

**PALMER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**January 2, 2024**  
**7:00 PM**  
**GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING**

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The Palmer Township Board of Supervisors held a reorganization / general business meeting on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building meeting room. The following were in attendance: Supervisors Michael Brett, Joseph Armato, Jeffrey Young, K. Michael Mitchell, and Charles E. Bellis III. Also in attendance were the Township Manager, Planning Director, Assistant Planning Director, Finance Director, Police Chief, Director Public Works/Parks/Utilities, Assistant Director Public Works/Parks/Utilities, Superintendent of Public Works/Parks/Utilities, Fire Commissioner, Director of Public Services, MS4/Environmental Coordinator, Director of Parks and Recreation, and the Assistant Township Manager.

**1. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Swearing in of Newly Elected Township Supervisor Charles E. Bellis III

INFORMATION

District Judge Taschner will swear-in Supervisor Charles E. Bellis III to his six year term.

DISCUSSION

Brett said, this is a special night tonight with the swearing-in of our newly elected supervisor, Charles Bellis. Brett said, I would like to welcome Charles Bellis and his Mother to be sworn in by Judge Jackie Taschner.

Judge Taschner swore-in Supervisor Bellis.

Brett said, congratulations and welcome to the Board. We look forward to working with you.

Bellis said, I would like to thank Mike, all the people here tonight, and the people of the township. I hope I make you proud. I would also like to thank retiring Supervisor Ann Marie Panella for her 24 years of service. She deserves a big bow.

- B. Meeting Turned Over to Temporary Chairperson Who Will Call for Nominations for Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors

INFORMATION

Township Solicitor, Will Oetinger, will act as Temporary Chair and request nominations for Chair of the Board of Supervisors.

DISCUSSION

Solicitor Oetinger acted as Temporary Chair and asked for nominations for Chairperson for 2024.

Bellis made a motion to nominate Michael Brett for Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Armato and was agreed by all.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Joseph Armato. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

- C. Newly Appointed Chairperson Will Call for Nominations for Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors

INFORMATION

Newly appointed Chairperson will call for nominations for Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors.

DISCUSSION

Supervisor Young made a motion to nominate Charles Bellis for Vice Chairperson. Bellis seconded the motion.

Motion: Deny, Moved by Supervisor Jeffrey Young, Seconded by Charles Bellis III. Passed. 2-3.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Bellis III, Young

Supervisors voting Nays: Armato, Brett, Mitchell

Chairman Brett made a motion to nominate Joseph Armato for Vice Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Mitchell.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Michael Brett, Seconded by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell. Passed. 3-2.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Brett, Mitchell

Supervisors voting Nays: Bellis III, Young

- D. Supervisor Healthcare Notification Letter

INFORMATION

As outlined in Section 606 (c) (1) of the Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code, Supervisor Charles Bellis has submitted his letter for participation in the township healthcare plans.

DISCUSSION

Oetinger noted the Second Class Township Code allows participation in the health plans when authorized by the township, which has been in the past. It's not a discretionary matter just a matter of notification.

E. Reappointment of Township Solicitor

INFORMATION

The township staff is recommending reappointment of the legal firm Grim, Biehn & Thatcher as the township solicitor for 2024.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Jeffrey Young, Seconded by Charles Bellis III. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

F. Reappointment of Township Engineer

INFORMATION

The township staff is recommending the reappointment of Carroll Engineering as the township engineer for 2024.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Joseph Armato, Seconded by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

G. Appoint Township Secretary and Treasurer

INFORMATION

The Township Manager recommends he be appointed as secretary/treasurer.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

H. Establish Amount of the Treasurer's Bond

INFORMATION

The Board needs to establish the amount of the treasurer's bond for 2024. The current amount is set at \$3 million. There has been no recommendation by the Township Auditor to change the amount of the bond, at this time.

Board approval is requested.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Joseph Armato. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

I. Appoint Public Records Officer for Township and Police Department

INFORMATION

The Township Manager recommends Justine Caiazzo-Strouse be appointed as the Public Records Officer for the Township and appoint Chief Wayne Smith as the Public Records Officer for the Police Department.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

- J. Appointment of 2024 Northampton County Association of Township Officials Delegate and Alternate

INFORMATION

The Board needs to appoint a delegate and alternate to the Northampton County Association of Township Officials to attend bi-monthly meetings in 2024.

The Township Manager recommends he be appointed delegate and the Assistant Township Manager be appointed the alternate.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

- K. Appointment of the 2024 Township Council of Government (COG) Delegate and Alternate

INFORMATION

The Board needs to appoint a 2024 COG Delegate and Alternate.

The Administration is recommending the following:

Delegate -Robert Williams

Alternate - Brenda DeGerolamo

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Jeffrey Young, Seconded by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

- L. Discussion of Appointment of Voting Delegate at the 2024 Pennsylvania State Association Annual Conference

INFORMATION

The Board needs to appoint a voting delegate for the 2024 State Association Annual Conference. The Township Manager recommends he be appointed the voting delegate.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

- M. Discussion of Board Member Participation at the 2024 PSATS Conference

INFORMATION

The 2024 Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) conference is scheduled for April 14-17, 2024, in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Registration for the conference opens at 9:00 a.m. January 9th. Board members need to confirm if they will be attending so conference and room reservations can be

made on January 9th.

### DISCUSSION

Bellis said he is interested in attending. That date is a Sunday to Wednesday and we have a meeting that Monday night. I wouldn't want to miss the meeting.

DeGerolamo said we typically cancel the meeting if there is a conflict. Board members said they will attend Sunday through Tuesday. Armato said he will let us know if he can attend.

#### N. Discussion of 2024 Liaisons to Township Boards/Commissions

### INFORMATION

The Board shall discuss whether to reappoint Liaisons to township Boards and Commissions for 2024.

2023 Liaisons were as follows:

Planning Liaison - Joseph Armato  
Recreation Board Liaison - Jeffrey Young  
Suburban EMS Liaison - Ann Marie Panella  
Palmer Municipal Fire Department Liaison - K. Michael Mitchell  
Shade Tree Commission Liaison - Michael Brett  
Environmental Steering Committee - Michael Brett

### DISCUSSION

Brett said he is proposing the following liaison's for 2024:

Planning Commission - Joseph Armato  
Recreation Board - Jeff Young  
Suburban EMS - Zeke Bellis  
Fire Department - Mike Mitchell  
Shade Tree and Environmental Steering Committee - Mike Brett

Bellis asked if Mike Mitchell would consider switching because I'm interested in working with the fire department. Mitchell said he didn't want to switch.

Board members agreed on liaisons as discussed.

#### O. Appoint Business Privilege Tax Collector for 2024

### INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the reappointment of Berkheimer Tax Administrators as the Palmer Township Business Privilege Tax Collector and appoint James Farley as alternate Business Privilege Tax Collector for 2024.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

P. Discussion of Appointment to the Planning Commission

INFORMATION

Earlier in the year Bob Walker informed the Planning Commission he would be retiring at year end. Supervisors Armato and Young interviewed Chris Hess for the vacancy and is recommending his appointment.

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the appointment of Chris Hess to a four-year term on the Planning Commission, term to expire December 31, 2027.

DISCUSSION

Young said Chris is a long time resident of the township and I believe at one time worked for the school district or still may.

Armato said he is a well qualified candidate and I look forward to working with him.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Jeffrey Young, Seconded by Supervisor Joseph Armato. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

Q. Discussion of Appointment to the Zoning Hearing Board

INFORMATION

Marc Crisafulli informed the township he is not interested in being reappointed to the Zoning Hearing Board.

This creates a vacancy on the Board. We will continue to solicit interested residents through the township website, social media pages and township newsletter. The vacancy has a five-year term to expire December 31, 2028.

DISCUSSION

Brett said, we currently have a vacancy and I would like to thank Marc Crisifulli for his years of service.

R. Discussion of Appointment to the Environmental Steering Committee (ESC)

INFORMATION

Earlier in the year Bill Ruch and Tom Grube took positions on the Planning Commission creating two vacancies on the ESC. Supervisors Armato and Brett recently interviewed Celia Williams for one vacancy and they are recommending her appointment.

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the appointment of Celia Williams to a five-year term on the ESC, term to expire December 31, 2028.

DISCUSSION

Armato said, in the two years I sat on this Board I never came across a more overqualified candidate. She will be a tremendous asset.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell, Seconded by Supervisor Joseph Armato. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

S. Discussion of Appointment to the Shade Tree Commission

INFORMATION

The Shade Tree Commission currently has two vacancies for a five year term on the Shade Tree Commission, one term to expire December 31, 2026 and one term to expire December 31, 2028.

DISCUSSION

Brett said we currently have vacancies. Anyone that may be interested, please reach out to the township.

T. Discussion of Appointment to the Building Code Board of Appeals

INFORMATION

Matthew Longenberger resigned his position on the Building Code Board of Appeals.

Supervisors Armato and Brett recently interviewed Sherwin Miller for the vacancy and are recommending his appointment.

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the appointment of Sherwin Miller to the Building Code Board of Appeals.

One vacancy remains.

DISCUSSION

Armato said, this is another over qualified candidate that will be an asset to the township.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Joseph Armato. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

U. Discussion of Reappointment of the Emergency Management Director and Deputy Emergency Management Director

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the reappointment of Stephen Gallagher as Emergency Management Director and Wayne Smith as Deputy Emergency Management Director for 2024.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Jeffrey Young, Seconded by Charles Bellis III. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

V. Discussion of Remaining 2024 Assignments

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the following assignments:

Earned Income Tax Collectors - to appoint Keystone Collections Group for the year 2024.

Vacancy Board - to appoint Ann-Marie Panella to the Vacancy Board. Said Board exists and is used to break a tie if one exists due to a vacancy on the Board of Supervisors.

Township Physician - to appoint St. Luke's Health Network.

Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor - Victor Scomillio will be appointed by the Zoning Hearing Board at a fee of \$145.00 per hour.

Sewage Enforcement Officer - Stephen R. Sell

Sewage Enforcement Officer Alternate - Zachary A. Karasek

DISCUSSION

Brett said, these remaining assignments will need a separate motion for each. The first is to appoint Keystone Collections Group as our Earned Income Tax Collector for 2024.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Joseph Armato, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

Appointment of Ann-Marie Panella to the Vacancy Board.

Williams said, he would like to thank Bob Lammi for his service on the vacancy board for the past several years. The township has typically appointed the last supervisor to leave the Board to this position. We shouldn't go on without thanking Bob Lammi. Lammi said he served for ten years.

Motion to approve St. Luke's Health Network as the Township Physicians.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Jeffrey Young, Seconded by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

Motion to approve the Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor fee at \$145.00 an hour. The Board of Supervisors approve the rate and the Zoning Hearing Board will appoint their



solicitor.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Michael Brett, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

Motion to approve Stephen R. Sell as our Sewage Enforcement Officer and Zachary A. Karasek as our Sewage Enforcement alternate.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell, Seconded by Charles Bellis III. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

W. Resolution Appointing Delegate and Alternate to the Tax Collection Committee

INFORMATION

The Board needs to appoint a primary voting delegate and an alternate to the 2024 Tax Collection Committee (TCC).

The Township Manager is recommending he be appointed delegate and James Farley be appointed alternate.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Michael Brett. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

X. Discussion to Approve Fulton and Embassy Banks to Handle Township Funds

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove Fulton Bank and Embassy Bank to handle township funds.

DISCUSSION

Young said he will abstain because his wife is a Vice President at Embassy Bank.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Kendall Mitchell. Passed. 4-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell

Supervisors voting Abstain: Young

Y. Appointment of Township Auditor

INFORMATION

The Legal Notice of the Board's intention to appoint the Township Auditor was advertised in the Express Times on December 2, 2022.

The Board needs to approve/disapprove appointing the certified public accounting firm of SEK, 804 Wayne Avenue, Chambersburg, PA, as the Township Auditor to perform the

audit of the books and records of the township for the year 2023 and authorize the Chairman to sign the Appointment of Auditor resolution.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Supervisor Jeffrey Young, Seconded by Charles Bellis III. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

Z. BOS Meeting Schedule for 2024

INFORMATION

The Palmer Township Board of Supervisors meetings will be held the first, third and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00 PM during 2024. A special budget meeting will be held Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at Noon and a budget hearing will be held Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 6:00 PM. All meetings will be held in the municipal meeting room unless posted differently at the meeting location and on the Palmer Township website at [www.palmertwp.com](http://www.palmertwp.com).

Brett read the above notice of the Board of Supervisors 2024 meeting schedule, noting it is a change from the 2023 schedule.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Joseph Armato. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

AA. Staff Reports

INFORMATION

- Solicitor
- Township Manager
- Planning Director
- Township Engineer
- Public Services Director
- Public Works, Parks and Utilities Director
- Finance Director
- Police Chief
- Fire Commissioner

Williams said he wanted to congratulate Zeke on his election and welcome him to Palmer Township. I thank him for his diligence and hard work since the election. He has been meeting with township departments and learning procedures. I appreciate that you are a hard worker and I look forward to working with you.

Williams said, I would also like to thank Ann Marie Panella for her 24 years of public service. That is a long time to serve in this roll and she deserves a big thank you from our community. In January the Staff and township boards and commissions will have a luncheon at the community center to thank her for her many years of service.

Baird said, Happy New Year and congratulations Mr. Bellis. Welcome to a great township. We are taking a 21st century look at all our projects and planning efforts. We've examined all our functions, goals and objectives. You will hear from the

Planning Department on how we are eager to continue to move things in forward motion. There is a lot of grant money out there we will be pursuing. You are coming in at a great moment. All township departments work collaboratively together. The Planning Department will provide you with an annual report at your January 16th meeting. Bellis said, thank you and I still do need to get together with you and Craig.

Brett said, since we have so many of the staff with us tonight, I ask that you all stand and introduce yourself for the large group of residents in attendance. Kent Baird and Craig Beavers introduced themselves as the Township Planners and also introduced Allen Mason, the Township Engineer.

Brett said, Tom Adams is moving into retirement and isn't here tonight. Phil Godbout, Director of Public Services introduced himself. He said Tom will be back next week and will be around until April to assist in consolidating paper documents. Godbout said, this is a great time for Palmer Township and we have a lot to look forward to.

Director of Public Works/Parks/Utilities, Scott Kistler; Finance Director, Jim Farley; Chief of Police, Wayne Smith; Fire Commissioner, Steve Gallagher; MS4/Environmental Coordinator, Paige Strasko; Dan McKinney, Director of Parks and Recreation introduced themselves and all welcomed Supervisor Bellis.

McKinney said, we have an open door policy at the community center. Please stop in and see me with any suggestions you may have. Bellis said, the Christmas Tree lighting was a wonderful event. Bellis said, I'd like to see a ball drop for the kids next year with food trucks and a ball dropping at 9:00 p.m. to bring in the new year.

Jamie Paetzell, Assistant Director of Public Works/Parks/Utilities, and Bill Hunara, Superintendent of Public Works introduced themselves.

There were a number of firefighters in attendance and Chairman Brett asked them to stand as they received a round of applause.

Chief Smith introduced Sgt. C.J. Kuronya, Captain Vasa Faasuumalie and Captain Karp and K9 Officer Clinese.

Brett said, we have an impressive staff. Bob, Brenda, and the entire team are top notch. We are lucky to have you all.

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

### **4. REPORTS**

#### Supervisors

Bellis said he would like to express a thank you to Ann Marie Panella for her many years of service. I don't plan on staying that long. I'll be a one term supervisor, but I will learn the best that I can. I want to personally thank Bob Williams and Chief Smith

for there help in this process. I am not a politician, but I've lived 63 years in Palmer Township and I have the Bellis name behind me, and I will represent. Thank you.

Bellis said, I thank Bob Williams who took me around the township. I remember when three people were in the Municipal Building on Freemansburg Avenue who ran Palmer Township. You are the right man for the job now, but I plan to bring back that small town feel.

Bellis said, for the rest of the Board, I look forward to working with you guys. I plan to continue to make Palmer Township a great place to live, work, and play. I can't thank the voters and tax payers enough and all my friends here tonight.

Young said, it is great to see everyone here tonight. The people you saw stand, they do a fantastic job in all of our departments. This thing is humming and they are doing a great job. I served with Ann Marie Panella for the last 10 years. She was on the Planning Commission when I was on the Board before this time. She took my spot when I left the Board in 1999. She was always interested in doing the best for Palmer Township. Zeke and I know each other a long time. I remember when our fathers would be setting us straight. I am pleased Zeke is here. His heart is Palmer. That is the same for all of us up here. I'd like to point out that we have three former supervisors here tonight; Eston Morgan, Bob Lammi, and Bob Smith. It is something to be said about our community. I'm nearing my end here, either the end of this year or next year. I hope the township continues the way it is. Everything got better when Bob Williams came. He is really good at team building and his communications excels. Williams said, thank you.

Armato said, I welcome Mr. Bellis to the Board and congratulations. Happy New Year. We have the best staff and we are the most technological moving forward.

Mitchell said, I'd like to welcome Zeke to the Board and I look forward to working with you. Happy New Year and I think we should have all these people at every meeting.

Bellis said, I've been asked how many usually attend a meeting and I say eight to ten and it's usually only when there is something bad. People should show up when good things are going on too. Bellis said, everyone is welcome to stop at the Brown and Lynch tonight following the meeting.

Brett said, welcome to the Board and I extend a sincere congratulations. Policies and procedures are learned, but your passion is not. We all welcome you to the Board.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Charles Bellis III, Seconded by Supervisor Jeffrey Young. Passed. 5-0.

Supervisors voting Ayes: Armato, Bellis III, Brett, Mitchell, Young

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda DeGerolamo  
Assistant Township Manager