Barrett Township Supervisors
Minutes of a Workshop Meeting on April 15, 2026 – 6:30 P.M.

A Workshop meeting of the Barrett Township Supervisors was held on Wednesday April 15, 2026, at the Administrative Offices on Route 390 in Cresco, PA. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Grant Hilfiger

Present: Grant Hilfiger, Patti O'Keefe, Darryl Speicher, Bill Pipolo, Sean Anlauf, Nichole Irvin, and the public.

Grant Hilfiger began the meeting, reminding those in attendance that workshops are meant for discussion, and no action will be taken on any of the discussion items.

****public comment is included within the minutes to keep comments relevant to the recorded discussion****

1. Holding Tank Ordinance:

Grant Discussed that a clean version of the ordinance was received from Todd Weitzmann. It was discussed that "401-7 Section E. New Residential Development" would be removed from the proposed ordinance. The supervisors agreed that in previous discussions a holding tank was not appropriate for permanent solutions of new constructions.

Mary O'Keefe: Asked about new residential development pertaining to delays of construction when home construction has begun.
Grant explained that a holding tank could be authorized as a temporary use, just not a permanent solution.

Patti O'Keefe explained that she didn't believe there should be any long-term use of a holding tank. Grant Hilfiger disagreed, stating that he would rather offer a property owner, business owner, or homeowner the option to have access to a holding tank in the event their septic system failed, and the land was no longer viable. It would allow the owners to stay operating their business or living in their homes if moving wasn't an immediate option. A holding tank also provides viability to the structures instead of leaving them in a state of indefinite vacancy.

Hazel Gifford: So sewage goes by act 537, and it gives the township the authority to make rules… it says a holding tank isn't permanent, but it doesn't say anything about a time frame [for holding tanks]. Who is saying a time frame?
Grant responded asking "so you're saying make it non-permanent but never enforce any length?"
Hazel continued about a property owner searching for alternative septic methods during the length of time the holding tank was in place since the use of the holding tank isn't meant to be permanent. Suggesting that the property owner might be required to show that they are looking for new systems, even if the current systems do not comply so that a property won't be condemned.

Patti O'Keefe discussed that it leaves the Township open to new inspection items, and new items that the board and the Township would be required to monitor. Grant reiterated his point that a holding tank is the "last chance" effort a property owner would have vs. a choice for septic to keep the property viable.

Carol Hardy: What about the people who have been denied the ability to build because of this?
Grant responded that this is a different situation. Theres no house on the property, or structure. No hardship.

Hazel Gifford: How many lots, and how many houses can meet the setbacks in Barrett Township? There are a lot of very tiny lots.
Grant asked "How many people are hiding septic issues because they have no options. They might be hiding it because they have no options.
Hazel explained how expensive a holding tank could be.
Chris Gifford: Where are we at with central sewage for Barrett township?
Grant explained that there is nothing in the works for central sewage, and that it has been something he's advocated for 10 years.

Grant explained that there is language in the ordinance that would regulate and restrict the use of holding tanks that fall in line with DEP such as pumping agreements, escrows, Township right of entry/removal, maintenance bond, enforcement, and violations etc.

Sarah Kelly: In long term use, 401-7 A. (1), a planning module is required – PA Code says a Planning Module has to be an official plan for replacement with an adequate permanent sewage system. How do you mesh that with long term use [of a holding tank] when DEP has to approve the planning module? The statute states long term use is 24 months, and DEP has to review the module, and short-term use would be a year.

The board discussed that they could add a section into the ordinance that after 24 months if no septic options become available, the township could have the option to renew the 24-month period until an option becomes available. However, it's possible that one never does.

Hazel Gifford: Will a soil scientist be involved to say whether the soil is suitable for a septic system?
Grant Hilfiger responded that the SEO would be responsible for determining whether the soil was viable

Patti O'Keefe noted that holding tanks must meet the isolation distance required under 25 PA Code 73.13. The board continued its discussion and heard additional public comment on the Holding Tank Ordinance, including cost, pumping alarms, recordkeeping, permits, and inspections. The board agreed to forward the ordinance to Deanna, the Township Engineer, and then move on to the Sign Ordinance.

2. Ch. 407 Sign Ordinance:
Darryl Speicher pointed out that under section 407-9 (D) (1) Real Estate activity signs could stay in place for 30 days after a property was sold, leased, or rented.
The board discussed added language regarding non-conforming signs under 407-15 sections C, D and E. It is language that allows a sign owner to keep a non-conforming sign on site if it becomes abandoned, neglected, or damaged for only 3 months unless extended by the Board of Supervisors for good cause.

Frank DelNero: Asking about 407-7 (8), in comparison with 407-8 (8), section 407 states that those signs are prohibited and section 407-8 states those are exempt from requiring a permit. His business vehicle is a "mobile sign".
Grant provided clarity that the difference would be like purchasing a box truck and putting a billboard on the side and parking it on the side of RT 447 for an unlimited amount of time vs. the vehicle being your active work vehicle

Frank DelNero: 407-13, Section I. An engineering certification for a billboard could cost more than a sign permit.
Grant and Darryl provided feedback about the importance of engineering certificates for billboard structures for safety purposes and that prepared plans for billboard structures are likely already available to offset engineer costs. Grant said he would reach out to the Building Codes Officer for clarification.

Frank DelNero: Asking about 407-12 (B) – if 25% was too little window coverage for window advertising.
The board reviewed the section and agreed that it might be a little low. Acknowledging that other municipalities might allow higher percentages. They discussed that 50% would be fair.

Chris Gifford: What about whole window coverage?
Grant asked the board how they felt about allowing entire window coverage and said he would speak with the building codes officer if it was permitted in terms of egress, and safety.

Grant reviewed the changes that the supervisors discussed through public comment and moved into electronic message boards, noting that the section was detailed well. The supervisors discussed the difference between digital billboards, and off premise electronic message centers and the amount of time the EMC vs. Billboard is displayed. The supervisors also discussed shopping center/multi-tenant use signs such as at BARC, Starner's, and Lewis's.

Jeff Price: Is there a distance that I can place a sign from the road?
Grant explained that it depends on the zoning district and is regulated unless it's an exempt sign listed in the ordinance. Darryl explained that the ordinance doesn't state maximum distance from the road.

Grant reviewed the changes that were discussed through board and public input for the next supervisors' meeting to plan advertisement of the ordinance. Darryl reminded the public that the ordinance can't be advertised for adoption until the next meeting, and that would serve for the 30-day public comment period.

Patti O'Keefe discussed the use of feather signs, and whether they should be permitted as a permanent sign. Grant explained that they are primarily used for sales, and temporary uses, and shouldn't generally be considered for long term use.

Frank DelNero: Suggesting that the BOS provide a definition of a mobile billboard since it's listed as an excluded portable sign.
The board decided it would be a good idea to include a specific definition for clarity.

Hazel Gifford: How can you tell the difference between a mobile billboard that's "passing through town" or actually a mobile billboard?
The board explained that based on the definition of the mobile billboard, they would be driving up and down a particular road multiple times, or through an event on multiple occasions. Generally, they are illuminated and would probably be turned off if they were not operating as a mobile billboard and just "passing through".

Grant proposed adding the same language from the Ch. 375 Property Maintenance Ordinance under Enforcement and Penalties; Section 375-24 which would keep fines and enforcement regulations consistent throughout the newer ordinances adopted. The board agreed. Grant said he would consult with Todd Weitzmann, the BOS solicitor to add that section.
The board agreed that there was no further discussion on the sign ordinance and they could consider advertising for adoption at the next supervisors' meeting.

3. Scantek Document Scanning Proposal

Grant explained that Barretts document filing system is all paper based and does not exist electronically, cloud based, or digital. He reached out to a company called Scantek that would come collect the Township records and scan them into a cloud-based server so that they could be accessed digitally. The quote that Scantek gave was $86,000.00 which Grant acknowledged was not in a single year's budget, but it is important to start somewhere. Grant explained that maybe the BOS could discuss that in 2027 the Township could budget $20,000.00 and ask the company what they could provide with a starting rate and move forward with a 5 year plan to condense files into a digital format that's simpler to navigate and more efficient.

Public Comment: Are the scans searchable?
For the public no, for the township, yes.

Christine Esposito: I think [Scantek] also scans for Doctors Offices.

Grant mentioned that PSATS recommends Scantek, and that they are a CoStars contractor which helps utilize them as well.

4. Underdog Cyber Defense IT Agreement proposal

Grant explained that Barrett Township currently has an IT (information technology) company that we've been using for a while called OneTech360. However, the Township did not have a contract with the company. Grant asked for have a contract proposal written up and explained that he felt there could be another option to compare services with, so he reached out to Underdog Cyber Defense IT who offered very similar services. The board provided a speaking opportunity to the owner of the company, Carmine, who was present.

Carmine explained that Underdog Cyber Defense cyber security and compliance company. They work with business and municipalities to help lower their risk by governance and day-to-day cyber protection as well as IT helpdesk assistance. Carmine added that they have a team of employees that are available to help very quickly either remotely, or in person. Carmine also explained that if the Township started implementing Scantek, Underdog could assist with the "behind the scenes" work to help make that process simple as possible.

Grant explained that he would send the Agreement proposal to Todd Weitzmann for his review before voting on a new IT company at next weeks meeting.

5. Interview dates for Administrative and Operations Director

Grant explained that he spoke with Todd Weitzmann, who advised that the whole board can interview a candidate without violating the sunshine law. The BOS decided that they were closing the application period and would work on deciding interview dates for the next meeting.
Hazel Gifford: You guys are doing a negotiating wage? You haven't set a wage? *Grant responded "correct"*

6. Pick up the Poconos Earth Day Event: April 25th at High Acres Park

Darryl explained that the Pickup the Poconos event at High Acres Park would be on April 25th. Darryl explained that families with children will be assigned to park clean up areas such as High Acres, Ice Lake, and Seven

Pines, and Pasold Family Reserve. Grant stated that this is the first year that Barrett Township participated in the event. Bill Pipolo received a notification that the High Acres Park Committee would be holding their fishing contest on May 25th between 12-2PM, with their Memorial Day service at 3PM.

Mary Greenan: Stating that she saw on social media that there were snakes at Gravel Dog park, so it might be a good idea to warn families if that is where they go for the Pick Up the Poconos event.
Darryl stated that there might be ticks, too, so it would be good to take caution of their presence.
Mary Greenan: Does the Township just do a yearly budget or a 5-year projected budget? Maybe if you could get the scanning company to work on a 5-year contract you could lock them in for a 5-year price.
The board agreed that right now they only do a yearly budget, and they will do what they can to see how far the funds will go with this vendor.

The workshop meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.

Nichole Irvin
Recording Secretary