



## **Borough of Portland Council Meeting Minutes February 3, 2025**

On February 3, 2025, at 7:00 PM, the Borough Council of the Borough of Portland, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, met for a regular meeting at the Portland Borough Municipal Building, 206 Division Street, Portland, Pennsylvania.

**Call to Order** – President Lance Prator called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Roll Call** – Council Members: Lance Prator, President, Stephanie Steele, Vice-President, Lisa Prator, Karen Pfeiffer and Susan Ivancich were present. Bruce Cialfi was present via telephone speaker. He was unable to attend in person due to an emergency. Patrick McHugh was absent.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to allow Bruce Cialfi to participate via phone, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer.**

**The Solicitor asked Mr. Cialfi to confirm that he could hear everyone in attendance at the meeting, and that everyone present could hear Mr. Cialfi. Mr. Cialfi and everyone present confirmed that Mr. Cialfi could hear everyone and was heard by all.**

**Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Others Present** – Mayor Heather Fischer, Borough Solicitor- Michael Gaul, Borough Engineer-Mark Bahnick and Borough Secretary/Treasurer-Lori Sliker were present. Also present- Police Chief-Todd Pysner, Hubert McHugh, Marie Stoutland, and Terry Abramson.

**Announcement of Recording** – President Prator announced that the meeting was being digitally recorded for assistance in preparation of the minutes; and asked whether anyone else, besides the Borough Secretary was recording the meeting. Mayor Heather Fischer stated that she is recording the meeting.

*Editor's note:* Recording of the meeting by Mayor Heather Fischer, Borough Council members or members of the public are for personal use only, and do not constitute official Borough action, or an official record, unless expressly authorized by specific Borough Council action.

### **Approval of the Meeting Agenda and any Amendments:**

President Prator asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. There was none requested.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to approve the agenda as posted, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

### 2025 Bangor Area Commercial and Industrial Development Authority (BACIDA) Board Appointments

Borough of East Bangor has requested that Portland Borough reappoint Laura McClain to a 5-year term (1/1/2025 – 12/31/2029) on the BACIDA Board.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to appoint Laura McClain, Borough of East Bangor, to the BACIDA Board for a 5-year term (1/1/2025 – 12/31/2029), seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**



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Borough of Roseto has requested that Portland Borough to reappoint Joseph Angeline 5-year term (1/1/2025 – 12/31/2029) on BACIDA Board.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to appoint Joseph Angeline, Borough of Roseto, to the BACIDA Board for a 5-year term (1/1/2025 – 12/31/2029), seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Action on the Meeting Minutes of January 6, 2025:** President Prator asked if there were any corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of January 6, 2025. There were none requested.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to approve January 6, 2025, Council meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Secretary/Treasurer Report:**

**The Secretary presented the January 2025 4 Financial Report for review/approval.**

Bills Presented for Payment:

Borough Operations	\$ 10,002.93
Sewer Operations	\$ 26,610.69
Garbage Operations	\$ 171.00
Estimate Payroll & Payroll Taxes, February 2025	\$ 6,300.00
Estimate WEX Sunoco Fuel, February 2025	\$ 550.00
Escrow – ABC Company (King Spry)	\$ 508.00
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 44,142.62</u></b>

Solicitor Gaul advised that the ABC Company escrow account should be noted as the “Reed Smith” escrow account instead. Councilmember Lisa Prator noted that the year is not correct on the agenda, it should reflect 2025.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to approve the January 2025 Financial Report, with the noted year correction from 2024 to 2025, as presented, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to pay the Borough bills, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Public Comment:**

Pastor Phil – Tree Trimming & Prayer – Pastor Phil was not in attendance.

Terry Abramson & Marie Stout attended the Borough Council meeting and stated that the apartment units they own should not be subject to the Borough residential dwelling unit garbage collection and billing. They believe that their properties with multiple apartment units were equivalent to hotels or motels for purposes of the Borough’s garbage collection Ordinance (159), and garbage collection and billing. Ms. Abramson also stated that the Zoning Officer had told her that her building, which is mixed use, was zoned commercial.

Solicitor Gaul began by reading the current Borough Code sections authorizing the Borough to regulate the collection of garbage in the Borough and to impose a fee. He said the Borough Code provides the Borough broad powers in regards to the matter. He then went over Borough Ordinance 159. He said the Ordinance authorized the Borough to regulate collection from residential properties, to contract with a single collector and impose a fee to pay for collection costs. The Borough Ordinance has been in place since 1972. He stated that apartment units are residential units and not hotels or motels. The Borough has always collected garbage



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from such units and collected fees from property owners for such units. Nothing has changed in the Borough's system. The fact that the property may be in a commercial zoning district, or that the Zoning Officer may have stated that a property is zoned commercial is irrelevant. Multiple residential apartments have existed in the business zoning district for years. Further, the Zoning Officer is not tasked to administer the Borough garbage collection system. Ms. Abramson advised that she was not aware of the garbage collection service to her units, and that waste management has never picked up garbage at her address; and she has been paying for private garbage collection all along. She only recently received the bill for the fourth quarter collection. She stated that collections from her residential units are not part of the Borough's contract with Sanico. Solicitor Gaul responded that that was not correct. Sanico was required to collect from all residential units in the Borough and that is the way the contract had been structured in the past, as well.

Ms. Stoutland stated that she and her husband would pay the Borough unit fees but wanted to have a dumpster at the back of the property, instead of multiple trash cans. The Solicitor said that, not only the Borough, but Sanico would have to approve that, and the property owner would have to pay the dumpster cost. President Prator will call Sanico along with Ms. Stout for some clarification regarding the Stoutland dumpster.

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Ms. Abramson's last quarter of 2024 garbage bill was \$787.50. Mayor Fischer stated if she received everything up front then you would be responsible but that had not happened. Mr. Hubert McHugh advised that he had a tenant that did not put garbage out for several years and he still paid the garbage bills.

In order to move forward, Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated that she would make a motion to forgive Ms. Abramson's fourth quarter charges but not charges moving forward. Councilmember Stephanie Steele said she wanted to preface her motion by stating to Ms. Abramson that she should have done her research regarding the Borough's fees for municipal service before she purchased and developed her property. Ms. Abramson responded that she was aware of the Borough's charges for collection of residential garbage because she had owned other properties in the Borough. Ms. Abramson said she intended to have her attorney review her responsibility for garbage fees and bring him to the next meeting.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to forgive the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 Garbage bill for Terry Abramson, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 4-2-0 (Lance & Lisa Prator - opposed); Motion Carried.**

The Council discussed sending out a welcome packet for new residents when the Borough receives a property transfer. Mayor Fischer stated she had previously worked on putting together a packet. Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer offered to work on the welcome packet.

Route I80-Route 611 Updates: none

Borough Engineer's Report - Mark Bahnick, Van Cleef  
Stormwater Grant Project – no new updates.  
Sewer Grant Project – no new updates.

Sewer Committee – Stephanie Steele

Penn Power Systems – no update – place holder until March.

Commercial and Industrial customer required connection modifications – Mark Bahnick advised he had conversations with the business regarding installing the separators; they are working on their installations.



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Reeds - Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that James P. Potter had previously cut down the reeds at the sewer plant and Mr. LaBarre advised an hourly rate between \$15-20. Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked for an hourly rate of \$18.00.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to hire James P. Potter as a part-time borough employee at \$18.00 an hour to cut down the reeds at the sewer plant, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Quote – Penn Power System (Ultra Poly)-\$1,703.76 to provide required maintenance to the generator.

Quote – Penn Power System (Bagel & Deli) – \$1,690.80 to provide required maintenance to the generator.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the Penn Power System quotes for \$1,703.76 and \$1,690.80, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Mark Bahnick left at 7:58 P.M.

**Streets Committee:**

Co-Stars Salt Contract 2025-2026- the Council reviewed the amount of salt that was ordered last year and approved 75 tons of salt for this year.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to order 75 tons of salt from Co-Stars for this 2025-2026 salt contract, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Asphalt Ramp – President Prator will check the status of the ramp removal.

Market Street – President Prator advised he received a call and an email from Patrick McHugh advising that Market Street was plowed ½ way up after the storm and that Patrick McHugh fears for the residents on that street. Mr. Hubert McHugh advised the road was only plowed and salted halfway but left the rest of the road unplowed; President Prator asked Fred to go back and do another pass. Mr. Hubert McHugh advised that when he came to the meeting no additional plowing had taken place.

Legal:

Alternative Parking Restrictions Enforcement – no update

Quality of Life Ordinance – no update

UMBT Agility Agreement – the solicitor will work on the agility agreement.

**Subdivision and Land Development (SALDO):**

RPL East, LLC Proposed Subdivision Plan -current deadline March 31, 2025.

RPL East, LLC Proposed Planned Industrial Park Plan-current deadline March 31, 2025.

President Prator will ask Mark Bahnick to obtain extensions.

Proposed Borough and Township Intermunicipal Agreement on Sewer Service. No update

**Zoning, Building and Property Management:**

Municipal Building Ramp Replacement – Councilmember Bruce Cialfi advised the lift presentation will be February 24, 2025. Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked if anyone had time to review the two grant options she sent out.

Lowe's Hometown Grant and Post Foundation Grant – Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer advised she has begun to apply online for the Post Foundation Grant. Councilmember Bruce Cialfi advised that the contractor will be



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coming out on Saturday to give an estimate for a generator which will be included with the ramp replacement; two additional contractors were contacted, and he is awaiting call backs.

Slate Hills Enterprise (SHE) – none

**Portland Borough Authority** – President Prator advised that there is a water leak on Hester Street; repairs have begun however the water will have to be turned off and once it is back on a boil alert will be issued. There is a vacant seat at the Authority if anyone would like to join.

**Fire, Safety, Police:**

Police report - Chief Pysher presented the January 2025 Police Report. The Chief also asked Council if they had any questions regarding the Ordinance regulating the vehicles, traffic and parking regulations he previously sent out. After some discussion it was determined that the Council will provide the Solicitor with what they want in the ordinance, and he will then review the Ordinance.

**Mayor's Report:** Mayor Fischer stated that scientist postings went up for interviews. Mayor Fischer asked if an officer is on duty during a snowstorm and vehicles have not been removed from the street for plowing, then can the officer have the car towed or fined? The solicitor advised the ordinance would need to be reviewed. Mayor Fischer stated they are trying to address the cars running the red lights on Rt. 611 in the Water Gap.

UMBT had a Met Ed Representative at their meeting last week to discuss power outages but there was not a lot of information, however, Met Ed advised that falling trees on private property are the cause of the power outages; they will be providing more accurate updates.

**Portland Community Events Committee:** no update

**COG:** President Prator advised that A UCC Appeals Board hearing will be held in March and the hearing is open to the public. Slate Belt COG Municipal Directory was provided.

**Sanitation Committee:**

Cardboard – Mr. Hubert McHugh advised that his cardboard was not picked up last week. Councilmember Stephanie Steele spoke to Sanico, who advised that the recycling driver has discretion not to pick up contaminated cardboard. If that occurs, the garbage truck will take it when it comes through later.

Proposed Resolution regarding Classification of Multi-Unit Apartment Buildings as Commercial Establishments for Purposes of Residential Garbage Fee – Previously discussed.

Dumpster for State Street property – Previously discussed.

T. Abramson – Previously discussed.

**Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract:**

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the insurance renewal was received and there was a 13% increase; some of the increase was due to the change in the Water Authority properties.

**Plan Slate Belt:**

Next Meeting: Thursday-February 6, 2025 @ 7:00 PM – Pen Argyl

**Slate Belt Rising:**

Next Meeting: Thursday-February 13, 2025 @ 9:00 AM – Bangor

**Personnel** – none



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**Liberty Water Gap Trail Alliance:** President Prator advised they will be meeting on February 19, 2025.

**Old Business:**

Borough Phones – no update

**New Business:**

2025 Council Members-Election an email was provided by Councilmember Stephanie Steele for the elections and she stated the information is also available on the county website. President Prator usually goes and picks up information.

**Public Comment: Non-Agenda:**

President Prator advised that an email came out that Upper Mount Bethel is still pursuing an ambulance service. Suburban has provided a second rig on standby for our area during peak hours.

Mr. Hubert McHugh asked how he can get a copy of tonight's minutes; President Prator advised that once the meeting minutes are approved at the next meeting, they are put on the website.

**Executive Session: none**

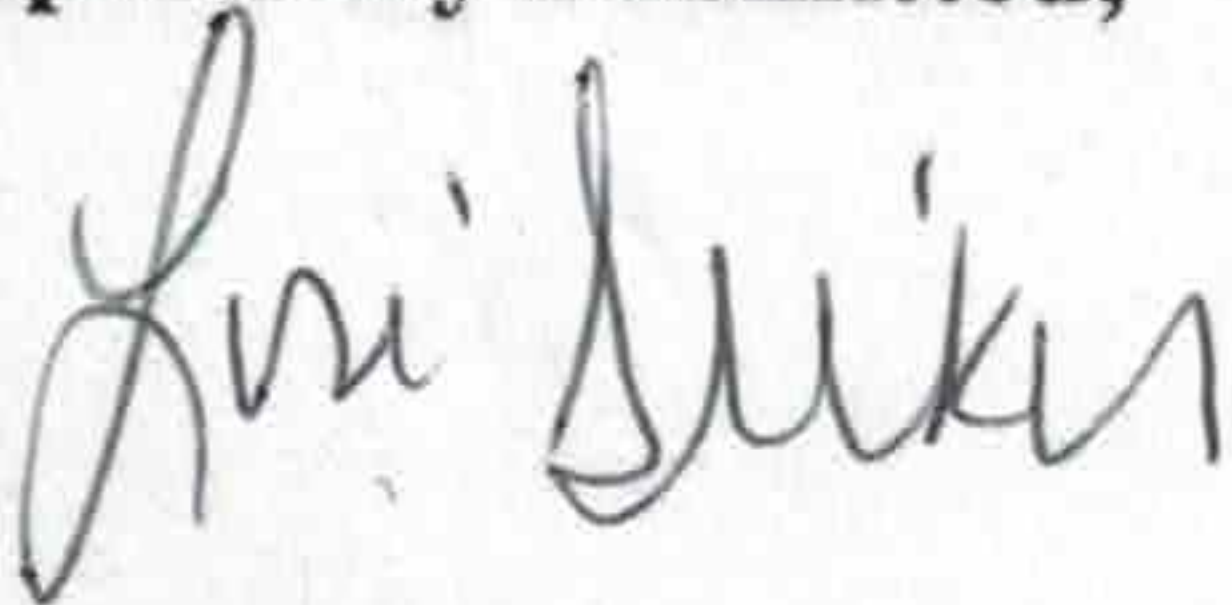
**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried**

**Reminder: Next meetings:**

**Monday, February 24, 2025**

**Monday, March 3, 2025**

**Respectfully Submitted,**



**Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary**

