

Newberry Township Board of Supervisors May 26, 2026

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Mario Eckert, Chairman
Tony Miller, Vice Chairman
Rob Harkin, Supervisor
Diane Shellenhamer, Supervisor
Jane Harman, Supervisor
Aaron Schwartz, Manager
Acting Chief Braxton Ditty
James Sanders, Solicitor
Bill Rudy, Engineer
Scott Getchen, Public Works Director
Brent Zeiders, Wastewater Coordinator
Donna Donald, Codes and Zoning

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. All present stood for The Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

Chairman Mario Eckert announced that the Board of Supervisors held multiple executive sessions prior to the meeting. An executive session was held on May 21, 2026, for personnel matters related to the hiring process for the Police Chief position, and a second executive session was held on May 22, 2026, also for personnel matters related to the same process. Additionally, an executive session was held immediately prior to this evening's meeting regarding personnel matters pertaining to the townhouses. No official action was taken at any of these sessions.

Public Comments

Roger Brunner, a township resident, addressed the Board concerning an abandoned property identified as the Koler Car Lot, located around the corner from his residence. He described the property as a longstanding eyesore, noting that the house suffered a fire approximately six to seven years ago, that no one has resided there for at least ten years, and that several junk vehicles remain on the lot with no apparent activity. He stated that neighboring residents had also inquired about the situation and asked the Board to investigate and take appropriate action. Chairman Eckert confirmed the property's location, and Supervisor Harman thanked Mr. Brunner for bringing the matter to the Board's attention.

Bob Gasswint, representing the Redland Senior Center, delivered what he described as the best news in fifty years for the organization. He announced that the Senior Center would begin moving into its new facility within approximately two weeks, with a hard deadline to vacate the current location by the end of June. He reported that flooring has been installed, bathroom stalls are in place, and kitchen completion and painting are nearly finished. Remaining items include parking lot line striping, a certificate of occupancy from the borough, and a final inspection from the Area Agency on Aging. Mr. Gasswint expressed gratitude to the Board for its annual donation and for the proceeds generated by a flower stand at BAPS and invited all interested parties to assist with the move by contacting their office coordinator, Carmen. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was discussed as a future possibility. Supervisor Harman and other Board members offered congratulations.

Dave Lash, a township resident and representative of the VFW, appeared first to thank the Police Department, Fire Department, and the Board for their contributions to the success of the Memorial Day Parade held the previous day. He noted that the weather cooperated after an earlier rain, that parade categories were judged across six areas—including a military category awarded to the reenactors—and that the Board's donation toward parade insurance coverage was greatly appreciated. Mr. Lash then addressed the matter of the Police Chief appointment, stating his continued belief that Acting Chief Ditty is the most qualified candidate, citing his familiarity with the township and its residents. He said that it was a "travesty" that Acting Chief Ditty had not been more seriously considered and pledged to continue keeping the Board informed of VFW activities and community contributions.

Sergeant John Taylor, appearing both as a resident and a sworn Officer of the Newberry Township Police Department, delivered a formal public statement directed not at the Board, but at Acting Chief Ditty. Sergeant Taylor expressed deep appreciation for Acting Chief Ditty's leadership during what he described as one of the most difficult periods in the department's history. He praised the Acting Chief for building community trust, improving transparency, protecting the integrity of victims and evidence, and maintaining officer morale. Sergeant Taylor specifically highlighted his view that the Chief's application process was structured in a manner that intentionally excluded Acting Chief Ditty from receiving an interview, despite his eighteen years of dedicated service at every level of the agency. He also alleged that a remaining candidate in the process had openly stated having "an in with this Board," characterizing this as a "shameful lack of integrity." Sergeant Taylor closed by expressing disappointment that the transparency and character demonstrated by Acting Chief Ditty had not been reciprocated by elected officials and thanked the Acting Chief for continuing to lead with principle and professionalism.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve the meeting minutes for April 28, 2026. Seconded by Supervisor Shellenhamer. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve the workshop meeting minutes for May 12, 2026. Seconded by Supervisor Shellenhamer. Motion carried unanimously.

Land Development & Subdivision Plan Review

There were no land development or subdivision plans presented for review at this meeting.

Reports

Police

Acting Chief Ditty presented the April 2026 police activity report. The department handled 1,250 incidents during the month, including 1 aggravated assault, 4 thefts, 1 drug offense, 12 DUIs, 9 simple assaults, 2 sexual assaults, 2 harassments, and 22 other offenses. Officers also responded to 1,197 additional calls for service, including 16 domestic-related incidents and 16 traffic accidents. Enforcement activity included 89 traffic citations, 158 warnings, 17 non-traffic citations, and 30 misdemeanors and felony criminal arrests—which Acting Chief Ditty noted was a notably high number for the month.

Acting Chief Ditty also addressed a recent incident at the Valley Green Townhome community that had generated significant public attention on social media. He reported that a press conference was held earlier that day, during which charges were announced against two adult suspects and five juveniles in connection with the incident. He emphasized that the Department would not tolerate harassment, threats, or stalking in any community, that directed patrols would continue in the area, and that all criminal activity would be investigated and prosecuted where appropriate. He commended the Valley Green Homeowners Association Board for its cooperation in sharing witness statements, actor information, and camera footage.

Acting Chief Ditty also expressed gratitude to the VFW, Fire Department, and all Officers who participated in and ensured the safety of the Memorial Day Parade. He praised his Officers for their continued dedication throughout a challenging period for the Department, specifically highlighting an instance during the Sunday night incident in which an Officer responded within a minute to a subject brandishing a knife, handling the

situation with professionalism. He concluded his report by acknowledging the public emotions surrounding the Department's leadership transition and personally pledging that, regardless of the outcome, he would continue to serve the Department and community with the same commitment he has shown throughout his eighteen-year career.

Engineer

Township Engineer Bill Rudy did note, however, that a conceptual land development and subdivision plan for the proposed Love's Truck Stop is currently under review. It has not yet been determined whether the matter will proceed first through zoning or the Planning Commission. Supervisor Harman inquired about timing, and Engineer Rudy indicated the plan would not be before the Planning Commission this month. Regarding the associated traffic study, Engineer Rudy confirmed that the applicant had been awaiting scoping information from PennDOT and that, having now received it, the traffic study can proceed.

Manager

Manager Schwartz noted that, in addition to the letter previously received from the Redland Senior Center, thank-you letters had also been received from New Hope Ministries and the Northeastern Senior Center in appreciation of the Board's charitable donations. Manager Schwartz also noted that New Hope Ministries extended an invitation to tour their facility.

Supervisors

Supervisor Harman offered public thanks to Michelle Christine and her Board for the behind-the-scenes work on the Memorial Day Parade, and extended special recognition to the Events Committee, Police Department, Fire Department, and the VFW. She reflected on the significance of the occasion, noting that the post-parade cemetery service was especially moving, and praised the community's strong turnout despite the early rain.

Public Safety/Fire Departments

Public Safety Director Clint Leakway provided several updates. He reported that the Knox Box system is now fully operational and that a list of participating businesses has been generated; paid drivers will be dispatched to verify accuracy. He noted that a protocol for Knox Box applications is being developed in coordination with the relevant office. Regarding driver training, a recently hired driver was scheduled to complete equipment certification that day at Station 31, with subsequent certifications to follow at York Haven and Goldsboro. Box alarm updates have been submitted to the 911 center and are pending processing. The upcoming Fire Chiefs' meeting is scheduled at Station 27. Director Leakway also noted that the Departments are transitioning to a new reporting format, Chief 360, which will provide hour-based breakdowns of activity across calls, training, and community events, replacing the prior per-call reporting method.

On the EMS side, UPMC Life Team reported 128 calls in the reporting period, 127 emergencies and 1 non-emergency—with 99 calls within the township and 29 outside. Several Board members inquired about transport volumes to the new hospital and whether a WellSpan critical care unit would affect 911 call volume. Director Leakway advised that WellSpan is establishing a critical care ambulance unit at the hospital within the next two to three weeks, utilizing two existing garage bays on the property. A meeting regarding the landing zone (LZ) for medical helicopters has been deliberately deferred until that unit is operational, so that all relevant parties, including WellSpan leadership and head pilots, can be included in a single, comprehensive discussion.

Director Leakway concluded with upcoming fire department community activities, including chicken barbecues hosted by Newberry (June 20), Goldsboro (June 7), and York Haven (May 30), ongoing Bingo events on the 5th and 19th of each month, cash-for-raffle tickets available beginning June 11, and a gun raffle at York Haven on September 12.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Presentation of 2025 Audit by Steve Rock from Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC.

Manager Schwartz advised the Board that the auditors were not prepared to present at this evening's meeting, a fact that was not known until the afternoon of the meeting. The item was tabled and will be rescheduled for the following month's meeting.

Approve Payment Application No. 4 to Manada Electric for the fourth payment of the Newberry Township WWTP Generator Upgrade in the amount of \$35,065.44.

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to approve Payment Application No. 4 to Manada Electric for the Newberry Township WWTP Generator Upgrade in the amount of \$35,065.44. Seconded by Supervisor Shellenhamer. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve Abby Smith and Dan Gregorowicz to the Newberry Township Events Committee.

Supervisor Shellenhamer noted that Dan Gregorowicz was unable to attend due to illness. Abby Smith was present and recognized by the Board.

Motion by Supervisor Shellenhamer to approve Abby Smith and Dan Gregorowicz to the Newberry Township Events Committee. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve William Simperts as a paid fire driver, replacing Chris Krichter following his resignation.

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to approve William Simperts as a paid fire driver, replacing Chris Krichter following his resignation. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve a \$1.00 per hour wage increase for Wendy Etter, Administrative Assistant, adjusting her hourly rate from \$23.40 to \$24.40, effective June 1, 2026.

Motion by Supervisor Shellenhamer to approve a \$1.00 per hour wage increase for Wendy Etter, Administrative Assistant, adjusting her hourly rate from \$23.40 to \$24.40 effective June 1, 2026. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve a \$.78 per hour wage increase for Abigail McQuown, Police Administrative Assistant, adjusting her hourly rate from \$23.62 to \$24.40, effective June 1, 2026.

Supervisor Harkins asked for clarification on the specific amount of the increase. Chairman Eckert explained that the adjustment was intended to bring Abigail McQuown's wage into parity with Wendy Etter's rate, following a recommendation from Acting Chief Ditty that Abigail McQuown was deserving of an increase. The Board concurred that the volume of work performed by both employees merited equal compensation.

Motion by Supervisor Shellenhamer to approve a \$.78 per hour wage increase for Abigail McQuown, Police Administrative Assistant, adjusting her hourly rate from \$23.62 to \$24.40 effective June 1, 2026. Seconded by Vice Chair Tony Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Newberry Township and the Newberry Township Police Department Patrolman's Association regarding Health Insurance Opt-Out Eligibility.

Manager Schwartz explained that the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement only allowed Officers to receive a health insurance opt-out per diem if coverage was obtained through a spouse. The proposed MOU revises the language to allow any qualifying group health insurance plan—such as coverage through the VA—to qualify an Officer for the opt-out benefit, thereby broadening eligibility beyond spousal coverage alone.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Newberry Township and the Newberry Township Police Department Patrolman's Association regarding Health Insurance Opt-Out Eligibility. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to authorize the Township Manager to hire Darrell Franklin as a part-time Parks and Recreation mowing and maintenance employee, for the period of April through October, at an hourly rate of \$18.00, not to exceed 30 hours per week, contingent upon the successful completion of all pre-employment requirements.

Manager Schwartz clarified that this is a seasonal, part-time position covering April through October and focused specifically on parks and recreation mowing and general maintenance. It was noted that Mr. Franklin could potentially be utilized during snowplow season as well, depending on need and qualification, though any such arrangement would require a separate memorandum or supplemental employment agreement to be properly memorialized. Chairman Eckert confirmed this understanding with Manager Schwartz.

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to authorize the Township Manager to hire Darrell Franklin as a part-time Parks and Recreation mowing and maintenance employee for the period of April through October at an hourly rate of \$18.00, not to exceed 30 hours per week, contingent upon completion of all pre-employment requirements. Seconded by Supervisor Shellenhamer. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the purchase and installation of five (5) dog waste stations for Shelley Park at an approximate cost of \$200.00 per station, with funding to be paid from the Parks and Recreation Fund.

Motion made by Supervisor Shellenhamer to approve the purchase and installation of five dog waste stations for Shelley Park. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-15 authorizing the Township Manager to transfer funds between approved financial institutions within the same Township fund for purposes of cash management, investment, liquidity, and operational efficiency, provided such transfers do not constitute interfund transfers or budget amendments.

Manager Schwartz provided background, explaining that the Resolution would allow him to move funds between approved financial institutions within the same fund, for example, from an M&T account to a PLGIT account—without requiring prior Board approval each time. The rationale was to enable the Township to optimize interest earnings by acting quickly when advantageous, rather than waiting up to thirty days for a scheduled Board meeting. He clarified that this authority would not extend to opening new accounts, establishing treasury ladders, or making interfund transfers, all of which would still require Board approval. Supervisor Harkins requested that the Resolution be amended to require that the Board be notified whenever such a transfer is made. Solicitor Sanders confirmed that the Resolution could be adopted with that caveat included. Vice Chair Miller sought further assurance that funds would remain within their respective fund designations, which Manager Schwartz confirmed.

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to adopt Resolution No. 2026-15 authorizing the Township Manager to transfer funds between approved financial institutions within the same Township fund, as amended to require notification to the Board upon each such transfer. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to authorize the temporary closure of Pleasant Road between York Road and Red Bank Road on June 7, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM for the speedway event, subject to submission of an acceptable traffic control plan, coordination with emergency services, maintenance of local access for residents

and businesses within the closure area, and any additional conditions deemed necessary by the Township Manager, Police Department, and Fire Chief.

Kolten Gouse, representing the speedway, addressed the Board to explain the rationale for the closure request. He noted that the June 7 event is expected to draw a significant number of attendees and that overflow parking has been arranged on neighboring properties with owners' permission. The primary concern is pedestrian safety along Pleasant Road, which lacks designated walkways along its length. The closure to through traffic—while maintaining access for parking and for residents and businesses within the closure area—would allow better crowd management. Fire Police will be stationed at each end of the closure and at the crosswalk on York Road. Patrick Fetrow, also present on behalf of the Speedway, confirmed the Fire Police staffing plan and noted that CNC and other businesses within the closure area would retain access throughout the event. Supervisor Harman raised the issue of pedestrian crossing at York Road as a concern from past events, which Mr. Fetrow confirmed would be addressed with Fire Police at that location.

Motion by Supervisor Shellenhamer to authorize the temporary closure of Pleasant Road between York Road and Red Bank Road on June 7, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM for the speedway event, subject to the stated conditions. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve relocating the July 4th Balloon Fest event to Shelley Park, with an estimated total event expense of \$1,248.00 and an estimated net Township expense of approximately \$750.00 after sponsorship contributions.

Supervisor Shellenhamer explained that while the Events Committee had not yet formally voted on the relocation, the matter was being brought before the Board in advance of the June 1 Committee meeting due to time constraints in the planning timeline. The motion was framed as contingent upon the Events Committee's approval at that meeting. The Committee's last meeting had been cancelled, preventing earlier action. A Board member sought clarification on the nature of the balloon event and was informed that the balloons are tethered to the ground and do not carry passengers. The inflated balloons are lit with propane to create a visual "glow" effect, and a safety perimeter is established around them. The balloon operator advised during site evaluation that the event will not proceed if wind conditions are unsafe. Other planned activities, including live music and food, are intended to supplement the event if weather prevents the balloon inflation. Supervisor Harman noted that the event had already generated considerable public interest on social media.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve relocating the July 4th Balloon Fest event to Shelley Park with an estimated total event expense of \$1,248.00 and an estimated net Township expense of approximately \$750.00 after sponsorship contributions, contingent upon approval by the Events Committee at its June 1, 2026, meeting. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Payment of Bills

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to pay all bills. Seconded by Supervisor Shellenhamer. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to adjourn. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Aaron Schwartz, Secretary

