



Bucks County Association of Township Officials

BUCKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Bucks County Association of Township Officials was held via Zoom on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 12:00 PM.

MEMBERS:

- *Michelle Benitez, Bensalem Township
- Maggie Rash, Buckingham Township
- *Barbara Lyons, Doylestown Township
- Ken Lichtenstein, Plumstead
- David Nyman, East Rockhill Township
- William Jones, New Britain Township
- *Dick Weaver, Newtown Township
- Ruth Schemm, Warrington
- Chester Pogonowski, Wrightstown Township
- Vicki Kushto, Clemons Richter & Reiss, P.C.
- *Vince Deon, Northampton Township
- Tom Cino, Upper Makefield Township
- * Jim Hopkins, Springfield Township
- Stephanie Shortall, New Britain Township

*NOT PRESENT

1. Call to Order: President Maggie Rash called the Executive Board meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

2. Approval of the Minutes: April 9, 2025.

MOTION: Motion made by Ms. Schemm and seconded by Mr. Jones to approve the minutes. The motion carried.

3. Treasurer’s Report: April 2025

MOTION: Mr. Jones motion was seconded by Ms. Schemm to approve the 2025 April financials. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. President’s Report:
Fall Event-Location Discussion**

Ms. Rash started the conversation about where to hold this year’s fall event. Ms. Rash stated that it was at Peddlers Village last year and asked those present of their ideas on where to go this for this year. Some ideas discussed were the Springtown Inn in Springfield Township, or possibly back to Peddlers Village to Hewn Spirits. Ms. Rash stated she could send an email polling the board with ideas and a final decision will be made at the June meeting. Ms. Rash added that she will include information regarding the picnic whether to have it on a Friday or a Saturday.

Ms. Rash turned the meeting over to Ms. Schemm to discuss the EMS event coming up in the fall. Ms. Schemm reported she and Ken are working on the third workshop, in which the process is following prior discussions that were first discussed in which it was a very emotional event on how real disasters carry out. The discussions at this year’s BCATO convention included a panel of speakers from volunteer fire services with the complexity of response times and volunteer versus paid EMS and fire services. For the next event Ms. Schemm reported that they want to focus on the financial impact.

Mr. Lichtenstein reported that he went to the PEMA day the day before the PSATS conference and reported that the head of EMS for the state expressed his support and raised it with Ruth and Maggie on a call before this.

Some of the issues are the defunding or the reduction of support from FEMA and how it affects the municipality. President Rash stated that the urgency of the EMS on this matter wasn't discussed enough at the convention. Stated that Chuck Pressler should be involved in the fall event.

Ms. Schemm added that during an emergency the police arrive first and then when you have an ambulance and fire engines it gets to be overlapping. Ms. Schemm stated that residents are questioning why the fire department responds to calls when someone falls. Stated that its not clear to residents. Mr. Lichenstein added that they need to set the stage as to why we are talking about it. Mr. Lichtenstein inquired about what others thought regarding different models for financing these kinds of services. Discussions continued with the issue of fire trucks showing up to ambulance calls.

Ms. Shortall added that at the PSATS conference they had a forum that described service models for different municipal and ambulance units on which they provided service models for different municipal and ambulance units,, from volunteer service to regional type services and added that it was very well put together. Stated that there were a lot of good models and information shared. Ms. Shortall added that there is a video link on the PSATS website with this forum and will share the link.

Discussions about where to hold the fall EMS event ensued. Ideas of having it at the country club in Northampton Township such as the Doylestown meeting room or at Doylestown Borough which is located in center of town which has also been renovated. Mr. Pogonowski added that if it's in Doylestown Township, it could be at no cost. Mr. Lichenstein suggested having the event on a Saturday in October which could be on the 4th, 11th or the 18th and added that it gives a two week buffer before the elections.

Discussions of the BCATO Fall Event being held on a Tuesday or Thursday ensued and the date of Tuesday September 30th was agreed upon. Ms. Rash asked that this be announced in the newsletter and will follow up with the location.

5. Executive Directors Report:

Ms. Courter stated that the May newsletter will be going out this week, with some PSATS highlights and a Save the Date for the Fall event. Stated that if anyone has anything they want to add they can email her. Reported that a new laptop was ordered, which should be delivered today.

6. Solicitors/Legislative Report:

Ms. Kushto gave the following report on bills that have been introduced in the Legislature:

SB 512 would repeal Act 12.

SB 338 would require a selling authority to conduct a ratepayer referendum on whether or not they want their water or sewer to be acquired by a for-profit entity. It would allow public input. It would require the for-profit company to publish an annual report regarding what they charge and what the previous entity charged.

HB946 would require ratepayer approval prior to the sale of a publicly managed water or sewer utility valued at more than 1 million.

HB 945 would repeal Act 12 and add a requirement for a ratepayer referendum prior to the sale of a municipally owned water or sewer system.

HB946 would change the fees for the valuation of the system that can be approved by the PUC by capping them at 5% of the value. Require the valuation fees to be disclosed to rate payers in a special mailing or notification.

HB 943 would require a municipality, prior to selling a water or sewer system, to request and received from the Independent Fiscal Office, an analysis of the costs associated with: the municipality keeping the system, applying for grants, borrowing money and raising rates to fix the system;

selling the system, including rate increases; and doing nothing. The analysis would be a matter of public record.

Ms. Schemm expressed her concerns regarding public utilities such as water and sewer and not having private companies coming along to take them over without a layer of protection. It was discussed having an outreach from BCATO giving information to members and having it on the website and reaching out to county organizations. President Rash added that she will work with Dave since he is now retired from Upper Makefield on the resolutions and go through the ones that have passed and even the draft resolutions and start reaching out and revamping the website to give more information. Ms. Kushto stated she will search where these bills stand and update everyone. Mr. Pogonowski added that a list of resolutions are on the PSATS website that remain for five years on the books and would be good to include in the newsletter and website with a link to the resolutions.

7. Other Business

Ms. Schemm reported that Tile Works, at the Mercer Museum is having an event on Saturday which will feature artisans around the country and more information is on the Tile Works website.

Mr. Jones asked if a motion was needed regarding the distribution of the resolutions report.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Pogonowski to have the executive director send out the PSATS Resolution report, motion seconded by Ms. Schemm, all were in favor.

President Rash discussed changing the meeting times due to some board members having challenges to attend the meetings at Noon. Ms. Rash recapped that she will send out an email asking for locations for Fall Event and the possibility of changing meetings to the evenings.

President Rash thanked Ms. Kushto for her time and thanked Ms. Shortall for bringing the basket to the PSATS conference on behalf of BCATO.

Mr. Lichtenstein reported that the BCATO luncheons at the PSATS conference on Monday and Tuesday were well done and well attended.

8. Adjournment:

With no further business, motion by Mr. Lichenstein and seconded by Mr. Jones to adjourn the meeting at 12:47 PM. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie A. Courter

Executive Director