

Penndel Borough Council Meeting Minutes

January 6, 2025

Council President John Stratz called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at the Meeting

Council President John Stratz  
Council Vice President Barbara Heffelfinger – via telephone  
Councilman Mark Moffa - absent  
Councilwoman Robin Valentis  
Councilman Gary Nickerson  
Councilman Bud Murphy  
Councilman Bob Winkler  
Mayor Tom Sodano

Also present at the meeting

Barbara Kirk, Hill Wallack  
Marie Serota, Secretary/Treasurer

Moment of Silence

-Former President James Earl Carter passed away on 12/29/24.  
-Mary Paul passed away on 12/11/24. She had been a resident of Penndel since 1960 and was constable for the borough at one time.  
-Those that lost their lives at the capital riot/insurrection on January 6, 2021.

Council or Borough Announcements

Mayor Sodano said for the record, that he objects to the nomenclature used regarding the January 6th incident.

Consent Items

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING AND TO PAY THE FOLLOWING BILLS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2024:

General Fund	\$38,679.33
Fire Tax Fund	\$ 63.36
Refuse Fund	\$23,698.24
Sewer Fund	\$26,549.66
Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 8,495.96
Sewer Capital Fund	\$ 1,967.40
Liquid Fuel Fund	\$ 2,723.20
Escrow Fund	\$ 40.00
Payroll Fund	\$ 1,292.25

Payroll

General Fund	\$34,641.28
Sewer Fund	\$ 3,720.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$38,361.92</b>

Escrow Bills

Schoolhouse Court LD:

Hill Wallack

\$40.00

SECONDED BY ROBIN VALENTIS. All ayes, motion carried.

**Reports:**

President's Report

John Stratz wished everyone a happy beginning to 2025.

Borough Manager's Report

John Stratz read Geoff Thompson's report which is on file in the secretary's office.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Sodano read his report which is attached. He wished everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous 2025 and looks forward to another year as mayor.

Police Chief's Report

Mayor Sodano read Chief Perry's report which is on file in the secretary's office.

Solicitor's Report

Barbara Kirk said at the December meeting, Mr. Jones asked if he could obtain a copy of the residential rental list held by the borough. She said she would look into it and see if there were any exceptions under the right to know law. As long as the borough has such a list, he could request a copy. If a list of that nature does not exist, the borough is not obligated to create one.

New Business

MOTION BY BUD MURPHY TO RATIFY APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MID-CYCLE INVOICES:

**AT&T Mobility** Invoice #X11262024 dated 11/18/24 in the amount of \$197.63 for PD wireless service

**Comcast** invoice dated 11/26/24 in the amount of \$196.96 for internet and voice services at 300 Bellevue Ave.

**Doyle's Coffee & Breakroom Services** Invoice #0229 dated 11/26/24 in the amount of \$108.92 for spring water

**Leck Waste Services** Invoice #516542 dated 12/1/24 in the amount of \$22,218.00 for December service

**PECO-Payment Processing** invoice dated 11/13/24 in the amount of \$263.48 for electric at pump station #2

**The Hartford** Invoice #357521758467 dated 12/1/24 in the amount of \$877.87 for life insurance premium

**Comcast** invoice dated 11/26/24 in the amount of \$219.06 for internet and voice services at 37. W. Woodland Avenue

**Office of Labor & Industry** invoice dated 11/27/24 in the amount of \$1,953.00 for fire department's workers compensation insurance premium installment

**Verizon Wireless** Invoice #6100083140 in the amount of \$25.02 for M2M Account Share 1GB

**Gettysburg Benefit Administrators** invoice dated 11/27/24 in the amount of \$201.93 for dental insurance premium installment

**Comcast** invoice dated 12/2/24 in the amount of \$297.89 for internet at 790 Neshaminy St.

**Comcast** Invoice #226231788 dated 12/1/24 in the amount of \$393.30 for business voice edge service

**Selective Insurance Co. of America** invoice dated 12/12/24 in the amount of \$15,790.00 for workers' compensation and commercial package insurance premium installment

**Independence Blue Cross** Invoice #582517170045 dated 12/13/24 in the amount of \$5,263.48 for medical insurance premium installment

**Langhorne Postmaster** invoice dated 1/3/24 in the amount of \$248.39 for quarterly sewer/refuse billing postage

SECONDED BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2025-1 PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCHEDULE OF FEES ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN PERMITS, APPLICATIONS AND APPROVALS WITHIN THE BOROUGH; PROVIDING FOR THE PAYMENT OF FEES AS A CONDITION OF ISSUANCE OF PERMITS OR ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS; REPEALING PRIOR INCONSISTENT RESOLUTIONS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. SECONDED BY BUD MURPHY. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2025-2 AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSITION OF PUBLIC RECORDS. SECONDED BY GARY NICKERSON. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE TWO-YEAR CONTRACT FOR JAMES BAMPFIELD, FIRE MARSHAL AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR. SECONDED BY BOB WINKLER. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY BOB WINKLER TO APPROVE APPOINTMENT OF RILEY COLLINS AS THE RESIDENTIAL RENTAL INSPECTOR. SECONDED BY BUD MURPHY.

Mayor Sodano asked if Mr. Collins is from an inspection agency. John said he is not. Mayor Sodano asked if that means he will be required to maintain his own secretary to handle whatever administrative and appointment setting etcetera is required or if the borough secretaries would be required to do that. Barbara Kirk said because it's under a contract, he will be responsible to handle his own reports and things of that nature and his own appointment setting and record keeping. Those records have to be available to the borough and put on file.

Bob Winkler said he disagrees with that. When he was code enforcement, the secretaries handled the appointments, the assistant secretary and other inspections that were required and the records were kept here at the office.

Barbara Kirk said she believes what happened was that the residential rental inspector was going to follow similar arrangements as the fire marshal, so that they could work hand in hand and coordinate the appointments and things of that nature. While Mr. Collins maintains his position as a firefighter for Middletown Township, as well as working for the Pennel Fire Company. It was done in such a way so that he could coordinate his schedule accordingly.

**Dave Cahill**, asked if Mr. Collins is a subcontractor and how he is being paid. Barbara Kirk said there's a proposed employment agreement similar to what is done with the fire marshal, and he will be paid an hourly rate. Dave said they don't get paid holidays or get insurance. Dave said to Bob that he worked for the borough back in the day. There is a difference between being an

employee of the borough because he said that the girls did all his work, and they should do the work for these people. They shouldn't be doing any work for anybody. He asked what the hourly rate is going to be. Barbara said \$30.00 an hour.

**Mike Smith**, asked if he is going to supply insurance for this. Barbara said that's his responsibility and he carries the certifications. There's a bond that's required under the law which the borough will pay, and he is responsible for maintaining his own certifications. Mike said he has to supply insurance and there will be no workers' comp. Barbara said none of that.

**Dave Cahill**, said if they do a 1099, they have to show proof of insurance in order to do the job, according to the Pennsylvania State Employment Laws. He asked if Mr. Thompson has an insurance certificate on file and if Mr. Bampffield has an insurance certificate and if Mr. Collins is going to have one.

**Kris Kross**, asked what the purpose of creating the position was. Barbara explained that it was at the request of the fire marshal in order to conduct residential rental inspections similar to what the borough does for commercial rental inspections. The whole purpose is to ensure that any property being rented as a residence meets all current codes, especially fire regulations, and this is a gentleman who will do those inspections under the supervision of the fire marshal. Kris said if they are going to create a position, it should be posted and offered to anyone. Barbara said more than one person came in. Marie said it was on Indeed. Kris said if he lived in the borough, or owns property in the borough, and he did not have the opportunity to see that because it was put somewhere that he was not aware of, and that is not fair to everyone else. Barbara said it was publicly posted on an available site.

All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO APPROVE THE MUNICIPAL PAY PROPOSAL DUE TO THE PERCENTAGE PAYMENT (2.75%) ON CREDIT CARD TRANSACTIONS AND \$1.50 PER ACH. SECONDED BY ROBIN VALENTIS.

Robin said in looking over the proposal, staff had advised that there would be a one-time initiation cost of \$1,500.00 and then \$30.00 a month maintenance. When she looks at the contract on page 2, it shows fees passed on to the card holder. She asked if they have an idea of how many people are requesting that they implement a credit card opportunity. Gary said the ability to pay the sewer bill online is tremendous. People talk about that all the time. Robin asked if there are other ways to pay other than credit card. She said she has some accounts that she set up on autopay, so she's not putting it on her credit card where she gets that 3% fee. She gives them her checking account and they auto deduct it every month. Gary said people can still do what they're doing now. Barbara Kirk said some people like to put it on a credit card because they rack up points or rewards and things of that nature and it also gives them an additional 30-day deferral before they have to pay the credit card company. This was in response to more people wanting to use credit cards.

Barbara Heffelfinger said they looked at this years ago and certain equipment that has to be in possession in the office in order for people to pay that way. Barbara Kirk said what they're proposing is a group called Municipal Pay and it's a similar program like Apple Pay or like what they have in her office, which is Law Pay. There is no equipment. The card holder goes to a website and inserts the information themselves and then it gets processed with the processing fee being charged back to the card holder. It's not like the old days where you had to have the old card reader to scan a card. A lot of this is done electronically now. Nobody in the borough needs to

get credit card information. It's done directly by the person who holds the card by inserting it into this program.

Mayor Sodano said his wife has an online business and he understands based on his knowledge of how her credit card transaction works. They will pay 2.75% on an actual credit card transaction, which would be what she was describing. The person enters the information online, but the ACH has to do with a clearinghouse transaction, which he believes on his wife's website happens when someone uses what she was describing before, which is a direct pay and he thinks that it's a set direct pay fee for those types of transactions. Barbara said those fees are all broken out, but it's geared to be in it being paid by the person using that method to pay the bill to the bank.

All ayes, motion carried.

Public Comment

**Dave Cahill**, said that at 1,125 calls for the year for the PD, that's three calls a day, one call per shift. They hired a new full-time officer and she's still working the same hours as the chief. He asked if that was ever going to change. Mayor Sodano said that isn't true. Dave said the last couple of times he's seen her work, she was working the same hours. He asked if she worked with the chief today. Mayor Sodano said she did not work with the chief today. Dave said it just doesn't seem to be very good management to have two full-time officers on the same shift because he believes they missed some shifts in December. Mayor Sodano said he will absolutely put his record in business management against his any day. When he can figure a way to have more than one person on, he does it. There are many programs out there where he can have two people on duty and then apply for reimbursement at the county or state level and he absolutely does it. Dave asked why they are missing shifts when they just hired a second full-time police officer. Mayor Sodano asked him if he could say flu. Dave said can he say flu. Mayor Sodano said he just answered his own question. As for calls, he looks at that as a very positive result from making vast improvements to the police department. Dave said they're budgeting about \$700,000.00 for the police department. Mayor Sodano asked him if he thought they needed to have crime or accidents or people being harmed in order to justify having the police department. Dave said they could save the taxpayers a whole lot of money by letting the state police do it for free. Mayor Sodano said he doesn't have a clue what he's talking about. The job of a police department is to protect and serve and if they can prevent crime by being in the right place at the right time, they are absolutely doing so and they're doing a darn good job.

MOTION BY BOB WINKLER TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:03 P.M. SECONDED BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER. All ayes, motion carried.

Submitted by: Marie Serota  
Marie Serota, Secretary/Treasurer

## Mayor's Report, December 2024

In December I attended the Borough Council meeting, there was no Council Work Session.

I attended the Borough Holiday Tree lighting and Santa's arrival. Thanks to the Activities Committee for a wonderful event.

2024 was a good year for Penn del Borough. While as Mayor, I don't have a vote in Borough Government, I always advocate for you, the residents, and bring forward the thoughts and concerns you share with me as well as my own thoughts and opinions.

There has been much residential comment and suggestions, here and online, regarding our many Borough activities and events. Most of these activities such as Holiday Tree Lighting, Halloween Parade, and Community Day are produced by the Activities Committee and are neither administered nor financed by Penn del Borough. And with the exception a few very Community Dedicated elected officials, are scantily even attended by most Council members. The dedicated few of us need your help. If, like us, you and your families enjoy these events and want our great little Borough to continue these wonderful traditions, consider volunteering and getting involved in at least one event a year.

As Mayor, I am the civilian head of the Penn del Borough Police Department. The Police Department has weathered it's share of ups and downs in 2024 but through the efforts of Chief Perry and myself has emerged much the better. We added a full time officer, a new vehicle, and upgraded our body cams as well as in-house and in-vehicle electronics. We improved and expanded our officer training and added a part time detective officer freeing up our patrol officers to be more readily available where and when you need them. And department morale has never been better. The end result is the Penn del Borough Police Department is in the very top tier in training and equipment for municipalities our size in all of Pennsylvania.

And we accomplished all of this while coming in under budget for the year. Again.

I wish a happy, healthy and prosperous 2025 for all of you, and I look forward to another year as *your* Mayor.