

**Penbrook Borough
Caucus Meeting
Minutes
June 16, 2025
6:30 PM**

1. Call to order and roll call: President Deardorff called the public meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Present were the Mayor, Deardorff, Newcomer, Dry, Stokes (virtual), Shaw, Burdine, Moore and Armbruster. Kern and Hogarth were also present. Moore left at 7:20 and phoned in at 7:35

2. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

- A. Matthew Thomas of 228 S 29th, while not an agenda item, Deardorff allowed him to address Council on the June 2 action to deny the handicap parking application. Thomas commented that he believes the space where he parks his vehicles to the rear of his property is not "off street parking" by definition and further the grade of the property doesn't allow for safe walking. He's asking Council to reconsider the application. Deardorff asked Hogarth to put it on the July agenda for discussion.

3. Discussion and Action Items

- A. No one from the Fire Department appeared to discuss the proposal. No discussion or action taken.
- B. Newcomer lead a discussion on recent action not to fill the vacant public works supervisor position. Newcomer believes it's a good time to look at the department and borough structure from a long-term sustainable position and allow the STMP report to weigh in on the decision making. Further, he proposes considering hiring an asst. borough mgr rather than a public works supervisor. The ABM would oversee the public works employees but also suggested that the public works committee should look into what the department currently does and what they should be doing. Shaw and Burdine agree with the proposed ABM position. Deardorff considers it a dual role which some are against with the already existing police chief borough mgr position.

PW employee Paul Goff was in attendance and asked about what was presented. Goff said he has over 12 years of pw experience and never worked for a municipality that didn't have some sort of job foreman or supervisor to manage the day-to-day activities.

Deardorff asked what the CBA has to say on the matter. Kern suggested that discussion be held during an executive session.

- C. The solicitor provided a written report to Council regarding the options to consider for 30 N 28th St. Member's 1st has now released the mortgage lien so it does open up options to deal with the blighted property. Council decided not to discuss or take formal action at this time on the matter.
- D. Solicitor Kern provided Council with a draft of an MOU between the Borough and Susquehanna Twp regarding sewer billing. Armbruster asked if it had to be approved by the PUC. Kern said she specifically added that the fees had to be

approved by both municipalities but further stated that her recommendation is for the Borough to transfer control of the sanitary sewer system to the Penbrook Authority. Deardorff asked Hogarth to send the draft document to the Township.

- E. Hogarth provided Council with a handicap parking application and supporting pictures to the property at 2710 Banks St. It appears that the application satisfies the application requirements and will be put on the July 7 agenda for action.
- F. Further discussion regarding ordinances surrounding the Brewpub regulation, specifically parking. Stokes suggested no further change to Chapter 88. He commented that there is nothing for personal service shops. Kern suggested that it was possible it was intended to be included elsewhere but supports changing to remove the ambiguity. But would not apply to existing businesses. Shaw asked if pre-existing non-conformities need to be documented somewhere. Hogarth suggested that it would be part of each property file.

Newcomer asked if Council wanted to move away from parking restrictions. Stokes said the planning commission was looking at other towns and recommends off street parking requirements be eliminated for restaurants in the Village District

Shaw suggested that once the Borough eliminates off street parking restrictions it's a matter of time before having to consider metered parking but does support eliminating the restrictions as suggested.

Burdine asked about other issues like food carts and food trucks. Kern said they were not zoning issues and therefore not part of these proposed changes. The proposed changes will be sent to the county planning commission for their comments.

- G. Hogarth explained that the proposed mini-pitch project is contingent on the borough capping the existing court surface. He received a quote from Bob Arney of \$12,500 but the project is also contingent on getting the project approved through US Soccer. Once the project is approved, Hogarth will add the spending approval to a future agenda item but informally, all elected officials are supportive of the idea.
- H. Newcomer discussed the recent County LSA grant award for \$37,500 supporting the Master Plan project for Community Park. The grant would require an equal match from the Borough. Newcomer would like an action item on the July agenda.
- I. Hogarth was asked to brief Council on police policies and planning regarding an potential immigration enforcement that might take place in the Borough. Hogarth explained that case law is very clear in PA that police should only take action regarding the detention of any person only with the support of reasonable suspicion or probable cause and delaying detention beyond the legal requirements of the initial reason for the detention, without further information supporting those legal standards, shall not happen. He went on to say that often, the immigration detainees are a civil process and like any other civil process, police should not get involved beyond keeping the peace. When asked about forcing entry into homes or business Hogarth stated that entry into homes or business by Penbrook police officers will only

take place, with a warrant based on probable cause, exigent circumstances or consent of someone that has legal standing to offer consent.

- J. Hogarth presented Council with a request from Tri County Regional Planning asking for a letter of support for a planning grant which would include planning for changes to the Walnut Street Corridor and specifically, the intersection of 28th and Walnut Streets. Newcomer made a motion to approve the letter of support and Stokes seconded. The motion carried with Armbruster being the only no vote.
- K. Moore asked about supporting Harrisburg City's events surrounding the Juneteenth holiday. Deardorff believed that it was too late to consider sponsorship and suggested it be discussed next year

4. Citizen Comments

- A. Joe Wenger commented on bus fares and incentivizing brewpubs to consider coming into the borough.

5. Council Comments

- A. Newcomer commented on the Little Valley Summer program kickoff and because of a job change, Sabrina Herb will not be able to lead the program in 2026. He also suggested a July Caucus agenda item to discuss next year's County LSA grant application.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph Hogarth
Borough Secretary