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Borough Council Workshop Meeting
July 8, 2026

Call to Order - Mrs. Dekar called the July Borough Council Workshop meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Roll Call - The following members of the Borough Council were present; Cori Belles, James Bentley, James Daly, Derrick Hall, Dan Wayman, Jessica Meyer, and Jessie Dekar. **Also present**; Henry Farley, Mayor; Gil Crossett, Fire Chief; Bruce Hoffman, Assistant Police Chief, Blane Lathrop, DPW Foreman; Robert Repasky, Assistant Fire Chief; Daniel Reynolds, Police Chief; and David Jarrett, Borough Manager.

Citizens to be Heard – There were none.

Approval of Bills List and Supplemental Bills List – June 25 – July 1, 2026 - A motion was made by Mr. Daly and seconded by Miss Meyer to approve the bills list and supplemental bills list for the period of June 25 – July, 1, 2026. **Under the question**: There were none. **Roll Call: Mrs. Belles, Mr. Bentley, Mr. Daly, Mr. Hall, Mr. Wayman, Miss Meyer, and Mrs. Dekar; YES.**

Correspondence Summary – The following items were discussed and will be added to the July Council meeting agenda for approval;

- Conference Attendance Request – Mr. Jarrett explained that he submitted the request to attend a two day conference in August hosted by the Pennsylvania Township Association.

- Code Enforcement Position – Mr. Jarrett explained that the Mr. Pierce has decided to not accept the position and the employment opportunity will be re-advertised.

- Teamster Correspondence – Mr. Jarrett explained that the Borough received a letter from the Teamsters Local 118 advising that they have selected their arbitrator for the police contract negotiations. Mr. Jarrett explained that Attorney Christopher Gabriel will serve as the Borough's arbitrator and that Attorney Gabriel and the Union's arbitrator will together selected an impartial arbitrator.

- Solicitation & Peddling Ordinance – Mr. Jarrett explained that Attorney Foster has prepared the amendment to delete the Solicitation and Peddling Ordinance that allows solicitation and peddling in Howard Elmer Park.

Elected & Appointed Officials Questions & Comments - Mrs. Dekar asked Mayor Farley if he had an opportunity to set up the meeting with Athens Borough (Mayor, Council President, and Police Chief) to discuss if there was an interested from them in merging Police Departments. Mayor Farley stated that he had not set up the meeting yet and would likely wait until September to do so.

Department Head Reports - The following reports were presented to the Borough Council;

Fire Department - There were no questions or comments.

Police Department – Mrs. Dekar asked if there was an update on the new computer system, and Chief Reynolds reported that he requested a "go live" date from the program manager. Mrs. Dekar asked Chief Reynolds to look into renewing the contract with Visual Alert for 2027.

Mayor Farley asked that Attorney Foster review the contract to determine what steps can be taken to ensure that the new system is operable before the current system is taken offline. Attorney Foster stated that he will coordinate a meeting with Chief Reynolds, Assistant Chief Hoffman, and Mayor Farley very soon. Mr. Wayman noted that the enforcement of the new e-bike and bicycle helmet ordinance that was passed in June has resulted in the issuance of warnings already.

Borough Manager – Mr. Jarrett reviewed the items listed on his report and addressed the following items;

- 2027 Budget – Mr. Jarrett explained that the budget process has started and the budget worksheets have been distributed to Department Heads and that the first draft of the budget will be presented to the Borough Council in October.
- E-Recycling Event Fees – Mr. Jarrett asked the Borough Council to consider implementing fees before the next e-recycling event is held in October.
- Appointment of Steering Committee - Mr. Jarrett also asked the Borough Council to give consideration to they would like to appointment of a steering committee for the upcoming project with PA-DCED to review and revise the Borough's Comprehensive Plan.
- South Keystone Avenue Parking – Mr. Jarrett explained that the new parking area that PennDOT created along South Keystone Avenue as part of the PA199 project is creating a traffic hazard for motorists. Mr. Jarrett suggested that the area be designated as No Parking between 7:00am to 11:00am so that individuals parking there all day and walking to work cannot park there before 11:00am and customers going to the Original Italian Pizza restaurant which opens at 11:00am can utilize the parking spaces if they choose too.

  A motion was made by Mr. Daly and seconded by Mrs. Belles to remove the first parking space (closest to Hayden Street) and designate the remaining spaces as No Parking 7:00am to 11:00am for a 45 day trial period. **Under the question**: Mrs. Belles asked that the business owners be advised of the new parking restriction. **Roll Call: Mrs. Belles, Mr. Bentley, Mr. Daly, Mr. Hall, Mr. Wayman, Miss Meyer, and Mrs. Dekar; AYE.**

Mrs. Dekar asked if there was an update on the playground project by First Citizens Community Bank, and Mr. Jarrett explained that the group spearheading the project is waiting to hear about the grant that was submitted for the project.

Mrs. Belles suggested that a promotional video be developed to highlight that numerous improvements begin made in the downtown and throughout the Borough. Mrs. Belles also suggested that decorative lighting be installed in the walkway that connects the downtown to the municipal parking lot to enhance that area.

Code Enforcement – There were no questions or comments on the monthly report. Mrs. Dekar stated that there is a property on Iroquois Street near the intersection with Oneida Street that has a bush that is overgrown and impeding the line of sight at the intersection. Mr. Jarrett stated that Mr. Kaiden will look into the issue when he returns from vacation.

Borough Solicitor – There were no questions or comments.

Public Works Department – Mr. Lathrop stated that the contractor hired by PennDOT to repair the East Lockhart Street bridge has asked PennDOT to consider allowing them to close the bridge for two (2) weeks so that they can complete the project sooner. Mr. Lathrop explained that detour will be set up directing motorist to use the Susquehanna River bridge in Athens Borough during the project.

Mr. Jarrett stated that the contractor hired by PennDOT to complete decking repairs on the Packer Avenue Bridge is expected to begin the project during the week of July 20th. Traffic will be limited to one lane with traffic control and the project is expected to take four (4) weeks to complete.

Emergency Management – There were no questions or comments.

Planning Commission – There were no questions or comments.

Fire Engine Purchase – Assistant Chief Repasky presented the following statement to the Borough Council;

We requested this meeting to gain a clear understanding of the Borough's plans regarding the replacement of Engine 2 and the purchase of a new fire apparatus.

More than a year ago, our committee was tasked with developing specifications and working with multiple manufacturers to identify the apparatus that would best meet the department's operational needs while providing the greatest value to the Borough. After several months of research, evaluating proposals, and working directly with manufacturers, we presented a recommendation that met all required specifications at the most competitive price available.

Since that recommendation was made, the cost of the apparatus has increased by approximately $26,000, and the projected delivery timeline has been pushed to the end of ***2028****. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated increase. Across the fire apparatus industry, manufacturers continue to implement annual price increases, often in the 2–4% range, driven by rising material and labor costs and ongoing supply chain challenges. Every year this purchase is delayed, the Borough can reasonably expect to pay substantially more for the same apparatus.*

Equally concerning is the possibility of losing our current production position. Manufacturers schedule apparatus years in advance, and delaying authorization could result in forfeiting our place in the production queue. If that occurs, delivery could easily be pushed into ***2029 or beyond****, further extending the life of an apparatus that is already* ***26 years old****.*

The longer Engine 2 remains in service, the costlier it becomes to maintain. As emergency vehicles age, repairs become more frequent, replacement parts become harder to obtain, and maintenance costs continue to increase. More importantly, unexpected mechanical failures can place the apparatus out of service without warning, reducing the department's operational readiness and potentially requiring mutual aid to fill the gap. Not to mention, if something breaks down during a fire, it could result in the loss of life and property. Investing significant funds into maintaining an apparatus that has already exceeded much of its expected frontline service life is not a prudent long-term use of taxpayer dollars.

We fully recognize the financial challenges facing the Borough and appreciate the difficult decisions that must be made during the budgeting process. However, our understanding is that funding for this project has already been accounted for in the current capital budget. Delaying the purchase does not eliminate the expense—it simply increases it while postponing the benefits of replacing an aging piece of critical emergency equipment. ***As both firefighters and taxpayers****, we believe moving forward now is the most fiscally responsible course of action. Purchasing the apparatus today locks in the lowest available price, preserves the earliest possible delivery schedule, avoids additional annual price increases, and reduces the growing maintenance burden associated with Engine 2.*

This is not simply a request to replace an old truck—it is an investment in the safety of our firefighters, the reliability of emergency response, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Every year of delay increases costs, extends delivery timelines, and places greater strain on aging equipment that our community depends upon during its most critical moments.

We respectfully ask the Borough Council to authorize the purchase of the replacement Engine 2 and allow this project to move forward before additional costs and delays make it even more difficult to accomplish. Acting now is the most responsible financial decision and the best way to ensure the department can continue providing the level of service our community expects and deserves.

Assistant Chief Repasky stated that the cost of the new engine has already increased $26,000.00 and if it was ordered this month it would not be delivered until 2028.

Mrs. Belles asked what the cost outlay would be and Assistant Chief Repasky explained that the current cost is $1.1 million but there are options for discounts such as pre-payment for the entire truck or only the chassis. Assistant Chief Repasky further stated that he has looked into the possibility of grant funding for the new fire engine and that PA-DCED's Local Share Account – Statewide grant program opens in September and that up to $1 million dollars could be received.

Chief Crossett questioned the Borough Council regarding the allocation of funding in the annual budget for fire apparatus. Chief Crossett stated that the funding has been taken away in recent years without explanation. Mr. Jarrett explained that the funding was re-allocated to pay the debt service on the new aerial truck that total $150,000.00 annually.

Miss Meyer asked if the Fire Department had a back-up plan if the current fire engine become inoperable, and Assistant Chief Repasky stated that the engine would be taken out of service.

Mrs. Dekar asked if the Fire Department could utilize mutual aid to assist the Borough, and Assistant Chief Repasky stated that mutual aid would be needed.

Assistant Chief Repasky stated that Matt Williams from the Central Bradford Progress Authority offered to help prepare the grant application and that Mr. Williams has experience with securing grants. Mrs. Belles stated that Mr. Jarrett has a good success rate with grant applications too.

Mr. Jarrett stated that he can prepare the grant application if that is what the Borough Council would like him to do. A motion was made by Mrs. Belles and seconded by Mr. Hall to direct Mr. Jarrett to prepare a grant application for the new fire engine. **Under the question**: There were none. **Roll Call: Mrs. Belles, Mr. Bentley, Mr. Daly, Mr. Hall, Mr. Wayman, Miss Meyer, and Mrs. Dekar; AYE.**

Mrs. Belles commended the leadership of the Fire Department for their dedication and service, but it is now time to develop a succession plan and determine if the Department's current model works or is it time to revise the model to better reflect current and future conditions.

Recess – Mrs. Dekar recessed the meeting at 6:29pm.

Executive Session – The Borough Council went into executive session at 6:35pm to discuss the negotiation of the police contract and potential arbitration. The session ended at 7:20pm.

Adjourn – A motion was made by Mr. Wayman and seconded by Mr. Hall to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm. There were no objections.

Respectfully Submitted,

David M. Jarrett
Borough Manager/Secretary