

MINUTES
NORTH EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Monthly Meeting
December 15, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Amber Belson, President
Ryan McGregor, Vice President
Todd Luke, President Pro Tem – via phone
Nancy Anderson
Heather Jones
Bill Beardsley

OTHERS PRESENT: Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor
Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager
Rebecca Bliss, Administrative Assistant
Julio Pazmino, Waste Water Supervisor
Wayne Yokom, Streets Supervisor
Mark Hamman, Assistant Streets Supervisor
Tyler Simmer, Water Supervisor
Sean Lam, Police Chief
Pattie Stempka
Sandy Streeter
Denise Pekelnicky
Michael Yori
Rosan Adkins
Steve Adkins
Joseph Schneider
Ken Snyder
Matthew Rink
Ryan Burniston
Amy Burniston
Dan Adamus
Christian Otto-Smith
Diana Hanes
Libby Rosequist
Rosalee Nattress
Mohamed Abuhamra
Others present, not signed in

PUBLIC HEARING:

Borough Council President A. Belson called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

2026 Proposed Budget

There were no public comments regarding the 2026 Proposed Budget.

2026 Tax Ordinance

There were no public comments regarding the 2026 Tax Ordinance.

The Public Hearing ended at 6:01 p.m.

The second monthly meeting of North East Borough Council was held Monday, December 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER:

At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, Borough Council President A. Belson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

INVOCATION:

B Beardsley offered the invocation.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

Denise Pekelnicky – Driveway apron, snow plowing

D. Pekelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that she and her husband have made a lot of improvements to their property in order to improve the community and increase curb appeal. She stated that her businesses have been negatively impacted by the work of the Borough on and around her property. She stated that she has witnessed Borough employees using her parking lot and driveway to turn around and specifically requested that the Borough not use her driveway. She also stated that the east apron of her parking lot that was replaced during the last construction project is significantly higher than the other driveway apron, causing damage to the apron, people's vehicles, and plow trucks. She asked that the apron be corrected in the spring. D. Pekelnicky also said she is disheartened by people not preserving the historic district and tearing down properties.

M. Yori, 20 South Lake Street, stated that an ordinance on vape shops should be passed immediately, stating that the lights are too bright and that the shops are aligning for when the state allows for the sale of marijuana. M. Yori also stated that the North East Fire Departments should not be spending one- to two-million dollars on new firetrucks when they cannot respond to EMS calls. He stated that people are dying because they have to wait over twenty minutes for an ambulance to arrive, often from a different station. He asked Council why they are donating money to the fire departments if they are not going to respond to EMS calls.

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:

2026 Proposed Budget

N. Anderson motioned to approve the 2026 Proposed Budget 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>

2026 Tax Ordinance

H. Jones motioned to approve the 2026 Tax Ordinance 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>

2026 Public Meeting Schedule

P. Gehrlein asked for clarification regarding the proposed meeting schedule of the Public Safety Advisory Commission. H. Jones motioned to approve the 2026 Public Meeting Schedule as presented with the correction for the Public Safety Advisory Commission meetings. 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>

NEW BUSINESS:

Vacancy Tax Discussion

H. Jones stated that the Borough needs to start focusing on the downtown area and the vacancies. She stated that a vacant property registration should be created to register properties that have been vacant for more than six months, with fees increasing with the length of vacancy. She stated that the purpose is to encourage use of the properties, not to punish the owners. P. Gehrlein stated that he will contact the solicitor about drafting an ordinance.

Historic Preservation Discussion

B. Morey stated that she is concerned with the demolition of properties and suggested that a date/age be set to determine the approval of demolition. She stated that she doesn't want to tell property owners what do with their properties, but that there should be more conversation and communication required before they are permitted to demolish anything that others might see as historically significant. H. Jones stated that demolition permits should be brought before the Planning Commission and then Borough Council for approval. N. Anderson asked if it applied to residential and commercial properties and asked what determines if a property counts as historic. P. Gehrlein stated that he could make an inventory list of properties within the historic district, but that there is currently only one building within the Borough that is declared "historic" by the national registry. B. Beardsley stated that "old" should not be assumed to be "historic."

Zoning Amendment Discussion

H. Jones stated that the zoning ordinance should be amended because vape shops are not specifically addressed in the current legislation. She suggested setting an allowable number of vape shops within Borough limits. P. Gehrlein stated that he will discuss the process with the solicitor, but that specific parameters might need to be set for the permissible locations, not limiting the opportunities by count. He also stated that zoning ordinance amendments must follow specific requirements through the Planning Commission and Erie County Department of Planning.

Tax Collector Discussion

P. Gehrlein stated that the current tax collector, Denise Fox, won the election by write-in, but will not be accepting the position, ending her term on December 31, 2025. He stated that whoever is chosen to fill the vacancy will serve for two years until the time of the next municipal election cycle. A. Belson stated that she will talk with Penny Luke, the North East Township tax collector, to see if she is interested in taking on the Borough tax collection. If not, the council will move forward with choosing someone else.

Commissions and Authorities Vacancies

P. Gehrlein stated that the current vacancies are up for discussion among council, stating that they can appoint people to those positions or advertise for interested candidates. A. Belson stated that one advertisement should be placed for the following openings: two (2) water authority members, two (2) sewer authority members, one (1) planning commission member, and one (1) marina authority member. H. Jones motioned to advertise for the current Commissions and Authorities Vacancies 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>

CORRESPONDENCE:

North East Borough Tax Collector – Letter of Decline

Marina Authority – Letter of Resignation

Sewer Authority – Letter of Resignation

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. Belson stated that the next meeting will be Monday, January 5, 2026.

A. Belson thanked Ryan McGregor for his years of service on Borough Council, presenting him with a gift.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

D. Pekelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that there is a solicitor that is assigned to the Borough who should be in attendance at every meeting. She stated that the Borough Manager is unauthorized to provide legal advice. She stated that the solicitor was aware of the potential nature of the meeting and should have provided the appropriate information and be in attendance to provide legal advice. She also stated that "historic" is hard to regulate but to do nothing is irresponsible. She stated that there should be no exceptions within the historic district.

R. Nattress, 30 Gibson Street, stated that she spoke to a representative from the Department of Environmental Protection who said an ordinance needs to be passed to protect historic buildings. She also stated that the demolition of properties should be regulated, citing the possibility of asbestos in older buildings.

A. Burniston, 11751 Peabody Road, stated her support for the previous comment regarding EMS service, as a family member had to wait more than thirty minutes for an ambulance during an emergency. Additionally, she stated that the Marina Authority's loss of Tim Truitt as a board member, as a result of his resignation, means they have lost the only person who had actual experience in running the marina. She asked that Council look at

who will replace him, and implored Council to choose someone with a sense of volunteerism verses someone who wants to line their own pockets.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 6:44 p.m. H. Jones motioned to adjourn. B. Beardsley seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rebecca Bliss (December 16, 2025)

Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager