

AVONDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 18, 2025
7:00 PM

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: President, Paul Morgan, Vice President, Mike Essmaker, Members Stephanie Reichert, Janet Watts, and Lucas Ortiz. Mayor Susan Rzucidlo, Solicitor Kim Venzie, Treasurer Joan McVaugh and Administrator Sharon Norris were also in attendance. Lieutenant Joseph Versagli from the Southern Chester County Regional Police attended the meeting along with eleven members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order and commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Mr. Morgan announced that this meeting is being recorded.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Mr. Morgan stated that speakers must state their name and address and whether they are a resident or taxpayer of the Borough. Public comment is limited to 3 minutes. There was no public comment.

SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY REGIONAL POLICE (SCCRPD) – Lt. Versagli summarized the recent activity in the Borough. Discussion topics included: the Department will be purchasing portable scales with the intention of reducing heavy trucks from attempting to cross the weight restricted bridge on Pennsylvania Avenue. There is one officer currently weights and measured certified with another one scheduled for certification training. The speed sign has been installed at Pennsylvania Avenue and Fifth Street and will generate volume and speed data. The Pennsylvania Avenue residents thanked the Lieutenant for sending them information on jake brakes. Ms. Susan McCue of 218 Pennsylvania Avenue asked about trucks using their noisy Jake brakes. A "Jake brake," also known as an engine brake or compression release engine brake, is a device that uses the engine to slow down trucks by manipulating the exhaust valves instead of using the brakes. Although they are prohibited in the Borough, the Lieutenant explained that an officer has to be present when the jake break is being used and therefore, it is difficult to enforce. Mr. John Langile, property owner of 302 Pennsylvania Avenue, commented on seeing more enforcement on Route 41 than he has in a long time and encouraged the SCCRPD to continue to do better. The Lieutenant explained that the Regional police are prohibited from using radar and must also follow restrictive sight distance policies. He acknowledged it is a challenge to ticket offenders in the Borough. The Avon Grove Charter School hosted a full-scale intruder training. The officers were well prepared for this training exercise.

BUSINESS

Public Hearing: Transfer of Liquor License to a location in Avondale Borough – Solicitor Kim Venzie opened the public hearing for the liquor license transfer. She explained the process and that this was the first step for a business to receive a liquor license. The Borough must acknowledge that they are aware this company is looking to transfer a liquor license from Parkesburg to Avondale Borough. The PLCB (the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board) is the entity that will issue the liquor license. MS. Venzie reviewed the 3 Exhibits, which included a copy of the Resolution, notice to the Chester County Law Library and proof of publication from the Daily Local News. Mr. Ken Butera, Esquire, representing his clients explained the process and the plan for his client (JamesWaterLLC) to open a business similar to their existing business in West Grove, the Penn Brew Station at 82 Pennsylvania Avenue, the former ATI Physical Therapy. A question-and-answer session between Mr. Butera and his clients followed the overview which included the proposed hours of business, details about the business (carryout beer and seltzers), they will have a full grill and carry a menu similar to Penn Brew Station in West Grove. Employees must attend and pass the Reasonable Alcohol Management Program (RAMP), and they plan to hire employees who live in the community. There will be no bar, and they will have some seating. The Council commented on parking challenges they will have. Ms. McCue commented on the type of liquor license. The owners gave a little backstory on how they came to own the Penn Brew Station. Solicitor Venzie closed the public hearing.

Consideration of Resolution 2025-09 transferring liquor license to 82 Pennsylvania Avenue from Parkesburg Borough – Mr. Essmaker made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-09. Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Public Hearing Regarding update to Act 131 – Solicitor Venzie opened the public hearing to discuss the proposed ordinance amending the Borough Code Chapter 108 entitled Salaries and Compensation to increase the salaries of the Mayor, President of Borough Council and Council Members. She introduced the following exhibits: B1: Proof of publication, B2 Email to Daily Local News and Chester County Law Library providing a copy of the Ordinance for review. MS. Venzie explained that the "salaries" of elected officials are minimal and the change to the Act allows a small increase. Ms. Venzie closed the public hearing.

Consideration of Ordinance 2025-284 amending Chapter 108 Salaries and Compensation in order to increase salaries of Mayor, Borough Council President and members of Council to be consistent with recent allowable increased provided by Act 131 – Ms. Venzie also explained that this increase will not take effect during the current Council members terms; it becomes effective after the next election, or the next term of current officials.

	Current	Salary showing increase – for Newly Elected members or members starting a new term
Mayor	\$2,500	\$4,190
President	\$2,500	\$3,145
Member	\$1,875	\$2,500

Mr. Essmaker made a motion to enact Ordinance 2025-284 with a second from Ms. Watts. The motion carried 5-0.

Consideration of Resolution 2025-10 – application to the Chester County Community Revitalization Program to locate and replace curb stops, water lines and restore curb box location on private property – the Mayor is working on a Community Revitalization Grant in the amount of \$310,000 to locate and possibly replace curb stops, water connections from the curb stop to the main and to restore the property. This grant requires a 5% match which equals \$15,000 match. Passing this resolution states that the Borough acknowledges they are able to provide a match and agrees to pay it. Mr. Essmaker made a motion that Council adopt Resolution 2025-10. Ms. Watts seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0..

Pennsylvania Avenue Discussion –Mayor Rzucidlo summarized what has occurred since the last meeting. She has spoken with Senator Kane and Representative Sappey and they are looking at what can be done. Both of these offices have a grant writer, and the Mayor will be meeting with them to look at grants to fix the pipes under Route 41. The discussion covered opinions on whose responsibility was the pipes and the road. The Mayor noted that the PA Small Water grant is only \$300,000 which will not be enough money to complete the repairs of pipes and road.

Lieutenant Versagli asked about the 41 project. The Mayor attends the meetings and sees lots of plans being discussed but no talk of who will be paying to execute some of the plans. The group talked about traffic circles (that’s a no from the Borough) and pedestrian improvements at First Street/State Road and Pennsylvania Avenue. Ms. McCue asked about the SAVE program and the bypass and commented on the continued rise in heavy truck traffic, potholes and her opinion on who is responsible for fixing 41 (PennDOT).

Marissa Paolicelli of 410 Pennsylvania Avenue commented on fixing the water pipes, the recent pothole repairs not holding and questioned what happens if we don’t get a grant and wondered what is going to happen to their house. The Mayor continued to reiterate this is a state issue and the Borough does not have money to make these repairs. Ms. Paolicelli read an email from Senator Kane commenting on the water pipes. Mr. Vincent Paolicelli commented on the impasse that is occurring, and which has been and will continue to go on for years. Ms. Langile, 310 Pennsylvania Avenue, commented on the negative effect this situation has on the value of her home. Mr. Morgan expressed his opinion about PennDOT and the Borough and its residents and recommended that the residents stick together. Mr. Morgan would like to see a meeting with PennDOT officials, Borough Council, the Mayor and the residents. Other public comment: Mr. Langile commented on the poor condition of many road signs and requested they be repaired or replaced.

Soccer League Request to use Second Street Park for tournaments - Mr. Joel Tomas, who held soccer tournaments last summer, has requested that he be able to hold tournaments again this year. The Council discussed the pros and cons of allowing this to take place. Mostly the organization was respectful of the area but there were parking challenges, some trespassing on residents’ lawns and one issue with trash. The Council requested that staff prepare an agreement to be signed by both the Borough and Mr. Tomas. The Solicitor will review this agreement. Said agreement should require a deposit which any balance leftover would be returned to the organizer. Last year the organizer provided porta potties which they will continue to offer this year.

Proclamation for Nathan Schwing achieving the rank of Eagle Scout – Mayor Susan presented a proclamation for Council’s signature to present to Nathan Schwing in honor of his attaining the rank of Eagle Scout and to thank him for his Eagle Scout Project to build benches in the new Avondale Veterans Memorial Garden. The Mayor is unable to attend Nathan’s ceremony but has asked the Chester County Council of the Boy Scouts of America to present it to him on behalf of the Borough. She will also include some other items in the packet presented to Nathan.

MAYORS REPORT

Memorial Update – The Mayor updated council and the public on the status of the Memorial walls. The Memorial company has made the repairs to the misspelled name and have confirmed that everything will be ready for the May 31, 2025, dedication of the park. Pastor Norton has graciously agreed to open the ceremony with a prayer. Mr. Ortiz will be organizing a color guard from the National Guard. The Mayor has invited the elected officials who were instrumental in securing grant funds for the playground to join the celebration. It starts at 10 am.

Pomeroy Park New Playground Update – we are working to wrap up the completion of this park.

The Council discussed the details of the April 5th cleanup. The Mayor has contacted the schools in an effort to secure volunteers. Mr. Ortiz will be running the operation from 8-10 on Saturday, April 5th.

Mr. Essmaker had a question about the Engineer’s report pertaining to Liquid fuels.

SOLICITOR REPORT

Ms. Venzie explained the status of the delinquent property letters. At this time, she has not received any undelivered letters. Once we figure out who is not responding we will determine how to put the liens in place.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Essmaker made a motion to approve the February treasurer’s report as presented. Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0. The disbursements and transfers are listed below.

General Fund:	\$47,710.48
Sewer Service	\$13,261.65
Water Service	\$ 6,834.16
Parks & Recreation	\$32,357.00
Street Lighting	\$ 372.28
Sewer & Water payments	\$24,026.34
Reserve Fund	<u>\$ 2,500.00</u>
Leaving a balance in all all funds of	\$256,959.59

MINUTES

Mr. Essmaker made a motion to approve the March 4, 2025, minutes are presented. Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Vision 2030: Mapping Our Vision for Tomorrow – Mr. Morgan reported on the difficulties they are encountering clearing the trail on the Webb property. There are many downed trees, and the size of these trees are monstrous. We talked about the PECO green regional grant. He thought he would need more money than \$10,000 which is the grant award.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Ms. Paolicelli said she sent emails encouraging neighbors to send letters of support.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next Borough Council meeting is Tuesday, April 1 at 7 pm

The Clean Up Avondale Borough event is on Saturday, April 5th from 8-10 am

There are plots available in the community garden. Plots are free.

Mr. Morgan announced that Council would be entering into an executive session to discuss outstanding water/sewer bills and possible litigation..

ADJOURNMENT – the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Norris
Sharon Norris, Secretary