



**Borough of Portland Council Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2025**

On October 27, 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, Karen Pfeiffer, Susan Ivancich and Bruce Cialfi were present. Patrick McHugh was absent. Lisa Prator arrived at 7:52 PM.

Others Present –Mark Bahnick, VanCleaf Engineering, Michael Gaul, Borough Solicitor and Borough Secretary/Treasurer - Lori Sliker were present. Also, present-Tara Mezzanotte, Craig LaBarre, David Cohen, Becky Bradley-LVPC, John Thornton, Erich Schock-FLB. 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 is recording tonight's meeting. None of the attendees stated they were recording tonight's meeting.

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. No amendments were requested.

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to approve October 27, 2025, agenda as posted, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

Fritzpatrick Lentz & Bubba Representation of LVPC; Waiver of Conflict – President Lance Prator stated that Solicitor Gaul had recommended that FLB's request for waiver of conflict of interest be placed on the Council agenda because the President did not have authority to take such action alone. Solicitor Gaul stated that FLB did not appear to have an actual conflict of interest in advising the LVPC, but that if FLB desired formal action from the Borough on such a matter, then the Council should take action, not just the President.

A motion by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to waive any conflict that Erich Schock-from Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba may have in representing Lehigh Valley Planning Commission at tonight's meeting, seconded by President Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

Action on the Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2025: President Prator asked if there were any changes to the September 22, 2025, Council meeting minutes. No corrections were requested.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve September 22, 2025, Council meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

Public Comment: none

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PBA appointment: President Prator stated that James Thornton submitted a letter of interest for the Portland Borough Authority and asked Council if they had any questions for Mr. Thornton. Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked if he is taking the vacant seat; President Prator stated yes. Solicitor Gaul advised Mr. Thornton that he will have to complete and submit a statement of financial disclosure form yearly.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to appoint James Thornton to the Portland Borough Authority Board for the remainder of the vacant seat (December 31, 2028), seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote: 4-0-1 (Lance Prator abstained); Motion Carried.

Plan Slat Belt

Plan Slate Belt general discussion

Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Intermunicipal Cooperation Implementation Agreement
RFP/Selection for Consultant Services Agreement

Becky Bradley, David Cohen and Erich Schock on behalf of LVPC attended the meeting to address Solicitor Gaul's prior comments to the Borough in regards to the impact of Upper Mount Bethel's apparent withdrawal from the Plan Slate Belt project on the Borough's participation in the Cooperation Implementation Agreement. Solicitor Gaul stated that his understanding was the UMBT did not need to be a party to the Cooperation Implementation Agreement, but that UMBT's non-participation may undermine the benefits of the Agreement to Portland. Whether to enter into the agreement was a policy decision for the Borough Council and not a legal decision. The LVPC representatives agreed with that assessment.

Solicitor Gaul next stated that, if in fact UMBT rescinded the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan as the Township's comprehensive plan, then it could raise a question as to whether Portland could participate in the Plan because Portland was not contiguous with the other municipalities in the Plan. The Borough has not been formally notified of the specific actions taken by UMBT, and the information it has received is ambiguous as to the status of the Plan in UMBT. Becky Bradley, LVPC, stated that she has been trying to contact UMBT about its specific actions but has not received a response. She stated that Upper Mount Bethel Township has not submitted anything to them in writing stating they are not participating; she also advised that now that they have the grant for the mapping it may be to their benefit. Attorney Schock stated the Borough and 4 of the other Plan Slate Belt municipalities share the same school district, which may create a sufficient nexus even if UMBT rescinds the Multi-Municipal Plan.

Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked if this would affect the sewer request from Lamtec; Solicitor Gaul stated this will not affect them.

Resolution #2025-11-Resolution adopting the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Intermunicipal Cooperative Implementation Agreement

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to approve Resolution #2025-11 - Resolution adopting the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Intermunicipal Cooperative Implementation Agreement, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.

Route I80-Route 611 Updates:

Ms. Mezzanotte provided a brief overview of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Expansion, including segments of the river that were not previously designated, and updated the Council that the entire river is now eligible. In 2000, there were gaps that were not studied. Ms. Mezzanotte provided a draft resolution for Council's review and consideration. Jacoby Creek is eligible for special waters due to being a cold water fishery. RPL would like its area to be excluded from the designation and has asked Upper Mount Bethel to exclude the RPL area from the Township's supporting resolution. In light of RPL's desires, Mezzanotte's draft resolution for the Borough excludes the area south of Jacoby Creek from the Borough's supporting resolution.

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Previously the Borough had considered supporting a designation of the entire Borough area. Solicitor Gaul stated that the draft resolution erroneously stated that the Borough approved the LDWSR Memorandum of Understanding. The Borough has never approved the Memorandum of Understanding. Councilmember Stephanie Steele asked about the small creeks in the Borough; Ms. Mezzanotte stated that "free flow" is required to be eligible. Council requested Solicitor Gaul to review/prepare the resolution for next meeting. Tara Mezzanotte left at 7:51 PM.

Borough Engineers Report: Mark Bahnick, VanCleaf Engineer

Mr. Bahnick provided Council with the following updates:

COVID Grant Project–Stormwater: the screens will be completed in November and delivered in December.

COVID Grant Project–Sewer – easements are on-going through Sewer Solicitor-FLB.

Portland-UMBT Sewer Service Intermunicipal Agreement

Wastewater Treatment Plant effluent line – Craig LaBarre advised that on the northern side of RPL property the line is broken with 63' of pipe full of mud, rocks and debris. Councilmember Stephanie Steele took a picture of the plan so the Council can review it. Craig LaBarre stated they should have someone dive in the river to locate the concrete top and see if it is broken; James Steele is willing to dive and try to locate the top of the concrete and the vertical pipe this week to see what is going on. Several options are being considered; but more information is required to address the problem and possible solutions. Mr. Bahnick advised that the current pipe discharges into the river under the water; they need to know if DEP will allow the line to be discharged into the river above the water. The area needs to be stabilized with rock, straw and seed to keep it from eroding; Craig LaBarre will provide the Borough Secretary with a quote for the materials to be addressed at the next meeting.

Lamtec Planning Module–currently in the 30-day public comment period.

Mr. Bahnick received a call from Russ (Portland Borough Authority engineer) regarding Dunkin Donuts/Auto repair location. The Water Authority has two water lines-valves that must be relocated before PennDOT starts the scheduled paving. Now that the auto repair shop has decided what they are doing the Borough can move forward with the Dunkin Donuts improvements to the driveway.

Lisa Prator arrived at 7:52 PM.

Sewer Committee:

Commercial & Industrial customer–Mr. Bahnick advised that the Bridge Commission installed the equipment and now it needs to be inspected.

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

Discuss & Update on WWTP effluent line from River Rd to Delaware River discharge –previously discussed.

Waste Water Treatment Plant – Lightbulbs need to be changed in the WWTP building-Fred to change.

Conduit line from the WWTP building to the treatment tank for exterior power-the area needs to be dug out.

Craig LaBarre asked Mr. Bahnick to write to David Kovach and provide an update on the effluent line. Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she spoke with Mr. Pektor to let him know what was going on and that the easement will be maintained. Craig LaBarre advised that the suction pressure and nitrates continue to go up and down; President Prator asked is there is a pattern/trend when these go up and down. Mr. LaBarre stated that he would need to review his operator's log.

Mark Bahnick and Craig LaBarre left at 8:15 PM.

Streets Committee:

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

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Building Committee:

Municipal Building ADA Compliant Lift – no update
Generator Quotes - no update

Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract:

Proposed budget for sewer – Councilmember Stephanie Steele provided a draft of the proposed budget; will provide updated budgets for the next meeting.

Tax collector position–Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that a resident is running for tax collector this election and the budget may need to be changed. Solicitor Gaul advised that there is an ordinance or resolution setting the amount to pay the elected tax collector; the secretary will find the ordinance/resolution pertaining to payment of an elected tax collector. President Prator stated the possible tax collector wants hours at the Borough Building; Solicitor Gaul stated the Borough does not have to approve the use of the building.

Solicitor Fee rate increase letter was provided in the packet for review.

Accident 9/17/2025 -\$500.00 deductible (Total \$925.38-\$500.00 deductible)-Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the insurance company has paid the borough minus the \$500.00 deductible; Solicitor Gaul stated these cases typically go through arbitration and that the Borough may receive the deductible and should wait.

Accident 7/24/2024 downtown–Councilmember Stephaine Steele advised that the Borough received a letter indicating the Borough will receive restitution; however, there was no other information- the Borough Secretary called for additional information but has not received a call back.

Tractor Truck took off stop sign – Councilmember Lisa Prator asked if the tractor trailers can be fined for being on the wrong roads; Councilmember Karen Peiffer asked if the Police can sit in that area. Councilmember Stephanie Steele will send Chief Pysher an email.

Community Development & Grant Committee:

Municipal Building ADA Complaint Lift & Generator- Councilmember Stephanie Steele met with an electrician; there are two issues with the building. The outside electric meter base/rod and mast need to be replaced – it is a fire hazard and then the work for the generator should be addressed. Electric to the building will be turned off during the work. Diesel Generator is more costly than a propane generator. Solicitor Gaul left at 8:35 and returned at 8:38 PM.

Portland Community Events Committee:

Founders Day went well over the weekend.

Tree Lighting Ceremony – scheduled on Sunday, November 30 at 6:30 PM.

Leaf Pick-up is scheduled for November 19, 20, 21, 2025.

Fire, Safety & Police Committee:

Speed Sign Trailer update- Councilmember Stephanie Steele will research a small trailer for the speed signs.

Ordinance Update Committee:

Ordinance 190 – Burning- President Prator advised further discussions on this item was not necessary; remove from agenda.

Personnel, Policy and Procedure Committee: none

Councilmember Stephaine Steele advised that Ms. Chipko is doing a great job with the downtown restroom.

Sanitation Committee: none

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COG: President Prator advised that the October 22, 2025, COG meeting minutes were in the packet; he will be reaching out to Waste Management and Sanico to see if they would sponsor lights for the COG.

Councilmember Lisa Prator advised that 111 Main Street won a gift card from the Halloween contest, they donated it to the Portland Hook and Ladder.

Slate Belt Rising: Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated they are going to start the downtown river rock project in March/April 2026.

Liberty Water Gap Trail Alliance: no update

Old Business:

Public restroom signage—President Prator is waiting for prices for 4 signs; Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she can do a mockup sign for Council to review.

New Business:

James Thornton letter—President Prator advised that Mr. Thornton is also interested in sitting on the Council; Mr. Thornton must reside in the Borough for one year, which he does not meet. Councilmember Lisa Prator asked if he could participate on some committees (events committee etc) in the meantime.

Public Comment: Non-Agenda: None

Executive Session:

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to enter Executive Session at 8:54 P.M. to discuss personnel matters with the Solicitor, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to return from Executive Session at 9:00 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. – no action.

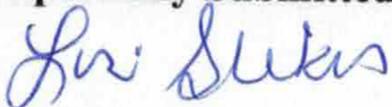
Councilmember Lisa Prator will be having a surgical procedure on Thursday and will be joining the meetings by speaker phone.

President Prator advised that he is hoping not to have the second meeting in November and December. President Prator asked that if he is elected Mayor does he have to submit a written resignation from the Council; Solicitor Gaul advised that yes, a written resignation will be needed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to Adjourn the meeting at 9:05 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried

**Reminder: Next scheduled meetings: Monday, November 3, 2025
Monday, November 24, 2025**

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary

