



## **Borough of Portland Council Meeting Notes May 5, 2025**

On May 5, 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, and Susan Ivancich were present. Patrick McHugh was absent. Councilmember Bruce Cialfi and Karen Pfeiffer will be late.

**Others Present** – Mayor Heather Fischer, Borough Engineer-Mark Bahnick and Borough Secretary/Treasurer-Lori Sliker were present. Also, present- Police Chief-Todd Pysher, Tara Mezzanotte and Hubert McHugh. Borough Solicitor-Michael Gaul, Councilmember Bruce Cialfi arrived at 7:02 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 is recording tonight's meeting and will be posting it on Facebook after-ward.

*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.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to approve the agenda as posted, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Action on the Meeting Minutes of April 7, 2025:** President Prator asked if there were any corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of "April 7, 2025. No changes requested.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to approve April 7, 2025, Council meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

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

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

Bills Presented for Payment:

Borough Operations	\$ 23,158.16
Sewer Operations	\$ 28,292.98
Garbage Operations	\$ 1,179.00
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 (VanCleaf)	\$ 7,881.00
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>\$ 67,361.14</b>



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**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the April 2025 Financial Report, as presented, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to pay the Borough bills, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Public Comment:** None

Councilmember Lisa Prator asked the Solicitor why the digital recording statement has to be in the minutes and read at each meeting if a recording can be posted on Facebook. Solicitor Gaul advised that the public could record the meeting and post it on social media as unofficial. The only official Borough recording is the secretary's recording. It is a courtesy to advise the Council that they are recording the meeting.

**Route I80-Route 611 Updates:**

Ms. Mezzanotte advised that NJDOT I 80 rock fall and retaining wall project were supposed to schedule meetings in April and May; however, they did not do so. If there is nothing scheduled by June 1<sup>st</sup> she will inquire. Ms. Mezzanotte advised that they have received support for the Explore Act; a meeting is scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup>, at Northampton County if anyone would like to join. An unsolicited letter was sent from Monroe County to the Department of Interior. President Prator will let her know if he can attend.

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

**Sewer Committee** – Stephanie Steele

Penn Power Systems – Councilmember Stephanie Steele will check with Craig LaBarre regarding this quote. Commercial and Industrial customer required connection modifications – making progress, will keep the Council updated.

Sewer Inspection Agreement – Sewer Solicitor Boell sent out an email for Council to review which added language to the agreement regarding the customers tracking and report of disposal requirements. This will be placed on the June 2<sup>nd</sup> agenda.

Amended Sewer Ordinance – to be placed on the June 2<sup>nd</sup> agenda.

Lamtec Letter – Mr. Bahnick advised Lamtec resubmitted their plans and modules last week.

Sewer Shut-offs: - President Prator advised one account remains unpaid.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to shut off account #323-507 Northampton Street, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Craig LaBarre reported the sewer tested for high phosphorus chemical (should be around 9 and it is now at 22.); she put a message on Facebook. In addition, she advised they are installing the new membranes.

**Streets Committee:**

Asphalt ramp Delaware Avenue –President Prator will check with Ms. Abramson.

President Prator advised that there are several projects to consider, and he would like Council input. The Councilmembers reviewed the projects; Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated that the garage ceiling can wait until fall/winter and crack sealing can be done in the fall; the Salt bin should be considered to protect the salt.

Crack Sealing quote – AMS -\$8,167.00

Salt bin material in house estimated for materials - \$8,956.00

Garage ceiling in house estimated for materials - \$2,113.00



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Mayor Fischer advised that Congressman Mackenzie reached out to her asking what the Borough needed, and she advised that the borough building needs a new lift / ramp as it is currently not A.D.A. complaint. The Mayor will find out more information this week for Council. Councilmember Lisa Prator asked if the decision can wait until next month when we have more information from the Mayor. These will be placed on the June 2<sup>nd</sup> agenda.

Mark Bahnick left at 7:25 PM.

**Legal:**

Alternative Parking Restrictions Enforcement – Solicitor Gaul advised that certain regulations require traffic studies and that he will be reviewing the ordinances.

Quality of Life Ordinance – no update

UMBT Agility Agreement for sharing Municipal Equipment and Personnel Resolution authorizing agreement. Solicitor Gaul advised he received comments from township and that the township received the agreement that included the scheduled equipment was removed and other incidental changes. The township requested the insurance requirements be added to the agreement. Solicitor Gaul prepared and distributed Resolution #2025-07 for consideration.

**RESOLUTION #2025-07**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to approve Resolution #2025-07, authorizing an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement for Sharing Municipal Equipment and Personnel, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**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. President Prator asked the secretary to email Mr. Bahnick for 6-month extensions.

Proposed Borough and Township Intermunicipal Agreement on Sewer Service. – nothing to report.

**Zoning, Building and Property Management:**

Municipal Building Ramp Replacement – Councilmember Bruce Cialfi has a call into another vendor; he also received some lift recommendations. Solicitor Gaul advised that he could also work through Co-Stars.

Slate Hills Enterprise (SHE) – none

Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer arrived at 7:33 P.M.

**Portland Borough Authority** – President Prator - nothing to report.

**Fire, Safety, Police:**

Police report - Chief Pysher presented the April 2025 Police Report. Chief Pysher provided the Council with information regarding the Blue Envelope Program autism awareness; the blue envelope program is for drivers with autism spectrum disorder; when the envelope is given to an officer the interaction is handled differently.

**Mayor's Report:**

Mayor Fischer advised that Congressman McKenzie reached out to her to see what Portland needed; she responded that an A.D.A. compliant ramp is needed. The RAMP was moved forward to the next step in the grant process; Mayor Fischer will have more information at the next meeting. The Mayor also advised she did a declaration for “Day of Prayer”. The Mayor advised that they are waiting for the grant funding for the Community Garden.



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Live Streaming the Council meetings – Mayor Fischer asked the Council to progress to live streaming the meeting and post the audio recordings on the website. Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer advised that a couple of council members came to the Borough and checked the equipment; the Borough's camera works, that the laptop in the Council Chambers would be utilized; she also advised that she spoke to Borough of Stroudsburg who's manager takes care of everything, Upper Mount Bethel hired someone to operate the system during meetings at \$50.00/hour; she asked if they would train someone here with our equipment and a one-time fee. The system would not be interactive with online participants and if the platform went down the Borough would not be held responsible for losing the connection. The Council expressed concerns about the live streaming process and executive session. Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer stated that at the April 7, 2025, meeting, Mayor Fischer had offered to set up and operate the equipment.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to have Mayor Fischer live stream the council meetings, set up and operate the equipment (computer & camera) and utilize the existing zoom account.** Discussions continued. Solicitor Gaul asked the Council to review what would be needed to live stream the meeting and describe what would need to be done during the live streaming.

Solicitor Gaul advised a committee should meet and develop a policy for live streaming the meetings. Mayor Fischer advised that once the camera is set up and the zoom account is linked, she can watch from her computer at her seat to make sure it is operating correctly. When the executive session is held Mayor Fischer advised she can turn off the camera, mute the audio and put the Borough logo up or the online participants can be placed in a waiting room or disconnect the connection and then reconnect until they are brought back after executive session ends. Mayor advised that the audio recordings were previously discussed to post on the website but that never took place. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated that resolution 2014-1 and 2024-14 address the digital minutes/files. Solicitor Gaul advised that 2014-1 was rescinded and replaced with 2024-14. Councilmember Lisa Prator advised she is more comfortable with putting the audio recording on the official borough website as she has concerns about possible fraud. In addition, there should be a statement on the website regarding the official borough recording. Solicitor Gaul will provide some information to include on the website. Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that posting the audio recording was previously discussed but no decision was made; she is concerned about long-term storage and asked the secretary to reach out to Borked PC and ask what they would suggest. Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer stated if the Council agrees, to have the secretary post April 7, April 24 and May 5, 2025, meeting recordings on the website.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to post the audio recordings starting with the April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting for 60 days on the Borough Website, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-1-0 (Lance Prator- opposed); Motion Carried.**

President Prator inquired if the website should state "recordings are not the official record of the Borough Council meeting". Solicitor Gaul advised that the secretary minutes are the official record and other recording by individuals are not borough records and are not subject to the Sunshine Act. Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that when the audience addresses Council, they must state their name and address.

**Ordinance Committee:**

Ordinance regulating the vehicles, traffic and parking regulations. –no update.

**Portland Community Events Committee:** no update.

**COG:** President Prator

President Prator advised they are waiting to hear from the grant application for the light stands.



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**Community Development & Grant Committee:**

Post Foundation Grant – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the application is being reviewed, she provided them with some additional information as requested.

LSA Grant – Borough Truck & Police Car – no update

**Sanitation Committee:** no update

**Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract:** no update

**Plan Slate Belt:** President Prator advised that Upper Mount Bethel Township sent a letter withdrawing from Plan Slate Belt.

**Slate Belt Rising:** Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised the next meeting is Thursday and the proposals and award scholarships will be discussed for the year. Power washing will be taking place on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Personnel –**

Randi Snook - Councilmember Stephanie Steele spoke with Ms. Snook about returning to work from May-October; she would like to increase Ms. Snook to \$12.00 per hour - 10-15 hours per week.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to approve Randi Snook seasonal employment (May 1-October 31) at \$12.00 per hour at not more than 15 hours per week, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Liberty Water Gap Trail Alliance:**

Ms. Cindy Fish advised the next meeting will be on May 21, 2025, at the Upper Mount Bethel Township Park Pavilion.

**Old Business:**

Street sweeping – tabled

**New Business:**

EMS Slate Belt Community Meeting 3-20-25 PowerPoint presentation – President Prator advised that a proposal was submitted by Suburban and Centronia to charge the Borough residents ½ mill increase which will be approximately \$14.00 per person in Portland; however, that will not increase response times.

Peer Assistant Program Guidelines & Letter of intent was received from the Governor's office. This is just a study and there is no cost for this portion. President Prator asked the secretary to reach out to the Township Manager and ask that he come to the June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting to speak about the letter of intent.

**Correspondence:**

The Borough received a letter from Reed Smith dated April 24, 2025, advising that they are rescinding the escrow for Reed Smith and require any remaining funds of the escrow to be returned within 30 days.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to return the remaining escrow funds to Reed Smith with an accounting of disbursements once the Borough receives final billing, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**



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**Public Comment Non-Agenda:**

Mr. Hubert McHugh asked if everyone would have to state their name when speaking to the council every time someone in the audience speaks. Solicitor Gaul advised yes and to comply with the Sunshine Act he will research what other information will need to be stated, as we are trying to avoid confusion on the audio recording.

Ms. Cindy Fish asked if anonymous comments can be made in the minutes. Solicitor Gaul advised he would have to investigate this question.

## Executive Session:

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to enter the Executive Session at 8:51 P.M. to discuss legal matters / personnel with the Solicitor, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to return from Executive Session at 9:06 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.**

President Prator asked if there was any action to be taken out of Executive Session. President Prator advised that the street sweeper will be cancelled this week and rescheduled for mid-June; it will be posted on Facebook. Welcome Packet was distributed at the last meeting, please review. Memorial Day parade will start in Portland at 11:00 AM on Monday.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried**

**Reminder: Next meetings:** **Monday, June 2, 2025**  
**Monday, June 23, 2025**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

Fre. Sicker

**Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary**

