

Penndel Borough Workshop Minutes

March 17, 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  
Councilman Mark Moffa  
Councilwoman Robin Valentis  
Councilman Gary Nickerson  
Councilman Bud Murphy - absent  
Councilman Bob Winkler  
Mayor Tom Sodano

Also present at the meeting

Barbara Kirk, Hill Wallack  
Chief Sean Perry  
Carol Schuehler, Value Engineering  
Marie Serota, Secretary/Treasurer

Consent Items

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2025 WORKSHOP MEETING AND RATIFY APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING FEBRUARY 2025 BILLS:

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$39,001.33</b>
<b>Refuse Fund</b>	<b>\$ 497.59</b>
<b>Sewer Fund</b>	<b>\$33,943.61</b>
<b>Capital Reserve Fund</b>	<b>\$ 2,313.50</b>
<b>Liquid Fuel Fund</b>	<b>\$ 5,650.21</b>
<b>Escrow Fund</b>	<b>\$ 1,876.54</b>
<b>Payroll Fund</b>	<b>\$ 1,333.02</b>

Payroll

General Fund	\$34,635.49
Sewer Fund	<u>\$ 3,690.87</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$38,326.36</b>

Escrow Bills

Schoolhouse Court LD:	
Hill Wallack	\$ 40.00
Value Engineering	\$ 61.00

50 Hulmeville Ave:

Value Engineering                      \$914.00

31 Bellevue Avenue:  
Escrow Release                      \$861.54

SECONDED BY BOB WINKLER. All ayes, motion carried.

***Reports:***

**President's Report**

John Stratz said grants are important to small boroughs like Penndel. It allows them to make much needed improvements that they otherwise couldn't do without financial strain. He announced that they received the ARLE Grant for \$356,190.00 for the stop light program at Durham and Bellevue. Congratulations to the Penndel - Middletown Emergency Squad and the Pendel Fire Company for grants they received from the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program of \$13,000.00 and \$16,322.00, respectively. John reported that they have had a few problems lately. There is a diagonal patch on Hulmeville Ave. at Woodland Ave. There was a sinkhole forming. The engineer was able to get emergency repairs done quickly. The sewage pipe was disintegrating, just like the problem they had on Bellevue Ave. John reported he received a call from the police chief that the roof was blowing off of one of the buildings at the rec field. Gary Nickerson, who has become the official/unofficial liaison to the Wildcats, called them to find out about the roof. Tim from the baseball Wildcats went out quickly to check on the building. The second floor was inspected and there was no damage to the roof itself. The wind damaged the decorative soffit molding and tore to shreds. It could not be fixed immediately because high winds prevented it but as soon as the winds died down and storms passed, it was taken care. He received a call from a resident reporting that another resident was releasing pool water into the street. Pool chemicals must be nullified before discharging any water because it goes into Neshaminy Creek. In this instance, no chemicals were discharged. The resident said that it was only rainwater on top of the cover.

Mayor Sodano said borough ordinance prohibits putting any stormwater into the street, whether it's chemical laden or not. Mayor Sodano said, according to John's report, he contacted Gary but the email he got from Gary stated that he was out of town when the initial problem arose, and the chief decided to shut down Dalola Ave. and the rec field. There was a discussion back and forth with Mayor Sodano and John about the timeline of the way things happened. Mayor Sodano asked why he wasn't informed about the emergency repairs on Hulmeville Ave., and that the street was going to be torn up and that there could possibly be safety hazard issues caused by having to reroute traffic. John said he was informed thirty minutes before they came. Mayor Sodano said the mayor is absolutely, always, supposed to be notified of any borough business, especially safety situations. This is not the first time this has happened around here and it's just as illegal this time as it has been all the other times that they have chosen not to include the mayor. It is his responsibility, as the mayor, for the safety of the residents of this town. It is John's responsibility, as the president of council, to ensure that the mayor is included in everything and that's a law, not a request.

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Sodano read his report which is attached.

Barbara Heffelfinger said that Jim Bampfield was in the office today and asked her to pass on to everyone that it's time to set the clocks back so it's time to check your smoke detectors. If someone doesn't have smoke detectors in their home or they have some that are not working

anymore, call the borough and let Jim know and he or one of his guys will come out and put the smoke detectors up at no cost.

Police Chief's Report

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

Engineer's Report

Carol read her report which is attached.

New Business

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO RATIFY APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MID-CYCLE INVOICES:

**Comcast** invoice dated 1/26/25 in the amount of \$219.27 for internet & voice services at 37 W. Woodland Ave.

**Comcast** invoice dated 1/26/25 in the amount of \$208.63 for internet & voice services at 300 Bellevue Ave.

**Leck Waste Services** Invoice #531055 dated 2/1/25 in the amount of \$23,660.56 for February services.

**The Hartford** Invoice #357522866874 in the amount of \$877.44 for life insurance installment

**Comcast** invoice dated 2/2/25 in the amount of \$304.89 for internet at 790 Neshaminy Street

**Comcast** Invoice #232643197 in the amount of \$408.24 for business voice edge service

**Gettysburg Benefits Administrators, Inc.** invoice dated 1/31/25 in the amount of \$201.93 for dental insurance installment.

**Independence Blue Cross** Invoice #582512837856 in the amount of \$5,263.48 for medical insurance installment

**Office of Labor & Industry** invoice dated 1/31/25 in the amount of \$1,953.00 for fire department workers' compensation installment.

**Selective Insurance Co.** invoice dated 2/12/25 in the amount of \$2,849.00 for borough employees' workers' compensation installment.

**PECO Payment Processing** invoice dated 2/19/25 in the amount of \$1,625.75 for streetlights' electric.

**Olden Carpet & Flooring** Invoice #6/17/24 in the amount of \$2,962.22 for 50% of vinyl plank flooring and installation for police department

SECONDED BY MARK MOFFA. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO APPROVE AND ADVERTISE THE BID PACKAGE FOR PAVEMENT REPAIRS AS OUTLINED IN THE BID AND CONTRACT DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY BOROUGH ENGINEER. SECONDED BY MARK MOFFA. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO PAY G & B CONSTRUCTION INVOICE DATED 3/4/25 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$43,572.98 FOR THE STORM DRAIN EMERGENCY REPAIR AT HULMEVILLE AVENUE AND WOODLAND AVENUE. SECONDED BY MARK MOFFA. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO APPROVE THE 2/24/25 PROPOSAL FROM HENDRICK'S WELDING SERVICE, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,710.00 FOR WORK TO BE DONE AT BOTH PUMP STATIONS (20% DOWN-FINAL PAYMENT UPON COMPLETION). SECONDED BY MARK MOFFA.

**Mike Smith**, asked when they discussed having the stairs replaced or repaired because he does that kind of work. He has no problem with Hendrick's Welding, but they should have called him, and they may have gotten the work done free of charge or just pay for the materials and he would pay for the labor. This motion should be tabled and put back out there. Several years back, there was a council person who went out and got a quote and he was made to get three quotes, and he was made to do that several times. The precedence has been set. They should do the same thing here. Not asking the people of the town what they could do to help out is wrong.

Barbara said she discussed this with Geoff, and he said he was not aware that Mike had that kind of business. She told him from now on to please ask if there are people here in the borough who have certain types of business or please come and ask council first before he gets bids. Mike said there's no way, after he talked to him about the rails out back about how they were going to rust, that he didn't know.

**John Lo Piccolo**, said there were times when they had bid thresholds that they were under but got three quotes. When they did the light switches for in here, he got an electrician because he didn't know that they had an electrician in the borough and Bob let him know. When they had the LED's done in the police station, they did use the resident. It never hurts to look at other prices to make sure everyone's being honest.

Robin Valentis said that she and Barb are finishing the current newsletter. In the next newsletter, they will put in a paragraph about anyone who lives in the borough who owns a business, if they're interested in doing work for the borough to submit a resume and then we will have a list and they'll make sure Geoff has it and then there should be no excuses.

**Dave Cahill**, asked if over \$12,000.00 requires three bids. Barbara Kirk said \$12,900.00 is the minimum threshold for three quotations and \$23,800.00 is the amount for a full advertised bid and that was effective January 1, 2025. Dave said for the \$139,000.00 RDA grant for the ADA work that they had done, the back ramp and the railings and the doors, they only got two bids.

Mark asked Carol if it was an emergency situation, with the steps, where they would have to be repaired ASAP. She is concerned that it's a safety issue, but she doesn't think anyone is going to fall through the steps this week, but she wouldn't want to put it off for months. Mark asked if she thought it was okay if they tabled this to allow an opportunity to see if they can achieve savings. Carol said that's reasonable.

MOTION BY MARK MOFFA TO TABLE THE MOTION. SECONDED BY ROBIN VALENTIS. All ayes, motion carried.

Barbara Heffelfinger asked Carol if that was going to set them back any, as far as time goes. Carol said the quote that was received has a ninety-day window and that was received at the end of February.

#### Discussion of Sidewalk Ordinance

Gary Nickerson said after speaking with Bud and Geoff about what they talked about at the last meeting, he hoped they would have the authorization to work with the solicitor to produce a draft ordinance on the agenda so there's not too much to talk about, with one exception. He wanted to update council because there was some information that he wasn't sure about. If you currently have a parcel that does not have sidewalks, there's no mechanism that would require sidewalks to be placed. If you sell your house and you currently have sidewalks, they are inspected as part of the use and occupancy by BIU and also, currently, if somebody calls in with a complaint about unsafe sidewalks, those are being fielded also by BIU. His intent is to come back for the next council meeting and have on the agenda requesting authorization to work with the solicitor to develop an ordinance. As part of the U&O, if there are no sidewalks at the residence, then that would be the time that sidewalks would be required to be put in. He thinks that they've talked about this a bunch of times and everybody's on board. It would be for residential or commercial. The goal is to produce a draft to present and then move through the appropriate channels and go through the Planning Commission.

Mayor Sodano said before they spend the money, council should decide what should be in the ordinance before they ask the solicitor to draft one.

Barbara Kirk said if there are certain provisions that are desired to be in this new ordinance, everyone should send an email to Gary with their recommendations of what they would like to see and, then from there, they can start working on it.

Bob Winkler asked Gary if he contacted the PSBA, which might have some drafts from other communities. Gary said he would reach out to them.

Mark Moffa said the way they worked was the Ordinance Committee met with the solicitor, and they would work on developing proposed ordinances and bring them to council in a Workshop Session. They would have a discussion, make revisions based on what council suggested at that meeting and bring a revised version back for additional discussion. Sometimes, things went through multiple rounds of revisions and then eventually, they'd have an ordinance everyone was happy with and then it goes to the Planning Commission. The solicitors were always present at the Ordinance Committee meeting because they're writing laws, it's good to have a lawyer there. John said that Mark has a good point. They're discussing writing laws for the borough and it's better to have a lawyer sit in at those meetings.

#### Public Comment

**Mike Smith**, said the way it's done is they have committees, and those three people meet and put all their ideas on a piece of paper and get them to where they think it's right. Then give it to the solicitor and they say yes or no and make changes. The fence ordinance went to the Planning Commission many times and the solicitor three times, and a lot of money was spent. They need to put everything in line like Gary said and get the community together to figure out what they're doing then talk to residents, talk to the solicitor, and let the solicitor tell them if it's good because they may have things in there that aren't legal. Mike asked if they got a signed agreement from the Wildcats. John said they got it today. Mike said they've been down there working on the fields.

John Stratz said due to lack of respect and inappropriate language issues at a previous meeting, council and professionals will not be answering any questions. They have three minutes to make comments and there are papers underneath the microphone for questions and they will get back to them at the next meeting.

**Dave Cahill**, asked what was going on at 51 Centre St. The job has been shut down for safety. He asked if the owner of the property came to the borough asking for documents. John said he can ask all the questions he wants, but he's not getting an answer. Dave asked if they were going to have more litigation in this borough. At the February meeting, the borough manager made it known that Marut's property was sold and that somebody had bought it, and they were going to renovate the building. He asked if the borough is asking this new owner to tear it down. He heard they came into the borough and wanted a copy of all the documents the borough had on the property. Mayor Sodano said these are silly allegations and they should just answer the questions. Dave said the borough took the previous owner to court and made him either sell it or tear it down. He doesn't understand why they would shut down a property when they want to fix it up.

**John Lo Piccolo**, said the sidewalk thing sounds good, cut and dry like when they did the laterals. When someone moves, they get an inspection, and they get it replaced, if needed. He saw they're putting money out for the backstops at the rec field, and it looks great. There is a trailer, which he guesses is the Wildcats property, and he noticed in the past, kids hanging out in the dugout area and climbing up on it. He just wanted to bring it to their attention for safety reasons. They have music playing with profanity and he's on the court playing basketball with his kid. He didn't know if they could do something about it or what the rules are for the park. Barbara Kirk said if there is a noise ordinance that prohibits certain sounds or volume after a certain period of time, they can get them for noise ordinance. John Stratz said it's 10:00 p.m. during the week and 11:00 p.m. on the weekend. John Lo Piccolo asked what was going on with Centre Street and the dumpster. He walks down the street and avoids it. At the end of the street, at the corner, there's no stop sign, and a lot of cars fly down the street. Maybe, it's something to look into from an ordinance standpoint. Maybe put a stop sign up. He was wondering if they could put a walking track all the way around the rec field. Barbara Heffelfinger said she will talk to Carol because they just got notice that the DCED grant is coming out now for recreation fields. John said they talked about that before but were always saying wait and see what Middletown does. It would be a beautiful asset now that they cleared some of the areas around the basketball courts. There are a lot of stop bars missing and crosswalks that have faded. He's not sure when Geoff was planning to do them but they're long overdue. Mayor Sodano said he spoke to Geoff this past week and his response was now that the weather is breaking, he's working on a schedule with their maintenance guy.

**Neil Berman**, said the sidewalks end at 502 Crescent St. He asked if he decided he didn't want sidewalks anymore, if he was allowed to remove them and he was told no. His next-door neighbor doesn't have to take care of the sidewalks. So, when it snows, he shovels right to their driveway. He asked how they can fix that so they can have a walking community where everybody has to have sidewalks, like during the use and occupancy inspection. He asked if people have to be union people to work in the borough. He was told they do not. Neil said some of these bids seem outrageous. He might have a friend that could do it cheaper. He asked if there were any stipulations, and he was told they just have to be licensed contractors. Carol said when they're bidding projects, it's not just as simple as getting a price. When they are over certain thresholds, they advertise them publicly and then there are requirements that bidders have to meet, like putting up performance bonds and payment bonds, proving that they have done similar kind of work and also be prequalified by PennDOT. He asked if \$130,000.00

is really true for a traffic light. Carol explained that it's not just for the light. It is for new mast arms, and they might have some right of way issues to deal with and probably a new controller box for that signal and she believes the video cameras are included in that as well. Neil said he was happy to hear that the fire department and ambulance company got some money. He asked if the borough gives them any money. Mayor Sodano said that three mills of their taxes are mandated by the state that we have to give to the fire company.

Council Members to be Heard

Mayor Sodano said the State of Pennsylvania county positions such as treasurer, are prohibited from simultaneously serving as a member of the governing body of any kind of city, borough, town, etcetera. On a personal note, if he were appointed to a position like that, even on a temporary basis, he would have chosen to step down temporarily until the permanent decision was made so that there was no illusion or possible accusations. They all know that there's plenty of people in this town who would take advantage of that so he thinks it would have been a prudent thing to do.

MOTION BY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING BY GARY NICKERSON AT 8:40 P.M.  
SECONDED BY MARK MOFFA. All ayes, motion carried.

Submitted by: Marie Serota  
Marie Serota, Secretary/Treasurer

## **Mayor's Report for February 2025**

In February I attended the Borough Council meetings.

I attended an online seminar with Chief Perry.

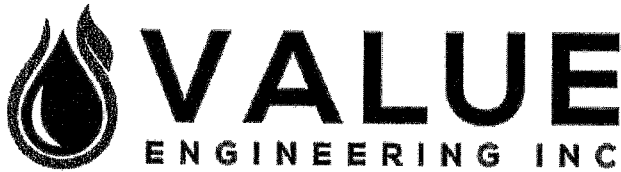
I hosted a luncheon for the Police Department.

During the course of the month I had multiple meetings with The Chief, the Fire Marshall, the Borough Manager and code officials.

Spring is around the corner. Lawn refuse pickups will resume on trash days. Please have yard debris bags and containers separated from your household trash.

Please remember rules for pumping any storm or standing water are changing, and such water must remain on your property. The Borough has ordinances prohibiting the pumping of pool or pool cover water onto the streets and sidewalks.

Lastly, Daylight savings time starts at 2:AM Sunday morning March 9th. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour and change your smoke alarm batteries!



www.value.engineering  
1578 State Road, Coopersburg PA  
1-888-346-8673

## March 17, 2025 Engineers Report Pennel Borough, Bucks County

### >> Pavement Repairs

Bid documents for pavement repairs are ready to be advertised. This will provide pavement repairs on Crescent and Highland ahead of sealing the streets, in addition to repairing numerous potholes recently marked throughout the Borough. If authorized this evening, the project will be out for bid this week, with bid opening planned on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

### >> Emergency Repair

The Borough received a complaint regarding a hole at the intersection of Hulmeville and Woodland Avenues. The location was adjacent to an inlet outside the travel lane in the pavement near the crosswalk. The hazard was marked by traffic cones and evaluated for emergency repairs.

PennDOT was notified, an emergency permit filed, and contractor G&B Construction (who did storm sewer and inlet work for Pennel last season) contacted to coordinate repair. G&B replaced the failed corrugated metal pipe with HDPE pipe, backfilled and paved the trench. We recommend payment to G&B Construction for this emergency repair.

### >> Pump Station Steps

We received a quote from Hendrick's Welding to replace the severely corroded components of the steps in both pump stations. The price is \$4,075 for Station 1, and \$2,635 for station 2, requesting 20% downpayment (\$1,342) to start the work. The price is below bid thresholds. It will substantially improve safety and extend the life of these steps.

Once the repairs are complete, the Borough should plan for scraping and cleaning the stairs followed by application of a corrosion protection paint.

### ARLE grant award

The Borough has been awarded an ARLE grant for modernization of the traffic signal facilities at Lincon Highway and Durham Avenue! When notice of award was received on Wednesday, we discontinued work on the Green Light-go application for this intersection. The Borough should await receipt of the grant contract terms before proceeding with any design work.

### CDBG

The Community Development Block Grant Application for backstop replacement at ball fields 2 and 3 of Memorial Park was submitted at the beginning of February.



## MS4 Inspection

Representatives from PaDEP have been performing MS4 inspections in area municipalities. In preparation for such an inspection, we met with Borough staff, reviewed and updated good housekeeping measures, and assembled and organized all MS4 documentation electronically for staff access and convenient reference. DEP met with us in Penndel in mid-February. They were satisfied that Penndel has documented compliance with the six Minimum Control Measures, and no violations were identified.

We spoke about updating the Borough PRP and TMDL plans to identify the stream restoration project identified in the LandStudies feasibility study and inquired about grant funding programs for such work. We also went to the waterway with DEP officials to view the potential project location. They viewed the idea favorably, provided helpful suggestions on the PRP update, and strongly encouraged involving Hulmeville Borough and Middletown Township in the project to help all three municipalities achieve pollutant reduction goals.

Next steps include updating the PRP and TMDL plans, continuing communications with Middletown and initiating conversation with Hulmeville to weigh their interest in working with Penndel on the stream restoration project.