



## **Borough of Portland Council Meeting Minutes April 7, 2025**

On April 7, 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 present at Roll Call: Lance Prator, President, Stephanie Steele, Vice-President, Karen Pfeiffer and Susan Ivancich were present. Lisa Prator, Bruce Cialfi, and Patrick McHugh were absent. Lisa Prator arrived at 7:30 PM, and Bruce Cialfi arrived at 8:35 PM, as noted below.

**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 Pysher, and Resident Hubert McHugh. Tara Mezzanotte arrived at 7:45 PM.

**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 tonight's 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. None of the Council members requested amendments.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the agenda as posted, seconded by Councilmember Susan Ivancich. Vote 4-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Action on the Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2025:** President Prator asked if there were any corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of March 3, 2025. None of the Council members requested changes.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve March 3, 2025, Council meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Councilmember Susan Ivancich. Vote 4-0-0; Motion Carried.**

### **Secretary/Treasurer Report:**

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

Bills Presented for Payment:

Borough Operations	\$ 25,077.70
Sewer Operations	\$ 26,407.29
Garbage Operations	\$ 17,332.00
Estimate Payroll & Payroll Taxes, March 2025	\$ 6,300.00
Estimate WEX Sunoco Fuel, March 2025	\$ 550.00
Escrow –Reed Smith (King, Spry) & Ultra Poly 3 (VanCleeef)	\$ 72.00
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>\$ 75,738.99</b>



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**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the March 2025 Financial Report, as presented, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 4-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to pay the Borough bills, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 4-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Public Comment:** None

**RPL Representative: Solicitor Ery McClain**

Attorney McClain provided the Council with an update on the RPL project and provided a copy of the layout plan/record plan for their review. Attorney McClain advised that they have been addressing some outstanding issues and that he understands there is a letter from the borough engineer that needs to be addressed. Solicitor Gaul advised that there is also a letter from his office expressing some concerns that should be reviewed. Attorney McClain advised that they are moving forward with the subdivision. Solicitor Gaul requested clarification regarding the access road and the railroad tracks. Attorney McClain advised that the road runs parallel to the tracks and because the property is in the flood plan the property will be used as egress for emergency vehicles and utilities across the property. Lot A is the Portland lot and the easement stops at that lot; there was no easement; they will extend the easement to Lot A to keep the easement open in case it is needed for emergency. President Prator asked if the IDA owns the property; Attorney McClain advised that the IDA does own the property; however, they sold it to them with an agreement that the property would be returned to RPL.

**Borough Engineer's Report** - Mark Bahnick, Van Cleef – no updates

**Sewer Committee** – Stephanie Steele

Penn Power Systems – Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated that the remote monitoring system remains on the agenda as a place holder and if the Borough would like to consider this option, an updated quote should be obtained. President Prator advised he does not recommend pursuing it at this time.

Commercial and Industrial customer required connection modifications – no changes at this time.

ABP Mechanical Contracting Quote – hot water heater - \$3,229.00 - President Prator advised that most of the cost is for the electrical work to remove the 480 volt and install the 120 volt for placement of the hot water heater.

**A motion was made by President Prator to purchase the hot water heater from ABP Mechanical Contracting \$3,229.00, pending receipt of the proof of general liability and WC insurance and the signed agreement, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 4-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Councilmember Lisa Prator arrived at 7:29 PM.

Cla-Val Co. quote \$1,846.00 – altitude valve.

**A motion was made by President Prator to approve the purchase of the Cla-Val Co altitude valve for \$1,846.00; seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Mark Bahnick left the meeting at 7:30 P.M.

**Streets Committee:**

Asphalt ramp – Delaware Avenue – President Prator advised the ramp is still in place but will be removed.



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Crack Sealing quote – AMS - \$8,167.00 – President Prator advised that they never use this amount and the company overestimates on the quotes; he will call the company and see if they can come and do an actual estimate instead of this overestimate. Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the crack sealing should be done after the street sweeping is completed.

President Prator advised that he received some information from Mr. Farleigh to cover the salt bins which will be discussed at the next meeting. In addition, Mr. Farleigh advised that to complete the manhole cover work a 3<sup>rd</sup> person would be needed in addition to equipment we currently do not have.

**Legal:**

RPL Center request for Developers Agreement regarding traffic review costs/Council approval of Developers Agreement. – Solicitor Gaul – Remove from the list/Agenda.

Alternative Parking Restrictions Enforcement – Solicitor Gaul advised that to restrict trucks from a roadway an engineering study must be completed; and deliveries have to be allowed. Mayor Fischer asked if there are grants that could be applied for to pay for the engineering study. Chief Pysher will speak to Tires-R-Us to see if the trucks are making deliveries and if anything can be worked out to keep the trucks off that road.

Quality of Life Ordinance – no update

UMBT Agility Agreement – awaiting solicitor's response from Upper Mount Bethel Township.

Reed Smith Professional Services Agreement - Solicitor Gaul – Completed-Remove from the list/Agenda.

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

RPL East, LLC Proposed Subdivision Plan -current deadline July 1, 2025.

RPL East, LLC Proposed Planned Industrial Park Plan-current deadline July 1, 2025.

Proposed Borough and Township Intermunicipal Agreement on Sewer Service -tabled

**Zoning, Building and Property Management:**

Municipal Building Ramp Replacement – Councilmember Bruce Cialfi is looking for alternate contractor to do an estimate on the ramp; the previous contractor did not follow through.

Slate Hills Enterprise (SHE) – none

**Portland Borough Authority** – President Prator

President Prator thanked the Borough for the letter of recommendation for the antenna/meter project. Once the antenna is installed, all the water meter information can be obtained from the office; no more driving around to get the information.

**Fire, Safety, Police:**

Police report - Chief Pysher reviewed his March 2025 Police Report with the Council members.

2-day Taser Training – May 1 & 2, 2025, Easton Police Dept \$895.00 – the council discussed the terms that would be associated with the approval of this training. The certification is every two years.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve Officer Dean to attend the 2-day Taser Training class for \$895.00 on May 1 & 2, 2025, seconded by Councilmember Susan Ivancich.

The Council continued to discuss the terms of Officer Dean's attendance. By consensus of Borough Council the prior motion was withdrawn and the following new motion made.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele, to approve Officer Dean to attend the 2-day Taser Training class for \$895.00 and that he signs an agreement indicating if he resigns from Portland,**



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**he will be obligated to train Portland Officers within that two-year span, seconded by Councilmember Susan Ivancich. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Chief Pysher stated that the police cars contain a lot off electronic equipment and during the winter months the garage they are stored in is very cold and some of the equipment does not work correctly; he would like Council to consider insulating the garage.

**Mayor's Report:** Mayor Fischer requested that the Council live stream their meetings; she stated that the Borough has the necessary equipment, and she will set it up and make sure it is working. Other Boroughs and Townships live stream their meeting, and she asked for a motion from the Council. There are various platforms that could be used such as Facebook, YouTube or Zoom; the Borough has a current Zoom account. Mayor Fischer offered to research the best platform and to set it up and train the secretary on how to use it.

Solicitor Gaul advised that someone needs to be designated to monitor the streaming and potentially place the online audience in a waiting room during Executive Session. Solicitor Gaul asked whether the remote audience would be allowed to participate in the meeting or simply observe the live-stream broadcast. Solicitor Gaul said that the Borough should be careful about giving the impression that the public was entitled to access through a Borough-provided remote connection, because a problem could arise under the Sunshine Act if the Borough's remote connection failed for some reason.

Mayor Fisher requested a motion to live stream in the next 30 days, test the process at the April 28, 2025, council meeting. Councilmember Stephanie Steele requested a plan be submitted before a motion is made to implement the live streaming. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated, for completeness, that the Borough's of Bangor and Pen Argyl did not live-stream their meetings.

Mayor Fischer again stated that she is requesting a motion that in the next 30 days the best platform and process for having the equipment is running and training takes place for the next meeting to live stream the meetings.

Councilmember Lisa Prator advised that she would rather wait to see if it works at the next meeting before advertising the live streamed meetings. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated she would prefer it be tested at the next meeting prior to making a final decision.

Solicitor Gaul advised that the Mayor's requested motion was impractical and too vague because it did not state who would be responsible for completing the task.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Susan Ivancich to make a plan to live stream the Council meeting at the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting and the secretary to be trained prior to the meeting. President Prator asked for a second and there was none – motion died for lack of second.**

**Ordinance Committee:** no report

**Portland Community Events Committee:**

Councilmember Lisa Prator advised that the Egg Hunt will be on April 19<sup>th</sup> noon at the Ball Field. It has been advertised on the website, and she has an Easter Bunny. Because there will be no fire company easter bunny this year she will set up a picture area that day. Could Mr. Farleigh bring the Easter stuff downstairs on the 11<sup>th</sup>? Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that if more candy is needed, purchase it and give the receipt to the secretary for reimbursement out of the Community Events account.



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**COG:** President Prator advised that he attended a meeting last week and the minutes were distributed. The COG was asked to mediate for the EMS discussions, and they have refused to do so – there are two townships that do not belong to the COG. The COG purchased an overseas container to keep their equipment stored in.

**Community Development & Grant Committee:**

Post Foundation Grant – generator - Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the grant application has been submitted.

LSA Grant – Borough Truck & Police Car – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised the LSA Grant for the pickup truck and police car submission dates have not been advertised. The truck specifications should be determined, and cost estimates will be needed prior to grant submission.

**Sanitation Committee:** President Prator stated that cleanup day is April 26<sup>th</sup> and if you haven't signed up already and wish to help, please do so. Sanico is donating gloves/vests and a dumpster.

**Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract:** none

**Plan Slate Belt:**

Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Intermunicipal Cooperative Implementation Agreement -Comment deadline May 1, 2025. President Prator advised that at the last meeting Upper Mount Bethel Township wanted to take pieces and use them for their own comprehensive plan, without entering an Implementation Agreement with the other Slate Belt Plan municipalities; this has been a 5-year process and this would be unacceptable. A comprehensive plan is just a plan. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated that the advisory committee is made up of each municipality; Solicitor Gaul stated the plan does not indicate who makes up the committee, and if it is each SB municipality, that would seem impractical. If Upper Mount Bethel Township refuses to sign the Implementation Agreement or participate in Slate Belt Plan coordination in the future, then it really may diminish the benefit to Portland. For example, Portland may not have the right to review and comment on developments of regional significance in the Township if the Township does not enter into the Implementation Agreement, or possibly allocate shared zoning uses with the Township if the Township does not coordinate its zoning regulations with the Borough. This would undermine the intended Slate Belt Plan to Portland because UMBT, as Portland's neighbor, would be the municipality with whom the Borough would most likely want to coordinate land use regulations. If UMBT had not been a part of the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. Portland would not have been permitted to participate in the Plan project.

Councilmember Bruce Cialfi arrived at 8:35 pm.

**Slate Belt Rising:** Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised April 26<sup>th</sup> is the Slate Belt litter cleanup day and the meeting place for Portland will be 10:00 AM -2:00 PM - Park and Walk. The kayaks were put back out on display Friday. One kayak was left out over the winter to see how it weathered. It needs a touchup and if we can do a grant, we may get it touched up.

**Personnel:**

Part time seasonal employee – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she is seeking a parttime seasonal employee to start cleaning up downtown.

**Liberty Water Gap Trail Alliance:**

President Prator advised the next meeting will be in Portland on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Route I80-Route 611 Updates-**Tara Mezzanotte, Liaison

Ms. Mezzanotte advised she did not have any updates for Route I80 or Route 611.



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Resolution 2025-06 – RESOLUTION DECLARING SUPPORT FOR INCLUSION OF DELAWARE WATER GAP RECREATION AREA LOCAL COMMUNITIES AS A GATEWAY COMMUNITY PILOT PROGRAM UNDER THE EXPLORE ACT: REQUESTING SUPPORT FOR SUCH INCLUSION; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS.

Solicitor Gaul presented proposed written Resolution 2025-06. Copies of the Resolution were circulated prior to the Council members, and copies were made available at the meeting. Solicitor Gaul advised he made some minor changes to the draft resolution that Ms. Mezzanotte had supplied. He also stated that while the EXPLORE ACT was a lengthy document, the section pertinent to the Resolution were few in number and did not contain a lot of detail. Solicitor Gaul read aloud the numbered paragraphs of the proposed resolution.

**A motion was made by Karen Pfeiffer to adopt Resolution 2025-06, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Ms. Mezzanotte asked if she could take the resolution to Northampton County; the Council advised her she could.

**Old Business:**

Borough Phones – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she will send out a proposal for a quote.

**New Business:**

2024 Kirk Summa Audit-draft

Authorization to sign and return audit documents and pay Kirk Summa \$10,000.00 for the 2024 audit.

Solicitor Gaul advised that prior to signing and returning the Management letter where the letter states there are no liens on borough assets - an asterisk should be included stating \*PennVest has liens on sewer revenues\*.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to have the secretary sign and return the audit documents with the asterisk comment added; seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the 2024 draft audit, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to pay Kirk Summa \$10,000.00 for the 2024 audit, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Public Comment Non-Agenda:**

Resident Hubert McHugh asked if at the one-way light on Route 611- are bicycles allowed on that part of the road; Mayor Fischer advised that they are not allowed only motorized vehicles. There are 60 old tires behind the building at the Tire garage; the secretary advised that he has a permit for a trailer for tire storage. Chief Pysner will ask the owner what his plans are for the tires.

**Executive Session:**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to enter Executive Session at 9:03 P.M. to discuss legal matters/personnel with the Solicitor, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**



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**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to return from Executive Session at 9:11 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

President Prator asked if there was any action to be taken out of Executive Session. None

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried**

**Reminder: Next meetings:                      Monday, April 28, 2025  
   Monday, May 5, 2025**

**Respectfully Submitted,**



**Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary**

