennDOT and other partners on improvement for the Meadows Road corridor and particularly the connection from the SRT and across the hopefully new bridge to Route 412. They are showing two options, one would be a buffer trail. It could be potentially be on either side of Meadows Road but they are showing it along the side of the creek. It

provides as many of you who walked on that and enjoyed it. Some sections are now closed as it's a very steep in view of the creek and connection. They also know that space is tight along that corridor and there is another option for a buffered shoulder or walkway. It wouldn't be necessarily design standards for both bicycle and pedestrian use but it would provide some additional space to walk along the shoulder and make the connection along the SRT and 412 specifically the Giant shopping center. For Route 412, the sidewalks from Hellertown Borough kind of end abruptly so the plan identifies continuing the sidewalk along the west side of Route 412 and helping to make the connection down to Meadows and from there a trail connection to the Giant shopping center. A lot of people are out there walking and biking today and there's transit along the corridor and a number of destinations people want to walk between. This will help to provide that connection.

Ms. Manbeck said Route 378 which was another focused area. For the corridor overall and particularly the northern stretch, as those have driven along the corridor, there are lane drops and lanes that are added and it creates some confusion and also some safety issues as reported by the Township police as being unclear and people trying to pass maybe when there is or isn't a lane and speed along this section. They are recommending that the Township work with PennDOT and the City and evaluate that section of the corridor and look at the travel lanes and look what might be needed to support the vehicular movement but also improve safety along the corridor with the potential of coming and providing three lane cross section if that is found to be supportive of the traffic needs along the corridor.

Ms. Manbeck said from a bicycle or pedestrian perspective, they identified a core area from the Saucon Valley Square shopping center down to Oakhurst Drive and Colesville Road and the Township water area. This is an area that there are a number of commercial uses along the corridor but also this corridor is an important connection between LST and neighboring municipalities and neighboring areas that are to the south and developing to the south and the City of Bethlehem to the north. For this corridor, we have two options. One is a multi-use trail that would be on the east side in that corridor and currently it's PennDOT ROW for Route 378, so that would require coordination and approval from PennDOT.

Ms. Manbeck said the other option they provide is a sidewalk on the west side and that would help to facilitate connections between the operations and businesses along the corridor. There are two options for Route 378. Looking between the two areas, there is a large residential neighborhood between SRT and 378 and they heard a lot about Bingen Road corridor. There is an existing sewer authority easement along the corridor and they think that might be a potential location for a trail to provide a connection along Bingen Road. That would require some crossing improvements but would help to provide a way for residents to reach the SRT. They also identified a trail or sidewalk along Black River from Alice Drive to 378 so that is another key connection to allow residents to walk to some of the local establishments along 378. Within this residential area there are a couple of potential links for pedestrian access so that people can utilize the neighborhood streets which are relatively low volume and low speed and can walk along them to make connections along the trail that are proposed on the outer side. This does include a potential crossing at Rader's Lane.

Ms. Manbeck said they also heard in the public comments about Mountain Drive so they are showing a trail along Mountain Drive and connecting down to the Bingen Road corridor. This is a glimpse of a potential trail along Bingen Road. It would be offset from the roadway corridor and buffer area. This is showing the potential connection from Alice to 378 with either providing a trail or providing a sidewalk. Making the connection from Bingen Road to Meadows Road and into the SRT and kind of connecting the two plans we just looked at, we have the extension and connection of a trail along Meadows Road and kind of within the power line area as well as some key sidewalk connections and shared lane markings for bicycle riding along Meadows Road to make the connection down to the SRT. They know and heard there are a number of connections outside of the Township that are important to Township residents, so they also looked to the north for key connections, particularly widening the shoulders on Mountain Drive which is a corridor used by many cyclists. Supporting

the connection of the SRT to the Bethlehem Greenways and some additional connections and kind of through the Lehigh University to the SRT.

Ms. Manbeck said their next steps are to refine the draft connections and improvements and as noted, the presentation was part of the Board packet, so if people have questions or comments, Diane will gather those and pass them along to our Active Transportation team and we will be happy to review them and take them into consideration as we do the draft report. They will be developing an implementation plan and metrics which can be used to track the implementation and part of the requirement for the WalkWorks program. In the month of June and July they will be developing the draft ATP and working with their committee to review that. It will be available for public review in August and presented to Council in September.

Mr. Banonis said thank you to Natasha and Bill for all their efforts on this and the other members of the WalkWorks Committee as they all put a lot of effort and thought into this and it's a really a thoughtful concise well laid out plan. He's looking forward to advancing this, getting it approved and then getting some funding and implementing all of these measures we talked about. Ms. Manbeck said everyone has been great to work with.

Mrs. deLeon said thank you. She asked when you talk about funding, what are some possibilities? Ms. Manbeck said there are a number of different funding opportunities and they will outline many of them in the plan. There are several funds and PennDOT has just announced a transportation alternative set aside grant funding round. It is open now, and applications are due in October and it is specifically for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The funding source is several funds and can be used for construction and the municipality would fund all of the design. That's one example and there are several funds and a number of State funds, both in terms of transportation as well as recreation, so DCNR has a number of grant programs that can be used for recreational infrastructure.

Mr. Banonis said can we anticipate that we want to do a filing for that new State funding before October and anticipate that this gets approved by Council during our first meeting in September. He says that only because if we approve this the beginning of September, it doesn't leave a lot of time for them to put together an application and he certainly doesn't want to miss that deadline if there is funding that may be on point for what we are trying to accomplish here. Mrs. Huhn said we can look at it and see what's required and start putting something together in anticipation. Ms. Manbeck said she will be happy to provide some additional information as well. Council thanked Ms. Manbeck for the presentation.

**B. EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT AT HELLER HOMESTEAD PARK**

Mrs. Yerger said Logan Kade is constructing a kiosk at the Heller Homestead Park for his Eagle Scout project. Parks & Recreation Board Member, Frank Thompson, will discuss Logan's proposal with Council.

Frank Thompson said he has mentored several Boys Scouts over the years in an attempt to gain their Eagle Scout badge by doing many different things. One of the things is doing a major project which has an impact on the communities that they live in. This year's applicant is Logan Kade. Logan has put together a proposal to replace the kiosk which was located at the Heller Homestead Park. It's directly in front of the old Heller Homestead, which is on Water Street and right on the Saucon Creek. When the new bridge was put in across the Saucon Creek, this kiosk was removed and the area was slightly changed and so having the kiosk there is rather quite important. He lives in the Four Seasons development so he often uses the park and he sees a lot of people using that. This kiosk would be explaining the background of the Heller Homestead but also explaining that there's a park that's very narrow but it does go along the Saucon Creek and it's very nice. In having this kiosk there is very beneficial because people are walking by that area if they see that they might walk through the park and see what's in the park. Logan is proposing to make a 10'x10' kiosk which is almost a duplicate of what was there before. He says he's going to make it double-sided with a Plexiglas window that

will have hinges and a lock and information about the home and the small park that's there will be inside of this. Originally Logan had thought he would be putting this kiosk in the ground himself but after some discussion with the Township Public Works Department, they highly recommend that the PW put the kiosk in the ground securely once it is built. It has a small roof on it and the Plexiglas covering the corkboard. He is giving us a materials list and also, he's informed us about the requirements that the Boy Scouts require of him and that is making a very formal proposal, putting it in a binder, getting our signature on it before he moves forward. Parks & Recreation is recommending that Council approve Logan's design and proposal so he can proceed with construction once he gets the Boy Scouts approval. His rough estimate for the construction is \$1,028.35. That will go down slightly as he had included concrete and also stone when he thought he would be putting the kiosk in the ground himself. The only thing that has been added on recently is that he became aware that the Township wanted a lock on this kiosk. The funding will come from various sources, even talked about asking Council down the road if they would pay for some of the materials, but Logan is resourceful and confident he can come up with the funding for the kiosk.

Mr. Banonis said he appreciates Frank's comments. He's been at each of the P&R meetings where Logan has presented his ideas and plans and he commends him for this accomplishment for getting to this point. It's a tremendous accomplishment to be a Boy Scout and to be an Eagle Scout which you will live with forever. He congratulates him. He would add he needs to complete it by the end of the year to reach his Eagle Scout and this is a great resource for the Township and a great improvement for the Heller Homestead, and draws attention to the property. It also helps the Saucon Valley Conservancy in drawing people to the property and to its organization.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to approve Logan Kade's proposal to construct a kiosk at the Heller Homestead Park for his Eagle Scout project, subject to the Township Engineer and Public Works for the placement and to have Public Works erect this so it's sturdy and stands the test of time. He would also ask if there are any fees or permits required for this, that the Township waive those as this is being done in a very benevolent way to help an Eagle Scout and help the community.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Stauffer  
Mrs. Stauffer said the Heller Homestead would benefit from this and she's in support of Logan's project and being a Boy Scout, which lasts a lifetime. Mr. Banonis said he knows Logan, he coached him in baseball, he's a fine young man and proud of his accomplishment.

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0  
Council asked Frank to thank Logan for his efforts. It was very well done.

**IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS**

**A. ~~COBBLE CREEK AUTHORIZATION TO END MAINTENANCE PERIOD~~**  
Taken off agenda.

**V. TOWNSHIP BUSINESS ITEMS**

**A. DISCUSSION OF SENATE BILL NO. 597**

Mrs. Yerger said Lower Saucon Authority Administrator, Bill Ross, is present this evening and would like to request Council's support to oppose Senate Bill 597 which will make it more difficult for small municipal utility systems to remain independent and could lead to significant expenses.

Mr. Carocci said this deals with the Water Authority and proposed legislation that would add PUC oversight to their operations. He believes this could greatly increase possibly the cost of service to LST residents for their water. His recommendation and motion would be that Council write a letter to Senator Boscola, Representative McKenzie and others that they oppose this legislation. Bill Ross can talk about it to explain it further and he'll state his reasons why he feels the same way.

Mr. Ross said Senate Bill 597 requires waste water systems to require an asset management plan and some other distribution system requirements that go beyond the current requirements of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, which is really what controls them now. They are currently under the

control of the DEP when it comes to regulations. What is being proposed with this Senate Bill is if you do not come up with an Asset Management Plan that they are requiring, you could then fall under regulation of both the DEP and the PUC, which can be very confusing and very dangerous actually having two separate entities regulating you. The Asset Management Plan that they are requiring can be very costly to implement for smaller systems including theirs. In the big scope of things, they are a smaller low-mid size system. There are many out there that are smaller than they are but there are some that are bigger than them. This legislation scares the heck out of him because failure to comply with the regulation can put you under the control of PUC, which can then lead to the possibility of being bought out by private water systems. Private water systems are really for-profit water systems. Authorities such as theirs, a municipal and water organization, really work their best to work out a balanced budget, they are not looking to make a profit. They have a healthy reserve to take care of emergencies and maintenance but they are not a for profit agency. The systems that are looking to buy smaller systems are and can lead to significant cost increases. He knows in NJ a similar bill was passed and according to articles that he read, he thinks it's Egg Harbor Township that ended up having to sell their system because the cost to each of their residents/customers would have been about \$1,600 a piece to implement the changes that were required, so they ended up selling to a private system. Bills like this are also in front of the Maryland legislature so there's really an effort going on to attack smaller systems out there. The bill itself is opposed across the board by agencies and organizations throughout the State. On the waste and water side it's opposed by the PA Rural Association, PA Municipal Authorities Association, Water Works Operators Association of PA and the PA Water Environment Association. It's also opposed by the PA State Association of Township Supervisors, PA State Association of Boroughs, and the PA Municipal League. It's very telling that all of these organizations are very strongly opposed to it. He can go on and give you readings from State statements, but the wording in their statements in the board packet that was distributed to board members and is on the website and is in very strong in opposition to this. He is trying to take a role from the authority's point of view in being in opposition and he does want to thank Tom Carocci for working with him on this and working with our local legislatures to oppose this bill. What he's asking from the Township is an official opposition to this bill that will not just help the LSA, but help small authorities throughout the State of PA.

Mr. Carocci said he's been the liaison for the LSA for a year and a half and he thinks Bill and his people do a great job and he would like it to remain in local control. We have Township residents who sit on the board of the LSA and do a great job, ask great questions and give great input. Like one of the things the Township residents on the board did last year was they waived late fees during the pandemic and that's just not something you are going to get if big water companies come in and buy these small to mid-size water authorities. He and Bill are going to meet with Representative McKenzie on Friday and he's hoping we can get a meeting with Senator Boscola, and hoping that Council agrees to send a letter in opposition first.

Mr. Banonis said Bill had mentioned the risk of having conflict between DEP and PUC, he guesses it's fair to say if there were conflict, and it's going to be more costly to the Township and greater risk to them in seeking clarification trying to resolve those conflicts. Mr. Ross said absolutely. Mr. Banonis said some people may have concern with keeping the water authority in local hands, can you share with us generally what the water quality is that is provided by LSA and how it's tested regularly and the quality product that's coming out of people's spigots.

Mr. Ross said residents of LST who are water customers should have received within the past week their annual Consumer Confidence Report which lists the testing that's done on an annual basis for the water they serve. He has one he got in the mail. Consumer Confidence Report is four pages long which includes a description of the water system, testing results with anything from fluoride to copper to disinfectant chlorine, and gives you readings on those. If you are not familiar with those, there are baselines, and they pass with flying colors in every testing that has to be done. They test their water on a weekly basis somewhere throughout the system in LST. They take readings for chlorine levels, and they check for impurities and they do that every week. In a course of a month,

they will run 10 separate water testing's at LST. They are required to do 6 at the DEP, they do 10 just to be thorough and cover all sections of LST so no area is being really ignored or missed. The water source they get comes from a reservoir in the Poconos, and comes down through the City of Bethlehem and then to LSA. The water is some of the highest quality of water in the State of PA. It doesn't need to be treated for hardness, it's a soft water to begin with. It's a very, very low level of impurities and is really a quality water product and they are able to bring that to the residents of the Township at a pretty fair cost.

Mr. Banonis said you mentioned Egg Harbor Township and how they were forced to sell their system because they were going to have to bill each household \$1,600, can you identify what you expect the cost of water to go up to if we did go to a private water system. Mr. Ross said it would be conjecture on his part and he doesn't really want to make an uneducated guess. All he can say is it would be higher and there's no doubt about that. They are one of the very, very few authorities in the State of PA that proactively replace old and weathered pipes. The City of Bethlehem is a perfect example. They don't replace pipe unless there's a break, a significant leak involved. Each year they identify an area and they have a 5-year plan for it. They replace anywhere from 1,000' to 2,000' of old poor-quality pipe so that reduces their leaks, reduces their breaks and ultimately saves our customers money. By doing that, they keep their lost water to a minimum. Usually, the industry standard is about 20% lost water is acceptable. Within the LSA, they set their goal at about 10% of lost water. Last quarter they came in at about 8.5%. Their field crew does a tremendous job of proactively going out and finding leaks and repairing them before they get to be a nightmare and big breaks where a lot of water is lost. They are able to find small leaks and that's how they go about saving their customers money – proactively finding leaks and replacing pipes.

Mr. Banonis said you guys do a great job and he would expect that our system probably has greater value compared to other systems because you are putting so much effort and reinvestment into the infrastructure. Can you give him a sense of what the value of the whole system is and let him explain why he's asking that. His question is do you expect that the current value you have for the entire system would go down as a result of some PUC oversight that would force us to sell. In other words, a big water company would come in and know that we are forced to sell and give us pennies on the dollar to what it's really worth. Mr. Ross said he doesn't have a valuation. They have their annual audit that was just worked on the past couple of months. When they get that back, he'll get an idea of what they have them pegged at. He doesn't have last year's audit with him. Mr. Banonis said it is tens of millions, hundred million. Mr. Ross said certainly not one hundred million, but he would think the low digit millions is probably a fair assessment. Mr. Banonis said it's fair to say that if we were to be forced to sell this, essentially at a fire sale, we wouldn't be getting the low ten million or double digit million return. Mr. Ross said he doesn't believe so. The one thing that would make them not as attractive to a private water company is that they would have trouble connecting to them. Right now they have connections with the City of Bethlehem, they also have an emergency interconnection with the Borough of Hellertown. Other than that, they are not connected with any other water systems, so if a private company wanted to buy them and connect with them, there would be some cost involved to them. For companies like that, it may not be a huge cost to do it, but when he looks at possible people who would want to take them over, the only one that makes sense at this moment would be the City of Bethlehem. Mr. Banonis said he appreciates his answers and thanked them for all their hard work.

Mrs. Stauffer said thank you for your presentation and information provided in the packet and she appreciates him walking everyone through it this evening. With all of these cons and reasons against adopting something like this, what is the reason the Senate Bill is even on the floor, for those who introduced this bill, what reasoning is there in introducing it in the first place based on everything we discussed here thus far. Mr. Ross said his understanding the Bill was introduced by Senator Stefano and there are small systems throughout the state, and he's talking anywhere between 250, 350 customers, very small systems, that do not do a very good job of keeping up with regulations, of meeting DEP requirements because of their size, because of personnel, so that's really an area that's

being looked at with this. The Asset Management Plan that they are looking to require, if you put it across the board, organizations our size, even places like Easton Suburban Water or Lehigh County Water Authority, the Asset Management Plan is really a big and expensive imposition. Not to mention one of the concerns a lot of them have with the Asset Management Plan is that making that public all of a sudden shows where water sources are, where water tanks are, which leads it open to terrorism for lack of a better word, open to attack and that's a big reason a lot of them have concern about it as well.

Mrs. Stauffer said that makes a lot of sense and it was mentioned in the packet and she can understand that angle. Would it make sense in our letter if we all agree to vote for this, to recommend an alternative or simply just oppose it now and let the legislature figure out an alternative for some of these smaller Townships/Boroughs where managing this type of service is not working well.

Mr. Ross said just a letter of opposition would be sufficient. If there is enough support to oppose the bill, and it seems, that there is, there will be discussions to rework it, make accommodations, change it to an acceptable level and that's where the professional organizations that he mentioned before that are opposed to it as well as members of our community will work with the legislatures to come up with an acceptable solution. As Tom mentioned, we have a meeting with Representative McKenzie set up for Friday and he has a call in to the staff of Senator Boscola to meet with her to go over their concerns with her as well. The legislatures know how we feel about it, it's just to make them understand the severity of what's being put forward. Mrs. Stauffer said she's glad to see our local representatives are listed here as introducing the bill, so she wishes him luck in the future meetings and it sounds you can make a change here. Mr. Ross said he appreciates that.

Mrs. Yerger said who will be crafting this letter. Mrs. Huhn said she can prepare this based on the draft letters that have been sent around asking for the opposition. Mr. Ross said if she needs anything, let him know. Mr. Carocci said he'd like to take a look at it. Mrs. Yerger said she just wants to make sure everyone's inputs is put into consideration. Mr. Carocci said he had a preliminary conversation with Representative McKenzie about what the topic would be and she was concerned about what he was concerned about. He doesn't think she's taken an official position on it. Mrs. deLeon said Lisa Boscola is on the committee that drafted this legislation. Mr. Ross said she's the Co-Chair of the committee. Mrs. deLeon said Bob Freeman may be someone you want to talk to. Mr. Ross said they will try to sit down with him as well. Mr. Carocci said the letter has to be sent to him as well.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Carocci moved to send letter opposing proposed legislation for Senate Bill 597.

**SECOND BY:** Mr. Banonis

Ms. Victoria Opthof-Cordaro, 1682 Woodfield Drive, said she's just hearing about this legislation as a resident and she's as concerned as all of you are and she's really happy to hear that we are going to be trying to protect our LSA. She was thinking in terms of how to really get our message across and reach the most voices that we try to also engage our Northampton County Council and see if we can get some other politicians on that side to join as the more we get to join, that would be better and also engaging Hellertown to see if they are also going to write a letter or do anything with respect to meeting with our politicians to handle that and then also Bill, it sounds like you have a great understanding of all of this, it might be helpful if our Council members also join and reach out to these various state representatives to get meetings with them and to do more of a lobbying on our behalf. It's great to hear Tom was in contact with State Senator McKenzie. If we are having trouble on the other side getting their ears or a seat at a table with them, we could get our other members of Council to reach out to them and sort of work that way. It might be helpful even though she's not directly related to the State legislature, if we got Susan Wild to find out about this, it would help. Mr. Banonis said it's a State, not a Federal bill, correct? Mr. Ross said correct. Ms. Opthof-Cordaro said she clearly isn't in a position to vote on it, but certainly she can put out a press release and she has connections throughout the State it would be helpful.

Mr. Ross said he would suggest and it might have been the impetus that starting the ball rolling on this is, he would love to see residents of LST contact their legislatures and let them know how they

feel. What started this was it was on the LSA's page asking residents to contact their local legislature and ask them to oppose this. Contact Senator Boscola and ask her to oppose this. The more voices that are heard the more impact that it has. In addition to having the authority, having the Township, having everybody contact them, if we could have a good number of residents of the Township contact our legislatures that will be very impactful. Mrs. deLeon said she missed that F/B post but the Township can issue and compose something along the same line and do one of those Constant email things, she can never remember the right word, but those emails blasts. Did you get any response to yours? Mr. Ross said not much, one or two comments, but not a whole lot of response. Mrs. deLeon said we can do the same and see what happens. Mr. Carocci said he did send an email to Lori Vargo-Heffner at the County a couple of days ago, and he's sure she wants to review what he sent her, and he's not saying she hasn't been on top of the issue and gotten back to him, that would be unfair, but she should be aware of it as to get the County involved.

Ms. Andrea Wittchen, 1885 Dartford Road, said thank you for this information as this is really critical especially for those who work in the environmental and sustainability industries. This is watching these small water systems going out of the municipal purview and out of control is significant. As the President of the LV Sustainability Network, she has at her command an opportunity to also spread the word on a broader scale and encourage people to contact their legislatures in the State. She said can you give me some idea of what the expected timing is as to when this might come up for a vote as it's usually better to tell people you need to do this within the next two weeks or whatever rather than just an open-ended when you get around to it can you contact your representative. Do we have any idea where this stands on the agenda and when it may come up for a vote?

Mr. Ross said he's been following it and this legislation has been fast tracked. It got out of the committee a lot faster than most bills do. He's heard they are trying to get a vote on it by the end of June. He's also heard that the opposition to it may not enable that to happen, but everything he's seen so far tells him that the people that are behind this want to execute it quickly. Ms. Wittchen said sure, that way it gets executed before there's enough opposition from it to stop it from happening. This is like a fire drill sort of a thing; we all need to do this within the next week. Mr. Ross said that would be great. Ms. Wittchen said she will use all of her platforms in order to share this also as this applies to other municipalities besides our own so there are plenty of municipalities where residents should be getting on board with this. Mr. Ross said contact him at the LSA during the day if she needs any information. Ms. Wittchen said she was aware of this bill before she saw it come through on the agenda, but all the supporting documentation that was with the agenda information, gives her enough of the detail to write up what she needs to. She knew that this was a thunder cloud on the horizon and she appreciates Bill bringing it to our Township's notice as it's important that we stop this now. Mr. Ross said thank you.

Mr. Maurice Kasmiroski said is it against the rules to go public and reach out to local newspapers and TV stations to see if they can put this out there to the general public? He feels the urgency, is there something that says we can't do that? Mr. Ross said not at all. He will say, most of the major papers do have someone with an eye in Harrisburg and they know it is happening. He's not sure if they know the importance of reporting on it as he's not seen very much on it at all. Reaching out to them may not be a bad idea at all. Mr. Kasmiroski said would it be better to come from Council instead of just a citizen walking up and saying hey, guys? Mr. Ross said it would be best if it comes from everybody. If it comes from the LSA, Township Council, residents, the more voices you hear the better impact it has.

Mrs. Stauffer said in addition to writing a letter, would it make sense to forward that along and she would like to know who would like to take action as we heard from some residents. Mrs. Huhn said we can certainly share on our F/B page and send out an email blast. We will get from Bill Ross what he shared so it's very similar, we can do that on our end. The draft letter is in the packet, if anyone wants to plug in the Senator and your name, she doesn't see why people can't use that draft letter.

Mrs. deLeon said we can also post it on our website as kind of like a press release. Mrs. Huhn said we will share anything that Bill has and get it out to the public. Mr. Ross thanked the Township and residents. This is a great step moving forward.

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**B. DISCUSSION OF TAX COLLECTION SERVICES**

Mrs. Yerger said the Director of Finance would like to present Council with tax collection proposals provided by Berkheimer Associates and Keystone Collections Group.

Mrs. Cathy Gorman said in your packet she did request Berkheimer, Jim Hunt and Keystone to update their proposals for full-time Deputy Tax Collector. Basically, she had a conversation regarding another matter and discussed some of the issues we are going to be facing next year and they provided a proposal as well as Berkheimer for the full collection services. Keystone is able to provide us with full tax collection services. They will be able to, if Council permits, have an office in Seidersville Hall so we'll have the local connection and it will be less than what we are paying now. They collect for the school district and they also collect EIT and Local Services Tax. This is a good opportunity to round everything up so some of the residents will still be able to come to the Township offices and be able to ask any questions they can regarding their taxes with one provider. The other items that you may have not noticed in here is that Keystone does offer different sources of payment functions which are cheaper than what we are doing right now. Their software and database are much more user friendly. Right now, we're pretty much outsourced two different ways. They can pay here; they can pay online with official payments and official payments is not linked to the database so people kind of pay what they want which can sometimes lead to trouble. Allie has done so much work trying to reconcile and call residents who made erroneous payments or short payments or over payments so it does take a lot of our time to reconcile things like that and Fulton is not accepting tax payments next year which would end up becoming more of a burden for residents coming in here and paying online so she's requesting Council at this time to permit staff to work with Keystone and provide them some office space at Seidersville Hall and also approve the agreement if Linc and Leslie say it's okay, and approve Keystone as the Deputy Tax Collector for 2022 which would give her time to transition.

Mrs. deLeon said what space are they going to be using in Seidersville Hall? Mrs. Gorman said there are a couple offices in there that will fit them perfectly and the one does give them a little bit of the security parameters. If they do come in, they will modify what they need. Mrs. deLeon said she's asking a specific area in the building as she's familiar with it. Mrs. Gorman said we were looking possibly at the Manager's office as being one. They don't need the bigger offices; they only are requiring office space for two desks.

Mrs. deLeon said what happened to the Sr. program. Mrs. Gorman said they will still be there and will have the space that they normally use. Mrs. deLeon said they never used the Manager's office then. Mrs. Huhn said they have one computer in there and a puzzle table. Mrs. deLeon said do we charge the Community Center for using that building? Mrs. Gorman said no. Mrs. deLeon said do we charge the Historical Society for using that building? Mrs. Gorman said we ask them for \$25/month and that's for the utility costs. Mrs. deLeon said what would Keystone be paying us for use of those rooms. Mrs. Gorman said they will be paying for their own utilities. Mrs. deLeon said this is like a win-win for them because the rent over at their existing office is much higher than free. Mrs. Gorman said she's not aware of what their rent is and that's a corporate decision on their part. Mrs. deLeon said she knows it's for the taxpayers and it's convenient, but no wonder their prices are much lower as they are not paying rent. How are you going to split the electric and the heat and all that stuff?

Mrs. Huhn said years ago Roger did a breakdown of the sizes of the rooms and did it that way. Mrs. deLeon said so what are we charging them then? Ms. Gorman said we'll figure that out if Council approves this. They are going to pay whatever they are required to pay. Mrs. deLeon said you didn't

think forward to that? Mrs. Gorman said we did, we have it all in square footage, so based on updating the square footage space depending on what room they get, and then she'll be able to give a definitive answer. Mrs. deLeon said when we did all that stuff and did that stuff it was for non-profits, it wasn't for profit businesses. Mrs. Gorman said she understands that but this is a service that is for residents and in any other capacity, Berkheimer and Keystone included, if they are the representative Deputy Tax Collector for that municipality, they typically have an office provided for them.

Mr. Banonis said Priscilla, it sounds like you're advocating against Keystone. Doesn't your sister work for Berkheimer? Mrs. deLeon said yes, she does and she makes that public every time. Mr. Banonis said he didn't hear that tonight, so that's why he's asking. Mrs. deLeon said she didn't get that far yet, she's still thinking of what the presentation was. Mr. Banonis said his view of this, if he may, this seems to be a win-win situation for everybody. It's lower cost to the Township, it's better accessibility and service to the residents, it's really irrelevant what they pay for rent where they may be currently because looking at the chart that Cathy put together, the Township is going to save over \$4,000 by doing this.

Mrs. deLeon said that's a great savings and she just wishes the chart would have been comparing apples to apples instead of apples to oranges as we would have given the other company an opportunity to have space at the Township, she wonders what the cost would have been. Mrs. Gorman said the only reason she would even entertain something like this is that they are also the School District's Tax Collector. Mrs. deLeon said she understands all of that, Cathy.

Mrs. Gorman said as for a Deputy full time she has to say, Allie Leayman has done an incredible more amount of work for her in positions that have been transitioned, the financial end of things that have bene transitioned to her department. That coupled with her grant applications and escrows and police department and public works accounting things we have taken on over the last couple of years, and knowing that Fulton is not offering that service next year, we are going to be inundated. Mrs. deLeon said that's an issue.

Mrs. deLeon said her sister working at Berkheimer, is that considered a conflict for her? Attorney Treadwell said not technically under the Ethics Code. You can discuss it and vote on it. Mrs. deLeon said that will be part of the record, correct? Attorney Treadwell said it will be in the minutes, he assumes. Mrs. deLeon said she means in the minutes, sometimes she thinks she's in court.

Mr. Carocci said he's glad you have more time to work on grants as that's a much better use of her time. Mrs. Yerger said we aren't getting any "rent" for that particular office anyway, correct? Mrs. Gorman said we are not charging any rent.

Mrs. Yerger said they are paying for costs and a benefit to help heat the building in general for the seniors and everybody else. Mrs. Gorman said correct. Mrs. deLeon said they are going to pay a portion Sandy. Mrs. Yerger said they are still going to be paying that portion which is not being paid now. Mrs. deLeon said it depends how you do your math. Mrs. Yerger said it's how it is.

Mr. Banonis said he can assure you; he doesn't have any immediate family members that work for Keystone, he has no parents, no children, he doesn't think he has any siblings as he's an only child, he doesn't have any aunts, cousins or uncles who work for either Berkheimer or Keystone so he's going to make a motion in good conscious and with a clear mind.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to authorize Keystone Collections to collect taxes in 2022 and become the Real Estate Tax Collector for LST and to give them space that is currently unoccupied in Seidersville Hall.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger

Mrs. Yerger said she seconded that based on the fact that she has no relatives working for either Keystone or Berkheimer. Mrs. Stauffer said can we make that motion that we are also going to be charging them a percentage of utility costs.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis amended his motion and moved to authorize Keystone Collections to collect taxes in 2022 and become the Real Estate Tax Collector for LST and to give them space that is currently unoccupied in Seidersville Hall and charge them a percentage of utility costs for the building.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger amended her second  
Mrs. Stauffer appreciates that. The one thing to distill from this, to play nice, she doesn't recall seeing anything in the packet sort of stating that, so she just wanted clarification on that and it will be excellent savings for the Township. Attorney Treadwell said can he add something to that they will be the Deputy Tax Collector and not the Tax Collector as Cathy is the Tax Collector and subject to the Township Manager and Solicitor approving any agreement. Mr. Banonis said Cathy may want to relinquish those duties from what he's heard so far, but unfortunately, she cannot.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis amended his motion for the second time and moved to authorize Keystone Collections to collect taxes in 2022 and become the Deputy Tax Collector for LST and to give them space that is currently unoccupied in Seidersville Hall and charge them a percentage of utility costs for the building subject to the Township Manager and Solicitor approving any agreements.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger amended her second

**ROLL CALL:** 4-1 (Mrs. deLeon – No – she thinks the Township should look into redoing the cost of using Seidersville Hall and that should be done in the beginning of the budget discussions as Roger did that a long time ago, and she didn't think it was apples to apples).

Mrs. deLeon said she's glad you know her history and family members and where they work Jason, but somebody else had to tell you that.

**C. DISCUSSION OF FIRE COMPANY FUNDING**

Mrs. Yerger said Council Member, Tom Carocci, would like to discuss funding for the fire companies and provide an update on the status of the merger.

Mr. Carocci said he wants to thank both fire companies for what they did. At this time, he'd like to make a motion to provide Lower Saucon Fire Rescue (LSFR) with \$150,000.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Carocci moved to approve \$150,000 to LSFR budgeted for them for 2021.

**SECOND BY:** Mr. Banonis

Mr. Carocci said on November 23, 2020 the members of LSFR voted to merge with Steel City Volunteer Fire Company (SCVFC). They changed their by-laws to accept the active and current members of SCVFC and they committed to the merger process and took actions to facilitate it. He has a timeline that he shared on the screen. He said they started meetings in May 2020 and they had discussed the timeline and actually presented to Council the plans to merge by this year and there was a joint merger resolution sent to the attorneys around October/November. There was Scott Krycia and Scott Nocek on the phone talking about dates. Krycia sent out an email, no reply from SCVFC. Follow up SCVFC did not vote on November 24, 2020. Then we get into 2021, LSFR sent an email to SCVFC for meetings requesting a status of the resolution with no response. They sent a second meeting request in February 2021 as they knew the time is coming due here. They really don't receive any response. They basically had a meeting then with Linc and Chief Barndt and both SCVFC and LSFR and they thought they had some kind of merger agreement, at least LSFR did, and LSFR agreed that all SCVFC members become members of the new organization. Scott Nocek would have a Captain's position which he appeared to agree with. Chris Snyder would be a Safety Officer, Dave Rockstroh would serve as a Safety Officer, there's a position for Kevin Kalman as a Special Policeman, and then they receive a letter from their attorneys saying there's a preference not to merge. So that's where we are at. He feels LSFR did a great job trying to facilitate the merger and the process worked out as he thought it would. We gave them seven months and LSFR passed a resolution to merge, SCVFC did not. It exposed who the obstacle to merging is and it's SCVFC. He feels like LSFR should be funded as they did everything within their power to get to a merger.

Scott Nocek, SCVFC, said in regards to Tom's timeline, most of it is correct, but up until their meeting with Tom Barndt and Linc, the discussion they were having since December requesting a joint operational merge and starting there first and moving forward with that, has always been denied because of the Township's timeline. That's something he feels that needs to be done first, the body feels the same way. It was told to LSRF and Tom several times and at their last discussion when SCVFC did have a resolution, the Township wasn't happy with what was there and even though it was legally binding with their lawyer and everything else, they still refused to accept it and then started to belittle them at the meeting itself. Any other actions, it will probably be now with their attorney itself.

Mr. Banonis said what do you mean be through your attorney, is that a threat? Mr. Nocek said no, not at all. The threats came from Tom Carocci at the meeting itself and they just feel it's not a productive meeting when Tom is there.

Mrs. Yerger said what did he threaten you with? Mr. Nocek said just legal allegations about stuff that has nothing to do with the merger itself and since they didn't sign the resolution written by LSRF, and they signed our resolution by their lawyer, that legal actions will be taking place if we didn't sign the resolution.

Mrs. Yerger said what is the key difference between your resolution and LSRF's resolution? Mr. Nocek said everything in that resolution, LSRF it's a done deal at that point in time. They don't have a lot of negotiations if they sign that resolution itself. SCVFC is still looking forward to move into the merger itself, but the resolution their lawyer has written up, SCVFC's lawyer said not to sign it.

Attorney Treadwell said one of the key differences between the resolutions is that SCVFC resolution said that they would consider a merger. Mrs. Yerger said that they would not actually merge? Attorney Treadwell said right. They would consider but didn't agree to merge.

Mr. Banonis said when did that resolution come into us? Attorney Treadwell said March. Mr. Banonis said what was the deadline? Mr. Carocci said June 1<sup>st</sup> for the merger, but all the SCVFC resolution says is we'll think about merging for the next two years and maybe we'll do it in two years, in 2023. We have a signed resolution from LSRF and if you go back to the timeline, even the timeline that LSRF agreed to, they presented this to us July 2020 and the timeline that was proposed both 60 and 63 were at the top of this letter, June 11, 2020, where the recent conversations about merging in the fire departments, here's what they said, the anticipated timeline, June 20, the companies vote to proceed developing a merger plan and they did that. January 2021, the merger documents completed by attorneys by both companies. SCVFC did not do that, LSRF did do that. June 21, election of officers and then they wanted to complete the merger by January. We told them we preferred it to be done earlier, June 2021, we made it clear at that time it was our preference, but SCVFC isn't even agreeing to what they said they would do a year ago when they said this would be done in 2021 and now, they are saying we want to think about it for another two years and maybe we'll do it in 2023. It is what it is.

Mr. Banonis said we have a motion, and we have a second, he appreciates Scott Nocek's comments but he doesn't know what bearing they have on the motion that's pending. He showed the letter of June 2020 where they did meet to develop a merger plan, but then everything else from January 2021, SCVFC refused to do and refused to cooperate. He feels LSRF promised to do what was in the document they presented to Council last year and he doesn't think SCVFC did what they promised what they were supposed to do in the document.

Mrs. Stauffer said she appreciates Tom sharing this tonight, especially since there wasn't anything in the packet. Mr. Carocci said he apologizes for that, he was trying to put this together with working and the kids starting camps, he does apologize that there wasn't anything in the packet. Mrs. Stauffer said it's helpful to see it tonight. Mr. Carocci showed the resolution signed by LSFC.

Mr. Nocek said SCVFC still wants to merge. He understands there have been delays but up until the March meeting they've asked for their resolution and it was not accepted by the Township itself. It's a legal binding document saying we are looking to move forward. SCVFC still provides fire protection to Steel City and the surrounding areas.

Mr. Banonis said the motion here is to fund LSFR, there's nothing before with regard to SCVFC. He appreciates Mr. Nocek's comments and service, but we can only focus on the motion right now.

Donna Louder said she believes that 16 has done everything they can possibly do to make this merger happen. When she was on Council, she was on the Fire Service and she actually went down to Steel City and met with the Chief and the other officers and there was a comment made to her that merger will never happen over their dead body. The constant games, this has been going on for almost 8 years now and she's sure it has been going on prior to that because she knows that the other Manager had talked about merging and it never happened. This has been many, many years, so she supports the money going to 16 and she appreciates that. Thank you.

**ROLL CALL: 5-0**

Mr. Carocci said he does have a little bit more and he feels like Scott has characterized, he said we threatened him, that's not the case at all, so he'll explain what he was trying to say. There was a financial transition that he became aware of and others became aware of. There was a \$50,000 donation that an individual made to SCVFC.

Mr. Banonis said who is the individual? Mr. Carocci said we asked SCVFC and there's a letter written by Linc asking them to identify that individual and they did not. Linc wrote a letter to their attorney because in their 990 filings, it just says the Boston Foundation. They asked what is the original source of the \$50,000 that the Boston Foundation donated to SCVFC.

Mr. Banonis said what's the Boston Foundation? Mr. Carocci said that's a non-profit donor advisor fund, it is a fund where individuals donate and can take the tax write off the year they donated to the Boston Fund then they can designate what charities it would go to at a later date. What happened with this \$50,000; it said \$40,000 of it went to an injured Police Officer that lives in NJ. SCVFC apparently kept \$10,000. The reason it's concerning is, and the reason why it appears it has to happen like this, under the Boston Foundation, Donor Advisor Fund Agreement, you go to page 13, you have grant limitations. The foundation verifies that all organizations recommended for grants are classified as public charities under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code, and SCVFC is a 501(c)(3) and if you read the second paragraph, your Federal law does not prevent grants for memberships, tips or sponsored tickets but if you read it, it says donors and family members may not receive grants, loans, reimbursements, it basically says grants may not be made to individuals. This is where SCVFC comes in with this \$50,000 grant, they are a 501(c)(3) and can accept this grant but the concerning part is under Steel City's IRS agreement the reason for their non-profit status according to the IRS is exactly what they state on this 2018 990. The tax from the SCVFC provides emergency responses to local and surrounding communities, to promote fire prevention to the local communities and schools. Now taking \$40,000 and donating it to an individual who lives in NJ is nothing near providing fire services to LST residents or nearby communities and not to mention, it appears that they are kind of using their 501(c)(3) status to take this \$50,000 donation and to pass \$40,000 of it on, that's why when this came to his attention and Linc wrote a letter on April 15, 2021 asking for clarification of this transaction. SCVFC never responded. Apparently, Linc got something today like at 4:30 p.m. and he'll let Linc characterize the response. This is what Scott was talking about, he was saying Mr. Carocci was threatening him, they weren't threatening him, they were simply asking them to explain this financial transaction that could be problematic. It looks like here's \$50,000; it should have been used for fire services in Steel City and the surrounding communities and \$40,000 was sent to a resident of NJ. Under PA non-profit law, they are also really not allowed to entertain transactions like this. It says PA law, charitable assets may not be diverted from purposes to which they were donated, granted, devised or otherwise vested in a non-profit corporation such as Steel City. The purpose of the donation, you would have to say it's for fire services but yet 80% of

it, \$40,000 of it went to an individual in NJ and our question is how does this happen and why does this happen and SCVFC refuses to answer. He'll let Linc characterize the response received today, two months after that letter was sent.

Mrs. deLeon said this was dated April 15<sup>th</sup>, was this sent to Council? Why didn't all of Council get this and who authorized the Solicitor to write this letter? Attorney Treadwell said he usually gets from Cathy or somebody at the Township normally sends him the 990's and he looks over them and he noticed this transaction and he called Cathy and talked to Leslie about it and asked what was it, it's kind of weird. When Chief Barndt and Linc met with LSFR and SCVFC, he asked some questions and the answer he got was everything is fine, there's no problem. Then he started to think as part of this merger discussions were going on, if there was an issue here, that maybe it would prevent the merger from happening. If he's LSFR and there's a financials transaction I have questions about, I might not want to take that on by merging with SCVFC, and that's why he sent the letter. Nobody authorized him to send the letter, he sent the letter to their attorney asking questions as he didn't get any answers that he understood when they had a meeting.

Mrs. deLeon said as a Council person, she feels that our Solicitor, the Engineer, any of our staff should copy Council on something like this. She doesn't like being in the dark. Attorney Treadwell said understood. Mrs. deLeon said she's sitting here looking at page after page after page of stuff that was not in their packet and they are getting thrown all this stuff. She's really not happy about this stuff being presented the first time to a Council member. She's sorry, they are not doing their job.

Mr. Carocci said don't blame them, it's not their fault. Mrs. deLeon said she's blaming somebody. Mr. Carocci said blame him, he's the one sharing these documents and he's the one that didn't have them organized. He did not want this to be on the agenda, just the merger discussion. He didn't have it organized in time and it's unfair to blame Leslie and Linc. They didn't know he wanted to share these documents and quite frankly, he was not going to share some of these documents about the transaction but Mr. Nocek claimed that at least he was threatening him in some manner and we were not threatening him, we were simply asking for an explanation of this transaction.

Mrs. deLeon said you can't pick and choose what Council gets or Council doesn't get. Mr. Carocci said you are right. Mrs. deLeon said she doesn't like to be spoon fed and she doesn't like the size of the spoon. We should have been copied on this. Whenever we pay Linc to do this, and we didn't get a copy of it. She asked at a landfill meeting our consultant to include a picture that we had to pay him for, to put in a report, unfortunately she had to be at a personal incident, that was her report being put in there and you, grilled her and she'd like to say something else, but we're on record. But yet you can do this. She's very disappointed, you should know better.

Mr. Banonis said the information Tom is sharing seems to be generated by Tom in large part. If he's understanding Priscilla's complaint, it's that she didn't get a copy of Linc's letter of April 15, 2021 and as he recalls, we did authorize Linc to be a participant in the negotiations among the fire companies. It seems this letter was generated as part of that authority. There are probably lots of letters that Linc writes that we do not receive as members of Council nor would he want to receive them. There's plenty of information we get and he doesn't need to micromanage what the Solicitor is doing. That's his job just as it's the Township Manager's job to manage the Township. We should not be micromanaging aspects of their roles. It seems to him Linc's letter is just the authority they gave to him so to the extent you are taken aback by this letter; he personally is not. He doesn't know if other members are and he's happy that Linc took it upon himself and had the initiative to ask these questions as it has helped us to have an understanding as to what's going on here.

Mrs. deLeon said again, she's not questioning Linc doing the letter, she's questioning why we weren't copied on the letter. Mr. Banonis is turning it around to make it sound like the fault is of him doing it. The fault was the Council wasn't copied on this. This is an important letter, if it wasn't

Tom wouldn't be showing it to us now. Mr. Carocci said he apologizes for not getting it to you earlier, but his point is, they have not answered these questions and the Township and Council deserve an answer to these questions because they want tax dollars and we deserve an answer.

Mrs. Stauffer said we deserve an answer. This is good information to have and it's very much appreciated that you are sharing it. She thinks that being kept in the loop is a sign of something that would be appreciated. The biggest question is has anyone seen this before Tom since Linc wrote it? Mr. Carocci said he didn't share it with anybody and he apologizes he couldn't get it in the packet.

Mrs. deLeon said when you got this letter in April, you didn't share it with Leslie? Mr. Carocci said Linc sent him the letter. Mrs. deLeon said you shouldn't have done that, you should have copied all of Council. Mr. Carocci said Linc sent it to him. Mrs. deLeon said we are not novices here. Mr. Carocci said he knows. Mr. Banonis said in all fairness, Tom is the liaison to the Fire Services so for Linc to share this letter to him seems pretty natural as he's the liaison. I'm not the liaison, Priscilla you're not the liaison. Mrs. deLeon said policy, policy has always been that the Solicitor and the Engineer, the Planner would always send any correspondence to Leslie, it would get stamped in, dated, and distributed to Council. That was not done, that's our policy.

Mr. Banonis said can we get back to the point of this whole discussion. Now it's turned into funding of fire services which rightfully should be funded to defending Council's questioning of another fire service to now questioning the veracity of the Solicitor and Township Manager for a letter that was sent out in good faith with a legitimate purpose. He doesn't understand why you are so fired up about this.

Mrs. Yerger said she agrees with Jason, we've gotten off track. What's on the agenda is financing LSFR and that's what this is all about. That's basically what we need to get done right now. Mrs. Stauffer said you are saying we should regroup on this and Council should receive copies of this potential discussion point further in the future.

Mrs. Yerger said it should be a discussion point as to merge or not merge and those kinds of things, but you need to decide tonight whether LSFR should be funded. Mrs. Stauffer said we did, we voted on that. Mrs. Yerger said we decided on what was actually on the agenda. If this other material and other discussion needs to go on a future agenda, that's fine. She's okay with that. Mrs. deLeon said yes, we have a motion on the floor to fund LSFR, if she's remembering, it's been a while ago, but that's on the floor, correct. Mr. Carocci said we voted and we passed it. Mrs. Yerger said she's not opposed to it being put on an agenda or anything like that if we need further discussion so we all have the material, it can be put on a future agenda if you would.

Mr. Carocci said he agrees, and he was not going to bring this up until Mr. Nocek said they were threatening him with the financial transaction which is completely not true. There's nothing threatening about this letter at all. It is simply to try and gather information about a financial transaction. He doesn't know what else to say. There's nothing else to say. There's no other agenda item to vote on. He doesn't like to be accused of threatening someone when it was just simply a letter asking for information that was never responded to or was responded to today with, he'll just let Linc tell you what it was, he barely looked at it, there wasn't much there.

Attorney Treadwell said the questions in his letter were not answered. There was a response he got from SCVFC's attorney today and it said they would still consider an operational merger and a couple of other things but they didn't answer any of the questions.

Mr. Carocci said it didn't answer who made the decision to send \$40,000 to the NJ resident. It didn't identify the original source of the \$50,000 donation. It didn't mention how they came in contact with the Boston Foundation; and they didn't turn over any paperwork that existed between the Commonwealth of PA regarding SCVFC in any investigations or audits over the course of three

years. Attorney Treadwell said no, it didn't and that's kind of irrelevant at the moment. Mr. Carocci said the public wants to talk; he doesn't have anything else on this agenda item right now unless the public raises something that he has to respond to. Mrs. deLeon said Tom, or Leslie, she would like copies of this letter and copies of that budget thing you showed earlier, anything that you showed on the screen, she'd like emailed to at least her.

Mr. Carocci said the timeline that was on the screen before, that was provided to him by LSFR, they put that timeline together. That was not again sent to Leslie and Linc. He called Scott Krycia and asked him for anything that they had done to facilitate the merger. He said he had a timeline and he sent it to Mr. Carocci. He just got that within the past day or two and he didn't give it to Leslie or he didn't give to Linc. Mrs. Huhn said anything you can send over; she'll send it out to Council.

Mr. Banonis said those 990 forms are public? Mr. Carocci said the 990 forms are from 2018 and 2019 which are the last years we have them for SCVFC. They've been in Township records since they were filed. They haven't filed a 2020 tax return yet, that's why according to past precedent not eligible for their funding at this time as they don't have the paperwork in. When he called to check on that yesterday, he was told that SCVFC didn't have the necessary paperwork to be eligible for their 2021 funding. His notes say Cathy said the SCVFC did not file a 2020 annual report nor a 2020 tax return for 990. They didn't do a copy of the revenue and expenditures for 2020 or proposed budget for 2021. They didn't provide a current roster or a 2020 training log. They didn't provide confirmation that they applied for a State grant. They would need to do all of that just to even be considered for funding as they have in the past and of course, he would like Linc's letter answered before he considered funding as they are important questions in there and he thinks as he stated before, Council and the Township have a right to know the answers to these questions.

Mrs. deLeon said you are talking about this April letter that needs to be answered by them? Mr. Carocci said yes. Mr. Banonis said what's your source of that Boston Foundation information, is it on their website? Mr. Carocci said no it's off of their 990. Mr. Banonis said the Boston Foundation itself. Mr. Carocci said that's on their website and then if you look at their annual report, it has the grants, Boston Foundation received \$50,000; and of course, our \$50,000 from the Township, and they got a PA grant for \$13,000. When you look at it, they got revenue of about \$113,000 that year and they sent \$40,000 of it to a resident in NJ. He doesn't know how this goes to providing fire services to the people of Steel City. That's his overall question. How does \$40,000 sent to someone in NJ, and they provide fire services to people in Steel City.

Mrs. deLeon said she's glad he asked Linc to look at it because it might not have been picked up.

Mr. Kevin Kalman said he does live in Bethlehem Township but he serves with Steel City as the Fire Police Captain and as a member of the SCVFC, his goal and desire is to serve the residents in LST. With all this information shared tonight, he was not aware of it. He's very surprised by some of these things but some of the items he is aware of – the funding, he personally applied for the most recent County EMS DCED grant and they were awarded a 50% matching grant to replace their AED's. He did that because he understands that Council wants the fire companies to reach out and explore grant opportunities and to apply for them. From a personal standpoint, to benefit the organization and community, he's an advocate of training and has many certifications that is a benefit for the community and to increase their eligibility for grants, etc. His desire has not changed, he still wants to serve LST and to the best of his ability, but his bottom-line question is with regards to SCVFC funding, is the lack of support to fund SCVFC, would that be the equivalent of defunding the SCVFC?

Mr. Carocci said no, what they are saying is they would like the questions about the financial transactions answered and talking with LSFR, and if you heard Scott earlier tonight, they said LSFR said the door for the merger is still open and Scott said the merger was still on the table for him. They don't have the necessary paperwork filed with the Township, he gave the long laundry list,

documents required by the Township. He feels the Council deserves an answer to Linc's letter before they consider funding. Mr. Kalman said he agrees with you, Mr. Carocci, he has not disputed that at all. His question is though if the SCVFC leadership fails to satisfy Council's request, what is your desire and perhaps the Council's desire to see happen to this organization.

Mr. Carocci said he's hoping it doesn't happen that we don't have to cross that bridge. He doesn't understand why the questions can't be answered and the necessary paperwork filed with the Township. Hopefully by next month's meeting, these things are taken care of and then Council can have a conversation about funding. He doesn't know what you are talking about. You haven't filed. You haven't done what's required and you haven't answered Linc's letter. Until then, he doesn't know what to tell you. You have to do those things.

Ms. Opthof-Cordaro said she wanted to comment on what seems to be the issue on the lack of procedure that's in place when it comes to correspondence that goes back and forth between a Council liaison and our third-party contractors. It seems to her that there's no reason behind Council getting some things and then sometimes they don't. As a resident, she doesn't think it's appropriate to have anything in front of Council unless all Council members had an appropriate time to review something and to see it. She can understand and can appreciate some delays in putting it together but really maybe Council should entertain a motion whereby you set forth procedures whereby all correspondence between Council members goes between Council members and their party contractors gets copied to all of the rest of Council members; and the Township Manager. That would seem to clear up any confusion that's happened in the past and clearly tonight as listening to this whole back and forth and to clearly understand it and surprised by certain Council members on what's going on is something that's unfortunate and she thinks can be rectified by a motion.

Mrs. deLeon said she agrees that we should have a motion but there has been past policy, Victoria, as some developers, who she'll use as an example, would work with the Solicitor for whatever their agreements are or conditional approval and then the Township was out of the loop and things weren't date stamped, the sensitivity of the date. So Leslie, she's been here long, the Manager before her, that's what we've done. Mrs. Huhn said you're correct. We have a policy and a procedure, it's logged in, it's date stamped, we have a mail log and distributed. Mrs. deLeon said every month Council gets correspondence with the date stamped. We can make all the motions but when new people come on Council, we don't have, and she's not criticizing the administration, we really don't have a policy book or you can sit there and read 100 pages from the last 30 years on what the policies were. It's just an unfortunate thing.

Mr. Carocci said he apologizes again for not providing information earlier. It's his fault, please do not blame anyone else. Mrs. deLeon said do we need a motion. Mrs. Huhn said no, she will pull the policy. Mr. Banonis said he'd like to thank Linc for his diligence, he's highly confident in Linc and not to do anything to keep anyone in the dark, he was simply undertaking the task that we had asked him to do and that was to participate in the negotiations to try to bring this to a conclusion, this merger that's been hanging out for probably a decade and he doesn't find any fault in any of the questions he has asked. Mrs. Yerger said one thing, she's going to say this first, she agrees with Jason completely, go ahead Linc.

Attorney Treadwell said can he just jump in for a second. He doesn't know sitting here right now that he didn't send it out, he's not sure. If he didn't send it out and didn't give a copy to Leslie, then that is his fault and he takes responsibility for that because something like this he would normally send out, so he doesn't know if he sent it late in the day and meant to send a copy the next day and didn't, but whatever the reason is, it's his fault and he takes responsibility for. What he does not do is send Leslie and Council a copy of every single email or correspondence that he has because the vast majority, 99.9% of his correspondence now in the practice of law is through email, so he doesn't copy Council or Leslie on every single email he has with either a developer's lawyer or a fire companies' lawyer or anything like that. This particular letter he thought he had sent out; he doesn't

know if he didn't as he can't get off of this Zoom thing to check his emails to see whether he did or not. If he didn't it's his fault and he takes responsibility. Mrs. deLeon said and your kids aren't home. Attorney Treadwell said his kids are gone.

Mrs. Yerger said can we circle back Leslie and see is there anyone else in the audience that has a comment. Mrs. Huhn said Andrea Wittchen. Mr. Carocci said she already spoke. Mrs. Huhn said not on this matter.

Ms. Wittchen said she would like to say she heartily recommends you put time on the agenda in July. You need to back off of this subject to about 20,000 feet and look at the issues involved. One of the reasons is what Linc did was totally appropriate. She thinks the fact that he caught this in the 990 is important having created a 501(c)(3) as the President of one, the fact that \$40,000 of the \$50,000 donation would be diverted directly from the purpose of the organization meaning SCVFC is an important issue that she would hope as a resident that the LSFR would resolve before they would merge with an organization that would do something like that. If SCVFC winds up being liable having improperly diverting funds that were provided to them as a non-profit. If they merge with LSFR they assume that liability unless the agreement is written clearly that they will not assume any of SCVFC's liabilities and it doesn't look like that from the little bit that she has seen. She would suggest that Council needs to spend some serious time deciding whether they want to push this merger through and if they do, what they would require from SCVFC to make Steel City make themselves whole before they enter the merger. To her, this would be a giant red flag if it appeared on her organization's 990 and secondly, if the merger is not going to go through, then they need to look closely at what the options are to provide service otherwise because it would seem to her that since this issue has been unearthed by Linc's diligence study of those 990's, that there may be some really serious questions that Steel City is going to be facing.

Mr. Carocci said thank you for your comments. To him, this is all a secondary to the merger. He understands her questions regarding the merger and they are all very well said. His thing is they are basically asking for their \$50,000 annual funding and until this is cleared up, he doesn't feel comfortable giving them any money.

Ms. Wittchen said she absolutely agrees. They want \$50,000 from the Township, but they handed off \$40,000 for not providing fire services. Mr. Carocci said he agrees 100%. Ms. Wittchen said you are absolutely right. Mr. Carocci said it needs to be resolved. It's not going to be resolved tonight but before the funding is given and you are right, if the merger comes to fruition, LSFR has to get some accountability that they are not going to be liable for that. Ms. Wittchen said she would suggest from her perspective, it would be a good idea to not go ahead with the merger until that issue is resolved. She thinks it's too big of a risk. Mr. Carocci said right now, they haven't passed a resolution to merge. LSFR has but SCVFC hasn't. He agrees, but at this point, it's a moot point.

Mr. Banonis said Ms. Wittchen brings up very good points and he's going to make a suggestion that we table this discussion as clearly, we are going to be talking about it a lot likely at the next meeting and all the points brought up tonight need to be considered and weighed so he would make a motion.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to table this discussion simply because we are going to be covering all these topics again.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Stauffer

Mrs. Stauffer said it's a very valid point and she'd like to see this material that has come to light and we have been talking about it for a while. Mrs. Huhn said she has two other comments until we bring this back. Mrs. Yerger said they raised their hand before we came up with this. Mrs. Huhn said one is Donna and Scott is asking to speak again.

Mrs. Louder said in light of all of this, as a taxpayer, she is so happy that Attorney Treadwell found this. She is so happy that Council is taking it seriously. To her, this looks like corruption and she's

not a lawyer. This is a big problem and she doesn't think that LSFR 16 needs to be tainted by this behavior. She thanks Council and she thanks Mr. Treadwell. Thank you.

Mrs. Huhn said Scott Nocek is asking to speak again. Mrs. Yerger said he has a minute and she means a minute.

Mr. Nocek said what Tom failed to say this was a public fundraiser held at Steel City Annual Red Line Run for the officer itself. It was made public. Prior to any of this, they actually had an audit completed from 2016 to 2019. They are cleared of any infractions for during those audits. Their lawyer advised them not to answer the letter only because they were cleared on the audit, it has nothing to do with the merger. There's nothing pending at this point in time and it's been in the public eye. They had flyers out and they had postings on line. It's been since 2019 itself and they weren't hiding anything. There was an injured officer and that's what they grouped with a club that helps each other and that's what it was for. It was a donation from an anonymous person and that was it. That's all he has to say.

Mr. Carocci said he has one comment and we can move on. Linc's letter did ask for a copy of any type of audit. It was not provided and he finds it, as an attorney, when your attorney advises you not to answer questions, it just says something, let's move on.

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**D. DISCUSSION ON RE-OPENING TOWNSHIP OFFICES**

Mrs. Huhn said with the anticipated lifting of the Governor's mandates, she would like to recommend to Council re-opening the Township offices to the public effective Monday, July 12, 2021, with the stipulation that requests to meet with staff be by appointment in order to continue to maintain safety precautions.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to approve re-opening the municipal building effective July 12, 2021 and get back to live meetings in person.

Mrs. Yerger said it says to meet with staff by appointment, so the offices will be open. Mrs. Huhn said yes, for the Zoning and Finance departments, we would ask that people make an appointment. Just to drop off permits, that's fine, but if it is to go over plans or a design or tax information, they would ask they make an appointment just to keep the amount of people in the building to a minimum.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to amend his motion and have Township offices open to the public effective Monday, July 12, 2021 with a stipulation to request that residents make an appointment with staff to continue to maintain safety precautions and also to begin holding all Township public meetings in person.

Mrs. deLeon said what is the capacity of our meeting room and are there any guidelines that we should be following for people sitting right next to each other, how are we going to do that. Mrs. Huhn said as of the end of June, is every mandate lifted? Attorney Treadwell said he can't speak to what the CDC says, but the emergency declaration is over, so those seating limitations that were mandated if you will by the State are gone. Mrs. deLeon said how many chairs do we have in the meeting room? Our capacity on the wall says 50. Mrs. Huhn said 150, but it probably doesn't hold 150, that might have to be revisited.

Mr. Banonis said he went to a Phillies game on Saturday and there were 38,000 people there and there were people sitting immediately next to him. Mrs. deLeon said and they were outside. Mr. Banonis said they were, some were and some were indoors in suites. Mrs. Huhn said she'd say we have about 50 chairs. Mrs. deLeon said she knows there are chairs up on the second floor, maybe we could add a couple extra. We had at one point 45 participants on the Zoom call. Mr. Banonis said you are suggesting putting more chairs and create a denser amount of population. Mrs. deLeon said no, people could space themselves better. Mrs. Huhn said we have more chairs.

Mrs. Stauffer said that raises a good question, if we open for meetings, we would fill to capacity, in theory, she's not saying it will happen, but that would be within current guidelines or should we

make provisions for seating to be more spaced out and move chairs. She's more interested in the logistics of doing this. She doesn't know if it would make more sense to include some logistics for the public meeting component. Mrs. Huhn said we have options, we could spread the chairs out, we could put tape over some or an X on some that people should not use them. Mr. Banonis said let's simplify this, he will amend his motion.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to amend his motion to strictly what Leslie has proposed and that is we reopen Township offices to the public effective Monday, July 12, 2021 with the stipulation that a request to meet with Staff be made by appointment to continue to maintain safety precautions. Mrs. deLeon said following up on that, the July meeting could be another Zoom until we get all the answers about the indoor seating. Mr. Banonis said his motion doesn't have anything about any meetings. It's simply about reopening offices. Mrs. deLeon said she's just asking a question if you don't mind. Mrs. Yerger said we can use that as a direction, so let's get this motion approved or however we want to deal with it, then we can direct Leslie for the July meeting. Mrs. deLeon said that's okay, thank you Sandy.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved to resume in-person meetings for all Township public meetings beginning July 12, 2021 and moving forward.

Mrs. Yerger said how is Leslie going to get that kind of information to us. How are we going to make that public beforehand and everyone has agreed to it? Mr. Banonis said the next Council meeting is a month away and it has to be published how many days in advance.

Attorney Treadwell said if you are going to go back to public meetings, which is the recommendation that PSATS is making, due to the fact that the emergency declaration is over now, and the provisions that the PA Legislature have adopted for a Zoom type meeting have now expired, then PSATS is saying you should go back to public meetings. He could probably make an argument under the Sunshine Act that you're allowed to have Zoom meetings, but that's not the way PSATS is going and he doesn't know that we want to be the only one that's still having Zoom meetings when everyone else is back to in-person meetings. Mrs. Yerger said she needed the clarification.

Mrs. Stauffer said if we approve this, does it give Leslie time to propose how you would like the room arranged in a way that staff, attendees, Council on the dais, would be comfortable. Mrs. Huhn said she believes so, we'll work something out. She can work with the chairs and get some spacing and we should be good.

Mr. Banonis said do you have masks available for people to use if they come in. Mrs. Huhn said we sure do. Mrs. Stauffer said is that something we would need approval on before we meet in some capacity. PSATS has made this recommendation, but she didn't see any recommendations on how to do it exactly. Her question is, just making sure we do it in the right way. Attorney Treadwell said as a Council, you control your meeting room. You are allowed to set it up however you want, the only thing you can't do is exclude people from the meeting. You can't set it up to say only 10 people come in and then 40 show up and you say you 30 can't come in. You can't do that.

Mrs. Stauffer said that's her concern. She doesn't have an answer for it. Attorney Treadwell said he thinks what Leslie and the staff are going to have to do is take a look at the room and see what the most common-sense way is to set it up. In the other Township's he represents, it's just business as usual like it was before the pandemic and if people want to wear masks, they can wear masks. Mrs. Yerger said they are not obligated to, that's the way it is.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger

Ms. Wittchen said several months ago when we were deeply into Zoom, there was a little bit discussion about possibly continuing Zoom in addition to the live meetings when we eventually could open up. She's not suggesting anyone take time to talk about this right now, but she would suggest that might be something Council might consider doing going forward simply because she thinks it

expands the numbers of people who can tap into the meetings rather than to be there physically. She would hope at some point it appears on the agenda for consideration as far as allowing as much transparency and participation as possible.

Mrs. Huhn said we are looking at options and she's not sure we are going to be able to Zoom because each Council member having a laptop here at the dais would reverberate with our sound system. She's been looking and trying to work with our Tech people to at least see if we can livestream. We just wouldn't have the interaction ability with that. The people in person could interact with Council, but she's not sure with the livestream, but they are looking at options.

Mrs. deLeon said we still according to the Sunshine Law, a Council person or another committee member can use a conference call. Attorney Treadwell said that's correct but we can't have more than two of you do that. Mrs. deLeon said is that law or is that Linc Treadwell law? Attorney Treadwell said is there a difference? Mrs. deLeon said it depends which court you are in. Attorney Treadwell said you can't have a quorum of the board participating by phone, then it's not an in-person meeting. Mrs. deLeon said that makes sense.

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**E. RESOLUTION #55-2021 – AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF DIRT, GRAVEL & LOW VOLUME ROADS GRANT**

Mrs. Huhn said Resolution #55-2021 has been prepared for Council's ratification of grant funds. No other action is required by the Township other than execution of the contract once received. This is for the replacement of a culvert on Reading Drive.

Mrs. Gorman said quite some time ago, she and the Director of Public Works have been trying to isolate specific problems about road infrastructure problems in the Township and they did isolate one item that is on Reading Drive. She found a source of funding through Northampton County Conservation District as this is a low volume road which means it's not highly traveled with the parameters of the Dirt and Gravel regulations. They had worked with James Lawrence at the Conservation District and he had said this was a very good project to do and we applied and it moved really fast. Their regulations regarding this was kind of like, this is great, you're approved. We received a grant for \$268,453 to replace a culvert on Reading Drive. Mrs. Huhn said this resolution will just ratify that with the district.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved for approval of Resolution #55-2021.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. deLeon

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**VI. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ITEMS**

**A. APPROVAL OF JUNE 2, 2021 COUNCIL MINUTES**

Mrs. Yerger said the June 2, 2021 minutes are ready for Council's review and approval.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved for approval of the June 2, 2021 Council minutes.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**B. APPROVAL OF MAY 2021 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Mrs. Yerger said the May 2021 financial reports are ready for Council's review and approval.

**MOTION BY:** Mrs. Yerger moved for approval of the May 2021 financial reports.

**SECOND BY:** Mr. Banonis

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**VII. COUNCIL & STAFF REPORTS**

**A. MANAGER – Mrs. Huhn**

➤ She said we have a request for a pavilion rental from the Vietnam Veterans of America for July 10, 2021 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. They are requesting the use of some amplified

music and microphone to amplify the sound levels of their meeting for that time and said they said they will be playing some 70's music.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved for approval of the request for pavilion rental from the Vietnam Veterans of America for July 10, 2021 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with use of some amplified music and microphone to amplify the sound levels of their meeting.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

- She said Jason touched on the Meadows Road Bridge during the WalkWorks presentation and she did reach out to Mike McGuire, the design engineer. They are working with PennDOT through the design and are looking at a build of 2023-2024 and taking down the bridge in the winter of 2021-2022 because they feel the freeze-frost cycle they should remove it by this winter. They were awarded the Federal grant and are working on getting their required DEP permits at this time.
- There is a Landfill Committee meeting tomorrow evening at 6:00 p.m., via Zoom. After the May meeting, she received a letter from Victoria Opthof-Cordaro asking about odors and how they are tracked and monitored and how they are processed through DEP. Mrs. Huhn did contact Amy Faulch and she will be bringing this up at the Landfill meeting tomorrow night. She is the Solid Waste Supervisor and she outlined DEP's process and it was shared with Council and the Landfill Committee with the understanding this would be brought back to the Landfill Committee for further discussion. She also reached out to Amy Faulch to see if she could attend a meeting and she indicated she isn't able to do that but passed her request on to Roger Bellas and Dean Ritter and we are awaiting a response from them.

**B. COUNCIL**

**Mr. Carocci**

- He attended the Hellertown Library fundraiser this evening and it was a very nice event and well attended.
- He wanted to bring to Council's attention this HR Bill 3728, this is Federal legislation, and it's a proposal called the Fire Station Construction Grants Act which will authorize a one-time, \$1 million appropriation to help local fire companies modify, upgrade, build new fire stations and train facilities. Approximately 43% of the fire stations in the U.S. are 40 years or older and cost of estimate to replace them are \$70 to \$100 billion. Our fire stations are fairly old. The original Se-Wy-Co station was built in 1908 and it's now the Social Club and officers. In 1948, two truck bays were built, in 1969 five bays were added, and then in 1990 the five bays were extended. Southeastern was built in 1959 with three bays and then two more bays were added in 1962. Steel City was built in 1979 and Leithsville was rebuilt in 2014 but he would like Council to send a letter to Representative Wild, Senators Toomey & Casey saying our support for this bill because we do have older fire stations and if we could get some of this \$1 billion, if the bill passes, maybe we can look to modify or rebuilt and upgrade some of these fire stations. He wants to thank Scott Krycia for bringing this to his attention and he hopes we can send this letter. He can provide Leslie with the information to draft the letter.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved for approval of the letter stated above by Mr. Carocci as it's a great source of alternate revenue and certainly would benefit all of our fire services, so hopefully it gets passed.

Mr. Carocci said he just wants to let Representative Wild and the Senators Toomey and Casey know we have older fire stations.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

**Mr. Banonis**

- He attended the Hellertown Library event this evening briefly at Black River Farms. It was very well attended. He understands the library has some funding wishes for some capital improvements and he's not sure how we can address those as the library is located in the Borough, but we are going to continue that dialogue.

**Mrs. deLeon**

- She would like to make a motion to have the Staff re-evaluate the square footage cost for Seidersville Hall. She knows we did that a long time ago and inflation and various costs have risen, so she'd like to ask that be re-evaluated. Mrs. Yerger said do you need a motion? Mrs. Huhn said direction is fine.

**Mrs. Stauffer**

- She said she hoped everyone purchased a ticket for the Hellertown Library event this evening. Everyone was working hard on organizing the basket raffles and acquiring sponsorships. She's looking forward to hear how it went after not being able to get over there before or after our Council meeting.
- The Historical Society has a couple of updates. They had a sizeable from Lenny Szy when he passed away and the National Museum of Industrial History is actually taking WWI and WWII armament articles into their collection so she thought that was an interesting share that someone local has kept a lot of history that is going to live on in another way in a more visible area.
- The shutter project is underway and the photography contest is coming up in September. Mrs. deLeon said that's neat that they are going to do the photography thing, she thought that was nice. Mr. Banonis asked Mrs. Stauffer if she could share the contact she has at the museum as he's on the Advisory Board of the WWII Museum in Gettysburg and perhaps there could be some synergy between the two. Mrs. Stauffer said she does not have that contact, but she's sure the Historical Society could provide that.

**Mrs. Yerger** – No report

C. **SOLICITOR** – No report

D. **ENGINEER** – No report

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – NON-RESIDENTS ONLY** – None

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Banonis moved for adjournment. The time was 9:15 p.m.

**SECOND BY:** Mrs. Yerger

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0

Submitted by:

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Leslie Huhn  
Township Manager

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Sandra B. Yerger  
Council President