



**Borough of Portland Council Meeting Minutes  
February 2, 2026**

On February 2, 2026, 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** – Council President Stephanie Steele called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Roll Call** – Council Members: Stephanie Steele, President, Bruce Cialfi, Susan Ivancich, Karen Pfeiffer and Lisa Prator were present.

**Others Present** – Mayor Lance Prator and Borough Secretary/Treasurer-Lori Sliker were present. Also, present-Borough Solicitor-Michael Gaul, Borough Engineer-Tyler Evans, Chief of Police Todd Pysner (arrived at 7:30 PM), Tara Mezzanotte, Hubert McHugh, John K. Thornton and Jonathan Erler-UMBT Supervisor.

**Announcement of Recording** – President Steele 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. 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 Steele asked if there were any amendments to the agenda.

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

**Action on the Meeting Minutes of January 5, 2026:** President Steele asked if there were any corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of January 5, 2026. No corrections were requested.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Ciafli to approve January 5, 2026, Council meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Secretary/Treasurer Report:**

**The Secretary presented the January 2026 Financial Report for review/approval.**

Bills Presented for Payment:	
Borough Operations	\$ 33,919.05
Sewer Operations	\$ 24,132.03
Garbage Operations	\$ 8,224.00
Estimate Payroll & Payroll Taxes, January 2026	\$ 6,300.00
Escrow–Dunkin (VanCleaf), UMBT-Lamtec (FLB, VanCleaf)	\$ 521.00
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>\$ 73,096.08</b>

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to approve the January 2026 Financial Report, as presented, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

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

Golden Property Maintenance Code Appeal- Tabled until April 6, 2026, Council Meeting.

**Public Comment:**

Jonathon Erler, Upper Mount Bethel Township Supervisor stated he wanted to clarify that Upper Mount Bethel Township has pulled out of the Planned Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan entirely. They previously approved a resolution adopting it but later revoked their approval of the Plan. The Township is currently using its prior 2010 Comprehensive Plan for its Comprehensive Plan. They are currently reviewing the 2010 Plan for changes.

**Route I80-Route 611 Updates:** Tara Mezzanotte

Ms. Mezzanotte advised she is the liaison for viaduct corridor (Amtrak) for Knowlton Township and Upper Mount Bethel Township, and she is willing to include Portland. The Amtrak horn is very loud and will affect Portland; a public meeting will be held in the next few months. PennDOT has the lead for the study which will include East Stroudsburg and Blainstown. Explore Act – The Department of Interior was supposed to identify 10 areas for the pilot program; but there has been no update. Ms. Mezzanotte has reached out to Congressman Kean and they are giving serious consideration of doing a joint letter with Congressman MacKenzie asking about the Explore Act. Ms. Mezzanotte advised she wants to focus on safety issues at the one-way light on Rt. 611. Council asked that Ms. Mezzanotte continue to follow up with the issues; Councilmember Lisa Prator advised that there are trees hanging in the roadway and rocks need to be removed.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to have Tara Mezzanotte act as liaison for safety, maintenance and light issues and to ask questions on behalf of Portland, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River:**

Ms. Mezzanotte advised that at the last Upper Mount Bethel Township meeting a representative from the National Park Service and the Chair of Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River Council attended the meeting and provided an update. Ms. Mezzanotte clarified Portland position and that the Industrial Park gap is up to Jacoby Creek. Solicitor Gaul advised that the Borough has not joined and they have not signed a memorandum of understanding; they designated a Council member to attend the meetings to bring back information. Solicitor Gaul stated one of the issues was what obligation the borough would be under for land use regulations. The next meeting is March and they are held quarterly.

**Liberty Water Gap Trail Alliance:** Cindy Fish

Mayor Prator stated the last meeting was 1/21/2026; the next meeting is scheduled for 2/18/26 at 9:00 AM.

**Borough Engineer's Report** - Tyler Evans, Van Cleef

COVID Grant Project-Stormwater-Mr. Evans advised the deadline to spend the grant funds is September 2026, and he would like to move forward with putting the project out to bid. The appraisal is still on-going for the easements; however, he would like to move forward with the remaining 80% of the project knowing the current deadline. They have the plan and specifications ready; Council President asked if the Council would consider this for the next meeting.

COVID Grant Project – Sewer Screens permit plans are ready; the contract is through Costars, the screen were delivered; construction is scheduled for first week in March. There are grant funds left over (\$78,300.00) which could be used to purchase membranes or used for the effluent line repair. The consensus of the Council was to purchase an additional set of membranes.

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Lamtec Sewer Connection – DEP Sewage Planning Module Review-Mr. Evans advised that Lamtec submitted the plans to DEP and upon approval the next step would be an agreement.  
Portland-UMBT Sewer Service Intermunicipal Agreement

**Sewer Committee** – Stephanie Steele

Commercial and Industrial customer required connection modifications – no update  
Proposed Borough and Township Intermunicipal agreement on Sewer Service- no update  
EDMR-January 2026 provided in the packet.

WWTP Effluent line from River Rd to Delaware River discharge  
Approve Fidelity Bank Term Sheet and Resolution # \_\_\_\_ authorizing small borrowing for capital purposes in the maximum amount of \$125,000.00. President Steele advised that they are working with Fidelity Bank for the project loan. Sewer Solicitor Boell (FLB) advised that they have a conflict and are unable to represent Portland; therefore, Solicitor Gaul will represent the Borough. Project estimate is \$129,000.00; at 4.9% for 5 years (3/1/2031) The Borough is also responsible for paying the Bank's attorney fees and an origination fee in the amount of \$1,000. Yearly payments–interest over 5 years \$14,000.00–yearly payment is about \$30,000. President Steele stated that Council needs to approve the term sheet tonight and then at the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday meeting documentations will need to be approved and signed.

Mr. Evans sent an email to DEP about the permit extension, who responded to resend when getting closer to the permit end date; however, they did not think an extension would be a problem. President Steele stated if they don't give us more time-providing we have receipts of money expended, the bank is ok with the Borough paying for it and then paying the funds back to the Borough. Councilmember Lisa Prator advised that with the current weather delays; Mr. Evans should be reaching out on February 11/12, 2026. Mr. Evans would like Council to commit to the Bradley quote; he is concerned that the quote will expire and the price will increase. Solicitor Gaul stated the emergency resolution would need to be adopted prior to committing to the quote.

President Steele reviewed the emergency resolution for consideration and possible adoption.

Resolution #2026-04: A Resolution of the Borough of Portland Ratifying Emergency Procurement–Council reviewed the resolution and had some questions. President Steele will contact the Sewer Solicitor regarding these concerns, specifics of the quote and awarding Bradley the contract; the quote for the work should be included with the resolution. Mayor Prator and Mr. Evans attempted to contact Sewer Solicitor Boell and Samuel Morgan without success. Solicitor Gaul advised that the quote is a Costars contract and Council could approve the Bradley quote subject to the sewer solicitor finding the procurement complies with state procurement for Costars. Mr. Evans stated that the contract is through Costars and a resolution is not necessary; however, he wants FLB to review and make the final decision. Councilmember Lisa Prator expressed concerns that if we do not accept the quote, the Bradley price could increase, and the emergency permit could be at risk. Solicitor Gaul advised that someone has to review to see if this is a legal procurement from Costars; President Steele will call Sewer Solicitor Boell tomorrow and ask if the quote is a legal procurement from Costars and if the resolution is needed and if the quote has to be included in the resolution.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to accept the proposal from Bradley for the 1/5/2026 for \$129,085.00, under the Costars contract #016-E25-403 for the emergency effluent outfall repair, subject to the sewer solicitor opining that the procurement complies with state law, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Fidelity Term Sheet–President Steele read the Fidelity Term Sheet for the bank loan.  
**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to approve the Fidelity Bank Term Sheet, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Sewer manholes on upper end of State St-tabled

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Recouping delinquent legal fees-Diann received some clarification from Solicitor Gaul prior to tonight's meeting; President Steele will follow up with Sewer Solicitor Boell. Solicitor Gaul advised Council there are two (2) Ordinances regarding delinquent collections (general and sewer).  
Tyler Evans left at 8:18 PM.

**Streets Committee:**

Garage ceiling in house estimated materials - \$2,113.00-pending  
Snow tires and steel rims for Dodge pickup for winter, not to exceed \$2,000.00. President Steele advised that the Dodge truck needs winter tires and rims; at approximately \$1,500.00.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to approve the purchase of snow tires & rims, not to exceed \$2,000.00, seconded by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer. Vote 5-0-0, Motion Carried.**

Mr. Erler advised that the Township puts chains on their tires, which is more cost effective and works very well. After some additional discussions, the motion was rescinded by Councilmember Lisa Prator and Karen Pfeiffer to consider chains as an alternative. President Steele thanked the Township for coming and moving snow from downtown.

Graphics on van and truck-President Steele advised the graphics are scheduled for the week of 2/2/2026.

**Legal:**

**Resolution #2026-04:** Resolution Declaring Borough Councilmember Offices vacant. Solicitor Gaul advised Council that the first vacancy was from Mayor Prator's resignation from Council and the second is a 4-year term that is not filled.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to adopt Resolution #2026-04: Resolution Declaring Borough Councilmember Offices (2) vacant, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

Mr. Thornton advised he had to leave, however; he just wanted to state that he wants to request to join the Council in May when his 1-year residency is complete and that he would hope they do not decrease the number of council members. Solicitor Gaul advised that there is a limited number of councilmembers allowed to sit in on Council and Authority.

**Subdivision and Land Development (SALDO):**

RPL East, LLC Proposed Subdivision Plan -current deadline April 1, 2026.  
RPL East, LLC Proposed Planned Industrial Park Plan-current deadline April 1, 2026.

President Steele will reach out to Tyler Evans for extensions at the March 2nd meeting.

**Zoning, Building and Property Management:**

Municipal Building Ramp Replacement – received federal funding for a replacement ramp, will further consider the options.  
Slate Hills Enterprise (SHE) – tabled

**Portland Borough Authority:**

Mayor Prator advised that the Authority received \$40,000.00 grant for their antenna project, they are applying for additional grants.

**Fire, Safety, Police:**

January Police Report-Chief Pysher reviewed his January Police report with the Council.

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Police Officer pay increases – rate increase \$1.00 per hour and holiday pay increase to \$100.00. Mayor Prator requested this item remain on the agenda until he can meet with Chief Pysher.

**Mayor's Report:**

Ramp removal–Mayor Prator would like the old ramp removed as it is a safety issue; President Steele will advise maintenance staff to remove the ramp.

Refiners Church requested to use the Baseball field on 5/23/2026–20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. A formal request from the church will be requested; Solicitor Gaul advised that proof of insurance will be required.

Towing authorization-Solicitor Gaul advised that the mayor could act as designated agent for towing vehicles during an emergency. Solicitor Gaul stated that the magistrate office may not process tickets if the mayor does not have an MOPEC number. The Ordinance states that 2 or more inches of snow requires that cars be removed from the streets. Solicitor Gaul advised that there are no snow emergency routes designated within the Borough. After discussing the snow emergency route signs, Council decided to have the signs removed.

Vehicle removal during snow emergencies will be published in the Newsletter and posted on social media.

Mayor Prator advised that a store owner contacted him regarding parking in front of her store; he will address it in the spring.

Mayor Prator advised that he was invited to attend the New County Executives Transition Team and he was very vocal about being left out of Slate Belt; they will try to pay more attention to this.

Mayor Prator advised that the Co-stars salt contract needs to be submitted; Councilmember Bruce Cialfi will work with the secretary to submit the contract.

**Ordinance Committee:** none

**Portland Community Events Committee:** Next community event will be Easter; the committee is working with the Fire Company for a 131-year anniversary celebration which will include Founders Day 150-year anniversary.

**COG:** Mayor Prator advised that meeting minutes were provided in the packet; a grant writer attended the last meeting and is willing to write grants for COG and also for Portland if needed.

**Community Development & Grant Committee:**

Post Foundation Grant Generator – no update

Municipal Building ADA Complaint ramp/lift-previously discussed.

**Sanitation Committee:** none

**Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract:**

President Steele advised that the Insurance has been placed for 2026 with a premium increase of 9%.

**Plan Slate Belt:**

1-8-2026 meeting information provided in the packet. Next meeting will be Thursday night.

**Slate Belt Rising:** President Steele advised that Brian Fenstermaker has left SBR/CALV to accept the Borough Manager position in Pen Argyl.

**Personnel Committee**

President Steele asked Council to consider hiring someone to help with plowing/grass mowing and weed trimming; the Personnel committee to meet with the applicant and provide Council with an update.

**Old Business:**

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Public Restroom Signage- Mayor Prator advised he would check with Fred to see if he picked them up.  
Trailer for speed signs –tabled

Park & Ride tree removal – tabled  
Revisit the section of the 2025-01 Parking Ordinance that pertains to snow emergencies-previously discussed.

**Executive Session:**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi to enter Executive Session at 9:00 P.M. to discuss legal matters with the Solicitor, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to return from Executive Session at 9:23 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

President Steele asked if there was any action to be taken out of Executive Session. – no action.

**New Business:**

Reduction in Council member discussion – Solicitor Gaul advised that Council needs to decide if they want to reduce the number of councilmembers; upon that decision they can research what needs to be done. Reduction requests go to court of pleas and needs the support of 10% of registered voters.

Salt for residents to use on their private residence-President Steele advised that a Portland resident asked if he could take salt from the Borough supply to put on his driveway. The consensus of Council was not to allow a resident to take salt for use on their private driveway.

Discussion about committee assignments and consolidation of committees. President Steele advised that she and Councilmember Lisa Prator consolidated the committee list. The Council discussed the number of members allowed to meet; Solicitor Gaul stated that while there are only 5 council members only 2 can sit on a committee. There are 2 alternatives to consider; President Steele will update the list and send it out.

President Steele advised that when she was downtown, she noticed that someone left the Borough public bathroom door open with the heat running; she would like to lock the door and place a sign on the door “Closed for the season will reopen on April 1, 2026; the Council agreed. President Steele will advise Ms. Chipko that she does not have to clean it.

Mayor Prator advised that the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic will have an online event on March 26, 2026.

**Public Comment Non-Agenda:**

None

**A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

**Reminder: Next meetings: Monday, February 23, 2026**

**Monday, March 2, 2026**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

  
**Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary**

