THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF MUIHLENBERG TOWNSHIP
SPRING 2020
Board of Commissioner’s meeting is held the third Monday of each month at 7pm

Brian Harris - Township Manager
Jim Bobeck - Assistant Township Manager
Dawn Cieniewicz - Secretary
Michael Setley, Esq. - Solicitor
Pat C. Lupia - Tax Collector

Planning Commission
Meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at 7pm
Walter S. LaSota - Chairman
Robert Entler - Vice Chairman
Frank Sabatucci - Secretary
Diane Benson, Kerry Good, David Hepner, Vanessa Pagan | Eva Eisenbrown - Alternate

Parks and Recreation Board
Meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month January through October at 6pm and December 6th at Noon
Joseph Lupia, Jr. - Chairman
Brad Coley - Vice Chairman
Fred Hatt - Secretary
Casey Blankenbiller, James Kelly, Dr. Timothy Moyer, Andrew Russo

Zoning Hearing Board
Scheduled on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm when required
Marlin D. Seyler - Chairman
Kevin Reichert - Treasurer
Robin Royer - Secretary | Anne Carroll - Alternate
James Gavin, Esq. - Solicitor | Jill Nagy, Esq. - Conflict Counsel

Arts Board
Meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm
Barbara Mills - Chairman
Elisabeth Ledig - Vice Chairman
Ann Barlet - Secretary
Cleon Garl, Madelyn Cave, Marika Horacek-Kunkle
2020 Census
Census day falls on Wednesday April 1st, 2020.

Comprehensive Plan Update
In 2020, Muhlenberg Township will begin the process of reviewing its Comprehensive Plan.

Report to the People
A letter to the people from Senator Judy Schwank.

Muhlenberg Township Fire & Rescue
Learn more about Goodwill Fire Co. and Temple Fire Co. merging to form Muhlenberg Fire & Rescue Company 66.

Spring Home Projects
The Codes Dept. has some tips for those spring projects around the home. Also a look at the new Township Quick Guides.

Parks & Rec Programs
Keep up-to-date with all the events and programs happening within the Township.

We are looking for old photographs of Muhlenberg Township
If you have any old photographs of different locations, buildings or businesses based in the township you are willing to share, we would like a copy for future projects. If you have some you’d like to submit or need them scanned e-mail art@muhlenbergtwp.com
Greetings Muhlenberg Township,

While the final quarter of the year leaves us with good memories of holidays, family gatherings and celebrations, Spring, for me, is a time for optimism. Our environment will soon be coming back to life with sprouting flowers, nesting birds, more sunshine, longer days and the smell of a neighbor’s BBQ grill. Spring is a time to get out of the house and act on all those ideas, goals and plans that we made last year. Your Parks Department has already been active in planning activities for 2020. The upcoming calendar includes: Flower Show Bus Trip on March 2, Designer Bag Bingo Fund Raiser on 3/8, Children’s Scavenger Egg Hunt on 3/18, Father Daughter Dance on 4/3, Dover Downs Bus Trip on 4/15, Lunchtime Jazz Concert at Laurel Run Park on 4/30, Muhlenberg Night at Reading Phillies on 5/9, Muhlenberg Flea Market on 5/16, Memorial Day Ceremony on 5/25, Bus Trip to Phillies Game on 5/29, Summer Playground Begins on 6/8, Spring Fiesta on 6/13 and the first of three evening Concerts at Jim Dietrich on 6/26. That is just the first half of the year and many more events are planned. To find out the dates of other programs or to keep up-to-date on the Township happenings please check out the Township Website at www.muhlenbergtwp.com or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mtparks.

Many of these events are only possible because of our volunteers and we invite anyone who is interested in volunteering a few hours of time to call the Parks Department at 610-929-4727 and ask for Karen or Heather. Volunteering at events, like RiverFest ( August 28,29 & 30 ), is a great deal of fun and regardless of your age, we can use you.

The New Year brings a new decade. It is the Board of Commissioners hope to see a “Roaring 20’s” in economic development for Muhlenberg. Businesses and jobs are already coming into Muhlenberg Township. This is not only important for the Township's tax base, but also for the pride in where we live. Please support our local businesses and more will come! Your Board of Commissioners has been and will continue to be united in making Muhlenberg a great place to live, raise a family and do business. The Township Commissioner’s meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month, come join us to see your local government in action.

Respectfully,

Steve Wolfinger
Township Commissioner
It is hard to believe that the 2020 Census is already underway. As we enter the next decade, Census day falls on Wednesday April 1st, 2020. In the weeks leading up to April 1st, you will begin to get a reminder in the mail. This year, for the first time, the Census will take place online.

**HERE’S SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What is the decennial census?**
Every 10 years, the federal government conducts a population count of everyone in the United States. Data from the census provide the basis for distributing more than $675 billion in federal funds annually to communities across the country to support vital programs—impacting housing, education, transportation, employment, health care, and public policy. They also are used to redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts and accurately determine the number of congressional seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

What this means to our local community is how much money we receive in federal funding. Estimates show for every person undercounted, Berks County could lose up to $2,093 per person per year in federal funding. That totals to over $350 million given our projected undercount from the previous census (16,000 people).

**Why is it important to me?**
Responding to the census is not only your civic duty; it also affects the amount of funding your community receives, how your community plans for the future, and your representation in government. Specifically, data from the 2020 Census are used to:

- Ensure public services and funding for schools, hospitals, and fire departments.
- Plan new homes and businesses and improve neighborhoods.
- Determine how many seats your state is allocated in the House of Representatives.

**How can I respond?**
In 2020, for the first time ever, the U.S. Census Bureau will accept responses online, but you can still respond by phone or mail if you prefer. Responding should take less time than it takes to finish your morning coffee.

**Where can I go to learn more?**
You can learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting www.2020census.gov

**2020 CENSUS - BE COUNTED!**

It’s CONFIDENTIAL! Even those who are not US Citizens need to be counted to ensure proper allocation of these funds. With all applicable laws and privacy policies nobody should fear completing the census. Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households or businesses, even to law enforcement agencies! The information collected can be used for statistical purposes only. Additionally, all Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information and any violations comes with a penalty of up to $250,000.00 and/or up to 5 years in prison. Learn more about the Census Bureau’s data protection and privacy program at www.census.gov/privacy.

It’s your civil duty and completing the census is mandatory, respond or Census Enumerators will come knocking! If a response is not received for your address by the end of April 2020, you will likely see a Census Bureau worker knocking at your door! **Do your part and BE COUNTED!**
Muhlenberg has a lot of good stuff going on including the adoption of the 2020 budget with **NO TAX INCREASE FOR THE 5th STRAIGHT YEAR.** As the graphic shows below, your Township tax goes a long way for being only 10% of your real estate tax bill. The Township does a lot with your money including some important things like police protection, paving and plowing roads, picking up leaves, maintaining over 400 acres of park land, attracting business, issuing permits, donating to our library and ambulance, successfully obtaining grant money for equipment, road projects, RiverFest and other Township improvements. These are just a few items that come to mind.

The retail corridors in Muhlenberg Township continue to experience growth and the Township continues to improve pedestrian access throughout the 5th Street Corridor.

Phase I of the 5th Street Revitalization Project concluded in the Fall and improvements were made to the intersections located along the southern portion of the corridor.

Phase II will begin in 2020 and will improve the intersections along the northern portion of the corridor. Pedestrian improvements will be made at 5th Street and Kutztown Road, Leesport Avenue, Tuckerton Road and Water Street. Funding through the DCED Multimodal Program was received for both phases.

Economic development continues throughout the Township as Reading Pediatrics, Diamond Credit Union, Vision Credit Union, Chik-Fil-A, Panera, MOD Pizza, Five Below and Ross were constructed. Penn State Health, Carbonlite, Dunkin Donuts, and Berks 222 are currently under construction with anticipated completion dates in 2020.

In addition to infrastructure improvements Muhlenberg Township will break ground on the Public Works Maintenance Garage project on Leesport Avenue. The current facility was constructed over half a century ago and is no longer able to accommodate the needs of the department.

In addition to the tax millage remaining unchanged for the past 5 years, the Township was also able to keep the refuse rates at $280.00 annually and $240.00 for Seniors. 2020 will be the final year of the current refuse contract and the Township is working diligently to minimize the rate increase associated with the upcoming bid.
Residents often have concerns about how and where their tax dollars are being spent within the Township. Commencing in July of every year, the Township begins the budget process. The budget is a document that builds on the objectives and goals established by the Board of Commissioners. Each year in the Fall the Board holds a budget workshop to discuss current and future budgetary needs. This is one of the most important meetings of the year. It is open to the public and the Township encourages all residents to come out and see first-hand how their tax dollars are being utilized. The following information is the breakdown of revenues and expenditures for the 2020 calendar budget year. It is a broad view of the finances as a whole but it provides you the information on the “where and how” of the budget allocation for 2020. We continue to search for new innovative ways, as well as follow conventional methods, to provide the level of services and programs that our residents enjoy and have come to expect in the most cost-effective manner. We encourage you to attend the yearly budget meeting which usually takes place in October or November, times will be posted on our website. Feel free to reach out and contact staff if you have specific questions as it relates to the Township and its finances.

Where the Money Comes From
The Township’s major operating revenues are real estate tax and earned income tax. Other tax revenue includes real estate transfer tax, local services tax and business privilege tax. The balance of operating revenue is comprised of other revenue which consists of licenses and permits, charges for services, fines, interest, recreation fees and other non-tax revenue.

The General Fund revenues are projected to increase from $14,662,900 in the 2019 budget to $15,160,190 in 2020 – an increase of 3.39%. This is due to projected increases in earned income tax and business privilege tax. The Township’s general purpose millage rate is currently 4.4 or $440 per every $100,000 of assessed value and the Fire Fund is 0.6 or $60 per $100,000 of assessed value.

Where the Money Goes by Program
The projected operating expenditures are budgeted to increase from $14,943,149 in the 2019 budget to $15,441,675 in the 2020 budget. This is an increase of $498,535 or 3.3%. The increase is primarily due to the increase in personnel costs, including wages set by collective bargaining agreements for Teamsters and Police and health care costs which increased from 2019.

The largest functional areas of the Township by expenditure are Public Safety which includes Police, Ambulance and Public Works. These areas represent a total of 68% of the Operating Budget.
MUHLENBERG TOWNSHIP FIRE & RESCUE

Muhlenberg Township is currently facilitating a merger between Goodwill Fire Company (Company 10) and Temple Fire Company (Company 11) to form what will become Muhlenberg Township Fire & Rescue (Company 66). The membership of both agencies has worked diligently to come together to build one of the best first responder agencies that Berks County has to offer. We would like to stress that the membership of the current companies will become one with the merger. All of the membership, other than the Fire Chief, are volunteer members striving to protect their community to the best of their ability and is performed with the utmost pride and respect for the community and the residents that we serve.

The administration of the department, per the department governing By Laws, will be overseen by the Muhlenberg Township Fire & Rescue Board of Directors. The Board oversees the operations and budgetary concerns of the department. The Board consists of seven members; the Fire Chief, two department representatives, two elected Commissioners from Muhlenberg Township and two individuals appointed by Muhlenberg Township who are leaders within the local business, civic and/or emergency services community.

Muhlenberg Township Fire & Rescue will be functioning as a fire company within the township and will be meeting regularly as set forth by the department By Laws. The officers within the structure of the fire company will be as follows; President, Vice President, Recording Secretary and Treasurer. All other command structure officers will be appointed by the Fire Chief in coordination with the membership of the Board of Directors. Command structure of the department operationally consists of the Fire Chief, Deputy Chiefs, Captains and Lieutenants. All command officers have the responsibilities associated with being the officer in charge of a scene at a critical incident. The officers also have many other functional duties that surround the everyday operations of the department.

The department has a total of three fire stations:

Fire Department Headquarters – 4963 Kutztown Rd. Temple, PA 19560

Station 1 – 115 Madison Avenue Reading, PA 19605

Station 2 – 810 Tuckerton Road Reading, PA 19605

The department resources consist of a total of 4 Engines (Pumpers), 1 Aerial Truck (Ladder), 2 Rescue Trucks, 1 Brush Unit, 7 Command Vehicles, 2 Utility Units, 1 all-terrain utility vehicle and 1 large scale spill trailer. The level of responses of the department range from; Residential/Commercial Fire Alarms, Motor Vehicle Accidents with Injuries and/or Entrapment, Technical Rescue, Fires – Structures, Rubbish, Brush, Odors, Gas Leaks, Carbon Monoxide Incidents, Smoke Conditions, EMS Response and Mutual/Automatic
Aid for emergencies of the same in surrounding Municipalities. The department is certified to provide Quick Response Services for EMS related incidents meeting the criteria set forth by the department guidelines for response. A QRS unit is a non-transporting level of EMS. A fire department agency providing QRS uses certified providers to respond to calls for EMS and provide EMS to patients before an ambulance arrives. Once, the ambulance crew arrive on the scene the agencies will work as a team to provide the necessary care to the patient. The department’s average annual responses have climbed consistently over the past 3 years, with the companies eclipsing 900 responses for 2019.

Funding for the operations of the department are provided by the funds collected through the Muhlenberg Township Fire Tax. Annually the fire tax is set at .6 mils. The tax provides the majority of the funding for the operating budget of the department, which is set at $678,150.00 annually. Funding is also supplemented by the use of state provided funds through Grants and the Volunteer Firemen’s Relief Association. The department does apply for Federal funding available on an annual basis as well. In 2019 the department received a Federal Grant to purchase a new fire hose, the grant total amount was $80,555.00. The department budget provides funding for part time drivers, 2 positions daily Monday through Friday. Drivers are not provided on Holidays or Weekends and the normal operating hours in which drivers are provided are from 8AM to 8PM. Firefighter incentive monies will continue for volunteers that regularly respond to calls.

Other areas that are funded by the annual budget is the replacement of equipment and/or apparatus as needed, training, building maintenance, station and operational supplies, contracted services, fire turnout gear, apparatus and vehicle maintenance, technology and infrastructure. Firemen’s Relief is available to supplement some of the costs associated with the annual operational budget. Relief funds can be used to purchase equipment exclusively used by the volunteers in the actions of their duties. This can range from a Thermal Imaging Camera to a Command Vehicle and its associated costs. If the equipment being provided is being assigned to a career staff member, the funds cannot be provided by Firemen’s Relief to provide for those necessities.

We would like to thank the men and women of the Goodwill & Temple Fire Companies for their tireless dedication and professionalism performed in their daily operations to serve the citizens and visitors of Muhlenberg Township. Without these dedicated responders the department would not be able to sustain the level of response to our citizens in regards to their emergency needs on a daily basis. Without the memberships and townships willingness to facilitate the merger process, the merger would not be possible. The townships target date for the merger of the companies to be fully functional as Muhlenberg Township Fire & Rescue is targeted for April, 2020.

Please feel free to contact Fire Chief Moyer at lmoyer@muhlenbergtwp.com with any inquiries regarding these topics or any other fire department emergency services provided within Muhlenberg Township.
It may not seem like it, but winter is almost over and spring is upon us. The signs of the change in seasons is visible already in the form of perennial bulbs poking through mulch beds and early blooming foliage growing buds ready to sprout in the coming warmer weather. In case you didn’t get to some of your lawn and landscape maintenance in the fall before it got too cold, or if you are new to landscape maintenance here is a simple checklist of maintenance items you may want to consider tackling before summer sets in:

- **Cleanup windblown sticks and leaves**
- **Clear mulch beds and shrubs of gathered leaves**
- **Cut back perennials before they emerge and divide to fill in empty spaces in beds**
- **Apply a pre-emergent to flower beds and continue to reapply throughout the year**
- **Trim back any broken or dead branches**
- **Spot seed bare lawn areas with quality seed**
- **Apply crabgrass pre-emergent and fertilizer to lawn areas**
- **Sharpen mower blades**

### Clean up windblown sticks and leaves, Clear mulch beds and shrubs of gathered leaves

Branches can clog mower chutes and dull mower blades. If leaves are left in piles in the lawn they could kill the grass growing beneath it. Leaves stuck in the branches of shrubs will look unsightly and could hinder growth.

### Cut back perennials before they emerge and divide to fill in empty spaces in beds

If you didn’t get to cut back your perennial grasses and flowers in the fall, now is a good time to get it done. You can also divide and transplant perennials to fill in voids in beds or reduce the size of the plants.

### Apply a pre-emergent to flower beds and continue to reapply throughout the year

One of the biggest flower bed struggles every year is keeping weeds at bay. Start the season with a pre-emergent weed control and reapply as the manufacturer recommends. Be careful to thoroughly read and understand the label and only apply herbicides as directed.

### Sharpen Mower Blades

It is good practice to sharpen mower blades frequently. Dull mower blades do not cut the blades of turf grass, instead the turf grass gets torn which can lead to disease and other problems. Be careful when attempting to sharpen mower blades yourself as improper balance of a blade caused by removing too much blade material can cause an imbalance and damage the mower. It is recommended that when mowing turf grass no more than 1/3 of the length of the blade of turf grass be cut at any one time. Cutting too much of the blade can stress the turf grass and lead to disease and stress of the turf grass.

Any yard waste generated from your property including woody plants, branches, and organic material can be dropped off at the Township’s yard waste collection site off of Reading Crest Avenue. Mulch, fill, and landscape stones are also made available free to residents.
**DRIFT JAM is Muhlenberg Township’s newest summer event.** This one of a kind experience for this area offers the joy of a lazy afternoon spent floating down the Schuylkill River from the Leesport Area in your kayak, canoe or tube to Jim Dietrich Park. At the end of the float you will exit at Jim Dietrich Park to enjoy a Clam Bake (*additional food will be available*) and a beverage to quench your thirst after a long afternoon on the river. There will be live music to keep the party going from 4 to 9PM. **This is an open event, you don’t need to float to enjoy the after party.** A limited amount of kayaks and canoes will be available for rental (*you will have to provide your own tube*). Registration for equipment and/or Clam Bake pre-orders will be available online at [www.muhlenbergtwp.com](http://www.muhlenbergtwp.com) from April 1st to July 3rd.
In 2020, Muhlenberg Township will begin the process of reviewing its Comprehensive Plan.

Community planning, according to the American Planning Association, is “a process that seeks to engage all members of the community to create a more prosperous, convenient, equitable, healthy, and attractive place for present and future generations.” One of the fundamental responsibilities of local government is to plan for future growth and development of the community. The guidance document that results from this planning process is the comprehensive plan.

A comprehensive plan provides a vision for the future of the community along with the steps that are needed to make that vision a reality. It is the basis for land use regulations and provides a nexus between the community’s future vision and the regulation of private property. This framework helps guide growth and change but without it, the development process would be reactive, resulting in development that is uncoordinated and costly. The comprehensive plan is a recommendatory document, providing guidance and is often written abstractly so that appointed and elected officials can utilize a variety of means to implement it.

It is important to remember that a comprehensive plan and a zoning ordinance are two separate tools that are used in conjunction with one another. A comprehensive plan acts in a guiding role and provides recommendations on how land should be utilized to meet the needs and desires of the community, whereas a zoning ordinance regulates land uses as recommended by the plan.

Planning is essential to every successful organization and local government is no different. In many communities throughout Pennsylvania, the vision for future growth and development is outlined in a Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plans are the backbone of any community planning effort and they outline challenges facing the community, identify solutions, and provide guidance to appointed and elected officials on planning-related decisions. Visit www.muhlenbergtwp.com for more information.
STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH TOWNSHIP INFORMATION

Sign up for email or text notifications from the Township. Visit www.muhlenbergtwp.com and click on the “Notify Me” button to sign up for customized notifications on events, announcements and more. Also don’t forget to download and use the GoTo Muhlenberg App for requests for service or issues that you need addressed. Links to the app can be found at www.muhlenbergtwp.com and click on “Report an Issue”.

Stay in the know! Notify Me allows you to subscribe to an unlimited number of Muhlenberg Township email lists. Receive email or text message updates regarding the information you have requested. Check out Notify Me today!

DISC GOLF
BERKS DISC GOLF CLUB
FUN LEAGUES START
MARCH 1
9:30AM
AND CONTINUE WEEKLY

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK
M.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/1920802281495320

ALL LEVELS OF PLAY ARE WELCOME
Many people operate under the assumption that concerns for personal safety apply only to someone who is away from the comfort of his or her home. A person should not take anything for granted when it comes to their safety. It is important to Take Action regarding your personal safety in all situations, including the home.

**Strangers at the Door**
Reports of strangers robbing victims who answer their door are all too prevalent in today’s headlines. Here are some steps you can take to prevent such an occurrence from happening to you or your family:

- Keep doors and windows secure at all times.
- Place a peephole in the door so you can look out and see who is on the other side.
- Do not open the door to anyone you do not know without some kind of verification of identification. If you are not satisfied with the identification – do not open the door. It is your home and you do not have to allow any access to it.
- If a stranger comes to the door and refuses to leave, advise them that you will call the police. Do not panic or argue, but be firm and state your intent confidently.
- At night, surround your house with adequate lighting. (sensor lights, floodlights, etc)
- Make sure that you properly educate your children regarding the actions they should take if a stranger comes to the door.

**Service and Delivery People**
- If possible, have all service and delivery people attend your residence by appointment or prior arrangement.
- Do not hide keys around the outside of your house for the delivery person to use while you are not home. This invites trouble.
- Do not leave valuables open to view or to a delivery person who is unattended while in your premises.
- If you do not like who you see when the delivery or service person attends – you can send them away.
- Ask for identification from any delivery or service personnel who attend your residence.
- Be sure to utilize reputable and reliable businesses for service calls. Take the time to check on references regarding any company that you plan to have perform work or service for you.

**Telephone Safety**
- Do not provide personal information to someone you do not know.
- Remember, no matter whom they say they are, you cannot visually identify a telephone caller. They could be anyone!
- If a caller refuses to identify him or herself to you – HANG UP the telephone.
- If a caller asks what number they have called, ask them what number they dialed.
- Do not divulge to anyone that you are home alone.
- Teach your children proper phone etiquette and safe telephone practices.
- If you wish to respond to telemarketing calls or surveys ask for their telephone number and offer to call them back. Never give out a credit card number over the telephone.
- Consider answering machines as useful tools for screening telephone calls.

Other Things You Should Consider
- Take all precautions regarding proper storage of firearms, toxins, medicines and all flammable materials.
- Install fire, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Do not use double cylinder deadbolts – these are not legal in residences.
- Display house address numbers on the front and back of the residence for all to see.
- Use exterior motion lighting and interior light timers.
- Display alarm permits, system stickers and Neighborhood Watch stickers in a prominent place.
- Apply the 3-foot / 7-foot rule to maintain open sight lines around your residence. Shrubs should be trimmed so they are no higher than 3 feet from the ground and tree boughs overhead should be trimmed so they are no lower than 7 feet.
- If you return home and find that it has been broken into and you suspect someone may still be inside, go to a place of safety and call 911 immediately.
- Be a good witness; watch for suspicious activity in your neighborhood and immediately report anything suspicious to the police.
- Consider a Safe Room in your house. In the unlikely event that you are home when a break-in occurs, make all attempts to get out of the home and go to a place of safety where you can immediately call 911. However, if you can not get out of the home - have a designated safe room inside your residence (ex: master bedroom). A safe room should have a strong door, a good lock and a telephone from which you can immediately call 911 for emergency police response.

RiverFest
Muhlenberg’s Food and Music Festival

Year after year RiverFest continues to grow and has become something everyone looks forward to as the unofficial end of the summer.

Mark your calendar for this years event. Festivities kick-off once again on Friday night, August 28 from 4 to 10PM IN FRONT OF THE FARMHOUSE ONLY. The trail opens up for the full event Saturday, August 29 from 10AM to 10PM and continues Sunday, August 30 from 10AM to 7PM at Jim Dietrich Park. The backdrop of the Schuylkill River will be our vista for this Food & Music Festival. We will have great music, a beer and wine garden, food vendors of a wide variety as well as artisan and home-based businesses all weekend long. Come join in the fun for the entire family along the Schuylkill River.

MUHLENBERG TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT
210 George Street
Reading, PA 19605
(610) 929-5454
www.muhlenbergtwppolice.com
As another year is completed we wanted to share some of our accomplishments during 2019.

First and foremost, there will be no water or sewer rate increase in 2020, and we continue to have the lowest rate in Berks County. Thanks to the hard work of our staff, we were able to keep our expenses within budget.

In the last quarter of the year, the Authority completed two projects to help the Township move forward and prepare for the future. The first was the completion of a new sewer pumping station located in South Temple. The original station was built in 1960 and was outdated and under-sized for the area it served.

The second project was the replacement of a pressurized sewer main in the Rivers Edge Development. Again, to prepare for future growth, the line was replaced and within budget.

The Authority has an outstanding record for water quality with both State & Federal agencies. We take this very seriously and work very hard to make sure our water is safe to drink for our customers. There are many factors which can impact our water, however, the Authority has developed a Source Water Protection Plan which locates any sources of contamination and works with these companies to make sure best practices are followed.

There are a few items that we want to remind our customers of for their protection during the months ahead.

**HOSE HAZARDS!**

Is your hose a hazard to your health?

When water flows backward through the water supply system, it is called backflow. When the water is accidently mixed with hazardous chemicals or bacteria, it could cause serious health hazards. The danger comes when a hose, any hose, is connected to a harmful substance. If the pressure in a water main drops while the hose is submerged in polluted or contaminated water, then it could be sucked back into your pipes and your drinking water. Water pressure drops can happen when firefighters battle a nearby blaze or when crews work on a main break, along with many other everyday happening.

Some harmful situations to avoid are chemical sprayers used to fertilize your grass or kill weeds. The cleaning solution used to wash your car, while leaving the end of the hose in the bucket. Even something as simple as filling your waterbed when a pressure drop occurs can cause harmful bacteria to be drawn back into your drinking water.

Here are a few helpful hints to keep your water supply safe, along with devises to prevent any backflow from happening in your home.

1) Never submerge hoses in buckets, pools, sinks, etc.
2) Do not use spray attachments on hoses.
3) Purchase and install backflow prevention devices for all outside faucets.
4) Check to see if you have any backflow prevention devices installed where the water supply enters your home.

Water and Sewer utilities are managed by the Muhlenberg Township Authority, which is a wholly separate entity from Muhlenberg Township and as such you should direct all business and questions to the Authority. Located at 2840 Kutztown Rd., Reading, PA 19605. 610.929.4709
After the holiday season; Spring project plans begin to come to mind. The process of completing a Zoning Permit Application, knowing what to expect and getting through the process can seem intimidating. The employees of the Township are here to assist the residents with making their project ideas become a reality. Don’t wait until the last minute to contact the Zoning Office, we suggest planning ahead. During the busy season the review/approval process of an application can take up to 30 days. Residents are encouraged to call the zoning officer with any questions and/or help needed to complete the application. It is important and helpful to provide as much information as possible when completing a zoning permit application. A few of the most common projects that require a zoning permit include; but not limited to, fences, sheds, pools and home additions. The first step to any project; is to determine the zoning district your property is located within, and identify the ordinances that apply to your specific project.

The information is also available on the Township website at Muhlenbergtwp.com

“ZONING PRESERVES THE CHARACTER OF A COMMUNITY. DON’T DELAY, PLAN YOUR PROJECT TODAY!”

Residents just a friendly reminder that the Township is currently enforcing the quality of life ticketing system. Please keep your sidewalks shoveled and free of ice and winter debris.

TOWNSHIP QUICK GUIDES
Home repairs and renovations add value and enjoyment to your home and property. When residents want to start a new home project they often don’t know how the process of permitting works or what to do first. The Township wants to make this and all information accessible and easy to understand for our residents. We have created the first set of a series of Township Quick Guides that summarize the permitting process for Desks, Sheds, Fences and Pools. These guides answer your common questions regarding these projects and will serve as reference materials as well as step-by-step instructions for what needs to be provided to the Township Engineering, Codes & Zoning dept. These guides are available online as well as hard copy format at the Township Building (210 George Street). We are also here to guide you in your project permitting process and can be reached at info@muhlenbergtwp.com or by calling 610-929-4727.
YARD WASTE COLLECTION SITE GRANT

In 2018 Muhlenberg Township applied for a Recycling Equipment grant through the Department of Environmental Protection and was awarded over $300,000 in equipment and improvements. One of the improvement projects that was started in 2019 was to replace all of the fencing around the Township’s Yard Waste Collection Site on Reading Crest Avenue across from the Wawa on SR 61. Along with the updated fencing an automatic gate was installed. This gate will allow residents who register with the Township to receive a key fob to access the site 24/7 to drop off their yard waste. In years past the site was open on the first and third Saturdays of the month from April through November as well as on an as needed basis for storm cleanup. The Township would regularly receive calls from residents who were unable to get to the site on its regularly scheduled dates so alternate times were made available to individuals. This new system will allow a resident who may not be available on weekends to access the site at their convenience. We anticipate having the automatic gate fully operational by April 2020.

Other improvements at the Yard Waste Collection Site will include additional mulch storage bins where material processed at the site is made available to residents for use around their properties. The Township always tries to keep a stockpile of quality double ground mulch available at the site. The grant award will also allow the Township to purchase two roll off containers for the collection of glass, plastic, paper, and bimetallic cans.

The Township will install security cameras at the Yard Waste Collection Site in conjunction with the automatic gate in case illegal dumping becomes a problem. Also included in the grant award is the purchase of a truck to haul the roll off recycling containers and to collect leaves in the Townships leaf collection program.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact our Customer Service department at 610-929-4727.
Report to the People

State Senator
Judith L. Schwank
11th Senatorial District

For five years, my staff and I have worked out of an office space on the second floor of the Muhlenberg Township Building at 210 George Street. Here we have helped constituents fill out state applications for driver’s licenses, handicapped placards, birth certificates and criminal background checks, among many other services.

Muhlenberg Township residents can be proud of this one-stop municipal government complex. I commend the Commissioners for their effort to make this long-term investment to provide local citizens with convenient access to their local government. It has worked very well. Constituents who come to the township but have a state-related problem can be easily referred upstairs to us. Likewise, when constituents come to our office with a township issue we can refer them downstairs. Part of the reason I chose to locate my district office in the township building was its ideal location on a major traffic artery and bus route and the opportunity to co-locate government services—state and local—in one place.

Working near the township has also made it easy to work together on improvement projects. Some of you have surely noticed changes on the 5th Street Highway corridor. There are new restaurants and stores opening, and improvements have been made to crosswalks and sidewalks. These efforts to improve safety, access for pedestrians, motorists and bicycles alike come from state Multimodal Transportation Grants, of which the township has received more than $1.5 million in the past couple of years.

I look forward to continuing this partnership in 2020. As always, if my office can be of assistance in helping you with any state-related program or service, please call my office at 610-929-2151. We’re here to help!
MAY 9
Muhlenberg Night at the Reading Fightin Phils Game
The Muhlenberg Parks and Rec Department is once again partnering with the Reading Fightin Phils to offer a Muhlenberg Night at First Energy Stadium. The Philadelphia Phillies were getting hot at the end of last season. Some of their young players started in Reading, PA. Mark your calendars for this year’s event to be held on Saturday, May 9th and maybe you could see some of these players in the big league by the end of the season. The Township and participating sponsors will be handing out free general admission tickets to this game. The game will start at 6:15PM against Harrisburg Senators which is an affiliate team of the Washington Nationals. As a special treat there will be postgame fireworks. Come to the Parks Office after April 24th to obtain your free general admission tickets. Let's show the Reading Fightin Phils just how much spirit Muhlenberg has by attending this game.

MAY 16
(RAIN DATE MAY 17)
Spring Flea Market
Join us for our annual Community Flea Market at the Muhlenberg High School parking lot from 8AM to 1PM to see if you can sell some of your treasures for cash. Tables are NOT provided as part of your $15/space rental fee. Set up starts at 6:30AM. Refreshments are available for purchase from local service groups so the sale of food or drinks of any kind is prohibited. The sale of weapons of any kind is prohibited on school district property. Mark your calendars now so you won’t miss out on the great deals. Pre-registration is required and payment in full is due at the time of registration. Registration begins on Thursday, March 19 at 9AM for this event and can be done online by visiting www.muhlenbergtwp.com.

MAY 25
Memorial Day Ceremony
Please join us in honoring our veterans from all military branches, especially remembering those veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedom. The Township will hold a Memorial Day ceremony at the flagpole at Jim Dietrich Park at 10AM. Students from the Muhlenberg High School will provide music and Boy Scout Troops #161 and #155 will post and retire the flags. Light refreshments will be served at the Steve Landes pavilion immediately after the program. “Our freedom is not free...Many gave all for the freedoms we have today.”

JUNE 13
Spring Fiesta
Come join us at Jim Dietrich Park on Saturday, June 13th from 11AM to 9PM for Muhlenberg Township’s Spring Fiesta. Spring Fiesta is a Music and Food festival with a Latino flair, featuring local restaurants and eater-
ies serving up an amazing variety of mouthwatering tacos & other related food items. There will be a variety of live music played throughout the day and will feature dancing, crafters, and an adult beverage area. For some additional entertainment there will be piñatas, face painting and even bull riding for those who are adventurous. The event will be capped off with a fireworks show starting around 9PM.

CHILDREN SPECIAL EVENTS

MARCH 28
Egg Scavenger Hunt
This egg hunt is not your traditional egg hunt. The hunt will begin immediately after you register between the hours of 10 and 11:30AM near the farmhouse at Jim Dietrich Park on Saturday, March 28. This is a self-paced egg hunt geared toward children 2 to 10 years of age. Each child is given a clue card that will lead them around the park to various stations where they will need to play a carnival type game to get their eggs filled with candy and toy surprises. Each child will also be able to make a simple craft inside the farmhouse. Be sure to bring a basket for your eggs and be ready to snap a picture with the Easter Bunny. Free to children that reside or attend school in Muhlenberg Township. This event will be held at the Recreation Building, 3025 River Road in the event of inclement weather.

APRIL 25
Fishing Rodeo
Come join us for the annual Muhlenberg Rotary Club’s Fishing Rodeo at Laurel Run Park on Saturday, April 25th (rain or shine). This is a great opportunity to allow your child to learn about the joy of fishing. The Club strongly encourages parents to allow the child to do the fishing on their own, but assistance is always welcomed. Registration is the day of the event by reporting to the registration table ½ hour prior to your age group’s scheduled time.

Children 4 to 5 yrs. old will fish from 8:30 to 9:10AM. Children 6 to 7 yrs. old will fish from 9:15 to 9:55AM. Children 8 to 15 years old will fish from 10 to 10:40AM. You will exchange a registration form for a free fishing permit. Registration opens at 8AM.

Rules of the Rodeo:
1) Children must be 4 years of age.
2) There is a limit of 3 fish/person and you are not to release any fish that is caught
3) Bait only, NO lures. Youth and adults are permitted to fish after the completion of the rodeo subject to PA fishing regulations.

CONCERTS

APRIL 30
Lunchtime Concert in the Park
The Sounds of Jazz will be coming from Laurel Run Park on Thursday, April 30th with a rain date of Friday, May 1st from 11:30AM to 1:30PM. The many talented students from the Muhlenberg C.E. Cole Intermediate, Middle and High Schools will be performing Jazz tunes during a Concert in the Park. Come bring your lawn chairs or blankets to watch them perform. The concert is free of charge and lunchtime food items can be purchased at the park for a reasonable rate. The park is located at 3049 River Road.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

JUNE 26, JULY 10 and 24
Summer Concert Series at Jim Dietrich Park
The Muhlenberg Arts Board presents the Summer Concert Series outside at Jim Dietrich Park. The stage will be located in front of the farmhouse with the river as the background for the band. Concerts will start at 6PM and
last until about 8:00PM with a short intermission. Bring your lawn chairs to enjoy the show. If the weather is inclement the concert will be held at Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church on the corner of Tuckerton and Stoudts Ferry Bridge Rd. You are welcome to BYOB and food to these concerts. If the event is held inside there will be no food or drinks allowed.

**This year’s lineup includes:**

**Friday, June 26**  
Manatawny Creek Ramblers

**Friday, July 10**  
Good Lovin Jam Band

**Friday, July 24**  
SlothLoveChunk

### ADDITIONAL RECREATION PROGRAMS

#### MARCH 2  
**Philadelphia Flower Show Bus Trip**

Inspired by the world’s exotic Mediterranean gardens, the 2020 Philadelphia Flower Show invites you to embrace your inner romantic and explore the allure and extraordinary plant palette of some of the world’s most captivating coastal regions. Gardens and picturesque landscapes greet groups as they enter lush groves of citrus, cypress and palms. A bigger display of flowers, plants and trees including lavender, Artemisia and sage will transport you to the everlasting sunshine of the Riviera. The bus departs at noon from the old Kmart parking lot at 3040 5th Street Highway and will leave the Flower Show at 7PM. The cost is $69/person and includes transportation and ticket into the show. Tickets can be purchased online. Please be advised there will be substantial walking involved with this bus trip.

**APRIL 8**  
**Adult Egg Hunt in the Dark**  
Calling all Adults that are young at heart! Have you felt left out over the years because you were too old to participate in an egg hunt? Well, those days are gone. Come to Laurel Run Park on Wednesday, April 8 at 8PM armed with a basket (or other container) for the Adult Egg Hunt. The twist is that you need to be prepared to hunt for those eggs in the dark. Egg will be filled with candy and other prizes. There will be golden tickets hidden in some eggs for special prizes.

**APRIL 20, JULY 6 and OCTOBER 19**  
**Muhlenberg’s Senior Group Meeting**

There are several senior groups in the Muhlenberg area. Many seniors belong to a few of these groups. We are looking to the future and wanted to start having a few meetings during the year where all clubs come together for fellowship. We are hoping to establish a foundation for a continuation of the groups through these consolidated meetings. These meetings will meet at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at the corner of Tuckerton and Stoudts Ferry Bridge Rd. from 11AM to 2PM. Each meeting will consist of an informational speaker, then lunch followed by entertainment. The cost will be $10/person and pre-registration would be required at the Township Building or online. Please don’t forget to register if you want to attend.

**The meetings are as follows:**

**April 20:** The speaker will be Dennis Damiani to speak on the Forgotten Heroes of Berks County. He will target the stories of six local veterans. The entertainment will be Boom Box Bingo with Rich Weilacher of TGBEntertainment. Listen to some great tunes from the past while playing a fun game of bingo for prizes.

**July 6:** Speaker is Mary Bach, a long-time independent consumer advocate, who now Chairs the AARP Pennsylvania Consumer Issues Task Force. As a volunteer, she is spreading AARP’s message about preventing fraud against older consumers. She will outline the most recent scams being used to swindle the unknowing consumer. The entertainment will be Barry Surran and Peggy Kurtz Keller singing some great music for all to enjoy. You might even be able to dance to a tune or two.

**MAY 29**  
**Philadelphia Phillies Baseball Game Bus Trip**

Join us on Friday, May 29th for a baseball game with the Philadelphia Phillies vs. the World Series Champions the Washington Nationals. Game time is 7:05PM. We will be
seated in section 208, rows 8-9-10-11. The cost of the trip is $80/person. The bus will leave the old Kmart parking lot (side of building) at 3:30PM and we will leave after the game’s completion. Tickets can be purchased online. Please be advised there will be substantial walking involved with this bus trip.

Don’t forget all of your trash and recycling needs can be found on the township website at www.muhlenbergtwp.com.

Garden Plots
Did you know that Muhlenberg Township has community garden plots off Route 61 behind the homes on Sheidy Avenue? Each plot is 20’ x 20’ and costs $10 to rent for the growing season (approximately March – October). Plots will be rototilled in March and will be available for planting once completed.

All spaces must be reserved by contacting the Parks Office at 610-929-4727
If you would like to advertise your company in an upcoming issue of the Muhlenberg Magazine, please email art@muhlenbergtwp.com and we will supply you with all the information you need.