

**Penbrook Borough
Caucus Meeting
Minutes
January 20, 2026
6:30 PM**

1. Call to order and roll call: Newcomer called the public meeting to order at 6:30 pm. All elected officials were present, Moore arrived at 6:54 pm. Hogarth and Kern were in attendance as were Bragunier and Bloss.

2. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items: N/A

3. Discussion and Action Items

A. Diane Kripas and Scott Doyle representing the Capital Area Greenbelt Assoc briefed Council on their projects and other noteworthy items. 2025 saw over nine thousand volunteer manhours to maintain the trail system. Several partnering efforts included walk with a doc and the Dauphin Co Library. Roughly six million dollars of grant money and other donations have gone into trail upgrades.

The Paxtang Parkway portion of the trail is scheduled to be finished in late spring 2026, in time for the June 7 Tour de Belt event. The final phase upgrades should begin in the winter of 2027.

B. Hogarth, Bragunier and Bloss briefed Council on the relationship formed with the codes staff at Hanover Borough. Hanover's Chief Codes Officer has shared all their policies and other documents and offered for our staff to do ride-alongs to better understand enforcement activities from an experienced staff. Hogarth also reminded Council of the upcoming grant opportunity through DCED for phase two funding for projects identified in the STMP report. Hogarth believes that prioritizing a codes rewrite will benefit the Borough in many ways but particularly in code and zoning issues. Newcomer would like to know how Hanover measures success and would like to see similar relationships built with other municipalities.

C. Newcomer led a discussion on Council Committees. An email, prior to the meeting was sent out for consideration:

To help with the pace of the meeting, I wanted to provide my recommendations on Committees and Committee Responsibilities. My recommendations are ground in two principles

1. *Committees should be meeting on a regular basis (at least monthly) and actively working on projects that support our collective long-term strategic vision for the borough*
2. *Committee should include members outside of council to take advantage of additional expertise and expand community participation*

With that foundation I am recommending

1. *Change Parks and Building to be Parks and Rec. Expand responsibilities to include other community events (see below for additional information)*
2. *Recommending we eliminate Budget and Personnel committees and replace with Finance and Administration (see below for additional information)*

3. Officially add the Technology Committee
4. Eliminate the Public Safety committee and address any issues using a combination of Chief of Police/Borough Manager, EMA and the full Council
5. Redesign Community and Government to have stronger focus on communication (newsletter, website redesign, surveys, social media, email list and broadcasting meetings) to drive increased transparency and awareness. Additionally, the committee would serve to connect citizens with state and federal government resources such as Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program as well as non-governmental resources such as food pantries
6. No change to Public Works – Committee focus would be to document the current responsibilities of the Public Works, assist in the development of SOP and checklists, and look for outsourcing opportunities
7. No change to Codes - Committee focus would be to review current codes (strategic recommendation), work with Robin and Jake to improve reporting, develop a mission statement, and develop standards for dealing with code compliance issues

Parks (and Rec) Committee

Responsibilities include:

1. Ongoing development and enhancement of the three Penbrook parks which includes maintaining strategic planning documents, maintenance checklists, gathering public input, coordination with Public Works and Police, identification of grants and other funding sources
2. All aspects of the Summer Program including staffing, planning the curriculum, fund raising and running the program
3. Planning the annual Penbrook Fall Festival **and other community events**
4. Coordination with organizations that use park facilities for organized sporting events
5. Coordination with the Capital Area Greenbelt Association (CAGA)
6. Coordination with the Lions and Leos for the Library Walk and Free Library
7. Walk with a Doc (WWAD)

Current Committee Members: Nate Newcomer (Chair), Ben Stokes, Sabrina Herb, Scott Doyle (CAGA rep), J.T. Dorsey, Laura Vandergoes-Lim.

Finance and Administration Committee

Meeting dates to be determined

Responsibilities include:

1. Development of the annual financial plan for the borough to be approved by Council
2. Quarterly evaluation of budget to actual performance with detailed explanation of budget variances, updated annual forecasts and recommendations for offsetting budget overages with reporting to council
3. Ongoing updates to the five-year plan for adoption by Council
4. Ongoing updates to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for adoption by council
5. Ongoing review of policies and procedures including recommendations to council for updates and additional policies
6. Ongoing review of internal controls and recommendations to council for improvements
7. Oversight of annual performance evaluation including staff interviews and goals setting
8. Coordination with staff to develop key performance indicators (KPIs), goal setting and performance tracking

The staff will prepare and disseminate a list of committees and members with the February Council documents. Newcomer had proposed to eliminate the Public Safety Committee, but Seaman argued that public safety is important and should be represented by a committee. Several others agreed so that committee will remain along with the others proposed by Newcomer.

Finance and Admin Committee will be chaired and Co-Chaired by Newcomer and Lovejoy. Shaw will also serve on the committee.

Parks and Recreation Committee will be chaired by Newcomer. Stokes will continue to serve and Burdine will join to help with community events.

Safety Committee will be Chaired by Seaman and Shaw and Moore will also serve on that committee.

Community and Government Committee will be Chaired by Moore. Lovejoy and Burdine will also serve on the committee.

Public Works Committee will continue to be chaired by Shaw. Stokes and Seaman will also serve on the committee.

Codes Committee will continue to be chaired by Burdine with Shaw and Newcomer serving on the committee.

Technology Committee will be Co-Chaired by Shaw and Newcomer.

D. Newcomer reviewed the letter of intent provided by DCED required to participate in the peer review offered by the Department. Newcomer explained that the process is free and recommended as part of the STMP report adopted by council a few months ago. Moore made a motion to send the letter to DCED to start the process. Shaw seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Newcomer offered his thoughts on the process to screen, interview and hire the assistant borough manager. Since the beginning of the year the job posting has resulted in over 100 resumes. Newcomer suggested that the Finance and Admin committee, along with Hogarth, screen the resumes, using, among other things, a scoring matrix to identify 10 applicants to interview. Of those 10, between 3 and 5 finalists will be invited to interview with all of Council.

F. Hogarth provided Council with an MOU between the borough and Paxtang agreeing to use each other's facilities in the event one has to relocate during emergency operations. The new Paxtang manager wasn't requesting any changes to the agreement but current official's signatures. The solicitor reviewed the document as well and didn't recommend any changes. This is to be on the Feb 2 agenda for approval.

G. Dry reviewed items that will be in the Spring newsletter as well as submissions she is waiting on from others. The deadline to submit is Feb 1 and Council will approve the draft at the Feb Caucus meeting. Shaw commented the cost to print and mail will exceed budget. Hogarth reminded Council of a conversation last year to request residents enroll to get mailed copies and all others can get it off the website. An insert will be prepared and sent out with the next newsletter.

H. Hogarth briefed Council on a Resolution he's proposing at the Feb 2 meeting to destroy certain borough records in accordance with the Commonwealth's record retention policy.

I. Tax Collector, Victoria Shaw addressed Council with concerns she has with being the Borough's tax collector after attending the mandated tax collector course. Those concerns include being bonded despite not collecting any monies, certifying the collections despite not

collecting any monies and not being able to transfer final responsibility to the County even though the County Treasurer is the one collecting all the tax payments. She said she would have a letter of resignation to the manager in the coming days for Council to act on at the Feb 2 meeting. Kern suggested that Hogarth advise the County and request a new agreement draft between the Borough and County be sent for Council to consider at the Feb 2 meeting.

J. Several appointed terms of office need reviewed for Resolutions at the Feb 2 meeting. They include: Nate Shaw serving on the Civil Service Commission, Victoria Shaw serving on the Planning Commission and Dave Deardorff serving on the Shade Tree Commission. Newcomer asked Seaman if he was willing to chair the Shade Tree Commission to which he agreed. Finally, Shaw explained that he used to serve as the Borough's representative to the County Tax Collection Committee, but he hasn't in a few years as it conflicts with his seat on the Storm Water Authority. Newcomer asked Lovejoy if she would be willing to represent the Borough, to which she agreed.

K. Hogarth briefed Council on a resident's sewer lateral issue on 31st St between Butler and Boas Streets. The Borough's engineer conducted a field visit last week along with codes and public works to determine what the issues are. What we know is that the current blockage is in privately owned laterals. Hogarth wanted to make Council aware and will keep everyone apprised in future meetings.

4. Citizen Comments

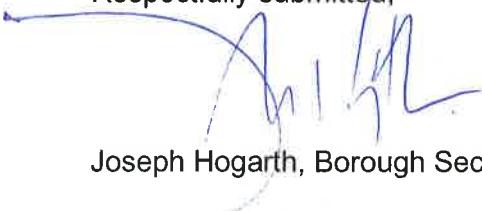
Solicitor Kern announced that her firm is hosting an event for municipal officials reviewing topics such as sunshine and RTK laws and other municipal topics. She will email a flyer and asks that RSVP's be sent in soon.

5. Council Comments

A. Newcomer and Stokes mentioned an effort with the PRI and the Borough further exploring table sponsorships at the Community Yard Sale later this year which would raise money to support the Summer Program. Council was in favor with continuing the planning.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm with a motion from Moore and Shaw.

Respectfully submitted,


Joseph Hogarth, Borough Secretary