

AVONDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 3, 2026 – 7:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Paul Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL

Present:

President Paul Morgan, Vice President Stephanie Reichert, Mike Essmaker, Janet Watts and Lucas Ortiz

Also Present: Mayor Susan Rzuidlo, Treasurer Joan McVaugh and Administrator Sharon Norris

Two members of the public were in attendance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Route 41 Multi-Municipal Planning Initiative

Mr. Lou Kaplan, a resident of London Grove Township and Board member of SAVE, addressed Council regarding a proposed multi-municipal master planning initiative along the Route 41 corridor (Kennett Square to Londonderry Township).

Mr. Kaplan explained that the initiative would:

- Develop a land use–focused master plan aimed at enhancing quality of life and economic vitality along the Route 41 corridor.
- Involve collaboration among five municipalities.
- Be funded through a DVRPC grant (minimum \$100,000), with no municipal cost share required.
- Retain a land use planner experienced in intermunicipal planning.
- SAVE would coordinate and fund the initial informational meeting.

Should participating municipalities agree to proceed, a formal grant application would be submitted prior to the upcoming deadline. If awarded, the planning process would begin in Spring 2026 and extend approximately one year.

Council agreed to host the informational meeting with neighboring municipalities prior to the DVRPC deadline. SAVE offered assistance with scheduling.

4. RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS

Resolution 2026-09 – Re-Declaration of Emergency (Phorid Fly Infestation)

Council considered re-declaring the emergency originally adopted in 2024. The proposed resolution included references to hydrogen sulfide. Council discussed concerns regarding the language and its potential implications for local mushroom growers.

Motion: Paul Morgan

Second: Janet Watts

Vote: Failed, 1–4

(Ms. Reichert, Mr. Essmaker, Ms. Watts, and Mr. Ortiz voting nay.)

Ms. Norris will contact Matt Fetick regarding possible revisions to the resolution language.

Motion to Contact Matt Fetick

Motion: Mike Essmaker

Second: Stephanie Reichert

To notify Mr. Fetick that Resolution 2026-09 was not adopted and determine whether he still wishes to seek the Borough's support.

Approved, 4–1 (Mr. Morgan voting nay.)

Resolution 2026-10 – Disposition of Records

Motion: Mike Essmaker **Second:** Stephanie Reichert

Approved unanimously, 5–0.

Resolution 2026-11 – Updated Fee Resolution

Motion: Mike Essmaker **Second:** Janet Watts

Approved unanimously, 5–0.

Approval of Minutes – January 20, 2026

Motion to approve as presented: Mike Essmaker **Second:** Lucas Ortiz

Approved, 5–0.

5. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Rzucidlo provided the following updates:

PennDOT Grant Application

- PennDOT requested a signed and sealed engineer's cost comparison.
- PennDOT's preliminary construction estimate was \$249,000 (construction only).
- Engineering and administrative costs were not included.
- Engineering certification is expected to cost several thousand dollars.
- Application deadline: February 13, 2026.
- The Mayor will follow up with PennDOT to clarify submission requirements.

Sewer Plant Parking / Long-Term Vision

Discussion regarding paving the area in front of the sewer plant and potentially installing a solar-covered shelter to support walkability and community events.

Electrical Service at Reservoir

Additional project details are needed prior to pursuing grant funding.

Armed Forces Day – May 16, 2026

A memorial dedication is scheduled at the Pomeroy Veterans Memorial. Invitations have been sent to the VFW, Scouts, and community members.

New Wells

A grant has been received to bring the new wells online. Additional details forthcoming.

Snowstorm Response

Public Works Director Andy was commended for his efforts during the recent snowstorm.

Water & Sewer Operations

Two water leaks occurred (Henson & Third; 403 Thompson Street). Well runtime decreased following the first repair and briefly after the second repair but has since returned to approximately 21 hours per day.

6. FIRE & EMS REGIONALIZATION DISCUSSION

Council discussed the proposed Fire & EMS merger and potential funding structures.

Two funding options were reviewed:

1. Continued tax-based funding (EMS tax capped at 0.5 mills).
2. Establishment of a utility-style fee not based on assessed value, allowing greater revenue flexibility.

Additional discussion included:

- Estimated 1 mill for emergency services equals approximately \$42,705 for the Borough.
- Borough representation on the proposed authority board.
- Legal authority to impose a utility-style fee.

- Service levels and cost allocation methodology.
- Financial impact on residents.
- Proposed merger effective January 1, 2027.

Council indicated that additional information is required prior to formal action.

Harvey Hall, Borough Fire Marshal, shared perspective based on his experience as a volunteer firefighter and discussed regulatory challenges impacting volunteer recruitment.

7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

- Council authorized issuance of a new Fire Marshal badge to Harvey Hall.
 - Mr. Hall has been provided with an additional emergency radio.
 - Mr. Hall requested that the Borough consider adoption of the International Fire Code.
-

8. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- A Tax Anticipation Note has been received.
 - A \$400,000 sewer reimbursement loan ordinance will be forwarded to DCED and scheduled for action accordingly.
-

9. OLD BUSINESS

Road Program

The Road Committee will meet next week to discuss allocation of recently awarded grant funds.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Borough Council meeting will be held on February 17, 2026.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM.