

**MINUTES
NORTH EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Monthly Meeting
December 1, 2025**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amber Belson, President
Ryan McGregor, Vice President
Todd Luke, President Pro Tem
Nancy Anderson
Heather Jones
Bill Beardsley

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor
Emma Scully, Junior Council Person
Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager
Dan Miller, Solicitor
Rebecca Bliss, Administrative Assistant
Julio Pazmino, Waste Water Supervisor
Wayne Yokom, Streets Supervisor
Tyler Simmer, Water Supervisor
Sean Lam, Police Chief
Cheryl Roberts
Jake Jones
Chris Skrekla
Ken Snyder
Richard Bardol
Matthew Rink
Sherry Reed
Jack DiOrazio
Diana Hanes
Chuck Rosequist
Joseph Schneider
David Hirtzel
Aaron Jelley
Morgan Tinko
Blakely Simmons
Rosalee Nattress
Christian Otto-Smith
Dan Adamus
Jamie Lamb
Kevin Lamb
Others present, not signed in

The regular monthly meeting of North East Borough Council was held Monday, December 1, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER:

Borough Council President A. Belson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

INVOCATION:

R. McGregor offered the invocation.

MINUTES:

H. Jones motioned to approve the November 3, 2025, minutes as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

B. Beardsley motioned to approve the November 17, 2025, minutes as presented. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

EXPENSE REPORT:

T. Luke motioned to approve the Expense Approval Report as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

There were no Citizens to be Heard.

REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICERS:

There were no Reports from Elected Officers.

REPORTS FROM APPOINTED OFFICERS:

There were no Reports from Appointed Officers.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:

There were no Reports from Standing Committees.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

There were no Reports from Special Committees.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**Letter of Interest: Marina Authority**

N. Anderson asked if P. Gehrlein had answers to the questions from the previous meeting. A. Belson stated that Council could make a motion and appointment, but that the term would not start until January. N. Anderson stated that several people had brought concerns before Council at the September meeting regarding the appointment of marina board members, which should be taken into consideration. She also stated that they should follow past precedents and ask for letters of interest from community members. A. Belson stated that she spoke with Amy Burniston and Ed Masharka, current board members, and that they were both amenable

to the appointment. H. Jones motioned to approve the Letter of Interest: Mariana Authority, appointment of Dan Adamus, as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried 4 to 2. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>No</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>No</u>

NEW BUSINESS:

2026 Proposed Budget

P. Gehrlein reviewed the proposed budget as presented. He stated that the proposed budget shows all six funds balanced but that costs continue to increase. The proposed budget, as reviewed several times by the finance committee, has a planned 8% sewer rate increase, which will begin April 2026. He also noted that some line items have been created to track grant revenues and expenditures separately. H. Jones motioned to advertise the 2026 Proposed Budget as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

2026 Tax Ordinance

P. Gehrlein stated that a tax ordinance is required annually. He stated that the proposed tax ordinance does not include an increase for 2026. B. Beardsley motioned to advertise the 2026 Tax Ordinance as presented. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Resolution 12012025-1: Resolution to Join PLGIT

P. Gehrlein stated that PLGIT (Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust) is a membership organization of over 650 municipalities in Pennsylvania that works as a consortium, collectively investing for greater returns than the local bank can offer. He stated that the Borough will maintain accounts at Northwest Bank for daily use, but that less active savings accounts could be moved to PLGIT for higher interest returns. He stated that the auditors have reviewed and approved the proposed transfer of funds. R. McGregor motioned to approve Resolution 12012025-1: Resolution to Join PLGIT as presented. H. Jones seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Request to certify eligibility list as presented by Civil Service

N. Anderson stated that the Civil Service Commission is requesting that Council adopt and certify the eligibility list as presented, stating that there is one candidate who has passed the background check and the physical, written, and oral examinations. T. Luke motioned to approve the Request to certify the eligibility list as presented by Civil Service. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
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Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Request to make conditional offer of employment to Civil Service Candidate for position of full-time officer

N. Anderson stated that the Civil Service Commission is requesting that Council approve a conditional offer of employment to Justin Fuller, probationary full-time officer. T. Luke motioned to approve the Request to make a conditional offer of employment to Civil Service Candidate, Justin Fuller, for position of full-time officer as presented. T. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

2026 Public Meeting Schedule

H. Jones stated that the Public Safety Committee may change their meeting times for the 2026 calendar year. The advertisement of the 2026 Public Meeting Schedule was tabled until the next meeting.

3rd Quarter 2025 Water Shut Off List – To be presented

H. Jones motioned to approve the 3rd Quarter 2025 Water Shut Off List as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Second Monthly Meeting – December 15, 2025, if needed

P. Gehrlein stated that there will be a Second Monthly Meeting on December 15, 2025.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Police Chief Report
Departmental Report
Manager's Report
Commissions and Authorities

H. Jones stated that she had a list of questions for P. Gehrlein to follow up on items from this year:

H. Jones asked about the implementation of Savvy Citizen. P. Gehrlein stated that the set-up has been completed and that the program will be announced to the community within the month, providing the QR Code for sign-ups and an informational article in the North East News-Journal.

H. Jones asked about the Skill Games Ordinance implementation. P. Gehrlein stated that the first notifications were sent and that one club has not yet responded. He stated that a second notification for compliance will be sent.

H. Jones asked about the pay scale for employees regarding the merit-based wage adjustments in the contract. P. Gehrlein stated that an evaluation tool is being developed, approximately 60% of which will apply to all employees and 40% will be more department- and/or job-specific indicators. He stated that the supervisors will be weighting each criterion, scoring each item on a 1 to 5 scale, completing evaluations quarterly. The compiled quarterly scores will then be averaged to a final score that will correlate to a percentage wage increase.

H. Jones asked for an update regarding a lighting ordinance. P. Gehrlein stated that the committee has met one time to review an initial proposal, but that the large picture needs to be refined. He will work with the committee chairperson to schedule the next meeting.

H. Jones asked about the Fire Department reporting standardization. P. Gehrlein stated that evaluations will be completed by the Borough's auditing firm, probably around January 2026.

H. Jones asked for an update regarding problem properties related to code enforcement. P. Gehrlein stated that identified properties have been sent first notifications based on the new ordinances.

H. Jones said that the Haynes House is missing a window, stating that it is a hazard. P. Gehrlein stated that code enforcement will send the appropriate notification. He also stated that he believes a tour of the property would be helpful for council to see the state of the building and ask questions about future planning.

H. Jones asked if the vacant position on the Water Authority would be filled. P. Gehrlein stated that he is reviewing all committees and authorities to make sure positions are filled, current members wish to continue, and any needs are identified.

H. Jones asked about the status of the arches at Freeport Beach. P. Gehrlein stated that the materials for the archway were provided by North East In Bloom, and that the arch is complete and ready for installation, which will take place in spring.

H. Jones asked about the Rental Agreements for the Community Center. P. Gehrlein stated that the Facility Use Agreement is already available on the website, allowing people to request reservations. He also stated that the long-term use contracts are in-process.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There were no Announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

J. Schneider, 64 Eaton Drive, thanked the Streets Department for their hard work in collecting leaves, even in poor weather.

J. Lamb, 8841 Findley Lake Road, stated that there is a lot of concern, as expressed on social media, regarding the owner of the Haynes House. She asked if Haynes House would be open to the public, what the larger story is of the owner and her plans, as well as why so many properties are being demolished. She stated her concern for the lack of communication by the owner to the community.

R. Nattress, 30 Gibson Street, stated that she moved back to town for the affordable housing options and the good schools. She stated that the developer is taking down affordable housing, which is a concern for the community and older people with fixed incomes. She asked if the developer has a demolition-only urban policy and requested that council consider a motion that historic properties should require council approval for demolition. She also read comments from neighbors, stating that the developer is hurting local businesses and the community. She stated that the Borough Manager should know what the developer's plans are.

D. Hanes, 11 East Main Street, stated that she was approached to sell her business, but that she declined, stating that there would be no progress and that the community would be mad at her for selling.

C. Skrekla, 78 Isabella Street, said that vacant buildings are a hazard.

M. Tinko, 54 Bank Street, said that vacant homes are unsafe. She asked what the process was for obtaining a demolition permit. P. Gehrlein stated that owners submit a zoning permit application, which is approved if the

proposed work is allowable according to the zoning ordinance, insurance is in place, and that basic safety regulations are met. He stated that building code compliance is handled by the North East Area Code Administration. M. Tinko asked if he toured the mass demolition projects before they are approved. P. Gehrlein stated that he can only review and approve applications based on the zoning laws that are in place, and that he doesn't have a legal reason to deny the permit requests that have been submitted.

C. Skrekla asked if there were different regulations for residential versus commercial properties. P. Gehrlein stated that the Borough handles zoning only, NEACA handles residential building code, and that he believes NEACA uses BIU for commercial properties.

R. Nattress stated that the 400 acres of farm property that have been destroyed does not help the community vision.

C. Roberts, 72 Robinson Street, stated that the lack of transparency from Granite Ridge is being repeated here. She stated that neighbors have a right to transparency.

A. Jelley asked if the developer was allowed to enter properties into a trust like they did in Corry, which would destroy the tax base.

P. Gehrlein stated that transparency from the developer would be helpful, but that he is bound by the legal parameters of zoning.

J. Lamb stated that the developer is working on small projects, not what's important. P. Gehrlein stated that it is often hard to understand how someone can afford to have a property that doesn't immediately turn a profit, but that the developer is not bound by that tension. He stated that he agrees that hearing the plans from the developer would help ease minds.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:02 p.m. H. Jones motioned to adjourn. N. Anderson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rebecca Bliss (December 2, 2025)

Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager