

Penbrook Borough Council Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2026
Council Meeting

1. Call to Order
 - a. On May 4, 2026, Vice President Shaw called the Borough Council to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag and a moment of silence.
2. The roll was taken. All were present except for the Mayor, who arrived right after roll call. Newcomer attended remotely. Borough Manager/Chief Joseph Hogarth and Assistant Borough Manager Bailey Welch were also in attendance.
3. Citizen Comment on Agenda Items: N/A
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Minutes
 - i. Council Minutes from April 6, 2026
 - ii. Caucus Minutes from April 27, 2026
 - b. April 2026 Treasurer's Report
 - c. Approval of bills to be paid

Stokes made a motion to approve the consent agenda as is. Moore seconded. No discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Reports
 - a. Mayor's report: Reviewed the monthly police stats.
 - b. Manager

Construction project for Assistant Borough Manager Office and Closet in community room has begun.

Borough Manager and Assistant Borough Manager met with Randy Howarth and Dave Heister of the Penbrook Lions to discuss Hero Banner Project. Manager encouraged support for the project and banners.

Manager gave Randy Howarth an overview of the Community Room to best prepare and adjust room set up for upcoming election day.

Mini-pitch at Penbrook Community Park installation is slated to begin on Tuesday, May 12th. Determined that mini-pitch will be installed prior to trench for electrical.

Police officer testing occurred over the past weekend (May 2-3, 2026). Started with 7 applicants, 1 withdrew, a number failed PT test. 3 went through written and oral test. Put those names forward, starting background checks Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

c. Solicitor

- i. Status reports for delinquent 2024 & 2025 Real Estate Tax were shared. Nothing further to share.

d. Fire Chief

Chief Steve Murphy gave an overview of the month of April including 48 monthly calls, 16 Borough calls, 32 Mutual Aid calls, 2 working fires, 203 yearly calls to date 392.50 staffing hours and 73 Training Hours.

Two fire company members have started their driver training.

Expressed willingness to meet with any Council member to discuss fire company finances, projects, and needs.

Station projects will resume now that weather is starting to break. Painting will be finished this month.

Planning for the 120th anniversary of the fire company. Exploring a block party around September 11, 2026. Seeking borough participation and input. Ben Stokes suggested considering merging the Fall Fest and Fire Company Block Party.

Nate Shaw inquired about remaining debt after the grants rewarded to the fire company.

Chief explained that it is not common to receive a grant for engines not in service yet.

e. Committees:

- i. Codes – Monthly department activities were reviewed by Burdine. Most common property maintenance concerns for April were (1) accumulation of trash and rubbish and (2) high weeds and grass. There were 6 violations regarding infestations and 4 porches, decks, or balconies in disrepair.
- ii. Public Safety – No report

- iii. Parks and Recreation – Newcomer shared about the DCNR grant for CP Phase 1 being successfully submitted by the deadline. Mini-pitch installation is slated to begin May 12, 2026.
- iv. Public Works – Shaw shared that mowing season has started, the first inspection of outfalls has been completed, potholes are being filled and the mulching at all parks has been completed.
- v. Finance and Administration – No report
- vi. Community and Government – Moore discussed trash clean up dates and a desire to push them out to the community. Different avenues are being explored regarding sign-ups, such as pushing the information out in the newsletter and having a sign-up sheet at the Borough office. Hogarth encouraged ensuring Becky Ramper (Borough Admin.) is looped in on information to best support/answer questions.
- vii. Technology – Newcomer inquired as to whether Borough Manager/Chief Hogarth and Assistant Borough Manager Welch had been able to compile and share all requested information with Vicky Shaw regarding IT services. Hogarth confirmed.
- viii. Penbrook Authority – Dry shared that there was a motion made at the last meeting to shift the annual budget cycle to January 1 – December 31. Bills will be sent out in January. There will be no bill July 2026 – December 2026. There will be a letter sent out shortly after the May meeting to share details regarding the change. An additional letter will be sent in the fall to outline each property owner’s specific bill. The next meeting will be held on May 20, 2026. The Authority is engaging in a 6-month budget to get to January when the new budget cycle will begin.
- ix. Planning Commission – Stokes shared that Dave Heister of the Penbrook Lions attended the last meeting and shared information regarding the Hero Banner Project. The commission gave full support. The next meeting will be held Thursday, May 28, 2026.

6. New Business

- a. A motion is needed to accept the resignations of both Raymond O’Leary and Mary Ann O’Leary. Moore had questions about the abrupt resignations and if there was a reason behind the resignations. Shaw confirmed that there was some health concerns involved. Stokes made a motion to approve, seconded by Seaman. No further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. A discussion was held regarding the vacancies on the Zoning Hearing Board. Hogarth shared that Raymond O'Leary had been acting as the chair and serving on the board alongside James Crum and Olivia Lyons. Mary Ann O'Leary had been serving as an alternate. Hogarth noted that Dave Deardorff may be interested, however, he would have to resign from the shade tree commission. Hogarth noted that those serving on the zoning board may have no other involvement in the borough. Solicitor Beth Kern elaborated that the individual who fills the position would also need to have been a borough resident for at least one year. A community member in attendance, Adam Rhoads, expressed interest. Hogarth noted that a brief application can be created and applicants can be reviewed at the May Caucus meeting. Solicitor Beth Kern shared that the Zoning Hearing Board selects the chair amongst themselves.
- c. A discussion and if necessary, action regarding the IT questionnaire and internet services for the borough. A motion was made by Moore to postpone the conversation until further information was secured. Seaman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Citizen Comments

- a. Adam Rhoads, 2836 Walnut shared about reoccurring sewer backups (every 2-3 months). Rhoads believes that the lateral line to his home is a shared system with other neighbors and believes that because his home is the last on the shared line, all of the sewage backs up into his house. Rhoads noted that Codes Department has visited the property today (5/4/2026) and could not determine where his lateral connects to the main sewer. Rhoads requested support from the borough in the form of hiring a plumber to camera his lateral line to determine where the issue is. Hogarth indicated that a dye test was planned to be conducted the following day (5/5/2026) to see what could be determined and the conversation could be revisited once more is understood.
- b. Stephen Garisto, 2531 Boas shared appreciation for the information provided in the newsletter regarding unlicensed vehicles. Garisto expressed concern regarding dirt bikes coming through the community. Garisto appreciates the new "stop" sign paintings in the alleys. Garisto noted that he was told his letter was received regarding the calendar would be printed, but it was not (National Day of Prayer). Robin Dry shared that holidays would no longer be added to the calendar in the newsletter because folks are generally aware of national holidays. Garisto noted his discontent with this decision. Garisto discussed fireworks being banned in the borough but encouraged fireworks to be allowed for this upcoming July 4th.

- c. Halimatou Akol, 2921 Walnut inquired about parking spaces for businesses. The borough requires certain number of parking spaces for businesses and Akol is uncertain if this has been changed. Akol noted that neighbors park in the spots where her business is, which she does not mind if she does not have customers. Joe Hogarth added that it is a zoning issue – zones require a certain number of spots for businesses. Shaw added a note about the one-way street there limiting some things. Akol inquired about adding additional parking. Moore suggested council taking a field trip to the location to assess and revisit the conversation during May Caucus Meeting.
- d. Joe Wenger, 2324 Hoffer shared appreciation for the council and added praise for the band at the Fall Fest.

8. Council Comments

- a. Burdine reminded everyone that May 19th is Election Day and polls will be open from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.
 - b. Dry reminded everyone that articles are due for the Summer Newsletter by the end of the week (5/8/2026). Lovejoy inquired if something should be added regarding the census sent by Susquehanna Township to clarify and clear up any confusion. Lovejoy noted that Susquehanna Township should send retraction letters.
 - c. Stokes shared that he has run into Lieutenant Jesse Folts on foot patrol and appreciates the visibility of Penbrook Police in the community.
9. At 7:18 p.m the public meeting was adjourned for an executive session to discuss the Police Collective Bargaining Agreement. The executive session began at 7:26 p.m. Moore departed at 7:45 p.m. The executive session ended at 7:46 p.m. with a motion to adjourn made by Burdine and a second by Lovejoy.

Respectfully submitted and attested,



Joseph Hogarth
Borough Manager and Municipal Secretary