

MINUTES
New Holland Borough Council
July 1, 2025

New Holland Borough Council met in regular session on Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 7 p.m. in Borough Hall. Members were present: President Patrick K. Morgan, Bryant J. Glick, Harry M. Klinger, D. Michael Ireland and Charles F. Kidhardt. Vice President Michael H. Kurtz and member John M. Taylor were absent. Also present were Manager/Secretary J. Richard Fulcher, Mayor M. Timothy Bender, Acting Police Chief Mark Bentzel and reporter Megan Gockley. Others in attendance included Borough Financial Assistant/Utility Accounts Manager Robin C. Parker, Donald Parker, Borough Water Consultant Jeff Bologna of Becker Engineering, long-time Auditor Pat Carr of William Koch Associates and Borough residents Don Herrington, Andy Herrington, Ryan Long and Tom Plank.

President Morgan opened the meeting, asking for action on the Minutes of Council's meetings of June 3 and June 5.

Charles Kidhardt made the motion that the Minutes of Council's meeting of June 3, 2025, be approved as presented. This was seconded by Bryant Glick and passed.

Bryant Glick made the motion that the Minutes of Council's meeting of June 5, 2025, be approved as distributed. This was seconded by Charles Kidhardt and passed.

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

Police Chief Bentzel then reviewed the Department's monthly summary Report. He noted first that some of those present may recall that back on April 7th the Exxon station at 312 West Main was burglarized. Lieutenant/Detective Bitner did good work with the information available and a 41 year old suspect from Berks County was charged. On other matters, he reported there was a total of 351 incidents during the period. Of 15 total arrests, 5 were felonies or misdemeanors, 9 summary traffic offenses; one of which was a DUI, which is counted with the nine felony total. There were 13 reportable and 6 non-reportable accidents. Fortunately, there were no juvenile contacts.

Member Klinger inquired how actions were within the Department with him for the time he has been here. How has he melded with the group.

Chief Bentzel replied that he utilizes a strong coaching and mentoring approach as much as he can with officers. He believes he has also learned much of the administrative side. He feels most officers are showing some better results.

Member Glick inquired if things like vacation schedules and other time off can affect an officer's activities during a period.

Chief Bentzel said that there are numerous elements which can impact an officers time able to be spent on the street. Some also have additional in-house assignments they are responsible for.

President Morgan noted that Police Committee member Kurtz is not here this evening so he will present the item proposed for action for tonight's meeting. That is proposed Ordinance #603. This ordinance approves the amending of the police pension plan by Council to allow police officers with prior police service in a different municipality to buy back that service time to reduce the pension eligibility requirements. It is only in effect during 2025. This will be a point of discussion with the Police Officers' Association during the department closeout process, if the Borough moves forward with West Earl Township, before allowing them to utilize it.

Harry Klinger then made the motion that Ordinance #603 approving the amending of the Police Pension Plan so Council can permit those eligible officers to buy back prior police service time as allowed under a recent state law and as reviewed by the Solicitor, be adopted.

This was seconded by Charles Kidhardt. The roll was:

Charles Kidhardt	Yes	Bryant Glick	Yes
Mike Ireland	Yes	Patrick Morgan	Yes
Harry Klinger	Yes		

The motion was unanimous. Ordinance #603 was adopted.

Personnel Chairman Klinger stated it was his honor this evening to assist in recognizing long-time Borough employee Robin Parker who has served the people of New Holland as Financial Assistant/Utility Accounts Manager for over a 38½ year period. She is officially retiring at the end of July. He then read for the record the following Certificate of Recognition from the Borough.

“To Robin C. Parker in Recognition of and with Our Deepest Appreciation. As you enter your next phase with this retirement step, we take this opportunity to honor your dedicated service to our community. Your professional and conscientious effort while with the Borough has helped maintain the Borough’s high standards of service, financial openness and accountability to the public.

Thank you for your 38½ Years of Service, your hard work and concern for the residents of the Borough. We wish you all the best with the next chapter of your life.”

He noted this certificate will be presented in a more formal format to Mrs. Parker when framing is completed. He asked Mrs. Parker how it was to work for the Borough Manager all those years.

Mrs. Parker stated it was good working with him. He is dedicated and is professional and courteous to the staff and is understanding of their family priorities that arise from time to time.

Former Council member Don Herrington commented that when he first joined Council years ago he was not aware of how much each staff member did, especially her position. After being elected Council President and visiting the office more often, he became aware of how much was involved. He stated his Thanks to Mrs. Parker for her good work and her many years of service to the Borough.

Borough Auditor Pat Carr of William Koch and Associates. stated he was present this evening to also comment on his many years of working with Mrs. Parker; probably going back over 30 years. He wants to recognize her professionalism and knowledge of Borough operations. She was prepared and responsive to each question and as the audit history shows there were never any audit concerns over the years. She has also been very helpful by working part-time in the interim to help train and mentor her replacement. He will miss working with her.

President Morgan noted he has another item that was provided to Council from the firm that the Borough uses as its Pension Plans administrator, R.J. Hall and Co. who were unable to have someone present this evening. He then read the letter, dated June 30, 2025.

“Dear Robin, From all of us at the R.J. Hall Company, Inc., warmest congratulations on your retirement after an incredible 38.5 years of dedicated service to New Holland Borough.

It has truly been a pleasure working with you. Your professionalism, attention to detail, and joyful spirit have made our role as pension advisors not only easier but genuinely enjoyable.

You've always been a delight to talk to—bringing laughter, kindness and a positive attitude to every interaction. Your dedication, especially to the pension plans, over nearly four decades speaks volumes about your character and commitment.

As you begin this exciting her chapter (or hit the road in your camper/RV), we wish you nothing but the best—whether you're spending time with family, traveling, enjoying your hobbies or simply relaxing. You've more than earned it.

With sincere appreciation and warm wishes, Rob Lutz, Kevin Hall, Christian Evans”

Mayor Bender began his report by saying he is also on the bandwagon in thanking and commending Robin Parker for her dedicated service to the Borough. He served on the Borough Authority for about 15 years prior to being Mayor and he is aware of her knowledge and her great effort and performance in her job. He has stated before that the longevity of Borough employees is a compliment to the Borough's operations. He then reported the monies received through the Department were: \$682.61 from the District Justice's officer; \$45 from accident reports; \$25 from fingerprinting; and \$349.80 in county court fees.

Manager Fulcher reported that the intense rain period today from about 4:20 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. caused high water temporarily at the normal low spots but otherwise seemed to be draining properly as the storm intensity decreased. He also noted that Water Consultant Bologna should have a close to final report on the Locust Street project; with Change Orders and related information possibly at next month's meeting. While there was a contractor on-site, he approved some additional deteriorated curb and sidewalk on the south side of Locust Street to be included in the work due to grade concerns in order to have the section to the west of Blossom Lane ready for the planned overlay for next year.

There being no further business or public comment, the meeting was recessed to Wednesday, July 9, 6 p.m.; at 7:19 p.m.

July 1, 2025

Continued to

July 9, 2025

New Holland Borough Council met in reconvened session on Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 6 p.m. in Borough Hall. All members were present: Patrick K. Morgan, Vice-President Michael H. Kurtz, Bryant J. Glick, Harry M. Klinger, D. Michael Ireland, John M. Taylor and Charles F. Kidhardt. Also present were: Manager/Secretary J. Richard Fulcher, Mayor M. Timothy Bender, Acting Chief/Consultant Mark Bentzel and reporter Megan Gockley. Others in attendance included West

Earl Township Manager Jenna Reigle, Sergeant Jordan Byrnes of the West Earl Police Department, and Borough residents Tony Bender, Ray Harnish, Terry Harnish, Carmen Harnish, Ralph Hess, Neal Martin, John Rhoades, Heather Schnader, Dennis Summers and Doris Summers.

President Morgan opened the meeting noting that Council held an Executive Session on police personnel matters prior to this evening's meeting.

Member Glick then made the motion that the Minutes of Council's special meeting of June 23, 2025, be approved as presented. This was seconded by Harry Klinger and passed.

President Morgan then read the following statement.

"Good Evening Everyone. I have just a brief statement I would like to read before proceeding.

Every single one of us sitting before you tonight fully supports the police community, law enforcement, lawfulness, and integrity. As has been stated many times, how we arrived at this point is the result of a careful process aimed at understanding the true cost of policing for New Holland Borough, its taxpayers, and residents.

The information we gathered revealed, among other things, that in order to continue providing police services to Earl Township, their financial contribution must increase slightly. To prepare for the possibility that Earl Township might choose a different direction, we sought proposals from neighboring communities. West Earl Township submitted a very respectable draft proposal. Earl Township also solicited proposals from others and appears ready to sign with West Earl.

After many, many hours of investigation, consideration, community discussions and prayer, we find ourselves faced with one of the most difficult decisions we have had to make in service to the New Holland Borough community.

The decision before us is this:

Either accept a formal contract for police services from West Earl Township; or accept losing Earl Township as a partner, and proceeding on our own which leaves us with a smaller department and a projected \$3 million annual budget—raising our share of the cost by approximately \$1.2 million.

One of the benefits of accepting a contract with West Earl Township is that all of our current officers will be eligible for hire as probationary officers—should they apply. They will also be able to transfer their earned retirement pension years and maintain seniority based on their years of service with the NHPD.

There are several additional negotiated benefits.

Our NHPD officers will play an important role in expanding an already professional department. This partnership would provide enhanced opportunities for training and career advancement, both for our officers and for those already serving with West Earl Township Police Department.

With more resources comes better service—not just for our residents, but for surrounding communities as well.

So what are some of the major benefits for the residents and taxpayers of New Holland?

- New Holland residents will continue to receive 24/7 emergency and patrol services from a local community police department—not from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).

- These services will be provided by a larger, better-equipped police department with greater resources than NHPD currently has.

Our taxpayers will also benefit from outsourcing police services, allowing for a more efficient use of tax dollars. By partnering—yes, regionalizing—similar to what NH Ambulance and GS Fire & Rescue have already done, we can spread both resources and costs across three or four municipalities.

There are many other service and cost disadvantages we have taken into consideration if we try to maintain our own force, such as:

- Less efficient policing,
- A projected \$1.2 million increase in costs,
- And NHB taxpayers shouldering the full burden of rising retirement, healthcare, and operational expenses—without a partner to share in the cost.

Furthermore, we would retain the full responsibility of managing a smaller, less efficient department. That could mean only one officer on duty 24/7, without the convenience or safety of a second backup officer.”

President Morgan noted that prior to any action on proposed Resolution #569, the floor will be opened to public comment or questions. He reminded everyone of proper speaking protocols and respect.

Resident Terry Harnish, 317 Ridge Avenue, stated that a couple of his questions were answered by the opening statement. He wondered if the 10 current New Holland officers who were applying to West Earl Township, will that be enough; and will they still use the Borough building.

President Morgan replied there will be 24/7 coverage in New Holland. If Earl Township signs with West Earl Township as expected, the sector coverage will be like it is now with more officers available for back-up than currently available. West Earl Chief Higgins intends to start/stop the shift changes for the Borough and Earl Township areas at times that cross-over so there is no loss of patrol services at shift change times. West Earl would like to have at least seven officers apply from New Holland. Currently, it is reported that 10 have applied. West Earl has requested and will have the use of a minimum of a room in the Borough building but it will not be a substation.

West Earl Manager Reigle stated that is correct, 10 current members have applied.

Member Klinger noted that the coverage plan is stated in the contract. Coverage will not be less than currently provided and actually be improved.

Terry Harnish then continued noting as meat supervisor at Yoder's Grocery in New Holland he is concerned about shoplifting being responded to in a timely fashion when it occurs.

Acting Chief Bentzel outlined how service now is split by the two sectors for both the Borough and Earl Township. Staffing levels will not be less. He expects such service to continue.

Heather Schnader, 128 North Custer Avenue, inquired if this change related to Earl Township's planning to go with West Earl Township for service.

President Morgan replied that was one factor in Council's analysis of the situation. Earl Township did not request additional negotiations with the Borough and has done its own due diligence for future police service for the Township. They have taken action to move forward with West Earl Township.

Mayor Bender added that Earl Township expressed no interest in communicating with the Borough about continuing coverage. To continue to delay action by New Holland is both unfair to West Earl Township, which has had a very reasonable and patient discussion with the Borough as well as being unfair to the current Borough officers as the transition steps progress.

Member Klinger stated that he has worked on many public contracts in his professional life and is comfortable with the planned services contract with West Earl Township and Council's concerns.

Ray Harnish, 502 West Cedar Street, inquired about an officer with the school district. Does that officer count against the two on patrol.

Chief Bentzel stated that the School Resource Officer does not count against the two officers working the New Holland/Earl sectors.

Doris Summers, 578 West Main Street, stated she wanted to express her appreciation to Council for their looking out for the residents of New Holland as they have gone through this process.

Tony Bender, 102 Hiester Avenue, inquired how long the initial period of the contract for services with West Earl Township will be.

President Morgan stated it is an initial five year Agreement.

Neal Martin, 17 South Whisper Lane, stated he also wants to thank Council for how it has handled this matter which appears to have a number of positive things in it for the Borough taxpayers. He was curious if Earl Township would at the last minute go with a different provider than West Earl Township would there be two patrol officers on duty in New Holland. He also asked for clarification on what West Earl requests for use of a part of the Borough police area.

President Morgan replied that West Earl does not need any staff at the Borough building. They have requested a room be available for officers to stop in, see people, have meals and so on.

Acting Chief Bentzel noted that if Earl Township goes elsewhere for service, there would only be one patrol officer on duty in the Borough. That officer would have backup from the other West Earl officers on duty.

John Rhoades, 56 North Whisper Lane, inquired how the actual costs got allocated as noted in the proposal as to the information provided.

Chief Bentzel explained that using approximate numbers, total police costs this year were over \$3.2 million, with New Holland paying just over one-half of that, approximately \$1.6 million. His projected budget if the Borough tried to go on its own in 2026 is \$2.6 million. The Borough will have basically lost 50 percent of its department cost funding support. This is not just for personnel. The cost of all other overhead was shared also. New Holland's portion of cost with West Earl Township if Earl Township also goes with West Earl Township is to be 27 percent; at the cost of \$1,439,400. In the interim, related startup costs and adjustments between the Borough and West Earl, involving items like how many officers go to West Earl, the use of by West Earl or otherwise the sale of Borough assets, any final pension plan adjustment, and so on, will be developed in the process.

Member Mike Ireland noted that Mr. Rhoades's concerns were already discussed and negotiated in the contract proposed with West Earl Township.

Ralph Hess, 595 East Jackson Street, stated he also wants to thank Council for how it has conducted its review of this matter for the good of the Borough residents. He said he heard today that Chief Higgins of West Earl Township is planning to retire in five years. Does this mean anything to the Borough as to what the situation may then be in five years for the Borough.

President Morgan responded that this question was discussed directly with Chief Higgins. He did not indicate that to the Borough. He does have a succession plan for the future. With proper training, experience and leadership experience they may have a person within their organization whenever that time comes. This of course will be a decision of the West Earl Township supervisors.

West Earl Manager Reigle stated Chief Higgins has not indicated any set time period for his retirement to the supervisors or her.

Sergeant Byrnes stated Chief Higgins has always been very transparent in his operations and he expects he would be the same when it comes to his retirement.

Mr. Martin asked for clarification of, if West Earl is the responsible policing organization, how does the Borough control this.

President Morgan replied that this was all identified and included in the contract discussions.

Member Ireland added for additional clarification that the contract has specific items in it related to both operations and communications.

There being no further questions or comments, President Morgan stated he would go around Council table to allow Council members to make any comments before action is taken.

Member Klinger then made the motion that Resolution #569, which authorizes the execution of an Agreement between the Borough and West Earl Township for police services in the Borough of New Holland commencing on January 1, 2026; contingent upon final review by the Borough Solicitor and Council President prior to the signing by the President, be approved. This was seconded by John Taylor.

Members Kurtz, Taylor, Kidhardt and Glick had no comments.

Member Klinger stated he thanks those residents who came to the meetings to learn of the important deliberations of this matter. He is also appreciative of the effort of the other Council members, Acting Chief and Consultant Bentzel, West Earl Chief Higgins and West Earl Sergeant Burns, as well as Borough Manager Fulcher and West Earl Manager Reigle. Nobody took this situation lightly and it is a big decision.

Member Ireland stated he was also glad to see those residents attend the meetings to learn about this issue and review the process and information. From what he has reviewed, he is convinced it is a reasonable forecast in terms of future costs and savings and believes it will be a situation that provides both better police service with a savings to the taxpayers.

Mayor Bender commented that he also wants to express his appreciation to those who attended and took part in the review process of this important issue. Nobody involved anticipated being in this position until things began to unexpectedly change. Tonight's proposed action is the best alternative focused on the community and its residents. The process was highly involved and done transparently by Council.

President Morgan noted that as he has stated before, Council tried to keep Earl Township as its policing partner. He also recognizes that they have a responsibility and accountability to their taxpayers as they considered their options. He thanks everyone for their input and discussion efforts with the matter. He then asked for a roll call vote. The vote was:

Mike Ireland—Yes
Harry Klinger—Yes
Byant Glick—No
Mike Kurtz—No

John Taylor—Yes
Charles Kidhardt—Yes
Patrick Morgan—Yes

The motion passed. Resolution #569 was approved. The meeting then adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

August 5, 2025
Date Approved