

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2025**

Call to Order: Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

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

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

PERRY STATED CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATION HELD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING, BEFORE THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING, REGARDING PERSONNEL AND LITIGATION ISSUES.

Atty. Logsdon said a resolution will be added onto tonight's agenda. With the Sunshine Act, under Section 712.1 permits matters that are related to real and potential emergencies involving clear and present danger to life or property. He said it is a resolution authorizing enhanced security measures for the mayor and employees.

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of July 22, 2025, Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: A Proclamation for Brenner's Recycling was presented to the Brenner family for their 100 years of service in the City.

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, spoke of Ordinance 2025-7- An Ordinance Amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Hazleton, Chapter 504, Trees. She asked what qualifications the arborist would need to have. Perry said after this ordinance is discussed; this question will be answered.

Deakos also spoke of 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"). She asked what the final cost will be for the city paving project.

Ricky DeLucca, Mountain Top, spoke of Ordinance 2025-9- An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Filing of a Declaration of Taking and Proceeding in Accordance with the Applicable Provision of the Eminent Domain Code- 630 Hanover Court. He said the City is trying to take the owner's property again. He said there is going to be another lawsuit regarding this property.

David Dominquez, 202 East Holly Street, Hazleton, spoke of the City's borrowing of \$15,000,000. He asked what the transparency procedures would be. Dan Lynch said the City is looking to borrow

\$10,000,000 to pave the City roads. He said the debt the City has is pre-budgeted every year. He said the bond will be structured for the debt reduction and millage to be the same.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(1ST READING)

Ordinance 2025-7 An Ordinance Amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Hazleton, Chapter 504, Trees **(1st READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said it has been difficult for the City to find Shade Tree Commission members. He said there are trees being trimmed, cut down, and stumps being left on the City sidewalks. He said under Section 504-3 Trees, it will be added, "the mayor shall temporarily assume the duties of the commission including those of the City Arborist". He said permits to be added, under Section 504-5, are branches and debris needs to be removed on the same day as the work. Also, to be added is a new section for the repair of City Right-of-Way. He said this is a guidance in removing a tree stump.

Perry asked if this ordinance refers to City trees only. Atty. Logsdon said yes. He said it has nothing to do with City residents' private property trees. Mayor Cusat said if removing a City tree, the tree that would replace the original tree would need to be installed professionally. He said the resident would need to grind the tree 2 inches underground and fix the sidewalk.

Nilles stated the City Water Authority has a timbering arborist who takes care of trees. Nilles asked Mayor Cusat if he could ask this arborist to refer someone to the City.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1ST READING

Ordinance 2025-8

An Ordinance Authorizing and Making North Locust Street a One-Way Street between 15th Street and Diamond Avenue (**1st READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

This ordinance refers to PENN DOT's issue on 15th Street. Atty. Logsdon stated 15th Street, going to Diamond Ave. would be south.

Bruno asked why the City cannot make between 14th Street only one-way. Mayor Cust stated Locust Street is not wide enough to be two lanes. He said this may cause more accidents. Perry stated this will require a lot of signs to be put up. Colombo stated the City fire department uses Locust Street to respond to fires. Fire Chief Leshko suggested making Locust Street one-way north. Atty. Logsdon stated City administration will get Leshko's opinions before the second reading. Nilles asked when this would be put into law. Mayor Cusat said 10 days after approval by City Council.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1ST READING

Ordinance 2025-9

An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Filing of a Declaration of Taking and Proceeding in Accordance with the Applicable Provision of the Eminent Domain Code- **Hanover Court (1st READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon stated this property was taken over by the City Land Bank. He said this property and the 6th Street dairy building have a “shared wall” with the garage of the subject of this eminent domain. He said once the wall comes down, this property will be damaged. He said the City has grant funds to move forward on this project.

John Matusick, 602 Cleveland Street, Hazleton, owner of the property, said he is not interested in selling the property. He said the City was going to knock down the building, and he would do repairs to his building. Matusick said the City made him an offer for his building, but he is not interested. He said a Barry Isett engineer told him, “As long as there is a wall there, there should be no problem”. Mayor Cusat said the City will do everything to accommodate him. Matusick said if he could have one or two months to think about the issue.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-no; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-1 ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2025-10

An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Filing of a Declaration of Taking and Proceeding in Accordance with the Applicable Provision of the Eminent Domain Code- **Chestnut Street (1st READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said PENN DOT has approved the City for a \$1,200,000 park and ride. It was originally planned for the old Blue Comet property, but the YMCA wanted the land. Bruno asked who would pay for parking downtown when they could use the Park and Ride for free. Mayor Cusat said part of the roof collapsed. He said the City Transit Authority would monitor this property. The City has

“reached out” to make the owners an offer, but they have not responded. He said the City offers the owner market value for the property.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-no; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-1 ON 1st READING

(2ND READINGS)

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") **(2ND READING)**

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Michael Vind, Stevens & Lee, said this ordinance is for the City street paving project. He said when any municipality borrows money, this needs to be filed with the state, and the state needs to approve this. He said the City needs to put in parameter amount every single year. Vind said the borrowing needs to be structured with the debt not being increased in millage. He said the City will only need to pay back \$10,000,000. He said the extra needs to be put in, every single year, to adjust the principal balance, as needed, to fit the debt portfolio for the City. The City would lock in a rate in September, 2025.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2025-34 Honoring Brenner Recycling

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2025-35 A Resolution Approving the Modified Consolidated Plan for CDBG-CV
Program Year 2020

Presented by Ondishin. Seconded by Nilles.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2025-36 A Resolution Amending the Fee Schedule for the City of Hazleton

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said the City's fee schedule is set by a resolution, and the ordinance sets the fee.
Atty. Logsdon stated this refers to City shade trees.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2025-37

A Resolution Requesting a Main Street Matters District Development Grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development to be used for improvements to Broad Street between Laurel and Wyoming Street

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said it is a street improvement between Wyoming and Laurel Streets on Broad Street. He said this would be in front of CAN DO Park. He said the City wants to put a "decorative island" between Laurel and Wyoming Streets on Broad Street.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2025-38

A Resolution Requesting Luzerne County Local Share Account Grant Funds for Personal Protective Equipment for the Diamond Volunteer Firefighter's Association

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question:

Colombo asked if this equipment is for the Diamond Volunteer Firefighter's Association members.
Perry said yes.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2025-39

A Resolution to Award the Wyoming Street Improvements – Phase 2 project

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said Phase 1 was Broad Street to Green Street. He said Phase 2 includes Green Street and "moving up". He said this includes sidewalks and curbs.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2025-40

A Resolution to Award the Conahan and Powell Drive Reconstruction Project

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Mayor Cusat said this will be paid for by the rest of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) money. He stated this money has to be used by the end of the year.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2025-41

A Resolution Authorizing the Implementation of Enhanced Security Measures for the Mayor and City Employees

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question;

Ondishin stated public officials do get threatened. He said this is an emergency. Mayor Cusat said this includes cameras.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

New Business: None

Old Business: None

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Comments from the Audience: Ricky DeLuca, Mountaintop, thanked city council for working with Mr. Matusick on his property.

DeLuca asked if the City is “crushing” ATV’s. Nilles said the City has not “gotten there yet”, but there will be a City of Hazleton Recreational Vehicle meeting soon. Police Chief Brian Schoonmaker said there are a lot of ATV’s.

Fran Metz, 237 S. Cedar Street, Hazleton, said she lives next to an auto repair garage. She said the business does not follow the rules, they work until 7 p.m., and do not keep their cars inside the garage. Metz said there is constant noise and traffic. She spoke with Charlie Pedri. Pedri stated he will be in touch Vianney Castro this week. Ondishin said the City needs to start “changing these laws”.

Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, said the City’s alleys and courts are two-way. She asked if a car does not stop at an alley, who is at fault. Police Chief Brian Schoonmaker stated PA traffic law indicates if a vehicle is coming out of an alley, they must come to a complete stop before entering a roadway. Deakos suggested the City needs to get a grant to install stop signs at these areas. Mayor Cusat stated, “any City street under 18 feet, there is no parking”.

Deakos stated people feel uncomfortable calling 911 for non-emergency calls. Nilles stated there is a 911 non-emergency telephone number to call. Ondishin asked if the City has a public service worker. Schoonmaker said no.

David Dominquez, 202 East Holly Street, Hazleton, said some of the Hispanic population does not know how to react to a traffic stop. He asked if the City could have a town hall to discuss some City issues. Schoonmaker said there is a National Night Out in August on Alter Street. He stated any City resident could come and discuss these issues with the police officers.

Comments from Mayor: None

Comments from City Administrator: None

Comments from Council: Nilles sent his condolences to a councilman in Virginia who was “set on fire”. Also, the recent murder of a 13-year-old Drums boy. He said there have been reports of a child chained to a radiator in the City. He said these things need to stop. Nilles said people need to speak up if they witness these acts.

Colombo asked Atty. Logsdon to contact the City Code Enforcement office regarding Metz’s issue. He said he would contact them.

Colombo said the grass and weeds have been cut by the City parking garage on Wyoming Street. He thanked the DPW.

Colombo thanked the City Fire Department at the big church fire by the library. Ondishin thanked all the fire departments for their work,

Perry stated National Night Out is on August 22, 2025. Police Chief Schoonmaker said it will be held on 10th & Alter Streets. Mayor Cusat said the event will be held at the “big grass area on Alter Street”.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

