

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026**

SUPERVISORS PRESENT:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair
Janine Martin
Andrea Brockway
Jimmy Chong

STAFF:

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Michelle Farzetta, Office Manager
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor
Paul Kenny, Police Chief
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Melinda Haldeman, Finance Director
John Farrell, Project Manager/Emergency Management Coordinator

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:05pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building and virtually on Zoom and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) met in executive session on October 6, 2026, and prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel related to the police department, non-uniformed positions, and volunteer appointments; real estate related to the planned Public Works garage and trails; and potential litigation related to code enforcement and emergency management

PRESENTATION: Overview of initial design ideas for proposed Public Works Facility

Ms. Duckett introduced John Farrell, Lower Gwynedd's Project Manager, who introduced the project team. The team included Chris Holler of Boyle Construction (construction manager), Christian Hoffer of Alloy 5 (architect), and Jim Hersh and Brian Studer of Gilmore and Associates (site civil engineer).

Mr. Holler reported that the schematic design phase was nearly complete. Design development and construction documents will each take a few months, with the land development approval process running alongside them. Bidding is anticipated in spring or early summer of 2027, and construction would run from summer 2027 through summer 2028. Cost estimates are updated at each phase. The supervisors would be asked to decide how to proceed once bids are received.

Mr. Holler reviewed the background of the Public Works Department, mentioning that there are 16 employees plus summer help. The department maintains roads, sewer and storm lines, buildings, vehicles, and 24 miles of trails. Operations are currently spread across five crowded, outdated locations. The new facility would consolidate operations on one site across the street from the Township Building, behind Giant, improving efficiency and increasing capacity for properly storing vehicles, equipment and material. It would provide offices, restrooms, locker rooms, a covered salt shed, a wash station, a fuel depot, and expanded vehicle maintenance space. In contrast to current conditions, all vehicles could be parked inside. Mr. Holler stated that a 400-foot buffer would be maintained between the site and the neighboring residential area, the hillside would provide additional buffering, and the existing trail system would not be affected. He said an earlier study considered other locations and found this to be the best site.

Mr. Hoffer walked through the preliminary site plan which included a covered storage and material bins, a salt shed, a large equipment vehicle garage with an open storage mezzanine, wood shop, chipper garage, a two-bay mechanic's repair area, and a wash bay sized for a fire department ladder truck. A T-shaped administration and staff building with offices, a conference room, training and break rooms, showers, and locker rooms would also be on the new site. A fuel station with separate access so that police and other users do not need to enter the main yard, a stormwater basin along Moore Drive and separate parking for staff and other township vehicles would complete the site.

Mr. Twersky asked how long a facility like this could last. Mr. Holler stated that facilities of this type are typically planned on a 50-year horizon. It was also noted that the facility could serve as a backup emergency operations center, and that the larger open gathering spaces were designed with that in mind.

John Bissell, 1211 Tenby Court, expressed concern about the loss of green space, the integrity of the 400-foot buffer, grading and drainage on the hillside, the preservation of the wooded hilltop, and the impact on neighbors on Rossett Court and Carnigan Court. He also expressed concern about the appearance of the township's entrance along Bethlehem Pike and stated that clearing appeared to have already begun on the site.

Ms. Duckett responded that the Township acquired the property through condemnation. The footprint was reduced from an originally anticipated 16 acres to 10 acres, but the 400-foot buffer between the neighboring properties and the site, while privately owned, is still in place due to zoning regulations. She said the planning process began before 2024 and that all information is posted on the Township's website. She added that she and Mr. Twersky canvassed the neighborhood to ensure residents knew about the project, tonight's meeting, and the upcoming Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Twersky stated that a retaining wall would be provided, and that Johnson & Johnson owns the buffer area.

Robin Kelly, 1121 Tintern, asked why area farther west on the site now owned by J&J was not selected. Mr. Twersky responded that a gas pipeline runs through that portion of property and that 10 contiguous vacant acres was not available elsewhere in Lower Gwynedd. The selected site was also the most economical. He also stated that the 400-foot buffer appears in every plan, that engineers

would protect the hillside vegetation, and that the vehicle traffic flow was designed to minimize noise and impact on neighbors. Ms. Kelly said the traffic flow explanation addressed her noise concerns. Ms. Martin noted that the Planning Commission will take up the project on October 21. Ms. Duckett confirmed that the date of the next public discussion about the project – the October 21st Planning Commission meeting – appeared on the flyer distributed to residents and that tonight's presentation would be posted on the Township website.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Consider approval of Resolution #2026-21 authorizing an intergovernmental agreement with Wissahickon School District for School Resource Officer services

Ms. Duckett explained that the agreement stems from a relationship with the school district that spanned at least ten years and shifted within the last year. A recent staffing review of the police department by Certus recommended returning to a School Resource Officer (SRO) program, which differs from a school police officer program. During the development of the Certus report, public input also confirmed strong community support for an SRO. Ms. Duckett thanked the school district and the police department. There were no questions from the Board or the public.

Motion to approve Resolution #2026-21 authorizing an intergovernmental agreement with Wissahickon School District for School Resource Officer services was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion passed 5-0.

Consider acceptance of a proposal from Aspirant Consulting Group, LLC for \$13,500 to assist the Lower Gwynedd Police Department with PLEAC accreditation compliance in 2027

Chief Kenny stated that the department had performed all accreditation compliance work in house since first becoming accredited, which tied up one officer nearly full-time. If the proposal from Aspirant Consulting Group is accepted, they would organize and support documenting adherence to accreditation standards through access to the department's records management system and Power DMS, and also help monitor changes in accreditation standards and best practices. The Chief said accreditation standards change two to three times a year.

In lieu of a single department accreditation manager, each of the four patrol sergeants would be assigned one of the four accreditation chapters each year and rotate annually. The Chief said this plan would broaden department-wide buy-in for accreditation. Chief Kenny also mentioned the liability and risk management benefits of accreditation.

Ms. Martin inquired about the fee. The Chief confirmed the cost is annual because proof of compliance must be submitted every year even though accreditation is reaffirmed every three years. Mr. Twersky asked about Officer Evard's role now. Chief Kenny stated that he has been assigned to a squad and would now be able to devote his full time to other duties. The Chief also explained that the higher-tier Aspirant option was selected because it includes continuous review of policy and legal changes. Ms. Duckett commended the Officer Evard who had been the Township's accreditation manager for many years.

A motion to approve the proposal from Aspirant Consulting Group, LLC for \$13,500 in 2027 to assist

the Lower Gwynedd Police Department with accreditation compliance with the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion passed 5-0.

Consider approval of a contract with Delco Solutions for audio upgrades in the main meeting room following discussion of options at the meeting

Michelle Farzetta explained why a new microphone system should be considered. Virtual participants often have a problem hearing speakers in the meeting room, passing the portable microphone around during larger meetings can become cumbersome, and speakers cannot always be heard later by people watching recorded meetings. This affects the ability of the Zoom audience to hear the discussion at the meeting and the quality of the recordings used for minutes. It also is not possible to hold a hybrid virtual/in person meeting in the main meeting room unless most of the speakers sit at the dais where the gooseneck microphones are.

Ms. Farzetta said that a quote of \$10,437 for four wireless button microphones was the amount included in the 2026 budget. However, Delco's prices increased this year. An updated quote for four button microphones with an eight-slot charger was \$14,340, and an option that would also replace the dais goosenecks with hardwired button microphones was \$18,896. Ms. Farzetta stated that the main cost increase was Delco's labor. Ms. Gleason asked whether the Board considered the upgrade worth the cost now, in the 2027 budget, later, or not at all.

Ms. Martin expressed concern about the high cost and about the possibility of open microphones inadvertently picking up audience conversations. She suggested purchasing one or two additional portable microphones. Ms. Farzetta explained they would need to be compatible with the current system. Ms. Duckett asked whether lower-cost clip-on microphones or vendors other than Delco had been explored. Ms. Farzetta said they had not. Mr. Twersky agreed that other vendors and alternatives should be explored, noting the substantial price increase in less than a year. The Board consensus was to have staff explore alternatives before considering a contract. No motion was made.

Consider authorizing the Public Works Department to participate in the Montgomery County Consortium of Communities' (MCCC) road salt supply agreement for winter 2026/27 with their low bidder, Morton Salt, Inc., at a price of \$73.44 per delivered ton and \$73.00 per non-delivered ton and authorizing the Solicitor to finalize an agreement with MCCC and Morton

Mr. Zollers reported that the Township has participated in the consortium's bulk salt contract in the past. This year the consortium is requiring each municipality to authorize and sign a separate agreement with the supplier, in response to delivery problems last winter. He stated the price is favorable and that the Township also participates in the COSTARS contract as a backup salt supplier. Ms. Duckett outlined the prices and the tri-party structure of the agreement. There were no questions from the Board or the public.

A motion to authorize Mr. Stein to finalize an agreement with the Montgomery County Consortium of Communities and Morton Salt, Inc. for road salt at \$73.44 per delivered ton and \$73.00 per non-delivered ton was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution #2026-22 authorizing disposition of records

Ms. Duckett explained that Resolution #2026-22 authorizes disposal of public records under the municipal records manual, in accordance with Act 428 of 1968, in anticipation of the annual shredding and recycling event that will be held Saturday, October 24, with the administration, finance, police, and parks and recreation departments participating. There were no questions from the BOS or the public. Motion to approve Resolution #2026-22 authorizing the disposition of records was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Ms. Martin. The motion carried 5-0.

Approval of invoice Report for October 13, 2026

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated October 13, 2026, totaling \$2,176,669.26. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the invoices dated October 13, 2026. Motion passed unanimously

Finance Report – September 2026

The report was included in the board packet. There were no questions from the Board. Chair Duckett thanked the Finance Director for the report.

Approval of minutes – for September 22, 2026, and October 6, 2026

The BOS received the minutes from both the September 22, 2026, meeting and the October 6, 2026, meeting. There were no questions or comments. A motion to approve the minutes from September 22, 2026, and October 6, 2026, meetings were made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Ms. Martin. The motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steven Laux, 714 Meadow Creek Circle, spoke on behalf of himself and several neighbors regarding the Township's plans to clear and establish a trail along an easement behind their properties. He submitted written comments and raised the following points:

- **Impact on homeowners.** Fences, gardens, and mature landscaping would have to be moved at a collective cost he estimated to be in the tens of thousands of dollars. Backyards that are already modest in size (some 30 to 40 feet deep) would be significantly reduced, and a 15-foot clearing and 6-foot wood chip trail would affect privacy, safety, and property values.
- **Easement.** He stated that the easement is private property granted "to the public" in the late 1980s for horseback riding and walking, not to the Township. He questioned the Township's authority to order relocation of fences or to build a formal trail. He also questioned the accuracy of the Township's survey stakes. His homeowners' association has retained a licensed surveyor, with results expected in November, and he has filed a Right-to-Know request for Township records.
- **Written notice.** He stated that homeowners have received only verbal and informal email descriptions of the proposed work, with no formal written description or statement of legal authority.

- **Bethlehem Pike connector.** He stated that the roughly 600-foot connector trail through wooded wetlands is not in the township's 2025 strategic sidewalk and trail plan, that letters had gone out to the Locust Lane townhouse community stating it was ready to be installed, and that he understood the connector had since been tabled due to engineering problems. He asked that public comment be allowed before any connector is built.
- **Requests.** He asked the Board to pause clearing and trail work until the survey and records review are complete, the Township provides a written description of the work and its legal authority, and the issues are discussed with homeowners. He also asked the Board to reconsider the project.

Ms. Duckett acknowledged that an easement exists and said Township staff understood the easement allowed the trail. She stated that nothing would move forward until the HOA's survey was received. She said the trail on the easement is in the 2025 sidewalk and trails plan and the idea for the Bethlehem Pike connector on the adjacent Township property came from resident requests at the recent Fall Fest, for pedestrian access to Bethlehem Pike. She stated that no connector trail had been authorized, that she was not aware of any letter sent to a community describing it as imminent, and that staff would investigate it.

Mr. Twersky said the central question is a legal one: whether the township has the right to place a trail in the easement or whether homeowners may maintain fences and similar improvements there. He said encroachments into easements are common. He added that the Board is trying to honor the requests heard from many residents for trails and a walkable township. In doing so, he said, the Board is not trying to harm Meadow Creek residents, would make sure the Township's information is accurate, and would try to sort things out. Ms. Martin asked clarifying questions about the neighbors' concerns beyond relocating fences and landscaping. Mr. Laux responded that his concerns were the cost of moving improvements in the easement, loss of backyard space, and the change from a trail that had not been used by horses in at least 15 to 20 years.

Steve Willard, 722 Meadow Creek Circle, stated that he moved to the neighborhood six years ago in part because of its single point of entry. He said he has three young children, and he expressed concern for safety, privacy, and the loss of open backyard space. He noted that the deed refers to an equestrian easement. He also observed that the proposed easement trail would connect to trails and crosswalks that already exist on the other side of Dager Road.

James Cimback, 713 Meadow Creek Circle, raised safety concerns. He cited three prior break-ins at homes backing onto the trail, including one involving the theft of \$10,000 and another in which a homeowner found an intruder coming out of a child's bedroom. He asked that police records be obtained. He also stated that a home along the trail was about to be listed for sale and that he was unsure what to disclose to the realtor. Ms. Duckett clarified that the easement appears in the recorded deed and development plan, and Mr. Cimback confirmed that residents were not contesting its existence. He stated that the survey was expected on November 12. Mr. Twersky stated that the Board understood the residents' concerns and that they were not falling on deaf ears.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

There were no Reports included in the packet for this meeting.

STAFF UPDATES

There were no updates from staff.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Mr. Chong thanked Ms. Duckett and Mr. Twersky for walking the Trewellyn Reserve neighborhood to notify residents about the Public Works building. Ms. Duckett thanked Township staff for their work during September and October, including the Public Works garage project, the ordinance amendment regarding data centers, and the sidewalk and trail plan.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Farzetta
Office Manager