



**Borough of Portland Council Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2025**

On June 2, 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, Bruce Cialfi, Karen Pfeiffer and Susan Ivancich were present. Patrick McHugh was absent.

Others Present – Mayor Heather Fischer, Borough Engineer-Mark Bahnick and Borough Secretary/Treasurer-Lori Sliker were present. Also, present- Borough Solicitor-Michael Gaul, Nicholas Graciano, UMBT Manager, Kay Bucci, George & Panagiota Triantafyllas and Hubert McHugh.

Announcement of Recording – President Prator announced that the Borough secretary was digitally recording the meeting 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 was recording tonight’s meeting and intended to post the audio on her personal website after 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 proposed amendments to the agenda. None were stated.

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

Action on the Meeting Minutes of May 5, 2025: President Prator asked if there were any corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of May 5, 2025. No changes requested.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve May 5, 2025, Council meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Secretary/Treasurer Report:

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

Bills Presented for Payment:

Borough Operations	\$ 15,411.51
Sewer Operations	\$ 23,670.66
Garbage Operations	\$ 9,979.00
Estimate Payroll & Payroll Taxes, June 2025	\$ 6,300.00
Estimate WEX Sunoco Fuel, June 2025	\$ 550.00
Escrow –RPL (King, Spry & VanCleaf) Reed Smith (FLB & King, Spry)	\$ 1,388.20
<u>TOTAL</u>	\$ 57,298.97

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A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to approve the May 2025 Financial Report, as presented, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to pay the Borough bills, as presented, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Public Comment: None

President Prator reported that Terry Abramson, who was not present, is requesting the late fees for her sewer bill be excused. Ms. Abramson advised that she mailed her sewer payment through the mail; however, the Borough did not receive it. Council asked if the original payment was received and if so what was the postmark date and has Ms. Abramson ever been late before; this will be discussed again upon receipt of the information. President Prator reported that he spoke to Ms. Abramson regarding the removal of her ramp; Ms. Abramson advised that her contractor has not been able to come back and remove it yet, but she asked if the Borough could just remove it. Councilmember Lisa Prator asked if the Borough did the removal who would be responsible for the cost; President Prator stated that the cost would be billed to Ms. Abramson.

At the Council's request Mr. Nicholas Graziano, Upper Mount Bethel Township Manager, was present to explain the letter of intent to DCED about the regional ambulance study and answer any questions. President Prator reviewed the questions that the Council had regarding the letter of intent and if by doing this letter would that commit the Borough to a mill increase. Mr. Graziano advised that the study does not cost any of the townships/boroughs anything. It would be done by a state appointed independent contractor who would work to solve the ongoing ambulance issues that the 9 Borough/Townships are experiencing. Mr. Graziano explained that there is no commitment and no financial responsibility to participate in the study, and it will provide a lot of valuable information. Solicitor Gaul reviewed a copy of the paperwork that Upper Mount Bethel Township completed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steel to approve the letter of intent to DCED provided it included a notation that the letter does not commit the Borough to participate in any proposed regional organization or any future financial responsibility for such service; seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Chief James Potter explained that EMS services have been financially struggling for some time; and we have been unable to get an ambulance service to commit to our area. They have been working on this issue for four years and have not been able to resolve it; therefore, by doing this study the state will tell us what we need. Response time is the problem not the quality of care. Part of the issue is that private insurance companies are billed for the ambulance, but the patient receives the payment not the ambulance company. Councilmember Lisa Prator asked if anyone has reached out to the private insurance companies to ask why this happens.

Route I80-Route 611 Updates:

President Prator advised that he and Ms. Mezzanotte attended a meeting for the Explore Act; the resolution was brought to Northampton County Council, and it was passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Bahnick advised that they have been working with FLB, Sewer Solicitor and will provide an update at the next meeting.

Sewer Committee – Stephanie Steele

Commercial and Industrial customer required connection modifications—Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked what course of action is to be taken regarding DABCO's non-compliance with the oil separator installation. Mr. Bahnick stated there is a provision in the Borough's ordinance to terminate the sewer service, which would consist of putting a plug in the sewer line. Mr. Bahnick asked what the current process is to shut

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off sewer-water service and would the same process take place to shut off sewer service by placing a plug in the line. Councilmember Stephanie Steele described the shut-off process and advised the same process would be followed prior to placing the sewer plug; the notification process should be started, and this can be reviewed at the next meeting.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to start the notification process to terminate the sewer service to DABCO for non-compliance, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Portland Contractor letter – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the letter was in the packet for review and to discuss this during executive session.

Sewer Inspection Agreement – none

Amended Sewer Ordinance – none

Sewer Shut-offs: - President Prator advised that 3 accounts out of seven that have not paid their sewer bill.

Account #15-201 Ruth Street Account #15-600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Account #142-203 Ruth Street

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to shut off account #15-201 Ruth Street, Account #15-600 Pennsylvania Avenue and Account #142-203 Ruth Street for non-payment, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Criag LaBarre advised that the sewer was tested and the phosphorus chemical should be around 9 and it is now at 22. Councilmember Stephanie Steele put a message on Facebook. Mr. LaBarre advised they are installing the membranes.

Streets Committee:

Asphalt ramp Delaware Avenue –President Prator. Previously discussed.

President Prator reviewed the quotes for consideration.

Crack Sealing quote – AMS -\$8,167.00 – Roads covered under liquid fuels will be reviewed and have crack sealing process applied.

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

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

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to approve the crack sealing quote from AMS for \$8,167.00 subject to proof of insurance, and use of PennDOT approved certified materials, and to pay the cost with liquid fuels funds for specific roadways covered, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Calfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.

Councilmember Lisa Prator will look for grants for either the roads or the salt bin.

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that prior to contacting AMS that Kevin O'Donnell, DOT representative, should be contacted as he has to start the process and assign a job ticket otherwise Liquid Fuels will not allow payment.

Mark Bahnick left the meeting at 7:47 pm

Legal:

Ordinance regulating the vehicles, traffic and parking regulations - Solicitor Gaul advised that he has reviewed the ordinance and provided Borough Council a redline document with suggested revisions and comments for review; Council will have some decisions to make. President Prator, Mayor Heather Fischer, Chief Pysher,

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Councilmember Bruce Cialfi and Solicitor Gaul will meet and review the ordinance. President Prator asked how electric bikes fit into the ordinance; Solicitor Gaul advised that these types of things will have to be reviewed.

Subdivision and Land Development (SALDO):

RPL East, LLC Proposed Subdivision Plan -current deadline July 1, 2025. The Borough received an offer of time extension through October 1, 2025, for Borough review and decision on the Plan.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to accept the RPL East, LLC's offer of a time extension through October 1, 2025, for Borough review and decision on the Proposed Subdivision Plan; seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

RPL East, LLC Proposed Planned Industrial Park Plan-current deadline July 1, 2025. The Borough received an offer of time extension through October 1, 2025, for Borough review and decision on the Plan.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to accept the RPL East, LLC's offer of a time extension through October 1, 2025, for Borough review and decision on the Proposed Planned Industrial Park Plan; seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Solicitor Gaul was asked whether the Borough Council could refuse the time extensions in the future. Solicitor briefly explained the process and that if the Borough did not accept the extension, Council will have to make a decision within the current deadline, or the Plans would be deemed approved; these extensions are given by the developer.

Proposed Borough and Township Intermunicipal Agreement on Sewer Service – none.

Zoning, Building and Property Management:

Municipal Building Ramp Replacement – Councilmember Bruce Cialfi advised he received a quote from Garaventa submitted a 9-page quote for \$43,000. Received 3 quotes: 1st quote 44,900. – 2nd quote \$18,000. – 3rd quote - \$43,000. Modular structure would be approximately \$150,000; this did not include electrical, water etc. Councilmember Bruce Cialfi will confirm that the prices received were the Co-Stars prices.

Slate Hills Enterprise (SHE) – none

Portland Borough Authority – President Prator

President Prator advised that the Authority received a \$25,000 grant for the antenna project. This project will allow for an almost immediate leak detection and DEP reporting. Chief Potter advised that the Authority is looking to get a short-bed truck, and the Borough is looking for a truck; they would be willing to sell the truck to the Borough; 2017 – 20,000 miles and kept in a garage. The Authority is months away from getting their new truck and will give the Borough the first option.

Fire, Safety, Police:

Police report – Mayor Fischer advised the May 2025 Police Report was in the packet.
PCCD compliance monitoring program audit met state requirements – passed.

Mayor's Report:

Live Streaming - remove from agenda

Mayor Fischer was notified by Congressman Mackenzie that Portland's grant request was moved to the next review step.

Community garden – received \$5,500. Held in the events account until a scientist is signed on.

Ordinance Committee: none

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Portland Community Events Committee: None

COG: President Prator

President Prator advised that the next meeting is in two weeks; he will be attending the PA COG convention which is sponsored by Local Government Academy. President Prator contacted Brian-Community Action Lehigh Valley to pursue someone to pain the COG storage container. He also advised they did not receive the LSA Grant for the Light stands. President Prator sat out at touch-a-truck with the street sweeper and a lot of people didn't know what COG was.

Community Development & Grant Committee:

Post Foundation Grant – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the Borough received a check today for the generator project in the amount of \$33,350.00. Councilmember Stephanie Steele will send the quotes/information to Solicitor Gaul for review.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to open an escrow account for the Post Foundation grant money in the amount of \$33,350.00, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.

LSA Grant – Borough Truck & Police Car – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the LSA Grants will open September 2025.

Sanitation Committee:

President Prator advised that there was a windstorm, and the recycling was all over the place, Sanico picked up the mess made by the wind. Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that a letter was sent to 300 State Street regarding the trash piling up.

Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract: none

Plan Slate Belt:

President Prator stated the next meeting is Thursday.

Slate Belt Rising:

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Brian reached out to municipalities to apply for the Lehigh Valley Chamber Grant; she applied for river rock to be used in the flower beds downtown. \$4,000. With 50% match – Portland needs to come up with \$1,000. The deadline was May 31, 2025.

A motion was made by President Lance Prator to ratify the letter to Lehigh Valley Chamber Grant through Slate Belt Rising for river rock, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried

Personnel –

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Randi Snook has resumed work and would like to know if there are any additional hours. Last year the council had approved some hours to work with the Secretary to inventory the documents upstairs and would they consider some additional hours. Council asked how many hours she has worked since coming back; the secretary will email Council with her hours worked.

Liberty Water Gap Trail Alliance:

President Prator advised that the next meeting is June 18th, 9-10 am; the Liberty Water Gap Trail is a bike trail and currently bikes are not supposed to go through the one lane road; this continues to be a problem.

Old Business: none

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New Business:

The Borough Office (secretary only) will be closed June 4th through June 12th.

Kay Bucci asked if the Borough had received compensation from the auto accident downtown. President Prator advised the Borough had applied for compensation; however, we have not heard anything. Solicitor Gaul explained that if the liability or amount is disputed between insurance companies, the claim may need to go through arbitration.

Public Comment Non-Agenda:

George & Panagiota Triantafyllas-owners of 303 state street-there have been two accidents that hit the building one of which was a tractor trailer. When the vehicles come off the bridge, they take the corner too fast, and the tenants are very uncomfortable living there. President Prator advised they will be speaking to PennDot on another matter, and they will speak to them about this too. Chief Potter stated there had previously been a guide rail on the corner.

Kay Bucci advised she attended a meeting in January about the fire siren and wanted to see about discontinuing the use of the siren. Chief Potter stated they have no intention of taking the fire siren out of service; he is aware there have been a lot of calls lately. The siren is to alert the firemen of a call and the public of an emergency. Ms. Bucci stated that for years there was no siren; the siren signal is very long and is affecting her health. President Prator requested the noise ordinance be sent to the Council members. Ms. Bucci stated that now the fire company receives 2 mills from the taxes and the books need to be reviewed to see where the money goes. Chief Potter advised the tax money is used for insurance and truck payment. Solicitor Gaul stated emergency sirens are normally exempt from ordinances; if Council requests, he will review the ordinance.

No action was taken by Council on Ms. Bucci's request/comments.

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to enter Executive Session at 8:59 P.M. to discuss legal matters/personnel with the Solicitor, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

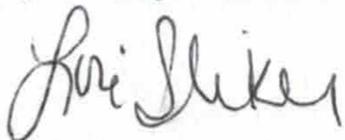
A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to return from Executive Session at 9:24 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

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

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

**Reminder: Next meetings: Monday, June 23, 2025
 Monday, July 7, 2025**

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary

