

BOROUGH OF LEHIGHTON

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MUNICIPAL BUILDING, P.O. BOX 29, LEHIGHTON, PA 18235



June 8, 2026

RE: Lehighon Borough Council Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2026

CALL TO ORDER – 6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation

Chief Abelovsky presented a Police Appreciation Award to Officer Gabrielle Szozda for his excellence, dedication, and performance. Officer Szozda has served with the Police Department for 12 years.

ROLL CALL

The regular meeting of Lehighon Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday May 4, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Dave Zimmerman. Council Members in attendance were: Dave Arndt, Rebecca Worthy, Jordyn Miller, Steve Hawk, and Joe Flickinger. Council Member absent was: Grant Hunsicker. Officials in attendance were: Mayor Ryan Saunders, Borough Manager Dane DeWire, Assistant Borough Manager Brooke Lichtenwalter, Borough Secretary Jessica Ahner, Solicitor James Nanovic, Police Chief Troy Abelovsky, Borough Engineer Vanessa Nedrick, Light & Power Superintendent Barry Fisher, Public Works Superintendent Kris Kunkle, and Junior Councilperson Reagan Abelovsky. Officials absent were: Recreation Director Tom Evans, and Fire Chief Patrick Mriss.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

Judy Patterson was present on behalf of the Willow Foundation and was asked to return for the June meeting.

Nick Catania of 164 South 1st Street asked about the Lehighon Canal Recreation Commission. Mayor Saunders replied it is the Intergovernmental Agency that oversees 6 miles of D&L trail from Jim Thorpe to East Penn Township. It is supported by 7 municipalities. There is a meeting the last Thursday of the month in Weissport. Catania asked about the Shade Tree Commission. DeWire said they are a commission that generally plant trees in the Borough working off a small budget. The Commission meets on the last Monday of the month. Catania asked about the noise ordinance, DeWire said we cannot measure the decibels if someone is having a party and asked Dr. Miller and the Chief if they had any suggestions. The Chief stated they were working on the issue regarding noise from motorized bikes.

Manny DaCosta of CCMA said there has been a considerable amount of water coming into the sewer plant, resulting in increased costs. DaCosta was wondering if we could put dye in the gutters at suspected inlets. Flickinger asked if CCMA saw any difference since the Borough performed I&I. DeWire said we have not heard anything from CCMA in the past 12 months after they had lined

rehab work. DeWire told DaCosta if he believes the blue dye would help, they should proceed with using it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Worthy noted a correction to the April meeting minutes: Parks and Recreation is not hosting “Wine on the River”. It should say “Industrial Revolution Steam Punk”.

Flickinger had an April meeting minutes correction: Police, Fire and Safety the minutes should not read “Land of Public Safety of Excellence”. It should say “Center of Public Safety Excellence”.

SH/DA motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of April 6, 2026 with noted changes and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Dr. Miller met with the Mayor and Chief to continue working on the draft of the new Cycling Ordinance. She noted residents can refer to “Bicycling in PA” for information regarding applicable laws and regulations until the ordinance is completed.

There was discussion on a new Life insurance policy. DeWire noted that we are currently spending \$929/month to Sunlife, which costs \$11,155 annually. The Unum Group Life and AD&D Insurance would cost \$5,696.64 annually with an increase in coverage. Lichtenwalter said they recently discovered this plan when dealing with employee injuries. DeWire said there is no change to coverage for Union Employees and Water Authority that are under contract. Life insurance coverage for employees not under contract will increase to \$50,000. JF/SH motioned to accept Unum Group Life and AD&D Policy and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

NEW BUSINESS

RW/SH motioned to hire the additional 2026 Lifeguards at the recommendation of the Recreation Director and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

JF/RW motioned to award contracts for 2026 Bituminous Stone and Aggregate materials as presented and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0.

JF/SH motioned to approve 2026 Public Works Paving Projects as presented and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/JM motioned to Sell 1995 Ford F-800 Dump Truck to the highest bidder for \$6,400 and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

JF/RW motioned to Decommission Police Car #6 and list for public sale and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/RW motioned to adopt Resolution R5-2026 Electronics Recycling List and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

DeWire said Fisher supplied him quotes on traffic signals for Second/Iron and 4th/Mahoning. The quotes are from Signal Service. DeWire tabled the invoices. The Mayor stated that a four-way stop may improve safety at the intersection. Flickinger said he thinks a study should be done. Hawk asked what kind of study you want to do. Nedrick said it would be helpful to see what the Police Department says. DeWire suggested we bring back the cost of the study and the light at the next meeting.

DeWire said we gave final planning approval to the Ford Relocation Project last month. The sewer main runs through Mahoning Township but the property is in Lehighon Borough. He reached out

to Ford regarding an agreement. Nanovic said there is a Lehighon-Mahoning Utility Agreement that was started, and their Solicitor has it. DeWire said we will continue this next meeting.

Mayor presented LDI's request to install a Mosaic Mural for America 250. LDI received a grant for this project. They will be purchasing tiles that the community will paint. LDI proposed constructing a shadowbox to display it by the Trailhead. Worthy asked if it needed to be a shadowbox and if it can it be placed at the Amphitheater. Dr. Miller mentioned ongoing graffiti concerns at Trailhead and thought that wouldn't be a good place to display. Residents voiced ideas for Mural. JF/DA to have LDI purchase a Mosaic Mural and later determine the location later and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/JF motioned to dissolve Civil Service List and authorize the Commission to establish a new list and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Dr. Miller said she didn't realize what goes into the Police Officer Hiring Process or how long it takes. Worthy explained once the request is approved to resolve a list it will go to Civil Service. The commission consists of a School Teacher, Retiree, myself, and Jessica. The commission will have a meeting and dissolve the list. They will schedule events and plan dates for tests and the next meeting. This meeting will happen upon availability. After meeting, Jessica will order the tests and advertise in Times News. Once we receive applicants, Jessica will email completed applications to commission. When testing is complete, we will wait for results from written test and have a meeting to construct a list. The list then will be brought to Council to approve. Police Department should then have their top three candidates to finish required process on selection. Police Chief added that they have lost applicants due to failed background checks. Some cadets graduate and are already committed for employment by another agency. Chief suggested to increase the sign on bonus to \$5,000 after 18 months of employment. Mayor Saunders agreed and said he knows how much time it takes. There was discussion on what else can be done to increase officers. SH made motion to increase sign on bonus to \$7500, but no second motion was made. DA/SH motioned to increase police officer sign-on bonus to \$5,000 to keep competitive with other municipalities and five were in favor, and Joe Flickinger opposed. 5-1 Motion of \$7500 was not passed.

OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

President of Council – Nothing to Report.

Borough Manager – Report Provided. Nothing to Report.

Borough Engineer – Report Provided. Nothing to Report.

Solicitor – Nothing to report.

Treasurer – Paper Report provided. Additional Bills Report provided.

Mayor – Mayor Saunders gave an overview of Willow Foundation services. They are to provide meals, counseling services, recovery support, and eventually planning on having doctors and housing. The opening of Willow Foundation was to open April 29, 2026 but was delayed.

Police Chief – Report Provided. Chief said the two new vehicles arrived and are on the road. He noted that they did a Blue Line Scholarship this year for a graduating senior advancing themselves in a criminal justice career. The scholarship amount was \$500. The construction project on the 2nd floor of department is almost complete and will be used for a training room. A donation of \$2,000 was given by Trinity Lutheran Church to support the 'Shop with a Cop' program, which benefits families in the community. A grant fund from Walmart for \$1,000 was given and will go back into the Outreach Program for our children.

Fire Chief – Report provided. Not Present.

Light & Power Superintendent – Report Provided. Fisher said he only had the traffic signals that DeWire spoke about. The cost for complete work on both intersections would be \$50,000 each.

Public Works Superintendent – Report Provided.

Recreation Director – Nothing to Report. Not Present.

Junior Councilperson – Reagan reported that not much was said at school board meeting regarding the Borough. She thinks without pressure from Borough the traffic light is not a priority.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Administration – Jordyn Miller, Chair; Steve Hawk, Co-Chair. Dr. Miller had nothing to report. Flickinger asked DeWire if he has spoke to anyone regarding Weissport Funds owed to Borough. DeWire said yes, but no update will be given.

Economic Development, Buildings and Codes – Steve Hawk, Chair; Rebecca Worthy, Co-Chair – Hawk had nothing to report.

Police, Fire and Safety – Joe Flickinger, Chair; Jordyn Miller, Co-Chair. Flickinger reported he will be attending the hazard mitigation planning at the County on May 6, 2026. He explained this happens every 5-years and should be done within the next 6-8 months.

Light & Power Committee – Rebecca Worthy, Chair; Grant Mosier, Co-Chair. Worthy had nothing to report.

Sewer Committee – Grant Mosier, Chair; Dave Arndt, Co-Chair. Arndt had nothing to report.

Streets, Public Works & Recreation – Dave Arndt, Chair; Joe Flickinger, Co-Chair. Arndt had nothing to report.

Library Board – Steve Hawk, Chair. Hawk reported that the Library will be participating in the Christmas in July celebration on Saturday, July 25, 2026. The event will include a basket raffle to raise money for children's material and services. He mentioned to contact Melissa Hawk to donate to this event.

Parks & Recreation Board – Rebecca Worthy, Chair. Worthy reported they are putting a boat in the Regatta race hosted by Pool Pals on May 23, 2026. They are doing a Steam Punk Event in June and summer concert series on June 6th with Richie and High Street Rockers from 6-9 pm.

Canal Commission – Ryan Saunders, Chair. Saunders thanked everyone who helped with clean up last month due to the large amount of garbage collected along the trail. Engineers and contractors are working on the new spillway built 2-years ago to prevent further deterioration. Fencing repair is being worked on and we are going to evaluate the damage from the fire last year. We have two new memorial benches that will be installed between June and July. Next month will begin clean-up on the Parryville side of canal. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission will be stocking trout by Lock 7 on Canal.

Council of Governments – Rebecca Worthy, Delegate; Joe Flickinger, Alternate. Flickinger said the COG decided at the June 23rd meeting that they will be distributing donations to Lehigh, Palmerton, and Jim Thorpe Libraries. Arrangements were made with Hawk. We were informed that as COG members may not have to pay membership and should look into our comprehensive plan to make sure it is updated. He also mentioned funds may be available for blighted properties.

Civil Service Commission – Rebecca Worthy, Chair. Nothing to Report.

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

SH/JF motioned to accept Official Reports and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

SH/DA motioned to approve treasurer report and pay the bills and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

ADJOURNMENT

RW/DA motioned to go into executive session for personnel at 8:15 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/SH motioned to go back into regular session at 9:20 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/JF motioned to hire candidate for Borough Mechanic, pending conditional offer acceptance, background check, and pre-employment screening and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

RW/JF motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 6-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Ahner, Borough Secretary