

Newberry Township Board of Supervisors January 27, 2026

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Mario Eckert, Chairman
Tony Miller, Vice Chairman
Rob Harkin, Supervisor
Diane Shellenhamer (BY PHONE)
Jane Harman, Supervisor
Aaron Schwartz, Manager
Lt. 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 AT 6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order. All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Eckert announced that the Board of Supervisors had held an executive session just prior to the meeting regarding litigation, real estate transactions, and personnel matters related to the Chief of Police vacancy. Additionally, the Board held executive sessions on January 13th and 21st to discuss personnel issues related to the vacant Chief of Police position.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Matthew Castillo – Believers in Christ Church

Pastor Matthew Castillo from Believers in Christ Church read a brief scripture and shared a personal story about his experience with the Newberry Township Police Department. He recounted how his then 5-week-old son had suffered cardiac arrest and was hospitalized at Hershey Medical. During this crisis, CYS officials arrived at the hospital and threatened to remove his other children from the home. When Pastor Castillo returned home to protect his family, he found that CYS had called the Newberry Township Police. He expressed deep gratitude for how the responding Officers professionally managed the situation, maintaining peace and protecting his family's rights. Pastor Castillo praised the Township Supervisors for their leadership in placing servant leaders like Lieutenant Diddy in positions of authority and thanked the first responders for their service to the community. He concluded his comments with a prayer of gratitude for Township leadership and first responders.

Doug Klinefelter – Police Association

Doug Klinefelter, President of the Newberry Township Police Officers Association, spoke on behalf of the organization's 14 rank-and-file members. He expressed concern about the Board's decision to name Lieutenant Braxton Diddy as officer in charge while simultaneously planning to spend between \$14,000-\$18,000 for the Pennsylvania Chiefs Association to conduct a hiring process for a permanent Chief. Detective Klinefelter

strongly opposed this direction, calling it fiscally wasteful and detrimental to department stability. He noted that the Board had prevented the Association from publicly endorsing Lieutenant Diddy at the last meeting.

Officer Klinefelter further expressed concern about the Board's treatment of the police department, citing recent unilateral changes to pension language without discussion with affected Officers. He warned that these actions could have serious consequences for Officer retention in an already challenging hiring climate, with the department currently down three Officers. He emphasized that experienced Officers have numerous employment opportunities elsewhere with better incentives, and that the township risks losing its current Officers if relations don't improve. Officer Klinefelter urged the Board to change course, stop making unilateral decisions that undermine the agency, and engage in a transparent process that values the department's Officers.

He also briefly mentioned being one of the Officers present during the incident Pastor Castillo described earlier, noting that he had been given a verbal order by a county judge to remove children from the home but chose to question that order, demonstrating the department's commitment to serving the community appropriately.

Bob Gasswint – Red Land Senior Center

Bob Gasswint, President of the Red Land Senior Center, provided an update on the Center's relocation to their permanent building in Lewisberry. He explained that during renovations, they discovered mold behind some walls. He reassured the Board that they were addressing the issue properly with certified mold inspectors and an industrial hygienist. To combat rumors and misinformation, the Center is planning educational seminars about mold - first for their board, then for center participants, and eventually for the general public.

Mr. Gasswint explained they are taking necessary steps to improve the building, including installing a new gutter system and replacing windows to address water infiltration issues. While they don't have a firm timeline for completion due to permitting delays and other challenges, he assured the Board that progress was being made. He invited Board members to attend the future community seminar on mold and offered to answer any questions people might have about the project.

Several additional residents spoke during public comment:

Jesse Bloom, a 17-year Police Department veteran and township resident, read the letter of endorsement for Lieutenant Diddy that the Police Association had attempted to present at the January 5th meeting. The letter unanimously endorsed Lieutenant Diddy for the Chief of Police position, citing his two decades of experience, leadership qualifications, and FBI National Academy credentials.

Trevor Stuck, a township Police Officer and resident since 2015, spoke against bypassing Lieutenant Diddy for Chief and spending taxpayer money on an outside search. He described Lieutenant Diddy as his mentor and emphasized that all Officers support him as the next Chief.

Dave Lash expressed support for Lieutenant Diddy, suggesting he be appointed as Chief for a trial period of 6 months to a year before seeking outside candidates. He also addressed the Events Committee, encouraging everyone to work together despite personal differences.

Dr. Jamie Norpel, a township resident, thanked the Police Department for their service during challenging times and expressed strong support for Lieutenant Diddy as Chief. She questioned spending \$18,000 on a search when a qualified candidate is available and spoke in support of the Special Events Committee and its volunteers.

Rainer Niederoest introduced himself as an engineer living and working in the township and offered his services should the Board form a committee requiring engineering expertise.

Tom Adams, a township resident, discussed township development concerns, suggesting better planning for future building projects and consideration of alternative locations for developments that face challenging terrain or conditions.

Tina Wise, a township resident, expressed disappointment with the Board's decisions, particularly not allowing Police Officers to speak at the previous meeting and the plan to spend taxpayer money on a search when Lieutenant Diddy is already qualified for the Chief position. She urged the Board to be transparent and fiscally responsible.

Jonathan Taylor, a township resident and Patrol Sergeant, described how he sought employment with Newberry Township Police Department in 2019 because of its excellent reputation. He expressed concern that the Board's current actions toward the department were damaging that reputation and warned about the potential consequences for Officer retention and recruitment.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes for December 22, 2025

Motion made by Vice Chair Miller to approve the Special Meeting Minutes for December 22, 2025.
Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Supervisor Harman abstaining as she was not at that meeting. Motion carried.

Approval of the Reorganization Meeting Minutes for January 5, 2026

Motion made by Vice Chair Miller to approve the Reorganization Meeting Minutes for January 5, 2026.
Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

LAND DEVELOPMENT & SUBDIVISION PLAN REVIEW

1325 Conewago Ave-South Walnut Ventures, LLC Minor Final Subdivision Plan

Lee Faircloth from Gordon L. Brown Associates presented a minor subdivision plan for South Walnut Ventures. The plan involved redefining the boundary between two properties at 1325 Conewago Avenue, where a survey discovered that a house was encroaching onto an adjacent vacant property. The subdivision would correct this encroachment and bring the property into conformance with zoning ordinance requirements.

Two waivers were requested: (1) providing a context map, as the plan already included many required elements and a location map, and (2) a stormwater management plan waiver since no development was being proposed.

Township Engineer Bill Rudy noted that the Planning Commission had reviewed and recommended approval of both the plan and the requested waivers. He stated that any future development on the vacant lot would require stormwater management review at the time of building permit application.

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to approve the requested waivers for 1325 Conewago Avenue South Walnut Ventures LLC (344-20.E Site Context Map and Stormwater Management). Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve the minor subdivision final subdivision plan for 1325 Conewago Avenue South Walnut Ventures LLC, contingent on addressing the five administrative items listed by the Engineer. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adopt the DEP Resolution for Plan Revision for New Land Development

Bill Rudy explained that this resolution was for a plan that had been approved by the Board in November 2024 with conditions. The DEP resolution was one of those conditions that needed to be satisfied, and it had been reviewed by the SEO.

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to approve the DEP Resolution for plan revision for the Diane M. and Richard Fox, II Subdivision. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Public Safety

Lieutenant Braxton Ditty presented the Public Safety report. For December 2025, the Police Department handled a total of 936 calls, including 10 thefts, 2 DUI arrests, 1 simple assault, and 17 other criminal offenses.

Officers responded to 26 domestic-related incidents and investigated 28 traffic accidents. They issued 44 traffic citations, 82 warnings, 4 non-traffic citations, and made 12 misdemeanor and felony criminal arrests.

Lieutenant Ditty congratulated the new fire department officers, particularly Chief Harbold of Newberry Township. He reported that the incentive programs have been successful, with \$5,750 paid out in the last quarter of 2025, for a total of \$18,450 for the year. He thanked the police officers, emergency management, fire departments, and public works department for their response during the recent storm.

Lieutenant Ditty also thanked Chairman Eckert and Supervisor Harman for participating in a tour of the police facilities. He noted that the new Axon tasers approved during the reorganization meeting had started to arrive, and that the department's new recruitment tool, Police App, was already showing success with six applicants in just two weeks. He acknowledged challenges with the recent records management transition and thanked Detective Kleinfelter for coordinating the successful "Shop with a Cop" event, which served 18 children in December with support from local businesses.

In closing, Lieutenant Ditty assured the public that despite the ongoing leadership transition following Chief Lutz's retirement, the department would not waver in its service to the community, and Officers would remain accountable and steadfast in their mission.

Manager

Manager Schwartz announced several Grants the township had recently received: \$192,400 for the Dolan Park Memorial's final phase, which would include pickleball courts, a new parking area, picnic tables, playground equipment with ADA accessibility, and security lighting; \$200,000 for the Newberry Connectivity Grant for sidewalks leading to a future park off York Haven Road; and \$161,000 for the Cly Road sewer extension project.

Manager Schwartz also expressed appreciation for the highway department's response to the recent snowstorm, noting their long hours and dedication. He acknowledged that while there were a few complaints, most residents appreciated their efforts and cooperated by keeping cars off the streets.

Supervisors

Supervisor Shellenhamer commented that the Events Committee Resolution did not need to be updated as the process had been in place since day one. She stated she was unsure why someone wanted to change the committee structure when they had been involved since its beginning.

Supervisor Harman thanked Lieutenant Ditty for the informative tour of the police building, noting that while she had previously been concerned about the expense, she now recognized the necessity of the facility after seeing it firsthand. She also thanked Scott and the highway department crew for pre-treating the roads before the snowstorm and maintaining 90+ miles of township roads.

Vice Chair Miller expressed appreciation to highway, first responders, EMS, and public safety for their excellent work during the snowstorm, noting it was significantly better than during a previous major storm. He also commented that most public speakers were allowed to exceed the normal time limits during public comment.

Chairman Eckert echoed the gratitude to all departments that helped keep the township safe during the storm, maintained roads, and responded when needed.

Fire Departments

Kyle Harbold Fire Chief of Newberry Township Fire Department presented a comprehensive report on behalf of all three fire departments serving Newberry Township. He reported that 2025 was the busiest year in the Newberry Township Fire Department's history, with 519 total calls (a 12% increase over 2024 and 40% increase over 2023). Of these, 399 calls were within Newberry Township and 120 were mutual aid responses. The department averaged 7 trained personnel per emergency call, accounting for approximately 2,700 individual personnel responses and 3,155 hours operating on emergency scenes throughout the year.

Chief Harbold highlighted two recent working house fires in January 2026 that demonstrated the departments' coordinated response capabilities under challenging conditions. For York Haven's December 2025 report, he noted they responded to 22 incidents within Newberry Township and 4 mutual aid responses outside the township. Their volunteer activity for December included 468 hours on emergency calls, 78 training hours, and

135 fundraising hours, totaling 681 volunteer hours. For Goldsboro Fire Company in December, they handled 21 incidents in Newberry Township, 1 mutual aid response, with volunteers contributing 435 total hours.

Chief Harbold thanked the Board for recognizing the work performed by township volunteers and providing the opportunity to highlight these efforts.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Resolution 2026-08 Establishing the Newberry Township Events Committee

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve Resolution 2026-08 Establishing the Newberry Township Events Committee. Seconded by Supervisor Harman, and Supervisor Shellenhamer and Supervisor Harkins opposed. Motion carried.

Motion to approve Kelly Veres and Heather Barnhart to the Newberry Township Events Committee

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve Kelly Veres and Heather Barnhart to the Newberry Township Events Committee. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to appoint a Board of Supervisor as a liaison to the Events Committee

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to appoint Supervisor Shellenhamer as liaison to the Events Committee. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Discuss needing one (1) additional member to the Steering Committee

Manager Schwartz reported that they were still seeking one more member for the comprehensive plan steering committee. He mentioned that one individual had expressed interest that evening and would be submitting an application. The Board will continue accepting applications for the next week or two before deciding on the 9-member committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the Township Manager to engage with Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association for the recruitment of the Police Chief position

Jerry Simpson from the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association introduced himself as their testing consulting manager and explained the services his organization would provide. With 42 years of police experience himself and family members still serving in law enforcement, Simpson outlined how the PA Chiefs would support the township through the executive search process. He explained that as project lead, he would build a team to collaborate on finding the township's next police executive. The process timeline would be determined by the township's pace, though it typically takes 3-4 months. He emphasized that their approach would be collaborative and viewed through a law enforcement perspective to support the community.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve the Township Manager to engage with Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association for recruitment of the Police Chief position. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to appoint Lt. Braxton Ditty to the role of acting Police Chief on an interim basis

During discussion of this item, some audience members attempted to interject with questions about why the Board was opposing Lieutenant Ditty for the permanent position, with one person noting that the Board had run on a platform of transparency. Chairman Eckert maintained order and proceeded with the agenda item.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to appoint Lieutenant Braxton Ditty to the role of acting Police Chief on an interim basis and to authorize compensation commensurate with the salary of the prior Police Chief (\$124,124 annually), effective January 27, 2026, for the duration of the acting appointment until a permanent Police Chief is appointed or the Board takes further action. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve request from WellSpan Health to utilize Shelley Park

Manager Schwartz explained that WellSpan Health was proposing to promote wellness within the community by placing signs in the park to encourage people to walk and use park facilities. The program would be at no cost to the township, with WellSpan responsible for installing and removing all signage.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve the request from WellSpan Health to utilize Shelley Park as a participating location in the Get Outdoors (GO) York program during the summer of 2026 and to authorize the Township Manager to coordinate and approve all related details, including installation and removal of temporary program materials. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to advertise the 2026 Road Program bids

Engineer Bill Rudy explained that the 2026 road program would consist of two roads: Sipe Road (from Sheep Bridge to a gravel turnaround) and Hill Drive (from Stevens Road to Sheep Bridge Road). Hill Drive would be bid as an alternate depending on cost.

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to advertise the 2026 Road Program bids. Seconded by Supervisor Harman. Motion carried unanimously.

Authorization for the Township Manager to advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional website design

Manager Schwartz requested approval to generate an RFP for a new website designer to enhance the township's website, making it more functional and user-friendly. He hoped to use a firm specializing in governmental sites to help organize information appropriately. He noted that this project was included in the current year's budget approved by the prior Board.

Motion by Supervisor Harman to authorize the Township Manager to advertise a request for proposal for professional website design, development, and optional hosting services for Newberry Township, with no fiscal impact at this time and final contract award subject to Board approval. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to close public roads for the 2026 Ethers Memorial Day Parade

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to authorize closing public roads for the 2026 Ethers Memorial Day Parade on May 25th, starting at 10:00 AM, proceeding through Whisler Road to 382 York Haven Road and onto Paddletown Road, and to approve the Commercial Liability quote for Ethers VFW Memorial Day Celebration Parade in the amount of \$400.00. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and the Township Manager to approve and sign the real estate tax refund for volunteer firefighters

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and the Township Manager to approve and sign the real estate tax refund for volunteer firefighters in appreciation for their service during 2025, with a total tax real estate refund of \$7,111.94 for 17 volunteer firefighters (with eleven members also qualifying for the Earned Income Tax Credit). Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of Ordinance No. 438, amending the Newberry Township Police Pension Plan

Manager Schwartz explained that the Ordinance would amend the definition of compensation in the Police pension plan. The language was the same as in the previous collective bargaining agreement, with the change being that it would now apply to all Officers rather than just those hired from 2017 forward. The definition would include the payout amount for accumulated but unused sick and vacation leave that is earned within the last 36 months of employment.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to authorize the advertisement of Ordinance No. 438, amending the Newberry Township Police Pension Plan by revising the definition of "Compensation," in accordance with applicable legal advertising requirements. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Township Manager to solicit competitive pricing for portable toilet services

Motion by Supervisor Harman to approve the Township Manager to solicit competitive pricing for portable toilet services at Shelley Park and Terry Dolan Memorial Park for the 2026 season. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Payment Application No. 1 to Manda Electric

Engineer Bill Rudy explained that the contractor received notice to proceed on the wastewater treatment plant generator upgrade in June, but it had taken time for the generator to arrive. The generator was expected within the next few weeks, and this was the first payment application for the project.

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve Payment Application No. 1 to Manda Electric for first payment of the Newberry Township WWTP Generator Upgrade in the amount of \$4,341.25. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the appointment of Abigail McQuown as Alternate Open Records Officer

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve the appointment of Abigail McQuown as alternate Open Records Officer for the Police Department, effective immediately. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

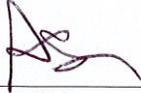
PAYMENT OF BILLS

Motion by Vice Chair Miller to approve payment of the bills. Seconded by Supervisor Harkins. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Supervisor Harkins to adjourn. Seconded by Vice Chair Miller. Motion carried unanimously.
The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Aaron Schwartz, Secretary

