



BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS

53 W Baltimore Pike 2nd floor

P. O. Box 658

Chester Heights, PA 19017

General Council Meeting Minutes

December 15, 2025

Call To Order President Young called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call Natalie Young, President
Jeanne Montgomery, Vice President
Drew Baum, Member of Council
Philip Block, Member of Council
Albert Cochrane, Member of Council
Tim Hudak, Member of Council

Not Present Marta Driscoll – Member of Council, Ginamarie Ellis – Mayor, Mike Kissinger – Engineer

Officials Present Alex Baumler, Esq., Solicitor
Kyle Miller, Esq., Solicitor
Megan Todaro, P.E., Engineer

2026 Budget Hearing

The 2026 budget was presented for Council discussion. A preliminary draft had been advertised and available for public inspection for nearly 30 days. Minor revisions were made prior to adoption, and related ordinances and resolutions for tax levies will follow budget approval.

Council reviewed the three components of the budget: the General Fund, Liquid Fuels Fund, and Fire Protection Fund.

General Fund:

Several non-material adjustments were discussed and approved. Revenue changes included an increase in Local Services Tax (LST) revenue based on updated county data and an adjustment to miscellaneous grants to reflect anticipated grant funding, which is considered pass-through and does not affect net totals. Total income decreased by approximately \$10,000 from the preliminary budget. The prior-year carryover was reduced due to updated expense projections.

Expense-side changes included correction of a typographical error in the audit line item, consolidation and renaming of personnel line items, restoration of the fire marshal expense to prior-year levels, an increase in the LST contribution for public safety, removal of a duplicate MS4 feasibility study line item, and recalculations of payroll and



unemployment taxes based on staff adjustments. Overall, total General Fund expenses decreased by approximately \$9,900, which was deemed not a material change.

Council members asked clarifying questions regarding the increase in miscellaneous grants and the comprehensive plan contract balance, which were addressed by staff.

Liquid Fuels Fund:

No substantive changes were made from the preliminary budget. The road maintenance allocation, including the Summit Lane project, was confirmed as accurate.

Fire Protection Fund:

Adjustments were made to reflect updated assessment data used to calculate the millage rate. A contingency line item was added to account for potential tax assessment appeals anticipated in 2026.

With discussion concluded and no further questions, Council was advised that the next step was a motion and vote to adopt the 2026 budget, beginning with the General Fund, followed by the remaining budget components and related ordinances and resolutions.

2026 General Fund Budget

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Baum) voted and approved the 2026 General Fund Budget.

2026 Fire Protection Fund Budget

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Baum) voted and approved the 2026 Fire Protection Fund Budget. Councilmember Philip Block abstained and refused to fill out abstention form.

2026 Liquid Fuels Fund Budget

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Montgomery | Block) voted and approved the 2026 Liquid Fuels Fund Budget.

Ordinance #222 to fix the Tax Levy for the 2026 Fire Tax.

Borough Council enacted an ordinance levying the Fire Service Appropriations Tax for fiscal year 2026. The tax rate is set at **0.3965 mills**, equivalent to **\$39.65 per \$100,000 of assessed real property value**. All other Borough taxes remain unchanged. The ordinance includes standard repealer, severability, and effective date provisions in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Cochrane) voted and approved Ordinance #222 levying the Fire Service Appropriations TAX for fiscal year 2026. Councilmember Philip Block abstained and refused to fill out abstention form.



Resolution #2025.12.B – Fixing the Tax Rate for the 2026 Year:

Council adopted a resolution fixing the Borough tax rates for the 2026 fiscal year following adoption of a balanced budget in accordance with the Borough Code. The resolution establishes a real estate tax rate of 0.20058 mills for general purposes (equivalent to \$20.06 per \$100,000 of assessed value) and a realty transfer tax of 0.5% of the gross consideration on real estate transfers within the Borough. The resolution repeals any conflicting prior resolutions and was duly adopted on December 15, 2025.

MOTION Upon Motion, Council (Block | Hudak) voted and approved Resolution #2025.12.B Fixing the Tax Rate for the 2026 Year.

Public Comment: Cynthia Morano – wanted Darlington Woods permit fees recalculated with the new Fee Schedule for her personal review.

Solicitor’s Report: 82 Baltimore Pike – HVAC Permit Fee Review

MOTION Upon Motion, Council voted to table the 82 Baltimore Pike – HVAC Permit Fee Review.

Draft Borough Manager Ordinance

Council reviewed a preliminary draft ordinance to create the position of Borough Manager, as required by Borough Code. The draft, based on language from 2019, was presented for discussion only and is not proposed for adoption at this time.

It was noted that the ordinance could be brief, with duties outlined in the employee handbook, and that a separate employment contract is typical but not required. Council acknowledged that duties of existing offices have changed and revisions would be needed.

The draft will be shared with incoming Council members for review. There is no time requirement to act, and Council members were invited to provide feedback as a starting point for future consideration.

Natural Lands Trust Rick Trailis – Final Report – Consider Motion

- The council adopted the Mini Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan, a concise, grant-funded strategic guide developed over a year to prioritize community recreation needs and enable future funding opportunities (00:34).
- The plan’s top priority is opening the newly acquired Powell property to the public through a phased approach: initial trail access and parking, followed by a detailed master plan to guide long-term development.
- Expanding the trail network to connect parks, residential areas, and the train station was emphasized, despite anticipated challenges like topography and property easements along Valleybrook Road and Baltimore Pike.



- Maintaining and upgrading existing parks, especially Community Park, was highlighted, including safety inspections and ADA compliance improvements.
- The plan recommends establishing Friends of the Parks and Trails groups to boost community engagement in maintenance and programming, a suggestion supported by council members to enhance volunteer participation.
- Opportunities for partnerships with local organizations such as the Garnet Valley School District were identified to develop educational outdoor programs at the Powell property.
- The plan serves as a flexible guide, not a binding law, allowing adjustments based on changing community needs and finances.
- A resolution to formally adopt the plan will follow to enable final grant reimbursement from Delaware County (00:59).

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Block | Montgomery) voted and adopted the Mini Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan prepared by Natural Lands Trust – Tick Trailis.

Engineer's Report: Rose Hill Financial Security Release No. 11 in the amount of \$50,770.50

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Baum | Hudak) voted and approved the Rose Hill Financial Security Release No. 11 in the amount of \$50,770.50.

One Smithbridge Sewer PennDOT application for M950AA.

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Block) voted and approved the application for PennDOT form M950AA for One Smithbridge Road.

68 Baltimore Pike – Ashley's Sewage Facilities Planning Module

The Board discussed the planning module related to Ashley's at 68 Baltimore Pike. It was noted that the project had been previously reviewed and approved, and the current item was limited to approving the submission of the revised Act 537 planning module. The revision reflects changes to the treatment facility located at the rear of the property that were required due to a sewer issue in order for the project to move forward.

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Montgomery) voted and approved 68 Baltimore Pike – Ashley's Sewage Facilities Planning Module.

Old Quarry Knoll Maintenance Bond – Deed of Dedication

Meeting Minutes Summary – Deed of Dedication (Old Quarry Knoll Development)

Council reviewed a proposed deed of dedication related to the Old Quarry Knoll development as part of the project closeout. The developer is offering dedication of the right-of-way along the road within the development, intended to provide the Borough



with rights for public purposes such as sidewalks, green space, or potential trail expansion. A maintenance bond for the project closeout was also submitted.

During discussion, Council raised questions about whether the document dedicated only the right-of-way or also included dedication of the roadway and curbing. Members expressed concerns regarding potential Borough responsibilities, including roadway maintenance, trees, landscaping, and utilities. It was noted that landscaping and trees would be covered under the 18-month maintenance bond, but clarification was needed regarding long-term obligations and the exact scope of dedication.

Due to inconsistencies in the language referencing “right-of-way,” “roadway,” and “public street,” and the absence of clear documentation confirming dedication of the roadway itself, Council determined that additional clarification was necessary before taking action.

A motion was made and seconded to table the item pending further review and clarification.

Old Business: No Report

New Business: Councilmember Block:
Councilman Block thanked Council for the opportunity to serve, stating it had been an honor and a privilege to work with the Council and serve the community. He expressed his appreciation and respect for the Council members and noted that, while service had its challenges at times, it was always an honor. Council thanked him for his remarks.

Council members expressed appreciation to those concluding their service, thanking them for their dedication during the past year and prior years.

Councilmember Baum was recognized for eight years of service. Remarks emphasized mutual respect among council members and the importance of working as a team, regardless of political affiliation, with decisions guided by what is best for Borough residents. It was noted that resident participation in borough affairs should be encouraged, as broader involvement leads to stronger ideas and better outcomes. The comments concluded with congratulations to incoming officials and a reminder that their primary duty is to serve the residents.

Public Comment: Eileen Lehmann – Concerns about fern catching fire by lighting.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Block) voted to adjourn the General Meeting at 8:26PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darlene Kurten