



Borough of Portland Council Meeting Minutes September 22, 2025

On September 22, 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, Lisa Prator, Karen Pfeiffer, Susan Ivancich and Bruce Cialfi were present. Patrick McHugh was absent.

Others Present –Mark Bahnick, VanCleaf Engineering, and Borough Secretary/Treasurer - Lori Sliker were present. Also, present-Tara Mezzanotte, Sewer Solicitor Steve Boell (via speaker phone), Sewer Solicitor Samuel Morgan (FLB). Robert Teel, L. McDonald, Craig LaBarre, and Fire Chief James Potter.

Mayor Heather Fischer and Borough Solicitor Michael Gaul were 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 is recording tonight's meeting. Mr. McDonald will be recording Mr. Teel's remarks.

Editor's note: Recording of the meeting by the Mayor, 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. Councilmember Stephanie Steele requested to amend the agenda to include approval of 2 resolutions 2025-09 & 2025-10 for LSA grant (Police car) to allow the Borough to take expedited action (and in this case does not represent an additional cost to the taxpayers), and to correct the date for the minutes from June 23, 2025, to July 28, 2025.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve September 22, 2025, agenda with the stated amendments, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Action on the Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2025: President Prator asked if there were any changes to the July 28, 2025, Council meeting minutes. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated that on page 3 under Sewer the word psoriasis should be removed and replaced with phosphorus.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve July 28, 2025, Council meeting minutes with the correction, seconded by President Lance Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Public Comment: Mr. Teel advised he is the current UMBT Planning Commission Chairman; he is concerned about the UMBT Act 537. His concern is the residents on Rt. 611; they need clean water and sewer. They are currently interviewing engineering companies and wanted to see if it would be feasible for Portland to provide water and sewer. UMBT's Act 537 must be passed before anything can be addressed. President Prator stated that 6 years ago this was addressed and no one in Portland had a problem with it; he asked the solicitor if an escrow should be set up prior with UMBT. The Solicitor advised that yes, an escrow should be set up to cover costs. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated an agreement should also be set up once they are ready. Mr. Teel stated the Board of Supervisors asked the Planning Commission to take on the Act 537 plan.

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Borough Engineers Report: Mark Bahnick, VanCleef Engineer

Mr. Bahnick provided Council with the following updates:

COVID Grant Project–Stormwater – will discuss in executive session.

COVID Grant Project–Sewer

Lamtec Letter – Mr. Bahnick advised that the VanCleef-Lamtec planning module letter/initial paperwork needs sections signed by the Council President and returned to VanCleef.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to authorize the Council President to sign the Lamtec paperwork and return them to VanCleef Engineering, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Planning Modules -DEP Review/DRBC Review: no update

Portland-UMBT Sewer Service Intermunicipal Agreement- in the process–law firms are working together; Sewer Solicitor Morgan advised that FLB owes comments to UMBT and Lamtec.

Legal: Steve Boell, Sewer Solicitor

FLB Memo – will be discussed during executive session.

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to enter Executive Session at 7:17 P.M. to discuss legal matters, possible ramifications and actions with the Solicitor, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to return from Executive Session at 7:58 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.

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to authorize FLB to get three estimates from appraisers for council review, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Sewer Committee:

Commercial & Industrial customer –no update

EDMR – The EDMR report was provided in the packet for Councils review.

Sewer Inspection Agreement – part of the ordinance

Amended Sewer Ordinance – part of the ordinance

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve FLB to advertise the amended sewer ordinance in the Pocono record for possible adoption on October 6th Council Meeting, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Proposed Borough and Township Intermunicipal Agreement on Sewer Service-pending.

Mr. LaBarre advised he needs a replacement for a mixer; the broken mixer can be rebuilt for approximately \$5400.00, and a new one is approximately \$9000+. Discussion only; Mr. LaBarre stated a rebuilt mixer will be fine – place on October 6th agenda.

Mark Bahnick, Samuel Morgan, Craig LaBarre and James Potter - left at 8:04 PM

Route 180-Route 611 Updates:

Liaison for National Park Service Gateway community meetings - Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that at a meeting last week a liaison from each community will be needed; can be an elected official or a resident.

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Streets Committee:

2 manhole repair-Marke & Sons quote \$11,500.00 – President Prator advised a quote to repair the 2 manhole covers was received for \$11,500.00; the manholes continue to be damaged when plowing.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to approve the Marke & Sons quote for \$11,500.00 to complete 2 manhole cover repairs, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Garage Ceiling in-house estimates \$2,113.00-pending–keep on the agenda.

Bucket Truck/Van – DRJTBC bid updates – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised Council that the Truck they wanted to bid on went for \$7,000.00; she spoke to President Prator who authorized her to bid on the Van; Portland was able to get the van at the opening bid of \$1,200.00.

MuniciBid-Borough truck & tractor–President Prator advised that the borough truck and tractor could be placed on MuniciBid to be sold–need information and a price, can also set a reserve amount.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to place the truck and tractor on Municibid once the descriptions, price and reserve bids are put together, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote: 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Building Committee:

Ramp/lift updates–American Lift–Councilmember Bruce Cialfi asked the status of consolidating the lift with the generator; Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that they are still looking at the buildings electric that may need to be upgraded.

Generator Quotes–Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she spoke to Tina (Keller Zoning) based on the building and when the Borough occupied it the building may need to be upgraded; she provided 3 electrician names for quotes. President Prator will compare the two generator quotes.

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

Community Development & Grant Committee:

Municipal Building ADA Complaint Lift & Generator-previously discussed.

Amended Agenda–Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the resolutions are required to submit with the previously approved LSA grant applications. (The amendment is necessary to allow the Borough to take expedited action (and in this case does not represent an additional cost to the taxpayers).

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to adopt Resolution #2025-09-Resolution for Northampton/Lehigh County Local Share Assessment Grant for \$110,425.86, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to adopt Resolution #2025-10-Resolution for Monroe County Local Share Assessment Grant for \$110,425.86, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Councilmember Stephanie Steele researched the LSA statewide grant for the police vehicle; it can also be used for sidewalks repair. The sidewalk in front of Refiner's Church needs to be repaired/replaced and non-profits can apply; both sides of Main Street need to be done down to Route 611; applications are \$100.00 each. Put on next meeting's agenda for consideration.

Portland Community Events Committee: none

Founders Day–October 18, 2025 – Councilmember Bruce Cialfi advised that Mayor Fischer went to look at games for Founders Day. President Prator asked if the events committee asked to use the train station property, he was not aware if they did; if not it may have to be held in the Park & Walk area. Founder's Day is posted on the Mayor's webpage.

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Fire, Safety & Police Committee:

Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that she spoke to Chief Pysher who wanted to suggest a trailer for the speed signs; they could be moved around. Tractor Supply has a 4x4 open new trailer for \$499.00. The signs would have to be permanently attached, and the trailer would have to be secured. Portland currently has an open trailer which can be considered; look to see how it can be mounted.

Ordinance Update Committee:

Ordinance 190 – Burning- President Prator advised that the Fire Company doesn't have any revisions for the Ordinance.

Personnel, Policy and Procedure Committee:

Downtown restroom–Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that Tami Chipko submitted a resume to clean the downtown restroom.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to hire Tami Chipko to clean the downtown restroom at \$20.00/hours for 2 hours per week and during special events, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Sanitation Committee: none

COG: Councilmember Bruce Cialfi will attend the next meeting. President Prator advised that the dimes to dollars fund raising event is taking off; Pen Argyl School District will be painting the shipping container.

Plan Slate Belt: Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that at a meeting she spoke to Becky regarding Plan Slate Belt, and she would like to schedule a meeting including our Solicitor; before a council meeting. Don sent out an email stating that UMBT went to Northampton County for funding for their own comprehensive plan. LVPC can attend the October 27th meeting (6 or 7pm) and have Solicitor attend either in person or by zoom.

Slate Belt Rising: Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that they are working on the river rock downtown. President Prator stated the park and ride looks very nice; the bricks are a trip hazard.

Liberty water Gap Trail Alliance: President Prator advised they met last week at UMBT; it is a bike route that no bikes are allowed on. There is no designated PennDOT representative right now.

Old Business:

Public restroom signage–President Prator advised that there are 4 signs needed (across bridge/river – front of train station – 2 restroom parking lot) 8 ½ x 11–larger signs at the restroom parking lot itself. President Prator will stop at Spectrum Signs to see what they have available at the end of the week.

PBA pick-up truck counteroffer accepted. President Prator advised that the PBA accepted the counteroffer of \$27,000.00. President Prator asked if some of the truck can be paid for out of Liquid Fuels account? The secretary will contact Kevin O'Donnell, PennDOT to find out about using Liquid Fuels funds. President Prator abstained from voting at the Authority and at the Borough.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to pay Portland Borough Authority \$27,000.00 for the pick-up truck and to also pay the transfer fees, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-1; (President Prator abstained) Motion Carried.

Tree at Park & Ride–Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked if we should get an estimate to remove the tree at the Park & Ride it is pushing up the blocks; President Prator asked if there is anything in the Park & Ride ordinance about the trees. Tabled.

New Business:

2025 salt contract – President Prator advised we ordered 75 tons of salt but have not taken delivery: waiting for the salt bin to be completed.

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Portland to Minsi Lake Trail-President Prator advised a Trail Feasibility Study brochure was in the packet for review. Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she had attended all the meetings.

New Bethany- President Prator advised he received a letter requesting a \$500.00 donation for homeless shelters in the Bethlehem area-no action at this time.

Public Comment: Non-Agenda: None

Executive Session: NONE

A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to Adjourn the meeting at 9:07 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried

**Reminder: Next meetings: Monday, October 6, 2025
Monday, October 27, 2025**

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary

