Board of Supervisors

MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

MEETING HELD AT SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP BUILDING

Supervisors Present: Dave Long, Lorna Yearwood, Pete Kade, Jim Hopkins, and Jim Nilsen
Also present: Rich Pursell (Township Manager), Scott MacNair, Esq. (Township Solicitor) & Mike McDonald (Police Chief).

Mr. Long called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENT

An Executive session will be held after the public meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Nadine Marnett (School Rd) addressed the Board regarding ongoing disputes and reported issues concerning her neighbor on School Rd. Her concerns included notations on documents obtained about her neighbor's property through a Right-To-Know request, exterior lighting & surveillance cameras, nuisance provisions and how the Police handle them, and requested formal action be taken by the Board of Supervisors with explicit findings. The Township Solicitor stated that her correspondence has been received and will be reviewed by the Zoning officer, and that while her issues could potentially fall under zoning regulations, he advised Ms. Barnett that filing a formal Springfield Township Concern Form would initiate a full zoning review. The Township Solicitor further explained that the Township lacks jurisdiction on matters of surveillance cameras and advised that privacy claims are a civil matter to be pursued in court. Mr. Long expressed sympathy for her situation, reconfirmed the process outlined by the Township Solicitor, and noted that the Police Chief was present and would look into the reported activities.

Barry John Murphy (Bucks County Herald) inquired regarding concerns about a potential conflict of interest at the Springtown Water Authority and asked why an email he previously submitted was not given a response. The Township Manager clarified that the email was forwarded directly to the Water Authority. It was explained that the Springtown Water Authority functions as an independent entity separate from the Board of Supervisors, and instructed Barry to attend their specific board meetings for direct responses.

Carla Sessions (Maple Rd) presented a letter on behalf of the "Concerned Neighbors" group regarding ongoing discussions between Springfield Township and Haycock Camp relating to shooting activity on camp property. She noted that the neighboring residents learned the camp requested outdoor shooting hours exceeding those originally deemed acceptable y the Board and approved by Judge Trauger under Condition #6 of the Conditional Use stipulations. She highlighted the original stipulations required only one indoor shooting range (for handguns and rifles) and one outdoor range (strictly for shotguns, with prohibitions on exploding targets and requirements to adhere to EPA practices). She argued that daily outdoor shooting lasting four to eight hours would inflict irreparable harm on the rural community, compromise quiet enjoyment, harm the environment, and negatively affect property values. She requested that the Board maintain the original protective conditions.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Long stated the financial report and balances are posted.

Motion made by Mr. Nilsen, seconded by Mr. Kade and unanimously carried, approving the financial report as presented.

Fund Balances as of August 31, 2026

General Fund	$2,056,503	Capital Reserve Fund	$1,455,911
General Fund Reserve	$411,734	Capital Reserve CD	$240,000
General Fund CD	$240,000	Liquid Fuels Fund	$206,028
Escrow Fund	$1,071,484	Liquid Fuels CD	$240,000
Street Light Fund	$8,245	Open Space Fund	$1,011,161
Dedicated Fire Tax Fund	$237,879	Open Space CD	$240,000
Dedicated Road Equip	$81,315	Act 537 Escrows	$90,631
		Dedicated EMS Tax Fund	$56,636

Revenue Balances

EIT	$784,054	Real Estate	$1,139,448
LST	$29,290	Real Estate Transfer	$133,494

Payment of Bills
(August 16, 2026 – September 15, 2026)

General Fund	$87,084.52	Escrow Fund	$26,838.64
PLGIT Credit Card	$4,069.36	Dedicated EMS Fund	$0
Liquid Fuels Fund	$192,336.30	Dedicated Fire Fund	$16,310.00
Capital Reserve Fund	$7,000.75	Dedicated Road Equip.	$0
Street Light Fund	$623.56	Open Space Fund	$10,345.32

Motion made by Ms. Yearwood, seconded by Mr. Nilsen, and unanimously approved the payment of bills from August 16, 2026 – September 15, 2026.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Yearwood, seconded by Mr. Nilsen, and unanimously carried, approving of the August 25, 2026 meeting minutes as amended.

Motion made by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Ms. Yearwood and unanimously carried, approving the September 1, 2026 budget meeting minutes.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Discussion on Data Center Ordinance – Mr. Long introduced the topic, noting that data centers are a significant subject statewide and nationwide. He stated that while the Planning Commission has been drafting an ordinance, standards and requirements have been constantly revolving. Mr. Long stated that the 16-page draft ordinance itself, would not be debated line-by-line during this meeting, but would be placed on the next meeting agenda.

Mr. Pantaleo (Planning Commission) presented a formal cover letter outlining the framework of the draft ordinance and read it into the record:

- Work on the draft began in the spring as a proactive measure.
- The proposed ordinance would permit data centers strictly as a conditional use within the Highway Commercial (HC) and Planned Industrial (PI) districts.
- Applicants would bear the burden of proving no adverse impacts on public health, safety, welfare, community character, or natural resources. Regulated standards encompass building height, setbacks, building/impervious surface coverage, landscape buffers, screening, lighting, noise, heat, vibration, water and wastewater, electrical supply, emergency management, aesthetics, parking, and access.
- Applicants must submit professional impact studies addressing noise, heat, vibration, water supply, wastewater, energy consumption, and environmental factors (including woodland disturbance, threatened/endangered species, and riparian buffers).
- A full decommissioning plan and financial assurance (bond, escrow, or letter of credit) sufficient to cover complete site restoration are required at the time of application, along with performance security and continuing enforcement provisions.

Mr. Hopkins noted that the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) is currently developing a model data center ordinance. He requested that once it's been received, it be forwarded to the Planning Commission to identify any gaps or operational differences.

Ms. Yearwood recalled comments made by the Township Solicitor at a prior meeting regarding Dublin receiving extensive feedback on their draft ordinance from the Bucks County Planning Commission. The Township Solicitor confirmed that the Bucks County Planning Commission maintains model ordinances on its website. He emphasized that because this proposal dictates land use locations and conditional uses, it must be enacted as an amendment to the Springfield Township Zoning Ordinance rather than a standalone ordinance. Mandatory review and feedback from the Bucks County Planning Commission is also required.

Mr. Long requested that any Board feedback be provided to Mr. Pantaleo prior to the next meeting.

Discussion on Noise Ordinance – Mr. O'Brien (Planning Commission) reported that while the Planning Commission originally envisioned a standalone ordinance, they will adhere to the Township Solicitor's legal advice to incorporate the revisions directly under the Zoning Ordinance performance standards. He conducted an analysis comparing noise regulations across six Pennsylvania townships with similar demographics to establish best practices.

- Added explicit statutory authority and definitions to eliminate legal ambiguity
- Reorganized and updated the decibel limit tables. Noting the Police Chief conducted empirical background baseline noise testing along the Route 309 commercial corridor, and findings indicated that ambient baseline noise was approximately 10 decibels higher than existing ordinance limits.
- Based on the Police Chief's baseline study, the proposed decibel limit for HC and PI districts was raised from 65 dBA to 75 dBA. Residential decibel limits remain unchanged.
- Created dedicated sections for specific exemptions, including emergency operations, snow removal, and agricultural activities.
- Added explicit new sections governing construction regulations, enforcement and special waivers, and violations and penalties.

Mr. Hopkins questioned referenced sections regarding trees/shrubs for screening, which Mr. O'Brien clarified were pulled directly from existing performance standards to ensure no unintended conflicts.

Ms. Yearwood requested clarification on boundary limits. The Township Solicitor confirmed that if a commercial/industrial zone borders a rural residential district, the lower 60dBA limit applies at the residential property boundary. Ms. Yearwood further raised concerns regarding practical enforcement, recommending a joint session with supervisors, the Police Chief, the Zoning Officer, and the Township Manager. The Police Chief remarked that "enforcement is easy; data collection is the hard part".

Quentin Brown (Maple Rd) expressed concern over the dictionary definition of "occasional" arguing it remains too vague regarding gunfire noise. He questioned whether sound is measured at the noise source or the receiving property line. The Township Solicitor clarified that decibels are measured at or within the receiving real property boundary line.

Amy Bounassi (Nemeth Rd) requested a separate, dedicated ordinance targeting ATV and dirt bike racing rather than addressing it under general noise.

James Gambino (Nemeth Rd) reported ongoing, severe issues with dirt bikes operating up to property boundaries and urged the Board to implement explicit regulations governing rider counts, hours, operation duration, and property line setbacks.

Patrick Sessions (Maple Rd) noted that top community complaints center on shootings, ATVs, and barking dogs. He expressed concern regarding high-volume shooting events involving semi-automatic weaponry and multi-hour durations, advocating for gun club permitting regulations or minimum delay rules between shots.

Mr. Long and Planning Commission members clarified that shooting, weapon safety, backstops, and hunting are governed under state laws (including the PA Game Commission) or require dedicated weapons/shotting ordinances rather than a noise ordinance. Impulsive sound definitions (short duration under one second, ex. Target shooting) are recognized within the draft, but broader firearm restrictions cannot be incorporated directly into this zoning amendment. Mr. Nilsen noted state law dictates projectiles cannot leave a property line, though explicit municipal backstop regulations are not currently in place.

Motion made by Ms. Yearwood, seconded by Mr. Kade and unanimously carried, authorizing the Township Solicitor to convert the draft noise ordinance into a formal Zoning Ordinance Amendment format.

Discussion on Deer Fencing – The Township Solicitor presented a proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment regarding deer fencing and general property boundary restrictions. He explained that the current zoning ordinance regulates structures and fencing by specifying what is *prohibited* within front, side, and rear yard setbacks. Because it only prohibits structures *within* setback areas, there are no explicit height restrictions for fencing installed *outside* setback lines (within the interior building envelope). Consequently, a property owner could legally build an excessively tall fence in the building envelope without a zoning violation.

The Township Solicitor presented an additional revision to patch the loophole: stipulating that no fence shall be installed on any lot in excess of 7 feet in height in any location, with the exception of deer fencing, which may be installed up to 10 feet in height.

Board members and the Township Solicitor engaged in an extensive breakdown of physical fence placement relative to township and state road right-of-way:

- Legal Right-of-Way Base: Defined as 33 feet (16.5 feet from road centerline).
- Township Setback Rule: Fences are permitted 5 feet beyond the legal right-of-way.

- Distance Calculation: Adding 16.5 feet (half of legal right-of-way) plus 5 feet equals 21.5 feet from the centerline of the road.
- Cartway Edge Example: If a primary township road has a cartway width of 28 feet (14 feet from centerline to edge), placing a fence 21.5 feet from the centerline results in a fence placed exactly 7.5 feet off the physical edge of the road.

Fencing installed 5 feet outside the legal right-of-way falls within a road's Ultimate Right-of-Way will require the property owner to execute a formal, binding declaration. This recorded declaration runs with the property in perpetuity and stipulates that if the Township executes future road improvements or widening, the homeowner must remove or relocate the fence at their sole expense.

Mr. Nilsen inquired about pre-existing non-conforming fences. The Township Solicitor clarified that existing fences are lawful pre-existing non-conformities. Routing maintenance and inline repairs (including replacing posts or sections incrementally) preserve non-conforming status. However, completely removing and replacing a fence requires full compliance with the new standard.

Motino made by Mr. Nilsen, seconded by Mr. Kade, and unanimously carried, authorizing the Township Solicitor to submit the draft ordinance amendment to the Bucks County Planning Commission for its mandatory 30-day review.

Authorization to Advertise the 2027 Budget – The Township Manager presented the proposed 2027 Municipal Budget. Mr. Long confirmed that the proposed budget does not include any tax increases.

Motion made by Mr. Nilsen, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, and unanimously carried, authorizing public advertisement of the 2027 Township Budget.

Ratification to Hire Full-Time Administrative Assistant – Motion made by Mr. Nilsen, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, and unanimously carried, ratifying the hiring of Kelli Mackey as Administrative Assistant on a full-time 40-hour weekly basis.

Request for Fire Police – Quakertown Borough – Motion made by Ms. Yearwood, seconded by Mr. Kade, and unanimously carried to authorize the use of Springtown Fire Company Fire Police/PRFR Fire Police to assist at the Quakertown Halloween Parade on October 18, 2026.

Discussion on Verizon and Service Electric – Mr. Nilsen led a discussion regarding local telecommunications infrastructure and service replacements. Township residents who have legacy Verizon copper landline services have received notification that Verizon has applied to the FCC to formally discontinue copper POTS and DSL lines in the community. Residents are being offered cellular conversion units or Fios where available.

Mr. Nilsen pointed out that large portions of Springfield Township lack Fios availability and have inadequate cellular coverage, creating serious connectivity and safety vulnerabilities. While Service Electric supplies cable/coax internet via fiber nodes, those nodes rely on localized electric grid power (PPL); when utility power fails for extended periods, municipal and emergency communications lose phone and internet connectivity. Following Verizon's recent acquisition and fiber procurement contract, Verizon is actively expanding fiber-to-the-home (Fios) across Upper Bucks County. Mr. Nilsen strongly advocated that the Township aggressively petition Verizon Corporate, the PUC, and the FCC to demand Fios infrastructure expansion throughout Springfield Township.

The Township Solicitor and Mr. Nilsen noted that cable franchise fees apply only to traditional video/TV services under the Cabel Act. While Fios television delivery would generate franchise revenue, basic internet delivery does not.

The Board would like to have the Township Solicitor and Mr. Nilsen to draft formal correspondence and coordinate with Verizon corporate contacts and regulatory bodies.

Discussion on Cooks Creek Watershed Association Work Groups – Ms. Yearwood introduced an initiative from the Cooks Creek Watershed Association (CCWA) regarding implementation of their updated Comprehensive Plan. CCWA recommended forming joint municipal work groups featuring representatives from Springfield Township, Durham Township, and Lower Saucon Township to prioritize tasks and finalize an implementation plan to submit to the state for future environmental grant funding.

Mr. Hopkins reviewed project categories and conceptual price estimates developed by Princeton Hydro:

- Well & Aquifer Monitoring: $140,000-$170,000 to establish groundwater depth baselines and safe yield capacity.
- Inlet Retrofits (Durham, Springtown, Pleasant Valley): $5,000-$10,000 per location (plus $1,000 annual maintenance) for particulate capture and road flood prevention.
- Additional Watershed Projects: Rain Gardens, bioswale installations, cover cropping, farm nutrient management plans, livestock stream exclusions, water quality monitoring, floodplain connectivity, and stream bank stabilization.

The Board appointed Ms. Yearwood as the Board's primary liaison to the committee, with Mr. Hopkins to serve as the alternate backup liaison. Representatives will also be invited from the Planning Commission and the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). The committee functions strictly in an advisory capacity with all physical work contingent on securing grant funding.

Discussion on Purchase of Police Vehicle – The Police Chief presented a recommendation to purchase a new police patrol vehicle. He recommended transitioning back to the Ford Police Interceptor Utility rather than continuing with Ford F-150 trucks due to dramatic price increases for F-150s. The Police Interceptor represents a more economical option that fits within the Capital Replacement Plan budget, accounting for trade-in values. The vehicle targeted for replacement is a 2017 unit with 135,000 miles. Active-duty vehicles currently average 1,200-2,000 miles per month. Equipment (including mobile cameras and dashcams) will be transferred from the decommissioned truck to the new vehicle. Lead time for delivery is estimated at 8 weeks.

Motion made by Mr. Kade, seconded by Ms. Yearwood, and unanimously carried, approving the purchase of the Ford Police Interceptor Utility vehicle at a price not to exceed $77,000.

Zoning Hearing Board Application (Winding Rd) – The Township Solicitor presented a Zoning Hearing Board Application for a property located at 2380 Winding Rd. A Resale U&O inspection revealed an existing pole barn located within a required setback. Historical aerial imagery confirmed that the unpermitted pole barn was constructed around 2015 by the previous owner. The new owner is seeking a dimensional setback variance to maintain the existing structure. The adjacent property closest to the pole barn is vacant, and no neighbor complaints have been filed.

Motion made by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Ms. Yearwood, and unanimously carried, offering to take no position/offer no comment on the Zoning Hearing Board application.

REPORTS / COMMENTS

Zoning – Report posted.

Police – Mobile in-car cameras have been installed and are functioning properly. Body camera docking stations were received, and officer training is scheduled for Thursday, with full deployment planned by Friday/Monday. Body Cameras automatically trigger when emergency lights are activated or when mobile cameras turn on.

Speed monitoring on State Rd eastbound showed 85% of passerby's adhering to the posted speed limit, despite isolated max speed outliers.

- Upcoming Events
  - October 24, 2026: Drug Take-Back Day
  - October 25, 2026: Springtown Halloween Parade
  - October 31, 2026: Trick-or-Treat Night

Roads – A hit-and-run collision occurred on lower Haupts Bridge Rd, knocking over a culvert headwall. Police and road crew are investigating deliver services which may have been servicing nearby residents at the time of the incident.

Springfield Township was awarded a $214,000 grant for a new dump truck. Paperwork is being finalized for ordering, with delivery anticipated in approximately 1.5 years.

A new park bench was installed along the rail trail at the top of the steep section in Peppermint Park.

Solicitor –

- 876 Passer Road Enforcement: Following a conference call with Judge Yeager (Court of Common Please) regarding the petition to enforce the settlement agreement, a joint site inspection was ordered for October 5, 2026. The inspection will establish a stipulated compliance order detailing required removal of tree stumps, wood debris, and land revegetation/stabilization prior to a formal court hearing.
- Honeycomb Creek Farm LLC Zoning Appeal: Legal Counsel will attend the Zoning Hearing Board meeting on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, regarding a notice of violation issued for unauthorized retail sales and service operations (E-18 use).

Engineer – Report posted.

Fire / EMS Providers	Report Received Yes	Report Received No	Comments
Palisades Regional Fire Rescue	☑		See additional comments below
Richlandtown Fire Co	☑		
Richland Fire & Rescue		☑	
Haycock Fire Co		☑	
Coopersburg Fire Co		☑	
St. Luke's EMS		☑	
Upper Saucon EMS	☑		

PRFR representatives presented departmental updates:

- "First Due" Software System Integration – over 400 man-hours were invested in migrating four separate reporting, chat, app-based dispatch, and box-card mapping systems into a single centralized system called "First Due". Initial setup delays have been resolved, and live monthly reports will now be generated automatically on the 1st of each month for all townships covered.
- Department Leadership Restructuring – Following the departure of Commissioner Jeff Mease, the department dissolved the Commissioner title and reallocated administrative and township liaison responsibilities between the PRFR President and Chief. PRFR plans to schedule a meeting with municipal board representatives before year-end to re-establish regular quarterly meetings.
- New Equipment/Ladder Truck Status – PRFR confirmed that a new ladder truck remains on order with a fixed contract price of $1,625,000 and a 4-year lead time, with delivery expected in the spring of 2028. No other major equipment is currently on order.

OTHER BOARD COMMENTS

Planning Commission – Ms. Kelly noted that the next meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2026. An application will be reviewed, followed by a special presentation on GIS systems.

Parks & Land – The Township Manager reported that all planned tree trimming work in the park has been successfully completed. Also of note, the existing stock of memorial park benches has been exhausted. Authorization was given to order 4-6 additional benches (around $9,000 in total cost funded via the Open Space Fund) for installation at Peppermint Park, and along the Rail Trail.

Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) – Electronics Recycling Event is scheduled for October 10, 2026, at Springfield Elementary. Itemized pricing is posted online, and voluntary donations will be collected to support the scholarship fund.

Historical Commission – No comment.

Water Authority – Mr. Kade and Mr. Nilsen reported on water system infrastructure and grant compliance:

- A property survey was conducted related to fire company land and a 99-year lease for the pumping station/treatment plant to establish legal right-of-way required for a $500,000 state grant.
- Discussions were held regarding smart water meters installed 20 years ago. The SWA Board is retrieving historical water loss reports (2023-2025) to protect grant eligibility.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hopkins – noted that the wooden township sign in front of the municipal building is decaying and becoming an eyesore. He proposed partnering with the local Vo-Tech school to fabricate a replacement structure similarly utilized in New Hanover Township and local churches. The Township Manager stated that any new sign location must be shifted forward toward the road/corner to improve visibility and to avoid placing structural footings directly on top of the underground Buckeye pipeline right-of-way. The Board agreed to have the Township Staff contact the Vo-Tech school to discuss design capability and consult with the Zoning Officer regarding electronic sign permissions.

Mr. Hopkins additionally raised his concern regarding four custom wooden display boards containing names and photographs of Springfield Township World War II veterans. The boards are missing from township property and request that anyone with knowledge of their location contact the township so they can be restored and mounted around the municipal flagpole.

Mr. Hopkins is also preparing a formal township citation to recently-resigned Water Authority member, Bill Hershey, to present to him at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Yearwood – announced she is meeting with Bucks County EMA regarding emergency notifications (ReadyClear)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Ms. Yearwood, and unanimously carried to adjourn the public meeting at 9:23 PM

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An executive meeting to be held following the public meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Pursell
Township Manager