



BOROUGH OF CHESTER HEIGHTS
53 W Baltimore Pike 2nd floor
P. O. Box 658
Chester Heights, PA 19017
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2025

Call to Order	Acting President Young called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
Members Present	Natalie Young, Acting President Jeanne Montgomery, Acting Vice President Drew Baum, Councilmember Albert Cochrane, Councilmember Marta Driscoll, Councilmember Tim Hudak, Councilmember Ginamarie Ellis, Mayor
Members Absent	Philip Block, Councilmember
Officials Present	Alex Baumler, Esq., Solicitor Kyle Miller, Esq., Solicitor Michael Kissinger, P.E., Engineer

Chester Heights Fire Company Operations and Budget Report

- Volunteer Force: 26 active members (18 operational firefighters, 5–6 administrative); fully volunteer with no financial compensation.
- Call Volume: Average of 374 calls per year over the past 20 years — more than one call per day.
- Member Commitment: Volunteers contribute about \$250 annually out-of-pocket to participate.
- Training & Certification: Over 2,500 training hours annually; certifications include:
 - 268 hours minimum for interior firefighting
 - 184 hours for EMTs (40% of members certified)
 - 72 hours for drivers
 - 180 hours for officers
- Special Capabilities: One of only nine water rescue-qualified teams in the county; 85% of members are swift water qualified, 50% technician level.
- 2025 Operating Budget: \$134,000, supported by approximately \$264,000 in total revenue from:
 - Fire tax – \$143,000
 - Local service tax (LST) – \$70,000



- Thornbury Township contribution – \$42,000
- Fire inspections – \$8,000
- Donations – ~\$1,000
- Major Expenses:
 - Building – \$35,000
 - Insurance – \$26,500
 - Equipment – \$7,200
 - Medical supplies – \$3,800
 - Training – \$21,000
 - Vehicle service – \$30,000
 - Loan payments – \$31,000
- Capital Planning: \$130,000 placed annually into savings; positive net position of ~\$105,000 for future replacements and upgrades.
- Future Outlook: Planning \$1.1 million engine purchase in 2028; vehicle costs have risen sharply (e.g., rescue truck increased from \$620K in 2020 to over \$1.2M).

Public Comment

Russ Booth – Concerns on a neighboring property and having it cleaned up.

Resident – Rose Hill Way - Concerns with retaining wall construction and driveway reconstruction.

Eileen Lehmann – Concerns with Fire Department / Advanced Life Support (ALS) Services.

Matt Hatfield – Not a Resident of the Borough - representing the Propstoppers Radio Control Aircraft Club, introduced himself and the organization, which designs, builds, and flies model aircraft. Hatfield mentioned interest in a large field between the Camp Meeting area and Rose Hill townhomes and asked for help contacting the property owner to explore possible use and community partnerships focused on aerospace education.

Engineer's Report

- Powell Park:
 - Coordination continues with the County; sign locations have been approved. Two signs will be installed—one at Smithbridge Road and one at the park entrance.
 - Installation of signs is the next step to allow for inspection and release of grant funds.
 - There is flexibility regarding the number of parking spaces and ADA requirements at this stage, allowing work to proceed quickly.
 - Work will continue with Scapeworx to prepare bids for the walkway, driveway, and parking areas.
 - Temporary mowing and tree clearing are being coordinated; the engineer will contact Scapeworx while Philip is unavailable.
 - The trail layout may be adjusted to avoid trees; dead trees will be removed for safety.
 - Roadway access will be shifted within the 50-foot easement to preserve existing trees and improve buffering for the adjacent property.



- Project steps include: (1) sign installation, (2) driveway construction, (3) parking and walking trail/tree work as needed.
- Logtown Road Sewer Module:
 - Engineering review is complete, and maintenance agreements pose no risk to the Borough.
 - A resolution is required for formal adoption and will be placed on the next meeting agenda.

Engineer's Report

- Winter Services Contract:
The base plowing contract has been advertised; bids will open May 17 and be awarded that evening. The new form includes two optional one-year renewals to avoid rebidding costs each year.
- Private-Drive Snow Program:
Staff are drafting a plan modeled on Township's approach, letting HOAs or owners sign private contracts with the Borough for plowing at a nominal fee while protecting the Borough from liability or ownership issues. Participation must be open to all private properties. Council discussed setting a budget cap and ensuring HOA residents are not double-charged. Further cost analysis and engineering review are underway; updates expected in November.
- 19 Smithbridge Road:
The prior 2023 settlement is void. The Borough engineer and code officer will inspect the site to verify compliance with storm-water and zoning rules; possible noise-ordinance enforcement will also be examined.
- 11 Smithbridge Road:
Possible unauthorized use for dumpster storage; the zoning officer will investigate separately.
- Zoning Ordinance Amendment:
Draft update adding pool-fence and general use regulations is complete and will be brought to the next meeting for authorization to advertise, targeting adoption in December.

Old Business President Young – Please submit budget requests for committees to Darlene by Wednesday for inclusion.

New Business 2026 Calendar Meeting Dates & Holidays

MOTION Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Montgomery) voted and approved the 2026 Calendar Meeting Dates & Holidays.

CHFC Audit Proposal

Motion Request: Fire Company Audit

Background:

- The Borough noted that audits for the Fire Company have not been completed for several past years.
- Current auditors provided a quote of \$30,000 to cover audits for 2021–2024.



- The Borough's budget allows \$9,000 per year for audits.
- Auditing the Fire Company is required by state code because they receive tax dollars.

Proposal:

- Complete audits for the earliest two years (2021–2022) at a cost of \$7,500 per year, totaling \$15,000.
- This amount exceeds the annual budget by \$5,000 but allows the Borough to begin catching up on missed audits.

MOTION

Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Montgomery) voted to approve to authorize the Borough to proceed with audits of the Fire Company for 2021–2022 at a total cost of \$15,000.

General Code Invoice – Annual maintenance eCode360 in the amount of \$1,195.00, does not need a motion this item was budgeted.

Committee List – Updates – Council reviewed the updates.

PA Labor and Industry

A complaint was submitted to the PA Labor & Industry on borough letterhead. It was not authorized by the council. Council discussed lack of disclosure to members and potential risk to the borough. Speakers noted the issue may be mostly resolved but acknowledged it was mishandled and emphasized the need for transparency and proper procedures.

Public Comment

Eileen Lehmann – Concerns ALS/ambulance services but supporting them could improve emergency response amid increasing demand.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon Motion, Council (Hudak | Driscoll) voted to adjourn the General Meeting at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Kurten