

BOROUGH OF LEHIGHTON

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



May 5, 2025

RE: Lehighon Borough Council Meeting Minutes – April 7, 2025

CALL TO ORDER – 6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation

Roll Call

The regular meeting of Lehighon Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday April 7, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Council Members in attendance were: Autumn Abelovsky, Jordyn Miller, Dave Zimmerman, Rebecca Worthy, and Steve Hawk. Council Member not in attendance was John Kreitz. Officials in attendance were: Mayor Ryan Saunders, Borough Manager Dane DeWire, Police Chief Troy Abelovsky, Fire Chief Patrick Mriss, Public Works Superintendent Kris Kunkle, Light & Power Superintendent Barry Fisher, Borough Engineer Vanessa Nedrick, and Borough Secretary Jessica Ahner. Officials that were absent: Solicitor James Nanovic, Recreation Director Tom Evans, and Junior Council Member Alex Sebelin.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RW/SH motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes dated March 3, 2025 and all were in favor with no objections. 6-0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nace Property Clean-up was discussed. DeWire said the property is still not cleaned up but an attempt to pay \$100.00 towards bill was made today. The property has never been this bad and the neighbors are continuing to complain about rats and other animals. DeWire would like to know where to go next. Autumn Abelovsky noted that this has been a problem for over 20

years. She asked if there was any kind of help they could get from Office of Aging. Hawk said there should be some help we can get them so we don't have to sell their house. DeWire said he will contact the Office of Aging and see what they suggest. Tabled until next meeting.

DZ/RW made motion to proceed with the subdivision of parcel 83B-38-A86A at the expense of Joe Marks and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/AA made motion to accept the offer to purchase 3 lots owned by the Borough on/near Millway and Bridge Streets, pending payment from Nanovic Law Offices Invoices and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire said we looked at three different street sweepers, described the difference between them, and then presented financing options to Council. The machine that would fit our needs best is our second option, the Model 2025 Galaxy R-6XL. DeWire investigated the PA Clean Diesel Funding program and mentioned that it would be better suited for a truck we use every day. There was discussion on the budget for the sweeper. AA/DZ made a motion to approve financing for option 2 for up to \$320,000 for 7 years with a \$30,000 down payment. 6-0

There was discussion on the purchase of a hydro-excavator / sewer vac track. DeWire said that the Public Works Department tested a \$500,000 machine the week before. The numbers indicate that costs could be split three-ways between Public Works, Light & Power, and Water Authority. DeWire said we will revisit at a later Meeting after speaking to the Water Authority. It was mentioned that something like this would need serious budget modifications and possibly a tax raise.

Discussion on Donation to the Sixth and Coal Ballfield will be discussed during Executive Session.

DeWire gave an update on the Facade Grant Program. He said there were 16 Applicants and some minor things that are currently being addressed. DeWire noted that no funds have been distributed.

NEW BUSINESS

RW/SH motioned to approve the request from Carbon County Area Agency on Aging for use of Recreation Center and Baer Memorial Field for Senior Games from May 6th through May 14th, 2025 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/RW motioned to allow a Seventh Street Road Closure for the Lions/Lioness Carnival on Saturday, May 10, 2025 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0.

RW/SH motioned to reschedule August & November Council Meeting dates to August 11th and November 10th, 2025 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire mentioned the aging phone system at the Borough Office and how it has been on his list of required upgrades since taking the position. He spoke about how the Water Authority

phone line had been hacked for a second time this year. The Water Authority's insurance company said they were going to pull their system policy if this was not resolved. DeWire said our shared phone system is using an old operating system, Windows 6, and must be completely replaced to continue routine maintenance. He presented an estimate of \$6,134.30 with reoccurring charges of \$425.50 per month. SH/JM motioned to accept Ironton Global's Phone System quote and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to accept a resignation letter from Duane Dellecker for the Civil Service Commission and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to accept Civil Service Commission Letter of Interest from Timothy Fritz to fill vacancy and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Mayor announced that we had 5 applicants for Police Officer vacancies, 3 applicants showed up for testing, and two passes all tests. SH/JM motioned to accept the Civil Service Commission's Recommendation List and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire said that Chief Abelovsky would like to Decommission Patrol Vehicle #5 for lack of use and having outdated equipment. Chief added it is a 2015 model only used about one time per week. Chief would like to sell the vehicle on Municibid, thinks it could be worth \$8,000 or more, and would like to put the money into a newer piece of equipment. SH/RW motioned to Decommission Patrol Vehicle #5 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DZ/RW motioned to accept Planning Commission Letter of Interest from Chris Nothstein to fill vacancy and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Borough Engineer Vanessa Nedrick spoke about Conditional Approval for the Blocker Minor Subdivision and said there are only a few minor changes needed for plan and then it will be complete. SH/AA motioned to grant conditional approval for Blocker Minor Subdivision and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/AA motioned to accept 60-day extension letters from Armin Feldman, PennDOT, and the Snyder Subdivision for the Planning Commission and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Mayor Saunders explained that AMERICA250 is suggesting a Resolution saying that the Borough recognizes the celebration of America's 250th anniversary. AA/DZ motioned to approve Resolution R12-2025 supporting the AMERICA250PA plan and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire said we are required to keep residential permits for at least 5 years, but the Zoning Office currently has files in there since 1973. DZ/JM motioned to approve Resolution R13-2025, permitting the destruction of residential permits and accompanying files pre-dating January 1, 2000 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire said it would be a good idea to have a Resolution on file outlining the written Crossing Guard Agreement. SH/RW motioned to approve Resolution R14-2025, Agreement regarding Crossing Guard Compensation with Lehigh School District and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire explained that Resolution R15 is to allow Parks and Recreation to apply for their own grant funding without prior approval, up to \$100,000. It was discussed that any grant not requiring matching funds or grants whose matching funds are paid for through money raised by Parks and Rec will be given a green light. SH/DZ motioned to approve Resolution R15-2025, Authorization for Parks and Recreation to apply for future grant funding. Worthy abstained and all others were in favor with no questions or objections. 5-0-1

AA/JM motioned to advertise Ordinance number 2025-679, adopting the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire discussed the removal of three trees from the lower park. He noted that the Shade Tree Commission is on board and understands the funds will be taken from their yearly budget. He is waiting for proof of insurance from the low bidder at \$6,000. The other bidder came in at \$9,000. Discussion was had to hire the cheapest contractor who is fully insured to do the work. SH/RW motioned to approve removal of three trees in lower park up to \$9,000.00 with proof of insurance and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire explained he did not get Paving Materials advertised yet so he wants permission to purchase up to \$10,000 of paving material to complete East Alley roadwork. SH/RW motioned to Purchase up to \$10,000 in material from Lehigh Asphalt for East Alley Roadwork between North and Coal Streets and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

AA/SH motioned to approve Payment Application #4 for Advanced Pipe Technologies in the amount of \$156,033.46 for the Lehigh I/I Abatement Project and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/RW motioned to approve Advanced Pipe Technologies' 60-day project extension letter for the Lehigh I/I Abatement Project and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/JM motioned to permit three additional sanitary sewer EDUs for the new DGS facility on Bridge Street and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/JM motioned to remove Union Employees #326, #327, and #331 from the CBA Probationary Period and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to provide a \$250.00 annual donation to the United Veterans Organization (UVO) and to approve the UVO Memorial Day Weekend Parade on May 25th and May 26th, 2025 all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

There was discussion about the Community Block Party on Friday July 4, 2025 and the Special Event Plan (SEP) process. Tina Henninger of Parks & Rec said everything is the same as last year,

but there have been talks about introducing a beer garden. Autumn Abelovsky noted that there is confusion on the flow of SEP documentation and mentioned that a system needs to be in place. DeWire said it can be done two different ways; you can approve application and then SEP can be filled out if needed or everything can be filled out and submitted for approval at once. Emergency Management Coordinator Joe Flickinger said a facility use application and an SEP application should both be filled out 90 days before an event. DeWire told Council that he will think about this and bring some ideas to the next meeting. It was noted that a beer garden would require approval later. SH/DZ motioned to approve the Community Block Party on Friday July 4, 2025, pending approval of the SEP and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire mentioned that the bulletproof glass portion of the 2025 CDBG project was not approved by the state program, and instead, we are pushing to use the remaining 2025 funding for depressed curbs and sidewalks at three locations round the Grove Park. DeWire mentioned that he needs to begin the application process for 2026 funding and wanted to gauge Council's interest in stacking 2026-2028 funding amounts to install an elevator in the administration building. Council was okay with using the funds this way, so DeWire will complete the pre-application with this in mind. Flickinger mentioned that CDBG funds could be used for a culvert at Bridge Street near the Light and Power Department.

DeWire announced that Patty Bissell will be retiring from the Borough Utility Billing Office on December 12, 2025 and that we should get someone hired and trained on new billing system. DeWire said he was looking to hire a part-time clerk at \$20.00/hour per the 2025 Budget. There was discussion amongst Council, and they decided to hire a full-time employee instead. SH/RW motioned to advertise for a full-time utility clerk and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire spoke about a streaming service test that Miller performed in-house at the March Meeting. Miller spoke about the process and her opinions on the system. The transcription of meetings was mentioned, and how it simplified the Meeting Minutes was commended. Some Council members believe we are behind the ball on technology. It was noted that other municipalities live-stream their Meetings, but if personal dictation is recorded, those electronic devices are sometimes provided by the municipality. DeWire said he would talk to Nanovic about this and report back at the May Meeting.

OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

President of Council – Nothing to report.

Borough Manager – Paper report provided. Nothing to Report.

Borough Engineer – Paper report provided. Nothing to Report.

Solicitor – Not Present.

Treasurer – Paper Report provided. SH/RW motioned to approve a \$200,000 transfer from L&P to the General Fund as needed, bills in the amount of \$492,011.87, and additional bills of \$146,550.98 and all were in favor with no objections. 6-0

Mayor – Nothing to Report.

Police Chief – Paper report provided. Chief reported that he would like to hire one Police Officer from the Civil Service Commission recommendation list. He investigated a hiring incentivization grant from last year and stated that it is no longer an option.

Fire Chief – Paper report provided. Nothing to Report.

Light & Power Superintendent – Paper report provided. Fisher said himself and 3 employees attended a free training seminar in Lansdale on underground wiring and reported that the course was very beneficial. The crew has been busy trimming tree branches near power lines.

Public Works Superintendent – Paper report provided. Kunkle said he has been without an assistant and will be until June.

Recreation Director – Not Present.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Economic Development, Buildings and Codes – Autumn Abelovsky, Chair; John Kreitz, Co-Chair. Autumn Abelovsky spoke about an open house at AOK from 6pm until 8pm on April 8, 2025.

Police, Fire and Safety – Jordyn Miller, Chair; Rebecca Worthy, Co-Chair. Worthy reported that our scholarship recipient recommendation did not get selected for award

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 – John Kreitz, Chair; David Zimmerman, Co-Chair. Kreitz-Nothing to Report.

Library Board – Rebecca Worthy. Nothing to Report.

Parks & Recreation Board – Rebecca Worthy. Worthy mentioned that she is working to make the Saturday following Earth Day an annual “Lift up Lehighton Day” which would happen on April 26 this year. She went on to say she had a letter of support from the Lehighton Downtown Initiative. Mayor Saunders made a brief declaration, designating Lift up Lehighton Day.

Canal Commission – Ryan Saunders. Saunders said the Commission has been working on damage to spillway and other normal Spring clean-up items. He stated that they are also working on getting new battery-operated equipment for easier clean-up.

Council of Governments- Steve Hawk, Delegate; Dave Zimmerman, Alternate. Nothing to report. Did not attend.

Civil Service Commission – Rebecca Worthy – Worthy reported that they met to go over applicants and create the hiring list.

Junior Councilperson – Alexander Seblin. Nothing to Report. Not Present.

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICIAL’S REPORTS

SH/RW motioned to accept the official’s reports as presented and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

ADJOURNMENT

RW/SH motioned to into Executive Session at 9:00 pm for litigation and personnel and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to go back into regular session at 10:15 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to erect a fence and pavilion at the Sixth and Coal Ballfields at the expense of the donor and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to hire candidate #1 as a full-time police officer, pending acceptance of conditional offer and completion of background check and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Ahner, Borough Secretary