

MINUTES
New Holland Borough
March 4, 2025

New Holland Borough Council met in regular session on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 7 p.m. Members present were President Patrick K. Morgan, Vice-President Michael H. Kurtz, Bryant J. Glick, D. Michael Ireland and John M. Taylor. Member Harry M. Klinger was absent. Also present were Manager/Secretary J. Richard Fulcher, Solicitor Bradford J. Harris, Mayor M. Timothy Bender and reporter Megan Glockley. Others in attendance included Borough Police Lieutenant/Detective Josh Bitner, officer Michael Specht, officer Derek Kanuck, and residents Rebekah Brown, Susan Burke, Jim Carpenter, Jenn Carpenter, Frank Cicero, Jarrod Deel, Regina Deel, Adam Fellenbaum, David Groft, Brendon Harnish, Ray Harnish, Terry Harnish, Abby Keiser, Winson King, Ryan Long, Tim Martzall, Wendy Martzall, Colby Morgan, Jean O'Donnell, Susan Roland, Karen Sheesley, Courtney Simmons, Henry Smeltz, Shelia Smeltz, Dennis Summers, Doris Summers, Aidan Thackray, Michael Upton, Melanie Upton, Allen Wessel Stacy Wessel, Dave Whitaker, David Whitaker, Courtney Willwerth, Cori Rae Witmer, and Lino Vescovich who is also the ELANCO Library representative to the Borough. Others in attendance included: Daniel Huyard, Isaac Huyard, Rinell Kurell, Linda DiBartolo, Jared Nolt, Tabatha Nolt, Matt Stoltzfus, Adam Walker, Patrick Waysylenko and Kerri Waysylenko.

President Morgan opened the meeting, stating that the many present this evening on a non-Agenda item but possibly with some comments or questions will be addressed first. He noted there is a position statement from Council as to Council's current activities related to it doing its due diligence as to potential future police service alternatives available as a handout for those interested. He is planning to allow 30 minutes for comments. He reminded everyone that those Borough residents who speak have two minutes to talk; and for everyone to be mindful and respectful to everyone. He then read the following statement before beginning residents' comments.

New Holland Borough Council is actively evaluating our Borough policing to strengthen its services and ensure the safety of our community. This includes assessing the qualifications needed for a new Police Chief, exploring potential partnerships with neighboring departments to enhance coverage and response times, and developing a strategic plan to determine the proper level of police staffing. However, we want to be clear—we are not considering eliminating local policing or utilizing the PA State Police.

The New Holland Borough Council is made up of seven publicly elected New Holland residents who serve without compensation. As part of our fiduciary and protective service responsibilities, we are conducting our due diligence to examine all aspects of policing in New Holland. This includes reviewing department leadership, staffing levels and financial obligations.

At this time, no proposals for partnerships with other municipalities have been received and we remain in the process of gathering data and expert input.

Lastly and as an Addendum to the prepared and distributed statement, all deliberations and decisions regarding any partnering and the future status of New Holland Borough policing will be held in future, to be scheduled, and advertised for public meetings.

In summary, the following comments were included.

Jim Carpenter, 246 South Railroad, stated he is not really aware of what may be happening with the police service discussion. He did not hear anything about decisions about the police force from the Borough and if something is approved like with Ephrata which the newspaper said was approved on their end, how would a 15 or 20 minute drive from Ephrata make his house safer. His main concern is the safety of his kids and wife and a responding police presence as soon as possible in an emergency.

President Morgan noted that is also the goal of Council and the Ephrata Review article was irresponsibly reported.

Michael Upton, 35 S. Whisper Lane, stated the police should have a regular proximity to the Borough. There is a high school in New Holland and a police presence would be important.

President Morgan noted that this is also an item of information and possible future negotiations relative to priority service items. The School District has indicated it would be interested in this with any police service provider.

Courtney Willwerth, 230 S. Brookefield Lane, inquired if Council knows what will happen to the current officers and any pension concerns.

President Morgan replied these are discussion and negotiating points as to any possible service provider. Council has not received any proposals to review and

negotiate as of yet. At this point, he would think everyone would be able to apply to whomever but there is nothing to report at this time.

Linda DiBartolo, owner of Tannery Antiques in the Borough stated she is highly involved with the New Holland Farmers' Fair which has many activities along with the big parade night. Police being available is very important to these activities.

President Morgan replied Council is also aware of these types of community activities and policing support needs as it considers things.

Regina Deel, 385 Valley View Drive, inquired if there was a way for New Holland to adjust the policing service area. Maybe this would be feasible to a larger organization in dealing with the need for a merger or acquisition to enlarge the service area.

President Morgan explained that this particular question was discussed with Terre Hill Borough a few years ago and they chose to go their own way with state police coverage. The other municipalities are responsible for their particular areas as they believe in their best interests and New Holland is one of the smaller and non-growing areas.

Jean O'Donnel, 109 East Broad Street, stated she is an EMT with the New Holland Ambulance and when there is a call and they request police assistance, the situation cannot afford to wait 20 minutes while a police car responds from Ephrata Borough. Inquiring if they will have AED's like now; and how many police officers does New Holland currently have.

President Morgan stated it is also Council's concern as to readily available police service other than coming from a far distance for a call. Time to respond now depends on where officers are located within their sector. This is not anticipated to change. He cannot say until something may move forward, but he would think all vehicles would have AEDs. The Borough has 12 working officers, which includes a Lieutenant/Detective and one additional Detective. He noted that Acting Chief and Consultant Bentzel is knowledgeable in this area and is reviewing actual policing needs of the Borough.

Ray Harnish, 502 West Cedar Street, stated he appreciates what has been explained and clarified this evening as he feels it is much different than what is being spread on social media. He thinks there are some good officers on the Borough's force and hopes they are being considered as to any possible change. He also heard

something about a lot of money being spent on investigations and asked if this was related to obtaining proposals.

President Morgan noted that consideration of current officers as to any possible future contract discussion is also a priority concern. As to the large expenditures he alluded to, these were not involved with the request for possible service proposals. The recent articles in the Ephrata Review were not correct and were in fact misleading. Neither Council nor Earl Township has considered any action to accept their action as presented with a cost.

Manager Fulcher noted that he does not usually concern himself with reporters' actions but since he was cited in those articles and both were incorrect in their representation he is aware they are being used to spread incorrect information and confuse people as to the process involved.

Ray Harnish stated in finishing that he is aware expanding areas and merging do work very well. It already exists with the New Holland fire service provider as well as the regional ambulance service provider.

David Whitaker, 595 Valley View Drive, said he is working with Linda DiBartolo and works with the New Holland Farm Show and is concerned that any consideration of service has to be aware of the fair and parade with officers nearby because they will be needed there.

Susan Burke, 309 Mentzer Avenue, stated she would be willing to pay additional taxes to keep a local police force. Council could use a straw poll of those at a meeting to identify what those in attendance want instead of considering alternatives.

Aidan Thackray, 131 West Broad Street, asked why the Borough did not have its own Facebook page to let people know what is going on.

Manager Fulcher explained that Borough information is contained on the Borough's website and he and the office are available by email, phone or in person if people have questions.

President Morgan noted that Council members and the Mayor are also available to answer people's questions.

Mayor Bender stated he thinks people should understand that the current situation came up suddenly and unexpectedly. The police Chief retired with his last day February 8. Acting Chief and police services consultant Bentzel started on February 10. The police service contract with Earl Township ends this year. Council is simply doing its due diligence by looking long term at the Borough's situation, recognizing it is not able to grow and its long term tax base is pretty well set.

President Morgan noted that it is the fiduciary responsibility of Council members to the Borough taxpayers to do what is in the best long term interest of the Borough. He, and other Council members, take this responsibility very seriously.

He then closed the public comment period of the session and moved to regular business at 7:39 p.m.

Bryant Glick made the motion that the Minutes of Council's meeting of February 5, 2025 be distributed as presented. This was seconded by Mike Kurtz and passed.

Mike Ireland made the motion that the Monthly Financial Report be accepted and the bills paid as prepared. This was seconded by Mike Kurtz and passed.

Police Chief Bentzel then briefly reviewed the Department's monthly summary Report. There was a total of six arrests, of which four were felonies/misdemeanors and two were summary offenses. There was one DUI. There was a total of 20 accidents; 11 reportable. The Department had 21 traffic citations and 22 warnings. There was a total of four juvenile contacts, with one referred to Juvenile court, three to District court. He noted that there has been a series of stolen vehicles throughout the region and common situations in nearby states with numerous departments involved.

Bryant Glick made the motion that the daily travel time cost allowance reduction Amendment under the temporary police services Agreement with Mark Bentzel as mutually agreed, be approved. This was seconded by Mike Ireland and passed.

Mike Ireland made the motion that the first half budgeted donation to the Eastern Lancaster County Library in the amount of \$10,000, be approved for payment. This was seconded by Mike Kurtz and passed.

Mike Ireland next made the motion that the Parking License Agreement between the Borough and Zausner Foods Corporation, for use by the Borough of an open

field area owned by Zausner for a temporary vehicle parking area for Locust Street residents while street reconstruction work is being performed, be approved; noting this was prepared by Zausner Foods and reviewed by the Borough Solicitor. This was seconded by John Taylor and passed.

Streets Chairman Glick made the motion that the low bid of the H&K Group of Skippack at \$97,622.52 be accepted for the 2025 street overlay work. He noted a total of six bids were received. This was seconded by John Taylor and passed.

Chairman Glick next made the motion that the request of the New Holland Summer Arts Council for the closure of East Jackson Street between South Kinzer Avenue and Park Avenue on Labor Day Monday, September 1, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. for its annual Fiddler's Picnic, be approved. This was seconded by Mike Kurtz and passed.

Chairman Glick then made the motion that the request of the Farmers' Fair Assoc. for its Fair and parade night: Fair: Tues., Sept. 30, 1 p.m. until 8 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 5; Main St. between Custer and Railroad; S. Roberts; N. Roberts from Main north to Broad St.; and Franklin St. between S. Roberts, east to S. RR. Ave. Parade: Wednesday, Oct. 1, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Jackson St. from Ranck west to S. Custer, then north to Broad St., east to N. RR, south to Main, east to Kinzer, be approved. This was seconded by John Taylor and passed.

Mayor Bender reported the monies received through the Police Department the past month as: \$589.97 from the District Justice's office; \$495 from accident reports; \$942.34 from county court fees; \$400 in alarm fees; and \$100 in fingerprinting. He noted as everyone is aware there are challenges before us with our police department and it is good to see a few stepping up a little in the situation under Chief Bentzel.

Lee Vescovich stated on behalf of the ELANCO Library, they appreciate Council's action for the partial donation this evening. Some of the 2024 information for the Library include that over 2,300 free books were distributed, 186,354 books and materials were checked out; and 58 outreach events were conducted. There is a happy birthday Pennsylvania day scheduled for March 8 at 2 p.m. and a Lunch and Learn for Homeschoolers on Saturday, March 15 at noon. There are many other activities cited on the Library's Newsletter.

Council member Glick stated he noted that the Democratic party was, he assumed, renting some Library space for an activity and he was curious as a 501c3

organization if its policies included extending such opportunities to other similar organizations.

Mr. Vescovich stated he was not certain of the situation but he would check into it. Ron Summers and Doris Summers thanked Council for help clarifying the confusion regarding the police services.

There being no further business or public comment, the meeting was convened into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. for discussion of police personnel matters. All members of Council were present, the Manager, Mayor, Solicitor and police chief attended.

Following the Executive Session, Council reconvened and adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

April 1, 2025

Date Approved