

Avondale Borough Council
Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2026

Call to Order: President Paul Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and then a moment of silence recognizing a Pennsylvania Police Officer killed in the line of duty.

Attendance: Council members: Vice President, Stephanie Reichert, Mike Essmaker, Janet Watts and Lucas Ortiz. Engineer Tom Wilkes, Solicitor Kim Venzie, Treasurer Joan McVaugh and Administrator Sharon Norris were also in attendance.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

The **Avondale Fire and EMS Company 2025 Year-End Report** was submitted by Fire Company President Guy Swift for Council's review. Council reviewed the report summary and had no questions.

Plant Operator Report:

Water Audit Results - Plant Operator Brent Hazelwood reported on a consultation with PA Rural Water regarding increased well pump activity and significant water loss. The Borough is experiencing approximately 50% more water loss compared to 2024. Several potential causes and solutions were discussed:

- Replacement of water meters older than 10 years (current estimated cost of approximately \$200 per meter). The majority of Borough meters exceed this age. Billing data indicates many users are paying minimum usage rates, suggesting possible metering inaccuracies. Council discussed implementation options, including in-house replacement versus contracting the work. Mr. Hazelwood advised that a piecemeal approach would be inefficient and recommended pursuing grant funding for a comprehensive replacement program. Council agreed to pursue grant opportunities.
- Leak detection services were recommended, including hiring a specialized firm to assess water lines for leaks. This would also likely require grant funding.
- System changes following the reservoir project, including valve adjustments, may have impacted system performance. Brent has verified with the Engineer that all valves are in proper positions.
- Data accuracy concerns were raised, including ensuring consistent meter readings, verifying remote reader battery function, and evaluating potential underreporting. It was noted that in certain instances, once a new meter is installed, the reported

water usage is lowered significantly. Mr. Hazelwood will contact LB Water regarding meter accuracy over time.

Engineer Tom Wilkes recommended prioritizing leak detection efforts before undertaking a full meter replacement program and suggested reestablishing the Water/Sewer Committee to further evaluate system issues. Council discussed preliminary cost estimates and the need to identify funding levels for upcoming grant applications. Further coordination between the Engineer and Plant Operator was requested, with recommendations to be presented to Council.

Planning and Development – CCPC Review (Wilkinson Quarry Project):

Council reviewed the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) comments and the developer’s submissions for the Wilkinson project. Discussion included:

- Sidewalk connectivity, particularly along Baltimore Pike and East Third Street. Council expressed interest in extending sidewalks for improved connectivity where feasible.
- Constraints related to steep slopes along Church Road limiting sidewalk installation and roadway improvements.
- Natural features, including tree preservation. Council requested additional detail on tree removal and preservation plans, including identification of trees and consideration of native species.
- Stormwater management design, including basin locations within flood hazard areas. Concerns were raised regarding basin performance, infiltration rates, and long-term effectiveness. The Borough will require financial security for 18 months post-construction to ensure system performance.
- Traffic impact study requirements and potential off-site improvements. Final determinations will be made upon completion of the study.
- ADA compliance challenges due to site topography.
- Recreation requirements will be satisfied through a fee in lieu of on-site improvements, as previously discussed.
- Homeowners Association (HOA) responsibilities and maintenance considerations were noted.
- It was noted that the conditions of the Conditional Use Approval should be added to the plan.

- No good options for snow removal.

Council also began reviewing the CEC (consultant) letter, including zoning and technical comments:

- Clarification of parcel acreage discrepancies.
- Lighting plan revisions.
- Waiver requests, including roadway grade, driveway spacing, and survey requirements. Several waiver requests require further clarification before Council consideration.
- Conservation plan deficiencies, including lack of detail on tree removal and preservation.
- Phasing plan clarification, including construction access and haul road details. The Solicitor requested clear, plain-language notes on the plans.

Stormwater Management Discussion:

Additional concerns were raised regarding karst geology, infiltration rates, and the potential use of stormwater facilities across roadways. Council requested further explanation from the developer’s engineer regarding system design and flow patterns. The developer is preparing revised plans and intends to present an updated proposal at a future meeting, likely in May 2026.

Scheduling:

Council discussed upcoming meetings as follows:

- April 7, 2026 – Regular workshop meeting
- April 21, 2026 – Special meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m. dedicated to the Wilkinson project
- May 5, 2026 – Continued discussion if necessary

Emergency Operations Plan (EOP):

John Watts, the Borough Emergency Management Coordinator, presented the Council with a copy of the updated EOP for review and approval. Council member Mike Essmaker made a motion to approve with a second by Council member Stephanie Reichert. Motion carried 5-0.

Fire Company Merger Discussion: Mr. Morgan and Ms. Reichert provided a brief update on regional fire service discussions, noting that decisions are largely being made at a higher level. Council will review related correspondence and place the matter on the April 7 agenda for further discussion.

Multi-Municipal Meeting Update:

Ms. Reichert and Mr. Ortiz provided Council with an update on the recent multi-municipal meeting regarding Route 41. The participating municipalities are collaborating on a grant application to fund a comprehensive planning study for the corridor extending from Kennett Township to Londonderry Township. The overall discussion was positive.

If awarded, the grant will fund the engagement of a Community Planner who will work with each municipality to identify local priorities and develop a coordinated corridor plan. The completed plan will serve as a planning tool to guide and inform future improvements by PennDOT. The grant would cover all associated costs.

Other Business:

Council approved fixing the gravel portion of Pomeroy Avenue and re-installing the “no trucks” sign that has been hit again after recently being replaced twice after being hit by the same truck.

Engineer’s Report – Mr. Wilkes reviewed his monthly report.

Old Business

- The Wilkinson Quarry Development Plan 90 Day review period runs through April 21, 2026.
- The Borough Council had no updates to the Vision 2030: Mapping Our Vision For Tomorrow.

Announcements: The next Borough Council meeting will be held on Tuesday April 7, 2026 at 7 p.m.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon Norris
Secretary