

***This meeting is being audio recorded for public record***  
Borough Council Meeting  
**Minutes**  
**July 16 2025**

*This meeting is being audio recorded for public record*

Patrick McCoy, President	Member, 1 <sup>st</sup> Ward	Term Expires: 12/31/25
Nicole Scimone, Vice President	Member, 4 <sup>th</sup> Ward	Term Expires: 12/31/27
Bryan Travis	Member, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ward	Term Expires: 12/31/27
Brian McGinnis	Member, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ward	Term Expires: 12/31/25
Sheila Vaccaro	Member, 5 <sup>th</sup> Ward	Term Expires: 12/31/25
Bernie Flynn	Member, 6 <sup>th</sup> Ward	Term Expires: 12/31/27
Lisa Dorsey	Member, 7 <sup>th</sup> Ward	Term Expires: 12/31/25

**Mayor:** Lillian L. DeBaptiste

**Borough Manager:** Sean Metrick

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**Public Hearing @ 6:30 PM:**

Consider the Re-Authorization and Five-Year Plan of the West Chester Business Improvement District Authority

**Discussion:** Mr. McCoy called the Public Hearing to order at 6:40 PM

Mark Thompson, Solicitor for the West Chester Business Improvement District (BID), addressed Borough Council and explained the process for reauthorization of the five-year plan, 2026 through 2030. A notice for the public hearing was advertised and the plan sent to the affected property owners. There is an opportunity for public comment at this Hearing, and a 45-day comment period to lodge objections to the final plan. The BID will come back to Borough Council after the conclusion of the comment period to approve a final plan and enact an Ordinance.

Mr. John O'Brien, Executive Director of the West Chester Business Improvement District, addressed Borough Council. The plan is a compilation of two years of work, conversations with the businesses and surveys. The plan includes a map of the new district, performance overview, strategic planning and organizational goals, marketing and event promotion, and the financial outlook for 2026 – 2030, which includes the assessment rate and expenses. The rate will remain at 3 mils. He advised Borough Council they can make an amendment to the plan at any time and explained the amendment process. Mr. O'Brien reviewed with Borough Council the programs, recruiting goals and tools, transportation, and event goals.

Ms. Scimone asked if the properties in the expansion area were notified. Mr. O'Brien replied, yes.

Resident Lisa Kearns had questions about revenues and expenses. Mr. O'Brien explained the revenue and expenses, and said they will continue to monitor both. She stated only 38% of the revenue went into services Mr. O'Brien said they are a 3-member staff and 44% of staff expenses is on the lower-end of what other organizations use as their personnel cost.

Bob Hall, owner of a business located at 116 South High Street, said his property was added to the proposed expansion, and asked how many units are currently assessed and how many are included in the expansion. Mr. O'Brien said they use the word "parcel" and there are currently 263 parcels, and they are adding eighty-five new

parcels to the district. He noted that the voting process is per parcel. Mr. Hall asked why the expansion is necessary and he said the budget from 2024 to 2025 increased 20%.

Regarding the budget, Mr. O'Brien replied all the event income, as well as all the event expenses, are now included in the accounting process, which is why the budget appears different from previous budgets. He said property owners, individual businesses outside the district, and former members of Borough Council are advocating for the businesses in other areas of the town. They want to do more for the businesses outside the district in terms of marketing, safety, and beautification.

Bob Hall said if he does not pay the assessment his property will be liened and/or he will have to pass the assessment cost to the tenant.

Mr. O'Brien said residential parcels have been included since the inception of the organization in 2000 and believes there is benefit to the residential properties. People are moving to West Chester because they love the walkability of the downtown area to restaurants, retail, etc., so there is an ancillary benefit.

Mr. Flynn asked what the average assessment is. Mr. O'Brien said currently \$1,100 and the median is \$390,000 due to large parcels. The expansion average is \$223.00 and median is \$373.65. The properties have three months to pay the bill.

Ms. Vaccaro said the BID does an excellent job with little funding. West Chester BID does more than larger municipalities and she is grateful we have the BID.

Business owner on Gay Street, Diane Davis, said her property has been added in the expansion. She asked of those eighty-five parcels, how many are pure and/or discounted residential, or assessed 100% of the fee. Mr. O'Brien said he does not have that data but will follow up with her. Ms. Davis said her business will not be receiving the benefit of the events.

Mr. O'Brien said there are a variety of ways to highlight and bring awareness to the businesses. The Clean and Green program will keep the area clean and improve property values.

Ms. Scimone asked if there would be expansion on the Board of Directors. Mr. O'Brien said they hope to include property owners in the expansion district to the Board. She encouraged new members to be included.

Mr. Flynn said the landscape of the Borough will be changing in the next several years with the addition of the new buildings.

No other comments were made.

Mr. Flynn made a Motion to approve the Re-Authorization and Five-Year Plan of the West Chester Business Improvement District Authority; Mr. Travis seconded the Motion.

**Roll Call:**

Ms. Dorsey – Yes; Mr. Flynn – Yes; Ms. Vaccaro – Yes; Mr. McGinnis – Yes;  
Mr. Travis – Yes; Ms. Scimone – Yes; Mr. McCoy - Yes

**Motion Passes: 7-0**

The Public Hearing concluded at 7:15 PM

**Borough Council Meeting:**

- I. Call to Order at 7:16 PM
- II. Pledge of Allegiance by Mr. Travis
- III. Announcements:

A) Announce the purpose of the July 16, 2025 Executive Session

Mr. McCoy announced an Executive Session was held on July 16, 2025 to discuss personnel issues.

- IV. Comments, suggestions, petitions by residents in attendance regarding items that are not on the agenda (*Please be advised that all public comment has a 5-minute time limit.*)

Mr. Tom Walsh reminded Borough Council of the Lafayette Day events and asked them to remind family, friends, and relatives to attend.

- V. Comments by the Borough Council and the Mayor

*Ms. Vaccaro:* Reminded everyone of *Up on the Roof*, which benefits the Borough and our beautification program. It is also a fun event.

*Mr. McGinnis:* Thanked the first Responders, West Chester Fire Department and East Bradford Township for responding to the fire on July 11<sup>th</sup> at Jakes Bar.

*Mr. Travis:* Phoenixville has just been named, *The Best Small Town in America* in which to live. They are number one in quality of life and received other accolades, as well. We need to keep this in mind and make sure we make the list next year.

*Ms. Dorsey:* Thanked the Parking, Building & Housing and Ramsey Reiner for their work on behalf of the Borough. She thanked Public Works for the paving and stormwater management. She personally noticed, and appreciates, the paving in the alleys. Thank you to Gil Robinson and our refuse and recycling crew.

*Mr. Flynn:* There is a new ice cream store in Ward 6 called, "*Ice Cream*" and he is looking forward to patronizing this business. The Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Foundation will sponsor a Trike Race on August 8<sup>th</sup>.

*Ms. Scimone:* Please visit the Chester County Visitor's Center. There is interesting information, maps, and documents to view.

*Mayor DeBaptiste:* Please bring your family and friends to the National Night Out. It is a free event.

*Mr. McCoy:* He is impressed with Good Fellowship, and their training and implementing services related to mental health issues and patients. He is proud of that accomplishment. We had four very good candidates that applied for the vacancies on our Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Committee. He appreciates our volunteers.

## VI. Reports/Presentations:

### A) Presentation on the 2024 Audit –Dale R. Umbenhauer, CPA – Maillie

**Discussion:** Chris Fratinardo, Audit Manager, with Maillie, LLP provided his presentation and reviewed the draft audit. He thanked Ms. Lioni for continuing to do an excellent job.

Mr. Fratinardo said there are no concerns in his presentation; however, there are two recommendations: The use of authorized vendors; and, repaying due to/due from. He advised Mr. Flynn was interviewed during the pre-audit governance call; and, Mr. Flynn suggested a five-year plan of revenues and expenses, and budgeting to determine if revenues need to be raised or expenses cut. Dale Umbenhauer will provide recommendations.

Mr. McCoy asked to explain the note on the report regarding vendors. Mr. Fratinardo explained the Public Work's Department was purchasing salt from unauthorized vendors which he believes is not supported by internal controls and could cause issues with grant money reimbursement. It is not a good practice.

Mr. McGinnis said Council needs to be cognizant that we will not see the influx of grant money that we have seen during the last several years. There are federal budget cuts, and we should start planning now for next year. ARPA and grant money will not be available as it has been during the last several years.

### B) Quarterly Update from the Rail Restoration Committee - Jason Levinn

**Discussion:** Jason Levinn, Chair, presented his report to Borough Council. A rail shuttle is proposed to run between West Chester and Wawa, connecting with SEPTA trains to and from Center City. Mr. Levinn explained the West Chester Metro overview, which includes stations, operations, equipment and budget, project updates, operating costs, funding, and grant opportunities. He requested support for the establishment of the West Chester Metro via letters of support from Borough Council.

Ms. Scimone has concerns regarding the value and demand to create a sustainable business. She questioned the travel comparisons, the timeline connections and the cost involved with taking the train. She is still looking for a business plan, and whether there is truly a need. There should be conversations with Wawa leadership and the other municipalities that will be affected.

Mr. Levinn said the business plan is on their radar and he will run other scenarios. He said they plan to have conversations with the other municipalities and Wawa leadership.

Mr. McCoy asked if the changes with SEPTA funding are considered in the report. Mr. Levinn said he does not have knowledge of SEPTA funding, and his hope is this will allow for negotiations for initial allocations and to fill the void if the R-5 is eliminated.

Ms. Dorsey is interested in understanding the funding. She would like to see the comments and opinions of the other municipalities affected in the next quarterly report.

Mr. Travis said he appreciates the updates. There needs to be a contingency plan in place, especially with the issues with SEPTA. He asked who the operator would be. Mr. Levinn said there are third-party operators to perform maintenance, operations, etc. There are options.

Resident Jim Sargeant said he commuted on the train from West Chester before the line was closed. Ms. Scimone's comments are very privileged. Rail service provides a two-way channel to West Chester

to provide service jobs to and from Philadelphia. He believes many people would use the train. He warned Borough Council about putting too much emphasis on anecdotal evidence. He believes this rail is a viable service. He started a 501(c)(3) because he believes in this project. It is an embarrassment that the Borough does not provide rail service.

Ms. Scimone agrees she is privileged that she has a flexible job. She is concerned that this may not be a sustainable business, and the trains are expensive for transportation to and from work. She encouraged the Committee to continue to work on their plan.

Mr. Sargeant said every train he took was full of commuters. This is not a business, it is public transportation, making a service available to those who do not have alternatives. There are risks, but train service is needed.

VII. New Business:

A) Appointment to the West Chester Borough Planning Commission;  
Transportation Advisory Committee:

- 1) Quinton Birl
- 2) Brandon Emig
- 3) Jeanine Ramagano-Houder
- 4) Dr Thomas H Jaagus

**Discussion:** McGinnis made a Motion to appoint Quntion Birl to the Planning Commission; seconded by Ms. Vaccaro

**Roll Call:**

Ms. Dorsey – No; Mr. Flynn – Yes; Ms. Vaccaro – Yes; Mr. McGinnis – Yes;  
Mr. Travis – Yes; Ms. Scimone – No; Mr. McCoy - Yes

**Motion Passes: 5-2**

Mr. Mr. Travis made a Motion to appoint Brandon Emig to the Transportation Advisory Committee;

**Roll Call:**

Ms. Dorsey – Yes; Mr. Flynn – Yes; Ms. Vaccaro – Yes; Mr. McGinnis – Yes;  
Mr. Travis – Yes; Ms. Scimone – Yes; Mr. McCoy - Yes

**Motion Passes: 7-0**

VIII. Old Business:

A) Discussion:

- 1) Motion to approve special event parking fees policy for Town Center Special Events (attachment)  
*Issue: Approve special event parking fees in garages and surface lots*

**Discussion:** Ms. Vaccaro said she spoke to John O'Brien, and he has no concern with the business employees parking during the events. Church parkers during Sunday events will be notified a month ahead of the event and permits will be provided.

Mr. Travis said the policy just references the lots, and not the garages. He asked if the policy could include the parking garages. He said it is not clear, and he received several comments and concerns.

Mr. McCoy asked if we could change the start time to 1:00 PM.

Mr. McGinnis asked if Sunday events could start at noon and could the Church parkers use the garages. Ms. Reiner said she does not know if the garages are capable of creating a system.

Ms. Vaccaro asked if the garages could provide a waiver for the churches in the morning. Several of the special events start early, and we are losing parking revenue.

Ms. Dorsey said there is street parking for those who want to avoid paying the \$20 fee in the lots and garages.

Mr. Flynn said he believes there will be a problem getting out of the garages during the special events.

Mr. McCoy asked to table this item for further discussion.

*This item is tabled to the August parking committee*

- 2) Motion to schedule a public hearing August 20, 2025 at 6:30 PM to consider amendment to Chapter 37- Animals, creating a new Article prohibiting sale of cats, dogs, and rabbits in retail stores. (attachment)

*Issue: Consider adopting an ordinance for the human sale of pets.*

**Discussion:** Ms. Dorsey said Mr. Flynn had a concern with licensed breeders being unable to sell dogs at the retail level. Ms. Dorsey said our Solicitor confirmed, in the spirit of the Ordinance, they could not. Ms. Scimone said Ariel Leftkovits, with Humane World for Animals, followed up and said if a breeder wants to go to the store and sell their animals, they can do that, but the retailer cannot sell the dog. Mr. Flynn said his concern is specifically dogs, being bred by professional breeders who have all applicable licenses. However, Mr. Flynn said most professional breeders would not collaborate with retailers to sell their dogs, but he wants to be certain they were able if they choose.

Mr. McCoy asked if the Solicitor reviewed the Ordinance. Mr. Metrick replied, yes.

Ms. Dorsey made a Motion to schedule the Public Hearing; Ms. Scimone seconded the Motion.

**Roll Call:**

Ms. Dorsey – Yes; Mr. Flynn – Yes; Ms. Vaccaro – Yes; Mr. McGinnis – Yes;  
Mr. Travis – Yes; Ms. Scimone – Yes; Mr. McCoy - Yes

**Motion Passes: 7-0**

- 3) Motion to approve budget modification or expense and revenue for Capital Project - Goose Creek Green Public Works and Matlack Street Rain Garden Stormwater Project and approval of final Certification of Payment #3 with change order in the amount of \$73,210. (attachment)

**Discussion:** Mr. Flynn said the purchasing policy is the Borough's most paramount policy and every Department should know and follow the policy exactly as written. He questioned the four points of interest in exercising a grant: the grant manager secures the grant; the engineer develops the plan and the process; production managers and project managers run the job; and, the general contractor performs the work. Last night there was a conversation regarding responsibility. He asked after the grant funding is acquired and the project begins, what is the focus of the grant manager. Does that responsibility include monitoring projects, attending production meetings, verifying progress reports, finalizing payment sign off, and closing the project.

Mr. Metrick said there is a planning and development team comprised of Department Heads, Borough Manager, and the Finance Director if lending is involved. The team discusses projects and concepts, which usually include an investment of \$4,000 to \$5,000. We then look for a grant program that matches our needs and then collaborate with our engineers to find a match. Borough Council then approves the application for submittal. A grant application is submitted and then we wait until the grant is awarded, which is usually 90-120 days. The project manager is responsible for the bid process, the contractor and engineer, how the project is developing, and reports back at monthly meetings. Most grants are reimbursement style grants. When the project is completed, an affidavit of payment is submitted for reimbursement, at which time the grant manager is involved in gathering all applicable records and documentation to be submitted for reimbursement.

Mr. Metrick asked to make a subtle correction. The project manager is aware of what the payment should be and making sure the invoices are available. The project manager is tracking the transactions so the grant manager can come in at the end of the project to secure the records and documentation needed to process the grant reimbursement application.

Mr. McGinnis suggested hiring an employee who does procurement and believes it would solve these issues.

Mr. Metrick said he has considered this for a position in the Finance Department.

Ms. Vaccaro said she likes the idea of a procurement position. However, Council needs to determine if they are going to pay the invoice for the change orders. She believes there were failures and mistakes that should not have happened, but we need to move forward with the work.

Ms. Vaccaro made a Motion to approve the cost of the change orders in the amount of \$73,210; Mr. Travis seconded the Motion.

**Roll Call:**

Ms. Dorsey – No; Mr. Flynn – No; Ms. Vaccaro – Yes; Mr. McGinnis – Yes;  
Mr. Travis – Yes; Ms. Scimone – Yes; Mr. McCoy - Yes

**Motion Passes: 5-2**

Mr. McCoy asked the Public Works Committee to study the planning design process, how it is accomplished and how it can be improved. He would also like the Finance Committee to look at the approval of change orders and provide recommendations for checks and balances.

Mr. McGinnis said he agrees. The Borough needs to determine how to keep projects moving when the tariffs become effective on August 1st.

Mr. Flynn agrees the Finance and the Public Works Committees need to work together.

Mr. Metrick said a Motion is not necessary to discuss these items at the August meetings

B) Approve the July 16, 2025 Consent Agenda:

- 1) Motion to approve June 17 and 18, 2025 Borough Council Meetings Minutes
- 2) Motion to reappoint Steven Krug to the West Chester Area Council of Governments UCC Board of Appeals
- 3) Motion to approve Resolution to dispose of the following records (attachment)
  - a) Open Records Files prior to 2022
  - b) Solicitor's applications prior to 2021
  - c) Building & Housing Residential Building Permits prior to 2020
  - d) Rental Permit Receipts prior to 2017

*Issue: Dispose of old records according to the Pennsylvania Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.*
- 4) Motion to schedule public open house for Goose Creek Pollution Reduction Plan – August 5, 2025 at 5:00 PM Borough Hall – 401 East Gay St.  
*Issue: Opportunity to provide public comment on the plan amendment with a presentation by RVE. Video will be recorded and an opportunity for asynchronous feedback through the website is also available.*
- 5) Motion to direct Solicitor to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the West Chester Chamber of Commerce to provide the cost of police services, with a cap of \$10,000; and, review the MOU the year after finalizing the 5-year police contract  
*Issue: Discuss support and fees for the 2025 parade.*
- 6) Motion to approve purchasing requests (attachment):
  - a) JJ Outdoor Services LLC for \$14,369.50
  - b) Johnson Controls for \$16,250.00
  - c) NexGen for \$30,284.00
  - d) USALCO for \$12,835.20
  - e) Witmer Public Safety for \$15,395.60
  - f) Great Lakes Recreation – DBA Boyce Recreation for \$65,386.00

*Issue: Review and recommend the approval of purchase orders exceeding \$10,000*
- 7) Motion to approve special events applications (attachment)
  - a) 10.18.25 Unite 4 HER 5k and fun run
  - b) 12.13.25 Christkindl Market – Downtown West Chester

*Issue: Review and approve special events applications*

- 8) Motion to direct the Solicitor to prepare an amendment to Chapter 66, 1000.6 “Disciplinary Action” to escalate points imposed by guilty convictions of citations for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> disruptive conduct/ nuisance cases to 3,4,5 points.
- 9) Motion to grant extension until August 31, 2025 for 210-214 W Washington Street, Axel Square land development project (attachment)
- 10) Motion to approve HARB applications (attachment)
  - a) 2025-18: 120 N. Church St-Exterior mechanical equipment installation
  - b) 2025-19: 233 W. Gay St-Exterior mechanical equipment-Rectory office
  - c) 2025-20: 233 W. Gay St-Exterior mechanical equipment-Choir mezzanine
  - d) 2025-21: 202 W. Gay St-Replace front door and sign*Issue: Consider a Motion to approve the June HARB Certificates of Appropriateness*
- 11) Motion to direct the Solicitor to attend Zoning Hearing Board relative to 531 Marshall Drive: relief from residential dimensional and parking requirements; and, for no Solicitor attendance required for 501 E. Miner St: relief to allow illuminated ground mount sign at The Melton Center on West Market Street (attachment)

Mr. Flynn made a Motion to approve the July 18, 2025 Consent agenda; Ms. Scimone seconded the Motion.

**Roll Call:**

Ms. Dorsey – Yes; Mr. Flynn – Yes; Ms. Vaccaro – Yes; Mr. McGinnis – Yes;  
Mr. Travis – Yes; Ms. Scimone – Yes; Mr. McCoy - Yes

**Motion Passes: 7-0**

IX. Other Business: No other business was discussed.

X. Adjournment at 8:41 PM

Respectfully submitted,

**Dana C. DiDomenico**

Dana C. DiDomenico