



**Borough of Portland Council Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2025**

On July 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: Lance Prator, President, Stephanie Steele, Vice-President, Lisa Prator, Bruce Cialfi, and Karen Pfeiffer were present. Susan Ivancich and Patrick McHugh were absent.

Others Present – Borough Engineer-Mark Bahnick and Borough Secretary/Treasurer-Lori Sliker were present. Also, present- Borough Solicitor-Michael Gaul, Chief James Potter (at 7:05 PM) and Chief Todd Pysner (at 7:35 PM). Mayor Heather Fischer was absent.

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. No one else 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. None were requested.

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

Action on the Meeting Minutes of June 2, 2025: President Prator asked if there were any corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of June 2, 2025. No changes were requested.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve June 2, 2025, Council meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

Secretary/Treasurer Report:

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

Bills Presented for Payment:

Borough Operations	\$ 12,545.63
Sewer Operations	\$ 62,685.77
Garbage Operations	\$ 8,382.78
Estimate Payroll & Payroll Taxes, July 2025	\$ 6,300.00
Estimate WEX Sunoco Fuel, July 2025	\$ 550.00
Escrow –Lamtec/UMBT (FLB)	\$ 416.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	\$ 90,880.17

Transfer \$50,000.00 from the Real Estate Fund to the General Fund/Sewer Fund to cover expenses. Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked if the \$20,000.00 Sewer loan was included in the transfer; the

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secretary advised that the amount included the sewer loan. The sewer loan is to allow the Borough to cover expenses for grant-funded projects until reimbursement is received. Solicitor Gaul advised the council to make separate motions for the transfers.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the June 2025 Financial Report, as presented, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

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

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to approve the transfer of \$30,000.00 from the Real Estate Fund to the General Fund to cover expenses, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Ciafli. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Lisa Prator to approve the transfer of \$20,000.00 as a loan from Real Estate Fund to Sewer Fund, to cover expenses for grant-funded projects until reimbursement is received, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

Solicitor Gaul reported that a Lehigh Valley newspaper recently had an article about another municipal official's alleged theft of municipal funds. Such theft can occur regardless of the size of the municipality and that oversight of the borough's finances is very important.

Public Comment:

Chief Potter advised that he reached out to the Call Center regarding the fire sirens and those Borough/Townships still utilizing the siren in their towns. There are currently 20 towns that still utilize the siren. In addition, he clarified that for the Fire Company to keep their door open and provide services to the Borough it costs \$867.00 per week, their insurance is \$30,957.00/year and the Borough pays \$7,000.00 and the truck payment is \$41,000. and the Borough pays 20,000.00/year. President Prator advised that at the last meeting he reviewed the noise ordinance and specifically read the section that states the fire siren is exempt from the ordinance. Chief Potter stated that the com systems are doing updates tonight and if there is a call the siren will sound during the night.

Route I80-Route 611 Updates: Tara Mezzanotte – no updates

President Prator advised that Ms. Mezzanotte is doing a great job; she was advised that rocks had fallen on Rt. 611; she took pictures and video, and they were removed.

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

Sewer Committee – Stephanie Steele

Commercial and Industrial customer required connection modifications – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Mr. Bahnick continues to work on these connections.

Sewer Inspection Agreement – no update

Amended Sewer Ordinance – no update

Abramson late fees-Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Ms. Abramson paid her sewer bill in full.

Transfer \$20,000.00 from General Fund to Sewer Fund loan to cover sewer expenses. Previously discussed.

Sewer Shut-offs: - Acct#/Address Acct#248-533 Delaware Ave / Acct#246-406 Pennsylvania Avenue – accounts have been paid - NO SHUT OFF's. Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer stated she is looking at the aging report to see who is overdue and would like some clarification of the report/process. Councilmember Stephanie Steele explained some of the information and stated she would go over the report with her.

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Mr. Bahnick distributed a letter to the Council for review regarding Lamtec; he noted that #5 had been added to install the oil separator device on the outside of the building. Solicitor Gaul asked if the letter had been reviewed by the sewer solicitor; Mr. Bahnick advised he has reviewed it.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the President to sign the Lamtec Letter, seconded by Bruce Cialfi. Solicitor Gaul advised that the letter is not on the agenda and no action can be taken. Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked if the agenda can be amended; Solicitor Gaul advised that the reasons the agenda can be amended are very limited and this does not qualify. Councilmember Stephanie Steele and Bruce Cialfi rescinded their motion. The letter will be placed on the next agenda for approval to sign.

Streets Committee:

Asphalt ramp Delaware Avenue –President Prator advised he spoke to Ms. Abramson and she wants to know if Portland can just remove the ramp; the Council discussed removal of the ramp and decided that Councilmember Stephanie Steele will contact Hallett and ask for a quote to remove the ramp. Solicitor Gaul advised that the Borough would need an escrow and commitment from Ms. Abramson. Upon receipt of the quote the council will discuss the options and write a letter to Ms. Abramson advising her of her options.

Salt bin material in house estimated materials - \$8,956.00-Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the salt bin storage is an approved Liquid Fuels expenditure. The secretary spoke to the Borough's PennDOT representative on July 3, 2025, regarding the salt bin. Mr. O'Donnell advised that if it does not meet the threshold, our maintenance staff are performing the work, we need to keep track of our bills and submit them with our report; he does not have to open a project, and the lumber does not need to be certified. The secretary will email Mr. O'Donnell to confirm the information and ask for clarification if needed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve the salt bin project for approximately \$8,956.00 to be paid for by the Liquid Fuels Account as an in-house project, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

Garage ceiling in house estimated materials - \$2,113.00-can be done later in the year-leave on agenda.

Mark Bahnick left at 7:30 pm

Legal:

Ordinance regulating the vehicles, traffic and parking regulations - Solicitor Gaul advised a meeting with the council members will be scheduled now that everyone is back from vacation. Solicitor Gaul stated his comments regarding the Plan Slate Belt RFP's can be shared; he also reviewed the generator information, and sent an email advising on the next steps for that procurement. .

Subdivision and Land Development (SALDO):

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

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

Proposed Borough & Township I.A. on sewer service – keep on agenda

Zoning, Building and Property Management:

Municipal Building Ramp Replacement – Councilmember Bruce Cialfi advised he called about the KFC grant opportunity, and he will be addressing it on Wednesday. This will be for upgrades to the municipal building; if approved it could result in \$10,000. Councilmember Lisa Prator asked if anyone has given any more consideration to utilizing the back door for ADA access; Councilmember Bruce Cialfi will contact the chair

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lift company to see what the approximate cost would be. The council discussed that it may be an easier project than the ramp and a mailbox can be placed out back by the door for payments.
Slate Hills Enterprise (SHE) – none

Portland Borough Authority

President Prator advised the Authority is pursuing other grants for their Antenna project.
Pick-up Truck – The Authority is looking for a truck and if the Borough is interested in the 2017 pick-up truck the trade in value is \$18,500-\$20,000. 14,800 miles-including the snowplow.
Chief Pyscher arrived at 7:35 PM

Fire, Safety, Police:

Police report – Chief Pyscher provided the Council with the June Police report. Chief Pyscher advised he received several emails/complaints regarding truck traffic on Main Street. President Prator stated a meeting for the ordinance needs to be scheduled; President Prator asked Chief Pyscher to stay for Executive Session.

Mayor's Report: none

Ordinance Committee: none

Chief Potter asked the Council to review Ordinance 190 (Burning Ordinance) as he has received 7 calls for illegal burning. The secretary will email ordinance #190 out to Council and this ordinance on the next agenda.

Portland Community Events Committee:

President Prator stated July 27 is free ice cream at the Refiner Ministry's – this is not a Portland event.

COG: President Prator advised they are still working on finding someone to paint the storage container.

Community Development & Grant Committee:

LSA Grant – Borough Truck & Police Car – apply for the LSA Grant when it opens – if the Borough buys the Authority truck only the police car will be applied for.
Post Foundation Grant Generator-Solicitor Gaul reviewed the generator proposals that the Borough has received. The proposals do not contain the same project specifications. The final project specification will determine the estimated costs, and the required procurement process; several council members will work on providing a general specification and ask for new quotes.

Sanitation Committee:

300 State Street Garbage complaint – President Prator advised that a certified letter was sent out to the owner with no response. Solicitor Gaul advised that the problem would likely be covered under the zoning, property maintenance and/or nuisance ordinances. The consensus of the Borough Council was that the matter should be referred to the zoning officer and notice be given to the owner; the secretary will email the zoning officer and provide a copy of the certified letter that was sent to the owner.

Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract:

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the Budget Committee has met and started going over next year's budget; she asked if money that is not being used under one line object can be moved and used under another line object. Solicitor Gaul advised that his understanding is that budget transfers or supplemental appropriations can be made after a certain amount of time such that the Borough can move money from one budget category to another, but that the Borough Code would need to be reviewed in order to confirm that, and also the required process. President Prator thanked the Budget Committee for meeting early to start the 2026 budget.

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Plan Slate Belt:

President Prator advised he forwarded the Solicitors RFP comments for review, but he has not heard anything back.

Slate Belt Rising:

Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated she is picking up the repaired kayak for downtown; Brian was on vacation but upon his return she will be speaking to him about the River Rock project.

Personnel – discuss in executive session.

Liberty Water Gap Trail Alliance:

President Prator advised the next meeting is on the 16th @ 9:00 AM in Portland.

Old Business:

Real Estate waive penalty request – 310 Main Street-\$105.80- President Prator briefly reviewed the request the taxpayer did not pay the bill timely because he misplaced the tax bill at home. Solicitor Gaul stated that, assuming for the moment that the Borough Council considered the misplacement of the bill a reasonable excuse for late payment, he expected that the penalties cannot be waived due to the Uniformity Clause. The secretary will advise the homeowner of this information.

Borough Code Services E-mail–Council stated they do not need this service -remove from agenda.
Illegal Street Parking/Signage complaint–some of the street signs cannot be seen because tree branches are hanging over them; they need to be trimmed back; Council requested Fred make a list of trees that need to be trimmed back.

New Business:

Borough Truck – Keep on agenda – previously discussed. Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer asked if we would be selling the old truck – the consensus was yes.

Borough Tractor – will be discussed in executive session.

Ball Field – President Prator advised that Upper Mount Bethel Township contacted him and asked about the ballfield; another agility agreement would be needed if they want to use the ball field. Councilmember Stephaine Steele stated that there were a lot of ground bees and ants in the field; if UMBT want to talk about the ballfield President Prator invited them to come to a meeting.

Alarm Code Discussion-Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she wants everyone to have their own 4-digit code to deactivate the alarm system. Please provide your 4-digit code to either the secretary or Stephanie.

Badge - \$30-50.00 – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised this will be discussed in executive session for possible reimbursement.

Public Comment Non-Agenda: none

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to enter Executive Session at 8:08 P.M. to discuss legal matters /personnel with the Solicitor, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to return from Executive Session at 8:58 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

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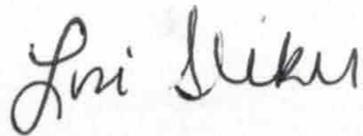
President Prator asked if there was any action to be taken out of Executive Session.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to send a letter to Officer Darryl Hatter, certified mail, to return his borough keys, badge and any other borough property, seconded by President Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

**Reminder: Next meetings: Monday, July 28, 2025
 Monday, August 4, 2025**

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary

