

Penndel Borough Council Meeting Minutes

May 5, 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 – via telephone
- Councilman Gary Nickerson
- Councilman Bud Murphy
- Councilman Bob Winkler
- Mayor Tom Sodano

Also present at the meeting

- Barbara Kirk, Hill Wallack
- Geoff Thompson, Manager
- Chief Sean Perry
- Marie Serota, Secretary/Treasurer

Council or Borough Announcements

Barbara Kirk reported that borough council met in an Executive Session from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to discuss personnel issues.

Consent Items

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 21, 2025 WORKSHOP MEETING AND TO PAY THE FOLLOWING BILLS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2025:

General Fund	\$34,878.75
Fire Tax Fund	\$16,972.91
Refuse Fund	\$24,828.62
Sewer Fund	\$34,212.53
Capital Reserve Fund	\$25,517.09
Sewer Capital Fund	\$ 8,470.00
Liquid Fuel Fund	\$ 198.61
Escrow Fund	\$ 1,598.70
Payroll Fund	\$ 1,393.00

Payroll

General Fund	\$39,153.35
Sewer Fund	<u>\$ 3,633.11</u>
Total	\$42,786.46

Escrow Bills

Schoolhouse Court LD:

Hill Wallack	\$ 20.00
Schoolhouse Ct. LLC	\$ 1,578.70

SECONDED BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER. All ayes, motion carried.

Reports:President's Report

John Stratz reported that they will be voting later on for approval to submit a resolution for a grant application regarding a walking trail around memorial field, which is their next big improvement. The residents have been asking for one for a long time. He and Carol walked the rec. field and mapped out a trail. Carol and Barbara met with Middletown about it, and it went well.

Borough Manager's Report

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

Mayor's Report

Mayor Sodano read his report which is attached.

Police Chief's Report

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

Vice President's Report

Barbara Heffelfinger reported that she and Carol met with Paul Kopera at Middletown and explained to them what they wanted to do with the rec. field. There are a couple of areas that go into Spring Valley Farm, and they said that's not a problem and they support Penndel completely and they're going to send all the paperwork that is necessary for the grant application.

New Business

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

Langhorne Postmaster invoice dated 4/1/25 in the amount of \$348.66 for quarterly sewer/refuse billing postage.

Leck Waste Services Invoice #545438 dated 4/1/25 in the amount of \$23,660.56 for monthly service.

NIJIAA invoice dated 3/7/25 in the amount of \$75.00 for Youth Firesetters and the Fire Investigator course.

Comcast Invoice 237701888 dated 4/1/25 in the amount of \$407.48 for voice edge service.

Gettysburg Benefit Administrators, Inc. invoice dated 3/31/25 for dental insurance premium installment.

Verizon Wireless Invoice #6109923007 in the amount of \$25.02 for M2M Account Share 1 GB.

Apex Overhead Doors, Inc. Invoice #11499 dated 4/17/25 in the amount of \$2,495.00 for two roll-down security doors at the recreation field.

Comcast invoice dated 4/2/25 in the amount of \$322.89 for internet at 790 Neshaminy Street.

Independence Blue Cross Invoice #582516809329 dated 4/7/25 in the amount of \$5,263.48 for medical insurance premium installment.

PECO Payment Processing invoice dated 4/22/25 in the amount of \$1,652.79 for streetlights' electric.

SECONDED BY MARK MOFFA. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE PBA AGREEMENT. SECONDED BY BUD MURPHY.

Chief Perry explained that they were just to clean up some language within the contract. There was a spelling mistake, some things were mistakenly omitted and to clean up the verbiage on the healthcare contributions. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON FOR THE PROPOSED EVENT & BLOCK PARTY. SECONDED BY ROBIN VALENTIS.

Gary reported that the ordinance was drafted by Barbara Kirk. Currently, they have no process for residents requesting a street closure to hold a block party or to close the street for any reason. Last year, they had a gentleman apply for a block party and they didn't really give him great guidance. Ultimately, he was denied, and they also had a situation where somebody came to apply for one and was approved. This will be easy for residents to understand, and it sets a requirement for the street to be closed for a block party event. The petition of support shall be signed by 75% of the households located on the block, including any condos or apartments. For a non-block party event, like a birthday party or private event, the petition shall be signed by 90% of households on the block, including any condos or apartments. One signature per household is required and the person signing must be 18 years of age. The applicant shall notify Penndel Police Department to ensure that closing a block does not affect any businesses. It gives the borough the right to establish a fee for this block party or non-block party event by resolution as the borough has a fee schedule, which is adopted but this enables them to revise fees without changing ordinances. It also requires this yellow caution tape to be used to block the street for a permitted block party. People with disabilities should have access to their homes. They cannot have a casino or sell alcohol, etc.

Gary said it mentions a T street. Barbara Kirk said the purpose of that is to make sure everybody on the block is aware that there's only one entrance in and out of that street and that enough of them are in favor of a T street being closed whereas, on the other ones, you could have a street closed but still keep open one end as an access. This is just rough terms to put something in front of council for decisions. They could say if a T street is to be closed, they would need 100% of the residents on that street to sign a petition.

Robin said like on her street, they could leave both ends of Julie open and just close the center. There are so many scenarios, so they're just trying to ensure that they incorporate everything. Barbara Kirk said the way it's worded is not necessarily referencing an entire street. It could be only a portion of the street being closed, so if there's an issue with the T St., you can eliminate that provision and just reference paragraphs B1 and B2 for the purposes of what they want.

Mark Moffa said one thinks of a block as being from one intersection to the other intersection but what if a block, for the purposes of this ordinance, can have a more flexible definition and it

could mean a group of homes, like a portion. It doesn't have to be from an intersection to another intersection.

Robin asked if the police department reviewed this. Barbara Kirk said this was drafted after the discussion last year with the two block parties and the intention of this was drafted to circulate to council for them to have something to start looking at and making a decision and then it sat there for a while. Robin asked that it be brought back to council for discussion and so where council wants to take it from here is fine with her. This was just a rough draft to give them some sort of terms to look at. Chief Perry said he reviewed it and a lot of what's in there was input that he had brought up during the last conversation, so he's good with it. He asked if there is anything there that gives the police department any authority on shutting it down if it goes far beyond what it was initially proposed. If they say there's going to be fifty people and there's five hundred and fifty people, do they have the ability to say their permit for this is revoked and everybody has to disperse. John said this was not on the agenda, so they can't make a motion to pass the ordinance. This was just a discussion. Mark said they will put the chief's ideas in. There is a part that says the applicants should comply with all lawful directives from the borough and the police department but that really refers to more of the blocking of the roadways. They can put in a clause that states the borough police department reserves the right to yada, yada, yada.

Barbara Heffelfinger said she lives on the corner and one street is a state road. She asked if they had to involve PennDOT. Mark said if it begins on Crescent St., in front of her house, it's on a borough road. Barbara Kirk said they can make the language to reflect that no block party shall take place on any borough street without a permit and this ordinance does not apply to state owned roads.

Chief Perry said since they will get the permit forty-five days in advance, they would notify the dispatch center to let all the fire, EMS and police in the area know that that road will be closed and not accessible by emergency vehicles.

Mayor Sodano suggested instead of changing definitions, they make it simple and call it a block of addresses, so they aren't redefining anything but are allowing sections of a block from address to address so it doesn't eliminate anything. If you say residences, that doesn't work because you might have an apartment and that's a different definition. Gary asked if they would still be required to sign off, they're closing a block of addresses and are not affected because you're up the street and you have another way to leave. Barbara said they can define the block as two or more contiguous properties. Mark said it begs for them to define what a block is. Whichever angle they look at, they have to sort of define a block. Gary mentioned deciding on a T street. Mayor Sodano said they want to be careful because there are different T streets and then also the cul-de-sac at the dead end of Centre St. There are different situations.

Dave Cahill, asked if the partygoers will be allowed to set things up in the street like tables and bouncy houses and chairs and water slides or is the street going to be kept clear for emergency vehicles in case there was an emergency and the fire department or police have to come down. He asked if a neighbor that's not part of the block party wants to leave, will they be able to drive up or down the street. This ordinance is no further than it was before because they still have too many questions they can't figure out.

Tim Weaver, said he has watched several other block parties that have been around, and everybody helps everybody navigate the ingress and egress around the barriers, if necessary.

The more they nitpick this thing and add more rules, the more difficult it is for everybody and the less fun anybody's going to have. He asked if anyone had seen the cohesion. Neighbors that don't normally speak to each other spoke to each other just because it was an event. They're making it more complicated than it needs to be. (No action taken by Council; motion not required)

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2025-7 APPLICATION FOR A GREENWAYS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION PROGRAM GRANT OF \$198,793.00 FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FINANCING AUTHORITY TO BE USED FOR INSTALLATION OF AN ACCESSIBLE WALKING TRAIL AROUND MEMORIAL PARK. SECONDED BY GARY NICKERSON.

Dave Cahill, asked if the walking trail was going to be around Penndel Memorial Field. He asked if it was going to extend into the nearby Evans' Farm. John said there is a big drop off and they need to fix that cliff. Dave said they are building a wall on Middletown's property. John said this requires no money. It is a grant for \$198,000.00. Dave said he doesn't live in Middletown Township. Barbara Heffelfinger said only the embankment portion, which they got permission for from Middletown, will be in Middletown. The trail is in Penndel.

Tim Weaver, asked if they did any environmental impact study, any runoff studies, or any erosion studies of that nature before they decided to build this wall. John said they are making safety a priority because it is a sheer cliff back there. Time said he understands that but it's also going to contribute to runoff further to that unnamed tributary to the Neshaminy Creek. They will be adding to something without looking further into how to mitigate that rainfall and wherever that water is going to flow. They will be adding more impervious surface. Barbara said she would talk to the engineer about it.

All ayes, motion carried.

Public Comment

Tim Weaver, read certain parts of a letter from Mark Moffa to the democrats about republican efforts to block key road improvements and sabotaging promising new development. John Stratz told him he could not talk about that. Tim said he is violating his freedom of speech. It wasn't a key road improvement by necking down Business Route 1 to one lane in each direction. The whole world is finding out that Tim Weaver wasn't wrong about the cloverleaf in Langhorne dumping all that traffic down on Bellevue Ave. during rush hour.

Dave Cahill, asked John why he keeps trying to change the constitution and the first amendment and telling them what they can say and what they can't say. The things that were put in that letter were absolutely wrong.

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:20 P.M. SECONDED BY ROBIN VALENTIS. All ayes, motion carried.

Submitted by:


 Marie Serota, Secretary/Treasurer

Mayor's Report for April 2025

In March I attended the Borough Council meetings and executive sessions.

I attended the annual Pennel Easter Egg Hunt. The children had a great time. Thanks to the Pennel Activities Committee and Redeemer Lutheran for all their hard work.

I attended the online Bucks County Hazzard Preparedness meeting.

During the course of the month there were multiple meetings with The Chief, the Fire Marshall, the Borough Manager and code officials regarding code and safety issues in the Borough. I am working with these officials to improve pedestrian safety at intersections, improve signage and pavement markings in firelanes as well as speeding and stop sign issues.

The annual Pennel Classic Car Show is Saturday, May 10th.

Mother's Day is Sunday May 11th.

Pennsylvania Primary Election Day is Tuesday, May 20th.

The Pennel-Hulmeville Memorial Day parade is Saturday May 24th.

The Pennel Community Day and Borough-wide yard sale is Saturday, June 14th.

Father's Day is Sunday June 15th.

As the summer nears, and the days grow longer, please remember children are out and about as we all return home from work. Stay alert, observe the speed limits and full stops at the stop signs. Young lives are depending on us. And remember, never leave your vehicle running and unattended!