



BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS
53 W Baltimore Pike 2nd floor
P. O. Box 658
Chester Heights, PA 19017
General Council Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2025

Executive Session: 6:45 PM – 7:04 PM Council met in Executive Session in accordance with Act 84 – the Sunshine Law to discuss matters of potential litigation and personnel.

Call to Order President Young called the General Council Meeting to Order at 7:04PM 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 Cocherane, Member of Council
Marta Driscoll, Member of Council

Member & Official Absent: Tim Hudak, Ginamarie Ellis and Alex Baumler, Esq.

Officials Present Kyle Miller, Esq., Solicitor
Michael Kissinger, P.E., Engineer

Public Comment: Paul Patrol - Walnut Hill Sewer - request for update.

Solicitor's Report **2025.2026 Winter Services Agreement – Bid Opening**

Two were received:

1. Dan Kelly's Landscaping
 - Rate per hour \$150.00
 - Cost of Road Salt \$150.00
2. MOR Construction Services, Inc.
 - Rate per hour \$225.00
 - Cost of Road Salt \$225.00

Council decided to table the awarding of the 2025.2026 Winter Services contract until the December 1st meeting to gather more detailed information on vendor capacity and pricing.

Resolution#2025.11.B – LSA Grant for Rachel Kohl Library to apply for a \$200,000 grant to fund the library roof replacement and solar panel installation.



MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Block | Driscoll) voted and approved Resolution #2025.11.B for the Local Shares Grant application supporting the Rachel Kohl Library to fund the library roof replacement and solar panel installation.

Open Project Report:

The zoning officer has provided markups to the existing zoning code; these include minor typos and easy corrections. A line-by-line review is underway, and a cleaned-up version will be presented to Council when ready.

Work on the proposed permit fee schedule is nearly complete. Discussions with recommended contacts are helping to simplify and finalize the schedule. The goal is to present the finalized proposal by the next meeting for potential implementation in fiscal year 2026.

Engineer's Report 8 Smithbridge Road – Financial Security Release \$62,874.90.

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Driscoll | Block) voted and approved the Financial Security Release for 8 Smithbridge Road in the amount of \$62,874.90, which would leave a balance of \$13,409.00. Council Member Baum abstained from voting and refused to sign abstention form.

Open Project Report:

Road Program – Summit Lane Paving:

Bid documents are being prepared for the Summit Lane paving project. The goal is to advertise the bid in January and award it in February, though the schedule can be adjusted at Council's direction. Paving work is expected to occur in the spring, as winter paving is not recommended.

Powell Park:

New signage has been installed. An inspection is scheduled for December 5, after which the Borough expects the release of all reimbursement grant funding. Work continues with ScapeWorx to develop the scope for the driveway project.

One Smithbridge Road:

The engineer reported no new progress on the One Smithbridge Rd connection. Discussions are still ongoing between One Smithbridge Rd and the Southwest Treatment Plant as they work through options. The Borough indicated it could install the required line; however, doing so would trigger prevailing wage requirements for the entire project. As a result, it remains in One Smithbridge's interest to install the line themselves, and negotiations continue.



Old Business: 2026 Draft Preliminary Budgets

Preliminary Budget Overview

- Most items are standard and expected; two significant new items were highlighted that were not previously discussed with Council.
- Council will vote only to *advertise* the preliminary budget, which can still be adjusted before final adoption. Additional review time is available, and major changes could be re-advertised in December if necessary.

1. General Fund – New/Unexpected Items

A. MS4 Feasibility Study (Environmental Requirements)

- A feasibility study is needed related to MS4 stormwater runoff mandates.
- Prior proposed projects may not fully satisfy updated requirements.
- Pennoni will evaluate:
 - What prior actions may qualify for credits.
 - What new projects are needed to avoid potential penalties (none issued to date).
 - Opportunities on borough-owned property (notably the Powell property) for higher-value environmental improvements, such as stream restoration or wetlands.

- Estimated cost: \$10,000–\$20,000.

- Purpose: To determine necessary MS4 compliance steps and support grant applications for future project funding.

- Budget line to be added: 408.343 – \$20,000 (not yet shown in the draft).

B. Borough Facilities Feasibility Study (Office Space Evaluation)

- The current lease ending in ~2 years, with no renewal provisions or right of first refusal.
- Study will assess:
 - Borough-owned properties (e.g., DeSalvo Park) for potential construction.
 - Available rentable properties.
 - Existing buildings that could be purchased or repurposed.
- Pennoni would evaluate site suitability, costs, and constraints (grading, construction needs, etc.).
- Estimated cost: \$10,000–\$20,000, budgeted at \$20,000 under 408.5.

Budget Adjustment Needed:

- Add the missing \$20,000 MS4 study line.
- Increase carryover line 389 by \$20,000 (from \$3,443,196.62 to \$3,643,196.62).
- These changes will be included in the advertised preliminary budget.

2. Budget Methodology & Line-Item Questions

- Council discussed concerns about past overestimation or underestimation of line items.
- Budget is not built by applying a flat percentage increase; each line item is reviewed individually.
- Quotes and known 2026 costs were used where available; otherwise, averages or documented historical data were used.



- Underspent funds remain in the general fund; they do not automatically roll forward into specific line items.
- Staff offered to prepare exhibits showing past years or specific variances if council members request them.

Key variances discussed:

- Legal/Attorney fees were significantly underestimated in prior years; the new budget adjusts to a more accurate figure (~\$70,000).
- Certain one-time or cyclical items (e.g., hydrant charges, inspection fees) were adjusted to reflect actual need.

3. Fire Protection Fund – Proposed Tax Increase

- Current fire tax revenue: \$143,000.
- Proposed revenue target: \$190,000.
- This corresponds to a proposed millage change from 0.28 → 0.42 (pending final certified assessment from the County).
- Estimated impact on the average household: under \$50 annually.
- Rationale:
 - Based on budgetary deficits presented by the fire company last year (~\$80,000).
 - Not based on the Wawa assessment issue; however, the final millage will adjust after certified assessment figures arrive.
- No vote on the millage rate tonight; the rate will be set after the assessment is finalized.

4. Process and Next Steps

- Council will vote tonight only to advertise the preliminary budget (with adjustments).
- The document will be available for public review at the Borough office.
- Council members may request additional financial detail over the next two weeks.
- Material changes can still be made after advertising.
- If significant revisions are needed, the budget can be re-advertised in early December.

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Driscoll | Block) vote and approved the 2026 Preliminary Budgets for the General Fund, Liquid Fuels Fund and the Fire Protection Fund and authorized the Secretary to advertise.

Consider Motion to authorize the Solicitor to DRAFT the Resolution for Chester Heights Borough Tax Mil and the Ordinance for the increased Fire Tax.

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Block | Driscoll) voted and authorized the Solicitor to DRAFT the Resolution for Chester Heights Borough Tax Mil and the Ordinance for the increased Fire Tax.

Public Comment: Eileen Lehmann – Concerns of beginning kind and respectful.



Debbie Miller – permitting process requiring the fire company approval for solar panels.

Paul Patrol – 2026 Winter Services bids.

Cynthia Mor – Walnut Hill speed hump painting.

ADJOURNMENT Upon Motion, Council (Driscoll | Block) voted to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting at 8:16PM.