

**in this issue >>>**

*Elected Officials*

*Stormwater Information*

*Police Department*

*Road Department*

*Zoning*

*Announcements & News*

Issue  
**THREE**



**Township Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm unless otherwise advertised.**

Keeping you connected to your community

# *in* Lehman

Winter,  
2019

## **elected officials >>>** *Stormwater Updates.*

The MS4 Stormwater Fee is a controversial issue. The Supervisors want our residents to have all the facts leading up to their decision to join with other communities to comply and how and why our property owners will no longer will be burdened with the cost.

The Township has been required to have an MS4 Permit for years. The permit is administered by DEP. According to the EPA, the term MS4 does not solely refer to municipally-owned underground pipes that make up storm sewer systems. It has a much broader application that includes roads with cross pipes, gutters, and ditches. Even though we were able to comply with the permit, beginning in 2014 we made several inquiries to DEP regarding an MS4 permit waiver. Since there was an impaired stream in the Township and two urbanized areas as defined by the Census Bureau, we did not qualify. As a result of a lawsuit filed against the EPA by the Chesapeake Bay Commission, the requirements to comply became more stringent in 2016. We were now mandated to reduce nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment stormwater runoff by 10% over the next five years. It's estimated that the Township's cost to comply would exceed \$700,000 in the first year alone and would grow to over \$3,000,000 by the end of year five. Once again, we made inquiry to DEP regarding a waiver and were told that we still didn't qualify.

In 2016 we began discussions with thirty-one other municipalities to form a regional joint municipal agreement authorizing WVSA to manage all thirty-two MS4 permits. Work completed to comply within any of the communities would be credited to the MS4 permits of all thirty-two. We made the decision to join because the cost to our residents would be significantly less than if we tried to go it alone. While at the Township Convention in Hershey we spoke with Townships out of our area that were already involved. Based on experience, their advice was to go regional if at all possible. When regulations are handed down, the rule of law says we have to abide. Since this was the most economical way to go for our residents, we had no choice and we signed the agreement in July of 2017.

When everyone began getting their stormwater fee bills, we were shocked to find out that many were charged more than we expected. We immediately contacted WVSA and questioned the inequality of the bills. We found out that they were calculated based on the impervious area on each property. We contacted our engineer and asked him to once again research the possibility of getting an MS4 permit waiver. He discovered that the DEP map designating impaired streams had been revised and the one in Lehman Township was no longer impaired. Based on that information, we filed a formal waiver application with DEP and were granted a five-year waiver in March of 2019.

The Board of Supervisors then authorized Dave Sutton, our chairman and Jack Haley, our attorney to begin negotiations with WVSA to withdraw from the agreement. Since there was no method in the agreement to withdraw, we had two choices. We could file a lawsuit and go to court or work out an agreement so our residents would no longer have to pay a fee. Going to court would be very costly, would probably take years to settle and even though we believed we had a good case there was no guarantee that we would win. If we did win, and failed in getting another waiver after five years we would be back complying with the mandate on our own at unaffordable costs to our residents.

After six months of negotiations, Dave and Jack presented an agreement to the Supervisors making us a non-permit member of the regional group. Our residents would no longer be charged, and everyone would receive a refund for all payments made. That agreement was approved by the Township on September 16, 2019 and by WVSA on September 17, 2019. Many of you may have already received your refund before reading this article.

As part of the original agreement the Township is responsible to pay its share of the startup costs of the entire program including work WVSA already completed in Lehman. Instead of paying it all at once, WVSA agreed to payments of \$28,000 per year for five years. After five years, if we get another waiver, we will only be required to pay our share of the administration costs. We expect that cost to be in the range of about \$11,000 per year. That's \$16 per year for five years and \$6 per year thereafter per property. That's far less than our residents were being charged. A new truck budgeted for this year will not be available until next year. As a result of that savings plus removing all costs associated with the MS4 permit, the Township is able to make the payments. There will not be any reduction in services or tax increases as a result.

Now that no one has to pay for at least the next five years, the Supervisors are directing their attention toward either removing the regulation or, at least leveling the playing field to minimizing the cost. If it has to stay, funding should be by the State or Federal Government. Dave Sutton recently attended a meeting with Congressman Meuser, Senator Baker, Representative Boback, EPA and DEP and presented the problems faced by our residents to the group. He will continue to work with them to resolve this unfunded mandate.

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we continue to work through this difficult issue.

## Student Resource Officers (SROs)

In February of 2018, a severe and very serious threat was made against the Lake-Lehman School District. It was immediately investigated and thankfully, the responsible parties were arrested and charged. The Lake-Lehman School Board, along with the Superintendent, requested Police officers in every building in the district. The School District began to update all security policies and protocols. Lehman Township Police provided coverage to the Jr/Sr High school and Lehman-Jackson Elementary school through a temporary agreement with the school board. Subsequently, negotiations between township and school began. In May 2018, a 3-year contract was signed between Lehman Township and the Lake-Lehman School District to provide full-time police services. The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program has been highly successful and welcomed by the entire community, staff, students, police department, school board, and township supervisors. The School district has since been successful in securing full-time School Resource officers in every school in the district.

We asked the officers to provide some information about what they do for our students. We were not disappointed in their replies.

“We are more than law enforcement officers in your child's school. Yes, our main responsibility is to provide a safe environment for your student to learn, but we also serve as liaisons between the police department and school officials. We have assisted school administrators in emergency situation planning and security matters. SROs participate in emergency drills with school staff and students to evaluate the groups readiness. We prepare and deliver age-appropriate classroom presentations on such matters as how to deal with strangers, being kind and caring, self-esteem, emergency skills, etc. Finally, we are building positive relationships with teachers, students, parents and the school community at large. These positive police interactions foster free-flowing communication which assists in crime awareness and prevention.” – Merritt Nash, Lehman-Jackson Elementary SRO

“School Resource Officer programs are community policing on a small scale, with large scale benefits. The Program allows a fully sworn law enforcement officer to be readily available every school day, from the time students arrive until dismissal. Having an SRO within the schools has numerous benefits; to prevent and respond to school-based crime, build positive relationships among law enforcement and the youth, the informal counselors, and the educators. We not only educate youth but also staff. We work with a select group of school administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors to prepare and plan for any critical incident that may take place on campus. We set up training and drills to implement how students and teachers handle those incidents in order to make the schools as safe as possible. Having an SRO present not only deters crime from happening, but builds

relationships with both the students and staff. Those relationships carry over into the community outside of school. If someone feels more comfortable with an officer, they are willing to approach the officer because they already are familiar with them. We also work after school hours providing protection at the request of the school for sporting events, dances, and other extracurricular events.” – Michael Eyer, Lake-Lehman Jr./Sr. High School SRO

Officer Eyer & Officer Nash have been such a great addition to our department. We are so very proud to have them here with us as it has opened much communication between us and students and faculty at the school. They both are full time employees and are assigned to regular patrol duties when school is not in session.



You may have noticed some signage that has been placed throughout the township regarding littering. Over the years we have had many complaints of illegal dump sites in our township. Police investigate and our Road Department assists with cleanup. Because of the severity of the problem of littering and illegal dumping in recent years, many programs are reaching out to towns to help.

A few programs we have or intend to utilize are as follows:

1. With the recent partnership between *Visit Luzerne County* and *Pick up the Poconos*, we have been provided with much needed educational material and signage to hopefully curb littering on roadways;



2. The *Pennsylvania Environmental Council* through a grant from the *Luzerne Foundation Youth Advisory Committee* will be funding small illegal dump site clean ups. This includes event coordination, supplies, insurance, education and disposal and transportation costs of the materials;

3. *Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful* is offering a Surveillance Camera Loan Program through *Illegal Dump Free PA* in which towns can apply for cameras which will be placed inconspicuously and will assist law enforcement to catch illegal dumpers.

If you would like to get involved to help stop littering, illegal dumping and/or clean up in Lehman, please email Chrisandra at [lehman@lehmantwp.com](mailto:lehman@lehmantwp.com)

## road department >>>

# Best Wishes to Adam Stefanowicz

After twenty-two years of service to Lehman Township, on September 30, Adam Stefanowicz walked out of work for the very last time as an employee.

At our September Supervisor's Meeting, we asked Adam and his family to join us as this would be Adam's last meeting as an employee.

Being the humble man Adam is, he didn't want any "big fuss" about his retirement, but with the help of his wife & son, Supervisors were able to surprise Adam with a plaque of appreciation and refreshments with friends, family and community members.

We wish Adam the happiest retirement. He will be missed by everyone here at the Township and also by the many residents who have reached out through social media with messages of congratulations and best wishes.

## project updates >>>

- All crack sealing was completed in August. A total of 23 roads were able to be completed. We do crack sealing (and not crack filling) as it is a long-term pavement preservation solution for our roads.

- 100 tons of hot patch has been placed on paved roads around the township. We use hot patch asphalt repair to address the underlying problem that caused a pothole. Our road department excavates around the pothole, then fills and seals it with hot asphalt.

- We were successful with our grant applications for Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) for Crossin, Trojan and Swamp Roads. Those projects will be completed as weather allows.

- Bids for the Meeker Road Pipe replacement project will be going out soon.



Above: Our road department thanking Adam for years of unwavering service.

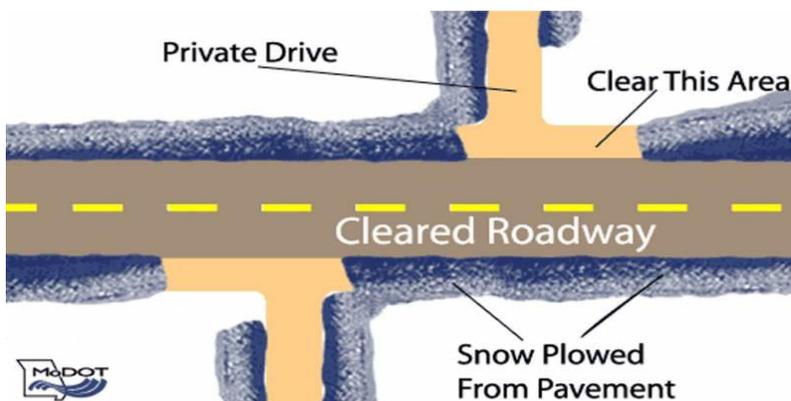


Left: Adam pictured with his wife, Denise and son, Daniel.

## Zoning Office >>>

# Ordinance Reminders

Please be advised that Lehman Township has a Snow and Ice Ordinance. This ordinance prohibits the depositing of any snow or ice which has been removed from a property to any street, road or highway. In essence, this means any snow you have plowed and/or shoveled out of your driveway cannot be placed or left in the street.



Any and all snow and ice placed from your property onto the public roadway must be completely removed by you. Not only are you creating a hazard to motorists on the roadway, you are also in danger of fines and penalties.

Parking vehicles on Lehman roadways is prohibited during snowstorms or during the snow removal process; said vehicles will be towed at the owner's expense. As always, we ask that you abide by our Township Ordinances to keep everyone safe.

Please also make sure your mailbox is within government regulations (6-8 inches from the road edge to the mailbox door – you can see [usps.com](http://usps.com) for requirements) to avoid any plow to mailbox issues. These regulations provide our drivers with ample room to properly plow the road without taking out any mailboxes.

We've found some helpful tips to keep your driveway cleared during plow season from MoDOT. Many states are calling this technique "avoid the second shovel".

Thank you for helping us keep residents safe and happy this winter.



## LEHMAN TOWNSHIP

1183 Old Route 115

Dallas, Pennsylvania 18612

### Announcements & news >>>

## *Food Drive Collection Location – through the holidays.*

Recently, food banks have been low on donations. If you are able, please feel free to drop donations at the municipal building during regular business hours and we will make sure they get to a food bank in our area.

For more information about how to get help, or how to give, visit our website.

Visit us on



*“Lehman Township,  
Luzerne County, Pennsylvania”*

Call us at **570-674-7788**

or check our website  
[www.lehmanpa.com](http://www.lehmanpa.com)

## *voting locations*

Residents who have voted at the Lehman Township Municipal Building or the Dallas Baptist Church in Idetown have a new voting location. You will now be voting at the EMS Building near the entrance to the Luzerne County Fair on Route 118.

If you are one of the effected voters please keep your eye out in the mail for official notification from the Luzerne County Board of Elections. Your new location was misprinted in the newspaper.

Please note that the Luzerne County Board of Elections and not the Lehman Township supervisors handle voting location decisions. In the past, we have opened the Township Building for their use. All questions and concerns regarding relocation of voting places should be directed to them.