UPPER FREDERICK TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Business Meeting – September 9th, 2026 - 7:00 PM

Minutes

Executive Summary: The Board of Supervisors meeting for Upper Frederick Township on September 9, 2026 reviewed financial reports, departmental updates from police, fire, EMS, public works, water/sewer, planning, zoning, parks & rec, open space, and presented four budget options to address a projected 2027 deficit; the board also discussed a draft ordinance governing township appropriations to fire companies, reconciliation of historical fire company finances, and canceled a special meeting scheduled for September 14, 2026.

Attendance: Chair William Landman, Vice-Chair Lisa Fischer, Member William Karaffa, Manager Aaron Walizer, Solicitor Vicki Kushto, Engineer Norm Urlich

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

- Call to Order -*The meeting was called to order on 7:05pm*
- Pledge to the Flag

MEETING MINUTES

- Approval of the BOS August 12, 2026 and September 2, 2026 Meeting Minutes -*Both minutes were approved with a vote of 3-0*

REPORTS

Treasurer's Report/Bills to be paid

- *Year-to-date (8 of 12 months): revenue collections at 71.6% above the expected 67%*
- *expenditures at 62% of budget (under-run).*
- *Real estate tax collections at 98.7% for the year.*
- *Current month bills total: $128,922.71 approved with a vote of 3-0*

Emergency Services

PA State Police Report -*35 calls in August no specific trend; mix of welfare checks, traffic accidents, noise complaints*

Plymouth Community Ambulance -*28 calls in Upper Frederick in August; 12 calls to Frederick Living*

Fire company activity, current events

- *11 calls in August; 122 calls year-to-date.*
- *Volunteer hours for August: 961 hours; yearly total of 5,640 hours.*
- *Fundraising: September 16–17 partnership event with Moccia's train stop, 5% of proceeds to firehouse if patrons mention affiliation.*
- *75th anniversary party planned for a Saturday September 12th, 2026*
- *Concerns raised about Perkiomen Road/Bridge closure permitting and road work notifications.*

Fire Marshal's Report

- *One incident response during August*
- *Ongoing preventative actions and monitoring of severe weather.*
- *Sunrise Mill addressed fire detection updates and provided their record of completion*
- *Opening referenced for October 17, 2026.*

Water/Sewer Plant Report: Perkiomen Crossing & Ivy Ridge

- *New air compressor arrived; installation pending (was cause of pressure drop over summer).*
- *New groundwater pumps on order; one original pump housing cracked and requires replacement rather than rebuild.*
- *No regulatory violations in the reporting period.*

Public Works/Road Report

- *New pole barn installed (50×50; 25 ft tall) — provides covered equipment storage.*
- *Roadside swale work completed on Heimbach, Yost, and Gazelle roads*
- *Walking trails received a second cut*
- *Maintenance/repairs performed: new tires on the F-350; PTO and wiring harness replaced on the F-750; multiple repairs to road mower (blown bearings, blades) and warranty work on the Ram 5500.*
- *JCB backhoe purchased with grant-funded was delivered*

Civil Engineer's Report

- *Frederick Living apartment project: applicant's engineer discussed property-line buffers and supplemental use of tree growth on a site visit, additional site visit(s) planned.*
- *Three Dog Garage progressing toward occupancy of at least one building*

Building Inspector and Zoning Report/ZHB

- *2746 Yost Road: owner emailed; site visit attempts; rescheduling in process.*

- *3415 Salford Station Road: Substantial cleanup occurred; hearing continued to September 28, 2026, to monitor remaining cleanup; possible citation withdrawal if corrected.*
- *1646 Gravel Pike: solicitor advised new citations be submitted; ongoing process.*
- *Becker Road property maintenance deterioration noted again vehicles on jacks, items stored, action to revisit enforcement.*

CPVRPC / Planning Commission

- *Planning Commission is working on targeted comprehensive plan updates; focusing on preserving rural areas*
- *Monitoring data center impacts.*

Parks & Recreation Board

- *Collaboration with Lower Frederick Township for "Movie on Flat Ground" at Upper Salford Park on September 18, 2026 (rain date Sept 19); event starts around dusk.*
- *Yoga in the Park: last Sunday of September and October at 9:00 a.m.*
- *Community Day: September 26, 2026, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.*
- *Parks & Rec organizing Upper Frederick Bake-off for community day with entry via township Facebook page.*
- *Parks & Rec supporting St. Luke's Trunk Retreat on October 25, 2026 (role TBD).*
- *Unofficial Facebook page created for township events: "Upper Frederick Township Parks & Rec".*

Open Space Committee

- *Focused on outreach for Community Day; educating residents about open space benefits and preserving rural character; materials and outreach plans being prepared.*

BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

- New Business
    - Budget Presentation with options for deficit

- *Current projected equipment replacement needs are estimated at $439,000*
- *The Manager reduced net immediate required replacement cost to approximately $290,000 through resale/value recovery efforts.*
- *Discussion of no real estate tax increase in 18 years and the large amount of increase costs over the last almost 2 decades.*
- *Four proposed 2027 budget deficit remedies presented to board with the manager requesting directions to choose a single approach for October draft:*

    1. *Millage increase of 1.62 mills — fully cover deficit and fund equipment replacement with $50,000/year; estimated ~$15.50/month impact for average resident.*

2. *Millage increase of 1.00 mil — would largely cover deficit while drawing half of current equipment fund to bridge remaining gap; estimated ~$9.50/month impact for the average resident.*
3. *Millage increase of 0.60 mil + $50,000 from equipment fund + $128,000 from capital reserves — cover remaining deficit while preserving equipment replacement schedule; estimated ~$5.50/month impact for the average resident.*
4. *Millage increase of 0.40 mil and defer replacement of oldest commercial truck the F-750 — covers deficit only if F-750 replacement is removed from 2027 capital needs; delays equipment replacement schedule by approximately 3 years; estimated ~$3.80/month impact for the average resident.*

- *The Manager emphasized advantages of smaller, regular millage increases over time, and noted the legal limit on EIT (earned income tax) has been met and cannot increase further.*
- *The Manager also discussed comparable tax rates in the five municipalities that surround Upper Frederick that have done more regular tax increases.*

    - Minimum Municipal Obligation Payment Approval for $41,038.00 -*Approved with a vote of 3-0.*
    - Resolution 2026-04, appointment of Paul Christman to alternate position at Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Planning Commission for Upper Frederick Township - *Approved with a vote of 3-0.*

- Old Business
    - Comment Period on Draft Ordinance 2026-06 – Fire Company's

- *Purpose of ordinance: establish clear requirements for township appropriations to any fire company receiving township funds, including itemized reporting, supporting records, segregation/traceability of public funds, and reporting requirements prior to future township appropriations.*
- *Background cited by board (statement read):*

"There's been a lot of commentary out on social media, so we just want to reiterate some of what we said last week and just to reinforce some of our opinions. So we just want to make a statement again that the ordinance is this is not an attack on our firefighters or emergency responders.

We respect them, appreciate them, and understand their importance to the community. It is also not an attempt by the township to take over the fire company. That claim is absurd. This ordinance is set to clarify some points.

So, in 2017 through 2019, a Pennsylvania Auditor General compliance audit of Upper Frederick Fire Company identified unauthorized expenditures and that the relief association had not secured its proper ownership interest in jointly purchased equipment. The audit also identified a state aid payment that has been deposited into the affiliated fire company's account and was not transferred to the Relief Association until January 9, 2023. That also leads to township jointly purchased property that we'll be discussing later.

In October of 2023, the prior township administration requested financial records audited from the fire company. The documents provided were described as audited financials, but the

township determined that they were financial summaries, not audited financial statements or anonymized accounting showing how township money had been spent.

These questions did not begin with the current board, nor were they created for political purposes or because of any personal vendetta. That narrative being promoted on social media and certain websites is false. It misleads residents about when these concerns began, why the township requested these records and what this ordinance is intended to accomplish. It is simply political.

The township renewed its request for supporting financial records in October and November of last year. Once we received supporting documents, the township manager, Aaron Walliser, along with Supervisor Karaffa, identified 16 questions or unreconciled transactions, including a $50,000 township check deposited into the fire company's general fund.

A questioned transaction does not prove that money was stolen or improperly spent. It means the township needs the bank records, receipts, and supporting documents necessary to follow the money and determine how it was used. The township did retain an independent accounting firm to conduct that review after the fire company agreed to it in an April Board of Supervisors meeting.

However, when it came down to coming to develop an agreement between the township and the fire department we could not come to terms as we iterated last week. There were clearly two sticking points from the point of the township so after years of requests and unanswered questions and incomplete accounting of taxpayer money this board has a responsibility to take some sort of action.

This ordinance is our action. It establishes clear requirements for township appropriations, including itemized reporting, supporting records, proper segregation of township funds, and the ability to trace public money when it's transferred between accounts.

It does not provide unrestricted access to unrelated private donations or private expenditures. The ordinance does not take over the fire company or diminish the importance of our firefighters as it was never intended to do so. It creates a fair and enforceable system to ensure that public money is properly accounted for before additional public money is provided.

Leadership is not always easy. Sometimes the right decision is also the most difficult and unpopular decision. As the late Great Major Tony Oliver, United States Army Ranger, once said, if you have integrity and character, you must do the hard right over the easy wrong. That is what this board must do. We must support our firefighters, protect our residents, and provide accountability through transparency."

- *Fire Company response (Assistant Chief Jason Parkins):*
    - *Acknowledged willingness to cooperate and provide documents; raised concerns about ordinance language referencing NFPA standards (National Fire Protection Association), cautioning that general references to NFPA could render many local volunteer fire agencies immediately non-compliant because NFPA standards are detailed and can be costly (e.g., annual NFPA medical/physicals, bunker gear replacement, apparatus replacement cycles).*
    - *Stated that Fireman's Relief Association is a separate entity from the fire company and is already audited by the state; noted reconciliation of records is possible without immediate, sweeping ordinance enforcement and requested collaborative review of the 16 questioned transactions with township staff (Amanda as treasurer suggested as connector).*

- *Expressed preference to delay ordinance adoption and finalize changes collaboratively first.*

- *Solicitor guidance and board options:*
  - *Board may either adopt the advertised ordinance as-is on Monday (September 14) and later amend it (amendment would require re-advertisement), or delay adoption and re-advertise a revised ordinance after incorporating fire department feedback.*
  - *Solicitor clarified that any changes to the advertised ordinance must be re-advertised (minimum seven days) prior to adoption; adopting Monday with unadvertised amendments is not permitted.*

- *Board consensus and next steps:*
  - *Board elected to cancel Sept 14 special meeting and pursue collaborative edits to the ordinance; revised ordinance to be circulated to the fire company the following day, giving the fire company time to review and respond. The cancelation of the special meeting was voted on with a vote of 3-0.*
  - *Target is to have the ordinance finalized and re-advertised in time for an October workshop or business meeting adoption with the goal of simultaneously completing an independent reconciliation/audit of the questioned transactions so potential release of funds can follow the ordinance framework.*

- *Public concern noted about a 2021 $50,000 township check and the vote to approve that check*
  - *discussion established there are two separate transactions being referenced a $53,000 CD from earlier tax-funded money and a separate $50,000 township contribution.*
  - *Board members expressed desire for auditor review to clearly document origins and purposes of each transaction and to ensure no conflicts of interest or procedural gaps occurred.*

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Parks & Rec Board – 9/15/2026 at 7:00 pm
Planning Commission Board – 9/17/2026 at 7:00pm
Open Space – 09/17/2026 at 7:00pm
BOS Special Meeting – 9/14/2026 at 5:00pm
BOS Workshop Meeting – 10/07/2026 at 7:00pm
BOS Business Meeting – 10/14/2026 at 7:00pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Community Day is on September 26 from 11am-4pm
- Yoga in the Park the Last Saturday of each month

Adjournment -*The meeting was Adjourned at 8:43pm with a vote of 3-0.*