

BOROUGH OF LEHIGHTON

PHONE 610-377-4002
FAX 610-377-6638

MUNICIPAL BUILDING, P.O. BOX 29, LEHIGHTON, PA 18235



December 1, 2025

RE: Lehigh Borough Council Meeting Minutes – November 10, 2025

CALL TO ORDER – 6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation

ROLL CALL

The regular meeting of Lehigh Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday November 10, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Council Members in attendance were: Dave Arndt, Autumn Abelovsky, Dave Zimmerman, Rebecca Worthy, and Steve Hawk. Council Member absent was Jordyn Miller. Officials in attendance were: Mayor Ryan Saunders, Borough Manager Dane DeWire, Assistant Borough Manager Brooke Lichtenwalter, Borough Secretary Jessica Ahner, Solicitor James Nanovic, Borough Engineer Vanessa Nedrick, Police Chief Troy Abelovsky, Fire Chief Patrick Mriss, Light & Power Superintendent Barry Fisher, Public Works Superintendent Kris Kunkle, Recreation Director Tom Evans and Junior Councilperson Reagan Abelovsky. There were no absent Officials.

Guest Speaker Jared Soto from the Carbon Chamber & Economic Development advised that they are here to help new and developing businesses. They have a meeting the first Friday of every month for new business owners. They are looking to make businesses more aware of their resources.

Guest Speaker Tina Henninger from the Lehigh Area Merchants Association (LAMA) requested to host the 4th Annual Witches' Midnight Market on October 24, 2026 and rain date of October 25, 2026. The event went very well this year, raising between \$700.00 and \$1000.00 Per business. Tina will need a letter prior to the application. Autumn questioned if it will be held on 1st Street. Answer was yes. SH/DZ motioned to allow LAMA to host 2026 4th Annual Witches' Midnight Market on October 24, 2026 and rain date of October 25, 2026 and 5 were in favor and Autumn Abelovsky objected. 5-1

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

Tarone Blocker of 335 N 7th Street was present to speak about the soccer field and the donation he made to the Borough for the soccer field in honor of his father. He thanked the Borough for the great job they did with the fence and pavilion. He also thanked community, Fire Department, and Police Department for all the hard work that everyone has done throughout the years.

Mark Hoffman of 465 North 4th Street wrote an article for the Lehighton Borough Newsletter. He started by saying the Pool Pals installed new faucets in the men's and ladies rooms at the pool. Those faucets have been there since the opening at the pool. Pool Pals purchased a 20' umbrella from Dorney Park that will be installed at the pool. He noted they will be celebrating America 250 with a cardboard cabana in the pool in May. He added that Tom does a great job making decisions for the pool and likes the idea of having an advisory board for Tom to make decisions and bring different ideas to Council.

Rick Hess from 17 Second Avenue asked if an Ordinance is a law and how they are enforced. An ordinance is law and enforcement depends on what is being enforced. He asked if there are any new ordinances. DeWire said all Code Ordinances are managed and enforced by Barry Isett. Police Chief stated that criminal enforcement is handled by the Police Department and answered some questions Mr. Hess had.

Julie Harris of 353 Bridge Street wanted to thank all departments in the Borough for helping with the parade and making it a success.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RW/AA motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of October 6, 2025 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was continued discussion on the Recreation Center Lease with the Agency on Ageing. The lease expires 12/1/2025. Mayor spoke that the lease was not raised in ten years and proposes a lease at 4.5% over ten years. It is the County's responsibility to provide funds for the program. Tom said that we have meetings with County Commissioners and just do not hear an answer back from them. A lady spoke and sent pictures around and said that we clean up when we leave and take care of the place. When we come back the place is a mess. Other Seniors said that they have been there thirty-five years and have taken care of the place when no one else does. Autumn spoke to the Seniors and explained to them how the funds of the County work. DZ said what the seniors are asking cost more money. Autumn spoke, and would like to fix the building up to standards for seniors. SH spoke up and asked what we can do tonight. AA/SH motioned to renew lease with the State Legislative allotted amount with a state mandated percentage increase over a ten year period and 5 were in favor and Dave Zimmerman opposed. 5-1

SH/DA Motion to approve Resolution R25-2025, lease purchase agreement for (2) 2025 Patrol Vehicles.

NEW BUSINESS

Tom wants to increase 2026 Pavilion Rental rates to \$400 for members and \$450 for non-members. DeWire said we need to update the fee schedule anyway for 2026. Zimmermann said we don't have to do this tonight. Tom said people will be calling next month already to reserve. Autumn said the buildings we rent out are the Recreation Center, Annex Building, Pavilions and Pool. Council tabled for next meeting and all were in favor.

SH/DA motioned to approve Halloween Parade dates for October 17, 2026 with rain date of October 18, 2026 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DZ motioned to accept Saint Peter & Paul Catholic Church request for use of property December 20, 2025 for Children's Live Nativity Scene at the Amphitheatre and all were in favor with no objections. 6-0 Worthy questioned whether the animals will be in the Amphitheatre.

DeWire thinks they will only be in upper park and part of the Nativity display. A resident spoke up about cleanup. Autumn read from letter that the applicants will clean up.

Nedrick said that PennDOT had about 4-5 re-submissions, but now all requirements have been met for the 930 Bridge Project. Planning Commission recommends final conditional approval contingent upon a Land Development Agreement with Council. SH/RW motioned to grant final approval to PENN-DOT/DGS for their Land Development Plan at 930 Bridge Street at the recommendation of Planning Commission contingent to a Land Development Agreement with Council and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire read the winning bids from Municibid for Light & Power's 2002 Freightliner 46' Bucket truck at \$30,100.00, Vermeer RTX at \$8,433.00, and a 2000 Car Trailer at \$4,170.00. SH/AA motioned to award the winning bids and sell equipment as presented or transferring it to recreation department. 6-0

DeWire noted that the oldest truck in Superintendent Barry Fisher's fleet needs to be replaced. nt. The truck is still in good operational condition. There was discussion about selling vehicle. SH/DA motioned to purchase the 2026 Ford F-350 for Light & Power with Utility Body and Upfitting. Purchase not to exceed \$95,160.46 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DA motioned to approve Resolution R29-2025, Authorization for Lehighon Downtown Initiative (LDI) to improve Skyline Park and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

AA/SH motioned to approve Resolution R24-2025, Destruction of Police Department Retention Records and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DA motioned to approve Resolution R26-2025, Grant funding from LSA Monroe for the Less-Lethal Taser 7 Program, and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DA/SH motioned to approve Resolution R27-2025, grant funding from LSA Monroe for new patrol vehicles and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DA motioned to approve Resolution R28-2025, Grant funding from PennDot Multimodal Transportation Fund for Sergeant Stanley Hoffman Boulevard Reconstruction and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire said both Denise Niehoff and Patti Bissell are willing to help after retirement. AA/DA motioned to hire employees #059 and #068 as Part-Time Billing Clerks at \$26.25/hour on December 29 and December 15 respectively and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/RW motioned to appoint the Fire Police Candidate, pending pre-employment screening, and background check and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0 Mayor asked what the application process is for the Fire Police. Mayor asked if we get any applications to call Rich Armbruster so he can pick up. He will then give to the Police for a background check. Autumn spoke about flowing through to the HR Director.

Chief spoke about having substitute Crossing Guards. SH/DA motioned to hire two Crossing Guards, pending pre-employment screening and background check and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DA motioned to accept Parks & Recreation Resignation Letter from Councilwoman Jordyn Miller and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

AA/SH motioned to appoint Councilman David Zimmerman to Parks & Recreation Board and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DA motioned to advertise and hold a Special Budget Meeting on Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 5:00 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

President of Council – Nothing to report.

Borough Manager – DeWire noted that he has been working on the Budget. Autumn asked if DeWire could give an update on the Riverfront Property Acquisition. We revisited a Resolution last year and spent up to \$45,000 on a Riverfront Property Survey. Keystone Consulting Engineers did the Survey and determined that parts of the property are owned by Blue Ridge Real Estate. DeWire will need to budget for the purchase of these lots if Council wishes.

Borough Engineer – Paper report provided. Nedrick said that the Borough has an MS4 Inspection with DEP at Borough Hall on November 24, 2025 at 10 am.

Solicitor – Will speak in executive session.

Treasurer – Paper Report provided. Additional Bills Report and transfer request of \$400,000.00 from L&P as needed to pay bills

Mayor – Mayor attended the 2nd Annual Police National Night Out on October 7, 2025 which had a very good turn-out. He attended the Homeless Task Force Meeting in Nesquehoning and they will have space for up to 12 people and will open on December 1, 2025. The next meeting will be held at the Jim Thorpe Election Office on November 21, 2025 at 9am. On November 25, 2025 he attended The Witches Midnight Market. He also will have a few matters for executive session.

Police Chief – Paper report provided. Chief said they are holding the event Give a Gobbler, where we give to our veterans at the Valor House. Last year raised over 5000 non-perishable goods, 24 frozen turkeys and \$750. He said we hope to raise more this holiday. He said we talked last month about filling part-time position to replace Doris Vemito and at this time I think we should hold off until December.

Fire Chief – Paper report provided. Chief Mriss waiting to hear from last year's LSA grant for a pumper truck.

Light & Power Superintendent – Paper report provided. Fisher reported he will be getting the Christmas decorations up by Thanksgiving. He held off in respect for the Veteran's Parade.

Public Works Superintendent – Paper Report Provided. Kunkle spoke about the salt contract. act. DeWire spoke about getting a dump truck.

Recreation Director – Left Early.

Junior Councilperson – Reagan said as of October 22, 2025 the School District completed their assessment of properties and buildings. The assessor was impressed by the maintenance the district performs on these properties. They discussed the emergency shelter at the Recreation Center, and that it would be the municipality responsibility to provide equipment if needed. She said there was no further discussion on the 9th Street traffic light.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Administration – David Zimmerman, Chair; Jordyn Miller, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Economic Development, Buildings and Codes – Autumn Abelovsky, Chair; Dave Arndt, Co-Chair. Autumn is inquiring about the inspection reports. She asked how many rentals we have. DeWire said our best guess is 1,000 -1,200; it is very difficult to tell. She said we only did 200 inspections in 2025. Hawk mentioned that you have to apply to inspect and it is not productive to be chasing people down. DeWire said he had something for executive session.

Police, Fire and Safety – Jordyn Miller, Chair; Rebecca Worthy, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Light & Power Committee – Rebecca Worthy, Chair; Steve Hawk, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Sewer Committee – Steve Hawk, Chair; Autumn Abelovsky, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Streets, Public Works & Recreation – David Zimmerman, Chair; Dave Arndt, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Library Board – Rebecca Worthy, Chair. Nothing to Report.

Parks & Recreation Board – David Zimmermann, Chair. Zimmermann reported that the committee met in the annex building on October 26, 2025 to do an inventory check the lights, decorations, and tree stands. We met November 9, 2025 and straightened over 100 tree stands.

Canal Commission – Ryan Saunders, Chair. Saunders reported that they had another clean-up event on November 1, 2025. A week after that we had another tree come down in Parryville and cleaned that up. Per Capita bills will be going out in December.

Council of Governments - Steve Hawk, Delegate; Dave Zimmerman, Alternate. Nothing to report.

Civil Service Commission – Rebecca Worthy, Chair. Nothing to Report.

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

SH/BW motioned to accept Official Reports and all in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

AA/SH motioned to approve treasurer report, bill list in the amount of \$630,205.02 and additional bills in the amount of \$88,285.55, and transfer of \$400,000.00 from L&P as needed to pay bills and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

ADJOURNMENT

DZ/SH motioned to go into executive session for personnel at 9:33 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Council motioned to go back into regular session at 10:36 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to amend the agenda to add discussion of MEA Litigation and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/DA motioned to authorize Nanovic Law Offices to appeal the MEA litigation decision and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DA motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:39 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Ahner, Borough Secretary