

**MINUTES
NORTH LEBANON TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUDGET MEETING
October 7, 2025**

The duly advertised budget meeting of the North Lebanon Township Board of Supervisors was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chairman Brensinger at the North Lebanon Township Municipal Building located at 725 Kimmerlings Road, Lebanon, PA. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The following Board members and Township staff were present:

Ed Brensinger – Chairman
Gary Heisey – Vice-Chairman
Arden Snook, Sr – Treasurer
Lori Books – Township Manager

The following NLT Fire Co. Representatives were present:

Brian Vragovich – Glenn Lebanon Fire Co.
Rich Werni – Glenn Lebanon Fire Co.
Steve Matthews – Rural Security Fire Co.
Wesley Keener – Rural Security Fire Co.
Donald Steiner Sr. – Weavertown Fire Co.

Also present was one member of the public.

FIRE COMPANY BUDGET ITEMS AND DISCUSSIONS

Manager Books went through the expenses budgeted for the fire companies' line by line.

Fuel The budget remains the same for next year at \$3,000 per fire company.

Operating Supplies This line item has been increased to \$750. Floor dry is expensed from this account.

Professional Expenses \$8000 for annual audits (\$2,000 max per fire company).

Questions were raised by Don Steiner Sr. regarding auditing. He asked if they could possibly receive a discount on their annual audit. It was mentioned that since each fire company has their own EIN, they must all be audited separately. However, they could always ask their auditing firm if they would all use the same firm if they would be given a discount. That is not something the Township has control over.

Knox Box® Ordinance/Program \$300 to go towards any legal fees if needed for those who do not comply with the program.

I am Responding Software 2025 was the first year of the 3-year renewal for the I am Responding software. This cost was \$3,941 and goes from 7/1/25 through 6/30/2028, with renewal due on 7/1/2028.

Data Plan (iPads unlimited data plan) The cost will remain the same for 2026 at \$1,680 (\$35 a month per Fire Company). The data plan is now administered through Lebanon County DES.

Youth Programs \$2000 is budgeted to go towards school programs and trick or treat night.

Workers Compensation By law, the Township must provide worker's compensation insurance for fire police and volunteer fire company members. This insurance coverage is expensed from the Fire Protection Tax. Manager Books stated that we are still waiting for next year's renewal costs.

Contracted Services This account is for funding for the required inspections and testing of the hoses, ladders, and other equipment. This will need to be done every year, and we have budgeted \$20,000 to cover those costs.

Standard Allocation The standard allocation will remain the same. This is \$48,000.00 per fire company per year. The allocation will be disbursed into two distributions, June and December.

NLT Fire Co. Capital Reserve Funds The amount allocated for the NLT Fire Co. Capital Reserve Funds will remain the same at \$30,000 per fire company. Requests must be sent to the Township Manager for disbursement of payment along with the minutes approving the payment request. These funds go towards their loan payments for acquired apparatus.

False Alarms The fire companies were reminded to keep track of when they are dispatched to a false alarm. The false alarm should be clearly noted, so the administrative staff can invoice the correct business, if needed. Brian Vragovich mentioned that with the new reporting system, they are unsure how the false alarms will be tracked, but they hope it will be as efficient as it has been in the past.

Code Enforcement Manager Books reminded the fire companies to reach out to the Police Department when on site at a property that has code enforcement concerns so the Code Enforcement Officer can respond while they are still at the scene.

It was mentioned that for 2026, the Township is looking for a replacement for the current Code Enforcement Officer who will be retiring at the end of 2025.

Annual Non-Emergency Listing (fundraisers, parades, etc.) Manager Books reminded the Fire Chiefs to submit requests for any non-emergency activities for approval by the Board. Training is not required to be approved by the Board. Manager Books reminded the fire companies to provide the Township with this list by the middle of December so she can add it to the January 2026 reorganizational agenda for the Board to approve. This is needed for insurance purposes.

Submit 2026 Rosters Manager Books reminded the fire companies to provide the Township with their member roster list that separates auxiliary members from active fire fighters for 2026 by the middle of December. This is also needed for insurance purposes.

Other Items for Discussion

Supervisor Brensinger noted that PSATS is hosting two dates for strategic planning for fire service operations. This is an option for the fire chiefs if they would like to attend. The Township would cover the costs if anyone was interested in attending.

Manager Books continued with the scheduled discussion items on the agenda.

Updates on Policies and Procedures –

Updated policy and procedure documents were drafted for Chain of Command, Code Enforcement Protocol, Drug and Alcohol Policy, False Alarm Procedures and Box Alarms. These documents were drafted after a previous meeting held between the fire companies, Manager Books and Supervisor Heisey. Manager Books provided a draft of each document to all the fire companies and asked them all to review them and provide her with any corrections or updates. Once finalized each Fire Chief needs to sign the policy or procedure and provide Manager Books with an original document for each policy/procedure for approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Review of current Ordinances –

Revisions to the **Knox Box Ordinance** were discussed related to Section 505.1.B. & C. Procedures have changed regarding how notifications are received by the fire chiefs. Therefore, revisions are necessary to the ordinance to reflect the changes. Manager Books asked the chiefs to provide her with the desired verbiage. She will then forward to the Township Solicitor so she can review and draft the revised ordinance. It would then need to be advertised, and the Board would need to hold a public hearing before adopting the revised ordinance.

Manager Books reviewed compliance with the new **Private Fire Hydrant Ordinance** that was adopted this year. Once the list has been finalized, a copy will be given to each fire company, so they are aware of which hydrants have been tested and are in working condition. Final compliance notices were mailed last month.

The fire chiefs asked for consistency with the **Burning Ordinance**. They would like to see all officers follow the ordinance and be more consistent within the police department. Example given was that some officers continue to give warnings, where other officers will cite them per the ordinance.

Manager Books mentioned she would provide the fire chiefs with updated contact information for specific employees within the township, as per their request, so they can contact the correct person depending on the need (highway, sewer, etc.). Supervisor Brensinger also noted that county dispatch has a list of current contacts for both highway issues and sewer related issues.

Discussions were held regarding the request for an **employee to help with administrative items** such as applying for grants and handling reports. The concerns for the fire chiefs are that they need a reliable, experienced person to make sure all their I's are dotted and their T's are crossed when applying for grants. This would not require a full-time position, but more an as-needed role throughout the year. Brian provided his vision for this individual. They would be someone capable of handling code enforcement, keeping up with the Knox box paperwork, applying for grants, helping with reporting, organizing training, and fighting fires. It was acknowledged that is a tall order for one person to be able to do. Discussions continued for possible solutions. A few suggestions were offering stipends and being able to bill for calls. The fire chiefs all agreed that manpower is currently their biggest obstacle.

Other Topics for Discussion

Some of the struggles amongst the firefighting community are the lack of volunteers and unions. It was explained to us how unions prohibit employees from volunteering for other fire companies.

Supervisor Snook suggested a new DCED Study. In his opinion, the similarities in struggles are comparable to the police department prior to regionalization. He pointed out that manpower was also an issue with the police but since regionalizing things have greatly improved. Fire companies across the state are struggling with the same issues we are having. It was mentioned that eventually they believe fire fighters will need to be a paid entity just like the police. They discussed the possibility of a merger with the fire departments, but everyone had a different opinion on the topic.

The group discussed how the fire companies are being called out for many other incidents other than fire calls. Times have changed and they seem to be called out for everything. Obviously, anything to do with a fire, CO detectors, fire alarms, accidents, etc. they will be there provided they have the volunteers to respond. One example provided was years ago, dispatch would call the road foreman for fallen trees on the road and township staff would respond accordingly. Today, the fire companies are being dispatched. Another issue shared was about the misuse of the volunteer fire fighters by the ambulatory services. Example provided was fire companies being dispatched to help move a person back into their home after being released from the hospital. This situation is not an emergency. If an ambulatory company accepts the call to return a patient to their home, some of the fire companies feel the ambulatory service should have the staff to be able to handle the call. Especially since the fire companies operate with only volunteers and cannot charge for their services.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Supervisor Heisey and seconded by Supervisor Snook to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Misty Bender
Recording Secretary