

The agenda meeting of the Northampton Township Board of Supervisors was held at 6:15 p.m.

Present were:

Adam M. Selisker
Dr. Kimberly Rose
Robert Salzer
Paula Gasper
Barry Moore

Others present were:

Robert M. Pellegrino, Township Manager
William Wert, Assistant Manager
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Amanda Fueller, Township Engineer

Agenda items were reviewed and discussed.

The regular business meeting of the Northampton Township Board of Supervisors was called to order at 7:00 pm. Members of the Board present were:

Adam M. Selisker
Robert Salzer
Dr. Kimberly Rose
Paula Gasper
Barry Moore

Others present were:

Robert M. Pellegrino, Township Manager
William Wert, Assistant Manager
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Amanda Fueller, Township Engineer

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Selisker led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for loved ones that will be missed during the holidays.

Distinguished Citizen Award Madeline Marriott, MA - Bucks County Poet Laureate

Chairman Selisker read aloud a proclamation presented to Madeleine Marriott, recently named the Poet Laureate of Bucks County.

Ms. Marriott expressed her appreciation to Northampton Township and shared how grateful she is to live in a place that truly values and supports the arts. She noted that Bucks County and Northampton Township are vibrant arts communities, thanked those in attendance for the opportunity to be present, and introduced a short poem titled *St. Paul's Cathedral*, named for a neighborhood in London.

Northampton Day Check Presentation

Steve Bryer reported that Northampton Day 2025 was a successful event made possible through the support of Township administration, departments, sponsors, and volunteers. Now nearly 30 years old, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit continues its mission of bringing the community together through a free, family-friendly event featuring entertainment, vendors, and activities for all ages.

He thanked Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for their assistance and noted that excess funds were donated to several local nonprofits, Council Rock school PTOs, the Lions Club Foundation, and graduating senior scholarships.

Mr. Bryer encouraged residents to volunteer and shared that planning is underway for Northampton Day 2026, scheduled for October 4th. He noted that committee members Pete Palestina and John Bishop were in attendance and closed by wishing everyone a happy holiday season.

The Board members each expressed its appreciation to the committee for their hard work and another successful Northampton Day.

Public Comment

The following residents spoke at this public comment opportunity:

Curtis Leicester (Southampton, PA) urged the Board to find more ways to attract commercial businesses to support local taxes, including high-end restaurants or multipurpose venues.

Mary King, (Southampton, PA), urged the Board to consider consolidating the Tri-Hampton Rescue Squad and Fire Department to improve efficiency and coordination, rather than raising taxes for residents on fixed incomes.

Colin Unsworth, (Newtown, PA), urged the Board to address rising costs in the Township noting his son had to move to find more affordable housing. He also questioned the fiscal responsibility of the proposed tax increase.

Harrison Cantor, (Holland, PA), expressed concern about the proposed tax increase but acknowledged the importance of emergency services.

Laura Brenner Scotti (Richboro, PA) questioned the Fire Chief salary and urged the Board to prioritize funding for frontline firefighters .

Owen Bidwell, (Holland, PA), questioned the proposed tax increase and the need for Fire Station 83, urging the Board to repurpose it for community use.

Ed Mayer (Churchville, PA), urged the Board to explore expanding the use of Act 205 funds and repurpose Fire Station 83 to fund paid firefighters.

Consent Items

Board Minutes

Ms. Gasper presented the Board meeting minutes of November 19, 2025, for approval.

Accounts Payable

Dr. Rose presented the Accounts Payable for approval: November 26, 2025, for \$378,678.25, and December 10, 2025, for 2,349,343.55.

A motion was made and seconded (**Salzer-Rose**) to approval all consent items as presented.

Motion Passed 5-0.

Public Hearing

There were no Public Hearings.

Unfinished Business

There was no Unfinished Business.

New Business

(D) Consider Final Adoption of 2026 Preliminary Budget

Chairman Selisker asked Mr. Pellegrino, Township Manager to present additional information on the proposed 2026 Budget. Mr. Pellegrino noted that the proposed 2026 Budget was advertised for public inspection on Thursday, November 20, 2025 following adoption of the Preliminary Budget on November 19, 2025. A copy of the Budget has been available in the Township Administration Building and on the Township website for public review since Preliminary Budget adoption. He noted no residents visited the Township office to review the proposed budget or called with questions.

Mr. Pellegrino noted that since there were questions at the last meeting regarding the cost of fire service he would provide additional background and historical context, review the financials, and conclude with a general overview of the proposed budget.

Mr. Moore expressed support for a paid fire department but emphasized the need to be fiscally smart. He suggested reducing costs by relocating EMS staff to the main firehouse and selling the old EMS building for potential revenue, and repurposing Fire Station 83 on Hatboro Road for community use. He also urged pursuing changes to Act 205 so restricted funds currently reserved for volunteer services could be used for paid firefighters, noting this could unlock \$2.8 million.

Mr. Pellegrino stated that the Township's proposed budget of \$66.3 million maintains high-quality fire, police, and public services while balancing fiscal responsibility. The transition to a career fire department has improved response times and public safety. The proposed 2.75-mill tax increase (\$110/year for a median home) is allocated across all services, including the police and fire department. He noted that labor costs remain the most significant cost in the budget.

Mr. Pellegrino further explained that the Fire Department performs many other tasks as part of its operations. These include fire prevention programs, including commercial building inspections, school visits, CPR training, and a Smoke Detector Assistance Program in partnership with the Red Cross.

Mr. Pellegrino stated that the tax increase, while proposed to be solely in the Fire Fund, will pay additional costs across all departments. Placing the increase in the Fire Fund reduces the need to transfer funds from other sources to pay for the cost of fire services.

Everitt Harris, (Northampton resident) raised a discrepancy in reported totals of one of the presentation slides. Mr. Pellegrino addressed the discrepancy and provided explanation of the slide.

Ed Weinberg, (Northampton resident), asked to revisit the regional comparison chart and suggested adding a column showing wages/benefits versus operating costs for each community to make staffing vs. expenses easier to compare.

He also questioned response-time trends around the 9-minute NFPA benchmark. Chairman Selisker clarified that while trucks may arrive within 9 minutes, they often do so without enough qualified personnel on scene, which is difficult to sustain in a volunteer-only system given call volume.

Carolyn Buser Blackman urged the town to invest in fire prevention alongside staffing costs, citing a traumatic neighborhood garage fire and rising risks from electric vehicles and battery devices. She proposed community education, garage fire/heat alarms, and a fund to help low-income residents afford smoke alarms, batteries, and extinguishers, while voicing concern about the size of the budget increase.

Chairman Selisker noted that the budget funds full-service readiness—fires, rescues, EMS, and vehicle/EV incidents—and extensive prevention work, including 600+ commercial inspections, school education, extinguisher training, free smoke-detector replacement with the Red Cross, and free CPR classes. He also clarified that the relevant standards group is the NFPA, not the FDA/SBA.

Chairman Selisker called a recess at 9:05 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 9:15 p.m.

A motion was made and seconded (**Salzer-Gasper**) to approve the final adoption of the 2026 Preliminary Budget.

Chairman Selisker asked if there were any further discussion from the Board.

Mr. Moore moved to amend the motion to add that the Township Administrative staff evaluate three initiatives: repurposing Fire Station 83 for community use through Parks & Recreation; consolidating the EMS station on Township Road with the Richboro firehouse and potentially selling the Township Road Property; and continuing efforts with State Representatives to expand funding for paid firefighters.

Discussion occurred concerning whether conditions could be placed on a Budget approval.

Chairman Selisker asked if Mr. Salzer would like to amend the motion. Mr. Salzer declined.

After further discussion, Mr. Moore withdrew the amendment.

Motion passed 5-0 to adopt the 2026 Preliminary Budget as presented without changes.

Mr. Moore made a motion **(Moore-Rose)** requesting the Township Administration evaluate the following three actions.

1. Evaluate Fire Station 83 to explore the possibility of transition to a Parks and Recreation center for community use.
2. Evaluate the possible consolidation of Tri-Hampton Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on Township Road into Fire Station 3 and explore the feasibility of selling the property with the proceeds going to the Township.
3. Continue to work with State Representatives Marcell and Hogan and State Senator Frank Farry to expand Act 205 Foreign Insurance Tax revenue to allow funding for paid fire departments.

Motion Passed 5-0.

(E) Consider Authorization to Advertise Ordinance in accordance with Act 54 of 2024 concerning Real Estate Tax Limits for Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Salzer explained that the Pennsylvania Legislature recently enacted Act 54 of 2024, amending the Commonwealth's Fiscal Code to allow eligible townships to levy dedicated real property taxes for fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) above the limits in the Second-Class Township Code. This change responds to the growing shortage of volunteer firefighters and EMTs—particularly in suburban areas—and supports municipalities establishing paid fire departments. He noted that under the Act, municipalities in designated counties, including Bucks County, may levy up to 10 mills for fire services and up to 5 mills for EMS by adopting an enabling ordinance.

A motion was made and seconded **(Salzer-Gasper)** advertising an ordinance in compliance with Act 54 of 2024 to allow a dedicated tax levy on real property of up to ten (10) mills for fire protection and up to five (5) mills for emergency medical services as determined annually by the Board of Supervisors.

Each member of the Board of Supervisors provided individual comments.

Motion Passed 5-0.

(F) Consider Adoption of Ordinance 625 Establishing a Firefighters Pension Plan

Chairman Selisker opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Moore explained that the Board previously authorized advertising an ordinance to establish a new Fire Fighter Defined Contribution Pension Plan. Mr. Moore added that this is something that's going to save the township money, because it increases state pension plan funding by more than \$250,000.

A motion was made and seconded **(Moore-Salzer)** to adopt Ordinance 625 creating a separate Fire Fighter Pension Plan as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to qualify for Uniformed Essential Public Safety Worker state aid to support municipal pension plan funding.

Chairman Selisker clarified that the additional funds come from the state and are directed to the pension fund and not an additional pension to the firefighters.

Motion Passed 5-0.

Mrs. Gasper reported that the Township reached a proposed settlement with J.P. Mascaro & Sons, Inc. over 2020–2021 service disputes. Mascaro claimed \$312,000, including withheld payments and pandemic-related costs. Under the settlement, the Township would pay \$132,000, retain \$44,000 for service issues, and all other claims would be dropped with no further payment.

A motion was made and seconded (**Gasper-Salzer**) approve the proposed Settlement Agreement in the matter of *Solid Waste Service, Inc. d/b/a J.P. Mascaro & Sons v. Northampton Township* as presented, and to authorize the Township Manager to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Township.

Each member of the Board of Supervisors provided their individual comments.

Motion Passed 5-0.

Reports

Dr. Rose made the following announcements:

Parks and Recreation

- The Parks and Recreation team entered 2025 with an ambitious goal: to create new, memorable community events that would spark lasting traditions for the residents of Northampton Township and their families. Looking back, it is safe to say we accomplished exactly that.
- With the dedication of Kristin Fullerton, Special Events Coordinator, and the entire Parks and Recreation team, we kicked off the summer with the inaugural *Sun and Fun Fest*, which welcomed an estimated 2,300 attendees.
- Residents also enjoyed a Thursday-night tradition in the Municipal Park with our reimagined Summer Concert Series, drawing more than 6,000 residents over the season.
- And to close out the year, we all welcomed the holidays together at *Winterfest*, where more than 2,100 residents joined us for Northampton Township's first-ever tree lighting ceremony.
- The department extends sincere appreciation to the Public Works Department, especially Parks Foreman Mike Sweeney, the Northampton Township Police Department, Northampton Township Fire Department, Tri-Hampton EMS, the Board of Supervisors, the Parks and Recreation Board, all of the sponsors, and all the dedicated individuals we are fortunate to work with every day.

Senior Center

- December continues to be a very busy month at the Senior Center! If you are age 55 or better, the opportunities are endless for socialization, special activities, educational programs, parties, day trips and FUN! The center provides a wonderful support system to keep you active, vital, and independent.

- Join us for some upcoming classes...
 - An information presentation about “Every Day A I” on Thursday, December 18th
 - “Art with Heart” watercolors class held the second Wednesday of each month.
 - Ceramics- Tuesdays in the center Art room.
 - “Art Sparks” – Creative Art Studio, try a different art medium every 6 weeks. Coming in 2026! Happy Holidays from all of us at the Senior Center!

Mrs. Gasper made the following announcements:

Veterans Advisory Commission

- Mrs. Gasper noted that the December 6 wreath-laying at Union Cemetery was a solemn patriotic ceremony and encouraged residents to attend in the future.

Library Board

- Mrs. Gasper shared that the Library Board would like to shout out to the Parks & Rec Dept and say Thank You for allowing the library to be present in the vendor tent for the first of what should be many Winterfests. It was a great event! We say, “Well Done!” to P&R crew and the outstanding support job by NT Public Works!
- Effective Sunday, January 4, 2026, the library will be adjusting its Sunday hours to be 12 PM - 4 PM. We hope it provides better access for the public and makes Sunday hours less confusing by matching the closing time with Friday and Saturday. One more reminder to check out your new library website at www.freelibraryNT.org.
- The Library Board wishes everyone a happy and peaceful Holiday Season.

Mr. Salzer wished everyone happy holidays, noted the healthy debate, and recognized Chairman Selisker for his years of service and dedication.

Mrs. Gasper commended Chairman Selisker as a considerate, caring, and effective leader who genuinely works to improve life in Northampton. She noted that he is widely admired, values residents’ interests, and helps ensure the Township runs smoothly.

Dr. Rose thanked Chairman Selisker for his years of service to the community, noting their shared dedication and love for Northampton.

Mr. Moore noted that the Planning Commission will meet on January 13, 2026, to review the Russell Gardens subdivision, proposing 18 half-acre lots, with Board review expected in February or March. Additionally, the former Rose’s Greenhouse on Buck Road will be developed into about 12 luxury one-acre homes.

Mr. Moore expressed appreciation for continuing to work with Chairman Selisker on Fire and EMS matters.

Chairman Selisker highlighted the Township’s smoke detector program, which has installed 10-year detectors in dozens of senior homes. He also noted that with the Holland fire station now operational for a year, the Township’s ISO fire rating will be evaluated, potentially lowering residents’ fire insurance premiums.

Manger’s Report:

There was no report from Township Manager, Robert M. Pellegrino.

Mr. Pellegrino wished everyone a happy holiday season and thanked the Board for their ongoing support, noting it greatly benefits staff performance, productivity, and morale.

Assistant Manager's Report:

Assistant Township Manager William Wert reported that a traffic study of Highland Drive and **Farmway** Avenue supports installing an all-way stop. An ordinance for the stop sign will be presented for Board consideration at the January 28 meeting.

Beginning December 14, all yard waste must be placed in regular trash cans, as separate yard waste collection has ended for the season. Yard waste left outside containers will not be collected. Residents with questions should contact the Township Administration Office.

Solicitor's Report

Township Solicitor, Joseph Pizzo, thanked the Board and community for the opportunity to serve, wished everyone happy holidays, and acknowledged that this was Supervisor Selisker's last meeting, noting it was a privilege to represent the community.

Engineer's Report (Gilmore and Associates)

Township Engineer Amanda Fuller thanked the Board and staff for nine years of service, wished everyone happy holidays, and acknowledged Supervisor Selisker's lasting impact on the Township.

Chairman Selisker reflected on his seven years as a Township Supervisor, noting the challenges, passion, and occasional misinformation he faced. He emphasized his dedication to making Northampton a great place to live, praised the Township staff for their hard work and commitment, and expressed gratitude for the Board's support. He invited residents to visit him at the fire station to learn more about local fire, and EMS operations.

Public Comment

Colin Unsworth, of Spring Garden Mill, requested the Board consider adding a crosswalk across Route 332 near his neighborhood to improve safety for students running to and from Tyler Park.

Township Manager Robert Pellegrino noted that a grant has been received to upgrade the traffic signals near St. Leonard, which will likely include pedestrian facilities, addressing the crosswalk concern.

Owen Bidwell, (Holland, PA) thanked the Board for listening to public input and emphasized the importance of respectful debate among supervisors. He noted that public comments allow residents to share ideas and influence decisions, and urged the Board to remain open-minded, kind, and attentive to the community's concerns.

Ed Mayer (Churchville, PA) commended Chairman Selisker for his leadership, describing him as steady, collaborative, and highly effective both as chairperson and Fire Chief. He noted that Chairman Selisker's ability to bring people together and manage difficult situations will be greatly missed, and he thanked him for his service to the Township.

Pete Palestina, a former Township Supervisor, commended the current Board and candidates, noting the quality of public safety personnel and the importance of maintaining services despite tax concerns. He praised Adam Selisker's leadership, especially his long tenure as Chairman, and expressed support for his continued service in the fire department.

The Board of Supervisors wished everyone Happy Holidays.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barry Moore, Secretary