

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025**

Call to Order: Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, July 22, 2025 in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:19 p.m.

Silent Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance: A silent moment was taken followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-present; Nilles-present; Ondishin-present; Perry-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of July 8, 2025 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: Governmental Consulting Strategies discussed their fire protection and back flow prevention programs.

Anthony Ryba Jr., Government Consulting Strategies, LLC, said everything the City is doing, Governmental Consulting Strategies are doing. He said if the City is interested, Ryba would receive 30%, and the City would receive 70%. He stated this would bring significant money into the City. Ryba stated it would bring the City in compliance with a lot of issues. He stated there are many services the City could take advantage of through their company.

Brian Preski, President of National Water Specialties Co., Pittston, PA, said their services are in 13 states. He said his company sends out a notice of inspection to all businesses and companies in the City. Preski stated this is a revenue generator. He said for fire inspections, this would increase the ISO rating and a protection for the fire suppression system in the City. Also, the water supply will be protected due to the water flow and pressure. He stated his company sends out all letters to residents. The City will have all the inspection reports at their disposal. Preski said they will create a map of all the businesses who are in compliance or are not in compliance.

Perry asked Preski which municipalities are currently using their services. Preski said Nesquehoning Lehigh, and Wilkes-Barre.

Nilles asked Leshko if the Hazleton City Water Authority does the fire hydrant testing. Leshko said yes.

Bid Opening: City of Hazleton 2025 Material Bid Proposal – See resolutions

Atty. Logsdon said all the material bids, received by July 22, 2025, were opened by Josh Esposito, City of Hazleton Engineer, today, at City Hall.

Perry stated City Council held an Executive Session regarding contracts and litigation before the meeting.

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, said she was happy to see the bid opening on the agenda, but City Council did not open the bids at this meeting.

Deakos spoke of Resolution 2025-26- A Resolution Awarding the Alter Street Streetscape Phase 2 and

Phase 3. She asked how this would be paid for. Mayor Cusat said by multimodal grants.

Deakos said some of the contracts that are on the agenda tonight, the City will not be using for a while. She suggested City Council open the bids at their meeting, and the next council meeting would be to vote to approve.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(1ST READING)

Ordinance 2025-6

An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Hazleton, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, Setting Forth It's Intent to Issue one or more series of General Obligation Bonds of the City in the Aggregate Principal Amount not to exceed Fifteen Million Dollars (\$15,000,000) Pursuant to the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Known as the Local Government Unit Debt Act, 53 PA.C.S., CHAPTERS 80-82, AS AMENDED AND SUPPLEMENTED (THE "ACT") (1ST READING)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said as a first reading, this would be the authority to initiate the borrowing. He said the plan for the City spending would be approximately \$10,000,000. He said this would pave the City side streets, including 1st through 21st, between Thompson and Boundary Streets.

Perry asked how long the borrowing agreement would be. Brian Koscelansky, Stevens & Lee, said it would be for 20 years. Perry asked what the total amount the City would pay back. Koscelansky said the City would pay back, with interest, about \$16,000,000. The average interest rate would be 4.5-4.6%. Once the bond is priced, the interest rate would be locked in. Perry stated Bruno asked why the City would not be paying back any money in the first year. Koscelansky stated the City would start paying in 2026.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-0 ON 1st READING

(2ND READINGS)

None

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2025-26

A Resolution Awarding the Alter Street Streetscape Phase 2 and Phase 3

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Perry asked where the money would come from. Atty. Logsdon stated this is a multimodal grant. Mayor Cusat said there are several grants that would pay for the project. Mayor Cusat said this would include City streets from 2nd -6th.

Atty. Logsdon stated American Asphalt Paving Company gave the lowest bid at \$533,743.20. He stated Ray Leary, Barry Isett & Associates, reviewed all bids.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-0

Resolution 2025-27

Approving Application for a Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant from the Commonwealth Financing Authority for Phase III of Wyoming Street Improvements Project

Presented by Ondishin. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon stated Phase III would include sidewalks, curb enhancements, ADA compliance ramps, landscaping, lighting, drainage upgrades, and pavement restorations between Maple and Tamarack Streets. The advanced phases will include Holly Street.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-0

Resolution 2025-28

Approving the Settlement Stipulation in Relation to the Tax Appeal of Hazleton Estates, LLC for Tax Years 2023, 2024, and 2025

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon stated this resolution is for the Duplan building. He said there are two parcels, one

large and one small parcel. A negotiated settlement is included in the resolution. The total assessment of the larger parcel is \$1,818,300.00. The total assessment of the smaller parcel is \$1,818,300.00. There were assessments for the years 2023, 2024 & 2025. Ondishin asked if the property owners are delinquent on their taxes. Atty. Logsdon said no. Perry asked if Luzerne County did approve of this agreement. Atty. Logsdon said Luzerne County will have this on their agenda for their approval. He said the Hazleton Area School District has already approved this.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-0

Resolution 2025-29

Awarding the Contract for the 2026, 2027 and 2028 Real Estate Tax Collection and Administrative Services for the City of Hazleton

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said the City received two proposals. The first was from Elite Revenue. Their fee would be \$2.20 per tax bill, and \$2.00 per courtesy letter. Elite would be reimbursed for all mail and printing costs by the City. Elite already has an office at City Hall.

Atty. Logsdon said the second proposal was from Berkheimer Tax Office. Their fee would be \$1.50 per tax bill, and \$1.25 per courtesy letter. Lynch reviewed the RFP's. Both Atty. Logsdon and Lynch feel that Berkheimer proposal would be the economically feasible choice for the City. Atty. Logsdon said this is a three-year contract.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-0

Resolution 2025-30

Contract for Construction Equipment Rental – Remainder of 2025 through the 2026 Calendar Year

Presented by Ondishin. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said these bids are not “clear cut” as the usual contracts. He asked city council to accept the 2025 construction bids project bids, as presented. The equipment would be utilized on a “project by project basis” based on the fees included in the schedule.

Atty. Logsdon said there were three companies who responded with their bids. These companies are:

1. M&J Excavation- Bloomsburg, PA
2. Northeast Excavation- Conyngham, PA
3. Wanick Construction Co.- Zion Grove, PA

Atty. Logsdon stated the City would need to award as needed, and as a necessity for the City project.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-0

Resolution 2025-31

Contract for Materials – One Calendar Year

Presented by Ondishin. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question:

Josh Esposito, City of Hazleton Engineer, said there was a “sole” bidder for City Item #'s 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21. This contract will be awarded to M&J Excavation. For Item #15, Asphalt, single bulk

delivery, the contract will be awarded to Midland Asphalt Materials, Inc. Atty. Logsdon said Item's #1-6 and #9-11 received no bids. Esposito stated the City should rebid the awards that were not bid on.

Roll Call: Bruno-absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-0

Resolution 2025-32

Contract for Line Striping – Remainder of 2025 through the 2026 Calendar Year

****NO BIDS RECEIVED**

RESOLUTION FAILED

Resolution 2025-33

Contract for Winter Equipment Rentals –December 3, 2025, through April 6, 2026

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said the City received three bids for the winter equipment rentals. There were bids from companies.:

1. M& J Excavation- Bloomsburg, PA
2. Northeast Excavation- Conyngham, PA
3. Wanick Construction Co.- Zion Grove, PA

The City contract is awarded as follows: Northeast Excavation is awarded the truck with the 10 foot 2-way plow with cellular phone and operator @ \$130.00/hr. Also, rotor and rubber tire mounted articulated with 2 cubic yard bucket, cellular phone and operator @ \$250.00. Wanick Construction Co. is awarded the loaded rubber tire mounted articulated 600 ton per hour snow blower unit, cellular phone and operator @ \$800.00/hr.

Roll Call: Bruno- absent; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-0

New Business: None

Old Business: 1. **City of Hazleton False Alarm Ordinance, Chapter 125 of City Code, was discussed by Fire Chief Donald Leshko.**

Ondishin asked Leshko about the fire alarm system at the Altamont Building. Leshko said the City fire company cannot be “reactive”. He said the alarm system is doing what “it is supposed to do”. Leshko said the owner has to address the elevator not working in their facility. Leshko said this is a brand-new elevator. He said their elevator is set up for security purposes. He stated the owners are “quick” in responding to the City Fire Department’s concerns. He said the alarm company needs to fix their fire detector issue. Perry asked if the City ordinance includes a fine. Leshko said yes. Leshko said the City has used the fine at one or two locations. Leshko said the current City ordinance is sufficient.

Nilles asked how the fire department responds to the latitude and longitude fire calls. Leshko said the fire department does get the general location on their phones.

2. **Fixing problems at Locust & 15th Streets with PENN DOT recommendations.**

Mayor Cusat said the City would recommend changing Locust Street to one direction, going south. He said this would be better for the City plows and the school buses. He said this would be approved by City ordinance.

Comments from the Audience: Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, spoke of the bond for the City. She asked what the other \$5,000,000 will be used for. Ondishin said the City could borrow up to \$15,000,000. Mayor Cusat said the wording needs to specify the pricing for the bonds and needs the “leeway” to get a better price.

Deakos asked if the City courts would be paved from Diamond Ave. to 21st. Mayor Cusat said DPW will slowly do the courts.

Comments from Mayor: Mayor Cusat said the City will be doing the largest paving project in their history.

Mayor Cusat said the “Rockin the Mountain” concert series resumes on August 1st and continues on August 8th & 15th.

Mayor Cusat said the Rotary Beer & Wine Festival will be held on August 23rd.

Comments from City Administrator: None

Comments from Council: Perry asked Mayor Cusat if the City has put the bid out for street paving from 1st through 22nd Streets. Mayor Cusat said this is being prepared and will be sent out by the end of August.

Nilles asked Mayor Cusat if the City will change the flow of traffic at City View Park. Mayor Cusat said City administration has had two meetings regarding this issue. He said the City could connect with Powell Drive if the “mountain” is removed.

Nilles asked about the current old St. Joseph Medical Center situation. Atty. Logsdon said he has not heard but will check with Charlie Pedri.

Ondishin asked Mayor Cusat regarding Conahan Drive. Mayor Cusat said the City will go “80 feet” in from 424 and the money saved will pave the other side of Powell Drive.

Perry asked if the City has a tenant at the Northpoint building. Mayor Cusat said it is a third-party distributor from Chicago.

Nilles said there was a death of a homeless resident by Giant Food Stores. Lynch said he made contact with a representative from the Commission for Economic Opportunity. He said he met with the people from CEO. He said he will be going to their quarterly meeting to discuss the homeless problem. Lynch said there may be about 100 people living by Giant. He said a lot of the homeless try to undermine any help for them.

Colombo said the City of Hazleton will be helping Texas with their recent floods.

Police Chief Schoonmaker said Joe Snedeker will be biking to the Hazleton Police Department between 9 and 9:30 a.m. on July 25, 2025 for GO JOE.

Perry asked Mayor Cusat if he has any issue with the Governmental Consulting Strategies program plan. Mayor Cusat said he has no problem with their plan. He said their plan is a little “skewed” to the high side. He said it does not cost the City any money.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.