

MINUTES
NORTH EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Reorganization and Regular Monthly Meeting
January 5, 2026

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: | Nancy Anderson Todd Luke Bill Beardsley |
| OTHERS PRESENT: | Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor Elect Amber Belson, Council Member Elect Heather Jones, Council Member Elect Christian Otto-Smith, Council Member Elect 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 Mark Hamman, Assistant Streets Supervisor Tyler Simmer, Water Supervisor Sean Lam, Police Chief Penny Luke Hayle Otto-Smith Robert Behrens, Jr Sherry Reed Pattie Stempka Aaron Jelley Dave Jelley DR Kreider Chris Skrekla Matt Skrekla Brandon Cartney Ryan Hanes Carl Skrekla Rosan Adkins Steve Adkins Rosalee Nattress Ray Schaff Mohamed Ahmed Khaled Abuhamra Mohamed Fadel Betty Truby Ryan Burniston Amy Burniston Jake Jones Libby Rosequist Others present, not signed in |

The Biennial Reorganizational Meeting of North East Borough Council was held Monday, January 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. The regular monthly meeting of North East Borough Council to follow.

SWEARING IN OF MAYOR – Rebecca Bliss, Notary

Bobbi Jo Morey

SWEARING IN OF COUNCIL MEMBERS – Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor

Amber Belson

Heather Jones

Christian Otto-Smith

CALL TO ORDER – Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor

Mayor Bobbi Jo Morey called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

INVOCATION:

B. Beardsley offered the invocation.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

(Upon completion, the Council President will preside over the meeting.)

B. Morey asked for nominations roll call for Council President. Each council member gave a nomination for president. The nominations roll call was as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| N. Anderson - | Amber Belson |
| T. Luke - | Amber Belson |
| A. Belson - | Amber Belson |
| C. Otto-Smith - | Amber Belson |
| H. Jones - | Amber Belson |
| B. Beardsley - | Amber Belson |

After a roll call vote, Amber Belson was named Council President unanimously.

A. Belson, Council President, then presided over the meeting.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT:

A. Belson, Council President, asked for a roll call vote for Council Vice President. The votes were as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| N. Anderson - | Bill Beardsley |
| T. Luke - | Bill Beardsley |
| A. Belson - | Bill Beardsley |
| C. Otto-Smith - | Heather Jones |
| H. Jones - | Bill Beardsley |
| B. Beardsley - | Bill Beardsley |

B. Beardsley was named Council Vice President in a 5-1 Vote.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEM:

A. Belson, Council President, asked for a roll call vote for Council President Pro Tem. The votes were as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N. Anderson - | Todd Luke |
| T. Luke - | Todd Luke |
| A. Belson - | Todd Luke |
| C. Otto-Smith - | Todd Luke |
| H. Jones - | Todd Luke |
| B. Beardsley - | Todd Luke |

T. Luke was named Council President Pro-Tem unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF REGISTERED ELECTOR TO SERVE AS VACANCY BOARD CHAIR:

H. Jones motioned to appoint Michael Spellman to serve as Vacancy Chair Board. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

CONFIRM APPOINTMENT OF ERIE COUNTY TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE DELEGATES (ECTCC):

T. Luke motioned to appoint Patrick Gehrlein and Bill Beardsley as Erie County Tax Collection Committee Delegates. H. Jones seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

ADJOURNMENT OF REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

At 6:06 p.m. B. Beardsley motioned to adjourn the reorganizational meeting. C. Otto-Smith seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING:**CALL TO ORDER:**

Borough Council President A. Belson called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

MINUTES:

B. Beardsley motioned to approve the December 1, 2025, minutes as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

H. Jones motioned to approve the December 15, 2025, minutes as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

EXPENSE REPORT:

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

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <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:

Vacancy Tax Discussion

A. Belson read notes from the solicitor stating that the council may choose to implement a vacant property registration, but not a tax. A. Belson suggested forming a committee to continue discussions. Heather Jones, Nancy Anderson, and Bobbi Jo Morey will serve on the committee.

Historic Preservation Discussion / Zoning Amendment Discussion

A. Belson asked D. Miller, solicitor, to draft a document to define the Historic District and additional criteria that would be used to determine eligible properties. D. Miller stated that zoning amendments will need to be in compliance with the municipal planning code and that they should include a copy of the map of the historic district for reference. T. Luke motioned for D. Miller to draft documents related to the proposed Historic Preservation and Zoning Amendments discussion for council's review. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

NEW BUSINESS:**Resolution 01052026-1: Joint Tax Collection**

A. Belson stated that the proposed joint resolution with the North East Township is required to name Penny Luke as the Borough Tax Collector. B. Beardsley motioned to approve Resolution 01052026-1: Joint Tax Collection, contingent on the North East Township's approval, as presented. H. Jones seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

Resolution 01052026-3: Tax Collector Compensation

A. Belson stated that the proposed resolution will change the tax collector compensation rate to 4% across the board instead of the previous 3.5% for taxes paid on time and 5% for late payments. H. Jones motioned to approve Resolution 01052026-3: Tax Collector Compensation as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

Tax Collector Appointment**Swearing in of Tax Collector – Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor**

Mayor Bobbi Jo Morey administered the oath of office to Penny Luke, Borough Tax Collector.

Committee and Authority Appointments – Council President

Council President A. Belson asked for interest in committee participation, then appointed Council Members to Committees and Authorities as follows:

Finance Committee – A. Belson, B. Beardsley, N. Anderson
Personnel Committee – H. Jones, N. Anderson, C. Otto-Smith
Shade Tree Commission – C. Otto-Smith
Water Authority – B. Beardsley
Sewer Authority – T. Luke
Civil Service Commission – A. Belson
Public Safety Advisory Commission – H. Jones

Resolution 01052026-2: Authorization for Warrantless Arrests

Chief Lam stated that the proposed resolution updates the existing resolution to match the current rules of criminal procedure. T. Luke motioned to approve Resolution 01052026-2: Authorization for Warrantless Arrests as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

Gibson: American Legion – Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade (May 25)

C. Otto-Smith motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park: American Legion – Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade (May 25) as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

Second Monthly Meeting – January 19, 2024, if needed

A. Belson stated that there will be a second monthly meeting on January 19, 2026.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Police Chief Report

Code Enforcement Report

Letter of Interest: Marina Authority

C. Otto-Smith motioned to approve the Letter of Interest: Marina Authority as presented, appointing Aaron Jelley to the marina authority. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

Letter of Interest: Water/Sewer Authority

H. Jones motioned to approve the Letter of Interest: Water/Sewer Authority as presented, appointing Steve Gregory to the sewer authority. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| Heather Jones | <u>Yes</u> | Christian Otto-Smith | <u>Yes</u> |
| Todd Luke | <u>Yes</u> | Nancy Anderson | <u>Yes</u> |
| Bill Beardsley | <u>Yes</u> | Amber Belson | <u>Yes</u> |

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. Belson announced the January birthdays: Wayne Yokom and Todd Luke.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

R. Nattress, 30 Gibson Street, asked about the emergency provision that would allow property owners to demolish their buildings if they were unsafe. She stated her concern that property owners would neglect their buildings in order to later justify the lack of safety and permit demolition. A. Belson stated that a registration and inspection program would address her concern. H. Jones stated that Code Enforcement would be involved in maintaining the property.

M. Ahmed, 143 West Main Street, stated his concern for similar businesses being allowed to open near existing businesses of the same nature. He detailed his business's licenses and inspection records, donations to the fire departments and community programs, and the employment opportunities his shop offers. A. Belson stated that the zoning ordinance will be amended in the future, but that the constitution does not permit them to limit the number of specific businesses.

R. Behrens, 60 Grahamville Street, complimented the Streets Department for the street and sidewalk plowing, and thanked the Shade Tree Commission for planting trees.

P. Stempka, 104 Isabella Street, thanked the Streets Department for the Christmas decorations and street and sidewalk plowing.

R. Adkins, 80 Wellington Street, asked how long the zoning changes will take.

R. Burniston, 11751 Peabody Road, apologized for his late arrival and asked if the marina vacancy had been filled during this meeting, to which A. Belson said yes. R. Burniston read the letter of resignation from T. Truitt, former marina board member, stating that it was not read aloud when approved at a previous council meeting. He also stated that he did not agree with the appointment of Aaron Jolley.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Executive Session convened at 6:38 p.m., regarding Personnel Matters, with no action to follow. The Executive Session ended at 7:05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:05 p.m. H. Jones motioned to adjourn. N. Anderson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rebecca Bliss (January 6, 2026)

Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager