

**Penbrook Borough
Council Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2026
6:30 PM**

1. On September 8, 2026, Council President Newcomer called the public meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag and a moment of silence.
2. The roll was taken. Present were Newcomer, Dry, Stokes, Lovejoy, Shaw, Seaman, the Mayor, and the Solicitor. The Assistant Borough Manager and Borough Manager were also in attendance. Burdine and Moore were absent.
3. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items: N/A
4. Consent Agenda
 - A. Minutes
 - i. Caucus Minutes from August 17, 2026
 - B. August 2026 Treasurer's Report
 - C. Approval of bills to be paid

A motion was made by Shaw to approve the consent agenda as is. Lovejoy seconded. There was no further discussion, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Reports:
 - A. Mayor's report: Mayor McDonald reviewed the police activity report for August.
 - i. Borough Manager/Chief of Police Hogarth reported that two officers were successfully hired. Hogarth noted that the Police Department is holding off on hiring for the third vacant position due to the upcoming expiration of grant monies that had been used to fund an officer's salary and waiting to see what the budget will support.
 1. Headshots and bios of the newly hired officers will be included in the upcoming newsletter and shared on social media.
 - B. Manager:
 - i. Assistant Borough Manager Welch provided the following updates:
 1. A Liquid Fuels Audit was completed in August 2026 for the 2025 year. The Auditor General informed that Penbrook Borough complied with the criteria set forth by PennDOT for the receipt, expenditure, and reporting of Liquid Fuels Tax Fund money.

2. An MS4 Audit was conducted on August 18th. The audit seemed to have gone well and the Borough staff felt well-prepared. Staff are waiting for the report from DEP.
3. Staff are working on the Local Share Municipal Grant application materials to support Community Park revitalization.
4. The Borough Manager and Assistant Borough Manager were able to gather some input from the staff regarding some budget line input for their areas, which was helpful and gave the staff a better idea of the planning and preparation for the budget.
5. The \$2,500 donation for the police K9 program has been returned to the donor.
6. Staff have been attending trainings through PSAB and PA1Call, and have some more coming up soon.
7. The Borough Manager and Assistant Borough Manager met with a group of DCNR staff to check out Little Valley Park and Elm Street Station Park to discuss the process of their respective projects and working with DCNR. The time spent was encouraging. The parks and their respective revitalizations were well-received and set the tone for supporting Community Park revitalization plans.
8. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) training that local government elected officials are required to complete are ICS 100 & ICS 700. The courses are asynchronous, and each takes between 1-2 hours to complete. A second option would be for EMA Coordinator Robin Bloss to schedule someone from the county to come in and hold G402, which would satisfy the 100 & 700 level training requirements.
 - a. Council expressed interest in the synchronous in-person training. Assistant Borough Manager Welch will follow up to provide dates and times to Council.

C. Solicitor:

- i. Solicitor Kern noted that she has some information to share regarding the process for 2413 Walnut Street and what steps the Borough can take, as requested in a prior meeting, and will share the details during that section of the meeting agenda.

D. Fire Chief:

- i. Brad Wright of the Penbrook Fire Company provided the July and August statistics and calls received/responded to by the Fire Company.

E. Committees

i. Codes

1. Assistant Borough Manager Welch shared an overview of the August Codes Brief provided by Building Code Official Jacob Bragunier, noting that the most common property maintenance violation was high weeds

and grass followed by accumulation of trash. Property Maintenance Officer Robin Bloss issued 15 Quality of Life tickets, and a total of 6 citations were issued in August.

2. The 2413 Walnut Street property owner's contractor submitted a building permit to rebuild the deteriorating wall to Barry Isett & Associates, which was approved. BCO Bragunier and ABM Welch had some questions regarding whether bracing still needed to occur and what safeguards were being put in place during the work being done, and followed up with Alex Thompson from Barry Isett & Associates to get some more information. Alex Thompson shared a brief update shortly before the Council meeting indicating that the design needs some modifications to account for safety and more specifics to ensure that the demolition and reconstruction are done in a way that protects the neighboring properties as well. BCO Bragunier and ABM Welch will follow up, but the Borough can wait to take any action for the time being.
3. BCO Bragunier also provided a list of condemned and at-risk properties for the Council's review and attention.

ii. Public Safety

1. Seaman discussed the committee's request for arrest reports, but were not approved to get these reports from Chief Hogarth. Newcomer inquired about why the reports were requested. Dry noted that the committee was seeking transparency. Seaman indicated wanting to use the information to get ahead of any trends being identified from the reports. Shaw noted wanting to understand the current process for what it looks like when responding to a complaint involving how an officer managed a situation. Hogarth noted willingness to answer questions and noted that the process of responding to complaints has been provided in policy documents which have been made available to all of Council.

iii. Parks and Recreation

1. Newcomer shared that he was able to attend the DCNR meeting earlier in the day and was impressed by the number of staff who attended from DCNR.
2. The community clean-up day is scheduled for Saturday, September 19 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. It has been advertised on Facebook and the Borough website. One person signed up so far. Newcomer encouraged folks to sign up. Newcomer noted that he will push out information at Parks & Recreation committee meeting. The plan for the clean-up day is to meet at Borough Building, talk through safety precautions, thank attendees for being there, and clean up what they are able to.

3. Fall Fest is coming up on September 26th from 3 to 6 p.m. The Borough will be posting information daily leading up to event. There will be free food, prizes, activities, inflatables, food trucks, live music, the Penbrook Revitalization, Inc. Property of Merit Award Ceremony, and more.

iv. Public Works

1. Shaw shared that the committee met and discussed the Public Works monthly reports being improved and the intention to conduct a time study for use of equipment and time to complete responsibilities. The committee will meet again in September.
2. Shaw gave an overview of the Public Works report. Shaw reviewed the typical maintenance of parks, trash removal, maintenance of equipment, upcoming plans, curb painting being conducted, etc.
3. Newcomer brought up the hot box being purchased and not having enough staff internally to conduct paving work with it. Shaw noted that the hot box will be discussed during the upcoming committee meeting, then reviewed during Caucus meeting to determine what should be done with the hot box.

v. Finance and Administration

1. Newcomer noted that there is no new information to report, and that the next Finance and Administration committee meeting will be held on Monday, September 14, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. followed by the Budget meeting at 6:30 p.m., which is open to everyone.

vi. Community and Government

1. Dry reviewed book bag program. Dry noted that those who signed up for a book bag but did not pick them up during the designated pick-up days were followed up with to determine if they were still picking up the bags. This captured some additional pick-ups. Dry noted that she will check how many book bags remain and determine what to do with them. Dry plans to be more intentional with next year's form and asking more specific questions regarding age and gender.
2. Dry shared that there is a plan to hold a Storytime with Santa during the holiday season.

vii. Technology

1. Newcomer shared that the committee is exploring two ITS vendor partners. Both potential vendors are more expensive than the current provider. The committee is conducting reference checks and looking to summarize information to provide a recommendation to Council. The committee is looking to add benefit and reduce risks to justify the additional spending.

2. Newcomer noted that the next committee meeting is September 17th at 5:30 p.m., at which point they will discuss with ABM Welch what the staff is having troubles with or experiencing gaps with regarding software or technology being used.

viii. Penbrook Authority

1. Dry shared that the Stormwater Authority accepted President Blain Bargo's resignation effective December 31, 2026, which aligns with the end of his term.
2. Dry noted that the Authority will be looking to designate a new President come January, and will have a position open on the Authority as well.
3. Dry noted that the Authority is seeking quotes for the clean-up of the basin at the cemetery.
4. Dry shared that the next Stormwater Authority meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m.

ix. Planning Commission

1. Stokes noted that the Commission is continuing their working sessions. The plan draft should be prepared by October or November.
2. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission secured grant funding to conduct a traffic study on Walnut St. The announcement of this project was supposed to be made by end of summer, so Stokes will follow up if nothing is announced by the end of September.
3. Stokes noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 24th at 6:30 p.m.

x. Newsletter

1. Dry noted that the next newsletter will cover December, January, and February (Winter), and information is due on November 14th. Dry requested input from each area/committee.

6. New Business

A. A discussion was held regarding the Verizon Cable Franchise Agreement.

- i. Hogarth provided some information regarding the franchise agreement, including that Cohen Law Group specifically negotiates these types of agreements. Cohen Law Group is contracted through CapCOG and provides this service to multiple municipalities. Solicitor Kern affirmed that it is recommended to engage in this process to move things along more effectively, efficiently, and to provide a better return on the fees.
- ii. Hogarth noted that the Borough receives roughly \$2,000 quarterly from Verizon. Hogarth expects cable franchise fees to dwindle as cable becomes less utilized due to the popularity of streaming services. Hogarth noted that the franchise fee is directly related to the number of subscribers in the Borough.

- iii. Newcomer inquired about what it costs to audit the franchise fee. Newcomer was curious to know what the Cohen Law Group typically finds during audits, whether audits are done on a contingency basis, and if it would be possible for this to happen in conjunction with multiple municipalities through the CapCOG. Newcomer noted that he would bring these questions back to the Finance and Administration committee to determine if an audit is feasible/worthwhile
- iv. Stokes made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-20 authorizing the execution of a cable franchise agreement between the Borough and Verizon Pennsylvania, LLC. Dry seconded. Seaman, Shaw, Newcomer, Stokes, and Dry voted in favor, and Lovejoy abstained. The motion passed.

B. A discussion was held regarding the Community Park Master Site Development Plan.

- i. Newcomer stated that the link to the master plan document was distributed to all of Council for review. Sam Meckley from RETTEW was present for the discussion and available to answer questions. Newcomer discussed some of the demographics reported, indicating that the borough has more younger people than folks assume. There were nearly 100 responses on the survey regarding the park, and input/feedback was solicited from crucial community groups (Lions, Leos, JT Dorsey, etc.). Newcomer shared his desire to fund the project with as much grant funding as possible.
- ii. Hogarth inquired about the reason for the initial park design options being included in the document despite Council voting to approve the final map. Meckley and Newcomer clarified that all design options were included in an appendix to show the historical context of the process and the decision-making that occurred to get to the final plan design.
- iii. Resident Joe Wenger inquired about the timeline for completion of the park. Newcomer noted that it is a 3-phase project and if funding was available and secured, could potentially be a 3-year project, but it is complex and will take a lot of work. Bidding takes time, weather and seasonal sports play a role in minimizing disruption.
- iv. Wenger inquired about funds needed for first phase. Newcomer noted approximately \$600,000. Discussed applying for various grant funding. Hogarth noted that there are many moving parts with grants and the process for securing contracts and work to be completed.
- v. Dry made a motion to accept the Community Park Master Site Development Plan. Stokes seconded. All present Council members voted in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. A discussion was held regarding goal setting.

- i. Newcomer inquired as to whether Resident Joe Wenger was available to facilitate discussion at upcoming Caucus meeting on September 21. Newcomer wants to have a brainstorming session regarding what is important (i.e. parks, streets/paving, sidewalks, etc.) and generate 3-5 strategic goals for the

community. These goals will be pushed down into committees to develop SMART goals to them share with the staff for action.

- ii. Resident Joe Wenger encouraged Council to think about the things they want people to think/say about Penbrook in the next year, 5 years, 10 years, etc. The format of the goal setting session will consist of being broken down into smaller groups, have guiding questions, then come together to discuss and identify common themes. The intention is for this session to at least provide a starting point for setting goals.

D. A discussion regarding the Borough's video surveillance and retention.

- i. Newcomer encouraged developing a policy regarding aspects of video surveillance and retention for the Borough.
- ii. Dry questioned what type of information is being looked for (i.e. duration that video is retained, etc.). Newcomer reviewed the sample policy that was sent to Council and how it outlines key information regarding where cameras are located, how long footage is maintained, that new/additional cameras will not be installed unless Council votes for a camera to be installed, and so on.
- iii. Hogarth noted that cameras are currently connected to Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) and footage is used for investigations. Hogarth discussed that the Borough building has many more cameras than Little Valley Park, for example, so DVR for the cameras at the Borough building is likely to rewrite itself more often. Newcomer inquired about what a reasonable expectation of retained footage would be. Hogarth noted that a week would be a safe time frame for video to be retained. Newcomer noted if the Borough has a longer retention period, hardware may need to be updated, which could cost a significant amount of money.
- iv. Newcomer voiced that the policy should include where cameras are located, where footage is stored, and who has access to recordings.
- v. Shaw inquired as to whether anyone has remote access to the recordings. Hogarth was not certain. Newcomer noted that a log should be maintained for when recordings are accessed. Hogarth confirmed that there is a log for when an incident occurs and footage is reviewed because it is noted in a report. Newcomer clarified his request for a log for every time that footage is reviewed/accessed (i.e. via a spreadsheet or something of the like), not solely when an incident is being investigated.
- vi. Shaw inquired whether folks needed to log in to access the footage. Hogarth noted that logging in was not required. Shaw asked if footage could be deleted, Hogarth noted he was uncertain, but reiterated that it is a DVR, so it is possible.

- vii. Discussion was held regarding access to the video cameras, how often footage is accessed, protecting assets, etc.
 - viii. Resident Jim Armbruster noted that there are record retention requirements set by the state which specifies requirement standards for different documents and how long they need to be maintained. Newcomer discussed there being a distinction with maintaining criminal records.
 - ix. Newcomer recommended revising the sample policy provided by Solicitor Kern and bringing the conversation to a future meeting for additional discussion.
 - x. Stokes discussed the juxtaposition and balance needed between making folks feel like they are being constantly surveilled versus protecting the investments in the community.
 - xi. Solicitor Kern noted that anything recorded by the Borough during the duration for which it is retained is technically the creation of a public record that is subject to disclosure/production under Right to Know, which is why a policy is encouraged.
 - xii. Resident Joe Wenger noted that based on the type of device used by the Borough, the Borough should be able to restrict who can/cannot delete footage
- E. Due to earlier conversations regarding the updates on the 2413 Walnut Street property, it was decided that additional discussion was not necessary at this time. ABM Welch will provide an update to the Council at the next meeting.
- F. A discussion regarding blighted properties in the Borough was held.
- i. Newcomer shared that the Borough may be underprepared for/more reactive rather than proactive to addressing blight remediation. Newcomer noted that the spreadsheet of condemned/at-risk properties should be watched closely and followed up on regularly. Newcomer wants to be more proactive in addressing blight and finding things to do address concerns.
 - ii. Newcomer discussed recent attendance at trainings that addressed strategic code enforcement and taking a more engaged approach to addressing blight in the community.
 - iii. ABM Welch shared that she will be meeting with Fred Faylona from Susquehanna Township and and Representative Justin Fleming's Chief of Staff, Sarah DeSantis, on Friday, September 11th to discuss approaches to addressing blight and the Dauphin County Land Bank.
 - iv. Stokes inquired about sharing condemned/blighted property list with planning commission. Council and Borough Manager Hogarth agreed that it would be appropriate to do so.

G. The SharePoint sites generated for Council were reviewed by Assistant Borough Manager Welch.

7. Visitors to Be Heard

A. Jim Armbruster (650 Motter Street)

- i. Thanked Council for the return of the donation made for dog training that did not occur.
- ii. Visited the Stormwater Authority meeting and shared about his private stormwater system on his property, which is privately maintained and which his neighbors' properties stormwater collects into. Armbruster discussed the West Chester case and voiced that Borough Authorities do not have the right to tax.
- iii. Requested microphones for Council in order to be able to hear discussions better.
- iv. Proposed a mural on the outside wall of the Borough Building. Armbruster noted that the Borough should encourage middle and high school students in Penbrook to submit proposed drawings of the mural. Armbruster indicated that he would be willing to contribute \$10,000, of which \$1,000 would be awarded to the winner of the design with the rest being donate toward the installation of the mural.

8. Comments of Elected Officials

- A. Lovejoy expressed concern regarding people driving the wrong way down one-way streets in the Borough and the danger that it has been causing.
 - i. Hogarth noted that police will do targeted enforcement as they are able.
- B. Stokes encouraged folks to spread the word about Fall Fest.
- C. Newcomer encouraged folks to spread the word about the community clean-up day.

9. At 9:15 p.m. Shaw made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lovejoy seconded. All present Council members voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Bailey Welch

Assistant Borough Manager and Borough Secretary