

Council Meeting
October 15, 2025
7:00 P.M.
Chancellor Center

Present: Councilors Heinz, Phillips, Tognini, Woldorf; Mayor Burke; Manager Totaro;
Solicitors Heleniak & Bethala
Remote: Councilors Foley & Bauman
Absent: Police Chief Sabath; Fire Chief Forsyth

President Heinz called the regular semi-monthly meeting of Newtown Borough Council to order at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, October 15, 2025. The President asked those in attendance to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public to be Heard

Chris Gusty, Resident, disagreed with the recent assessment of communications between the Newtown Bucks County Joint Municipal Authority (NBCJMA) Board, also known as the Sewer Authority Board, and the Borough. Mr. Gusty stated his willingness to provide Board updates to Council, as requested back in July by the Borough Manager, and attempted to find a date to do so. In an email correspondence, Mr. Gusty noted conflicts in his schedule, requested specific details about what Council wanted to receive in a report, and asked if the NBCJMA Manager could present a report in his place. Mr. Gusty shared the Sewer Authority Board's involvement and engagement with Borough Council members in the past.

Susan Guy, Resident, expressed her dissatisfaction with the managing of snow removal this past winter. Ms. Guy was also upset by the length of time that PECO poles were left on sidewalks prior to installation, noting their obstruction of her sidewalk, followed by a pole installation in her bluestone sidewalk that forces push chairs and wheelchairs onto S. Congress Street; Ms. Guy asked whether PECO would receive fines that apply to property owners. Ms. Guy also reported branches left hanging in her tree after PECO trimmed them to clear powerlines, expressing concern that they could fall on passing pedestrians. Lastly, Ms. Guy stated her disappointment with the maintenance of State Street and use of blacktop to patch sidewalks in violation of the ordinance.

Doug Turner, Resident, requested that leaning street signs be fixed and stated that the Borough has been appearing shabbier recently. Mr. Turner asked that hanging utility lines and trees be better managed.

Jon Guy, Resident, expressed his discontent over current priorities, stating that overall maintenance and appearance of the Borough should take priority over projects not as significant to the community. Mr. Guy questioned the need for the additional ordinances the Borough has recently adopted and the restrictions they impose. Mr. Guy stated his preference for more dialog with property owners regarding non-compliance with ordinances as opposed to

letters imposing fines. Mr. Guy reiterated Susan Guy's points regarding PECO's pole replacement in his sidewalk and violation notices.

Mr. Guy disagreed with the Borough's pushback towards the organizers of the Annual Holiday Parade which he believed fell victim to party politics. Mr. Guy expressed his concern that, like the former Independence Day parade, these actions will discourage event organizers from planning future community events in the Borough.

Arthur Rodgers, Resident, supported Susan Guy's statement that PECO's subcontractor did great damage when cutting their tree, leaving dead branches in the tree and a potential safety hazard for pedestrians. Mr. Rodgers stated that there were three PECO poles lying on the Guys' hedges for months, forcing those pushing strollers into the street to pass by. Mr. Rodgers observed Intren, a PECO subcontractor, cutting additional tree branches on Mercer Street and leaving debris on the Guy and Musto properties.

Mr. Rodgers also stated that temporary signage on Penn Street from Court to Chancellor Streets, now blown away by the wind, indicates PECO road closures from October 10 to December 10, 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Mr. Rodgers, who has lived in the borough since 1974, has never experienced, and expressed great dissatisfaction with, all the road detours throughout neighboring Borough streets for such an extended period of time.

Laura Shepherd, Resident, noted the increased amount of cigarette butts outside of some business establishments on State Street; she asked whether the Borough provides guidance to business owners to clean up after their patrons. Ms. Shepherd requested whether the Borough could assist with managing low hanging Verizon wires.

Certificates of Appropriateness – Kris Bauman

❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to follow the recommendations of the Historic Architectural Review Board and direct the President of Council to sign the following Certificates of Appropriateness, thereby approving the historical appropriateness of the applications, with final approval by the Code Enforcement Officer.

COA 2025-034, Applicant: Don Marshall, 221 S. Chancellor Street, residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the existing front porch roof.

HARB recommended approval of the application as submitted.

COA 2025-035, Applicant: Joseph White, 220 E. Washington Avenue, residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a new 4-foot wrought iron fence with iron posts at the corners and 3 gates.

HARB recommended approval of the application as submitted.

COA 2025-038, Applicant: Alejandra Alvarez, 154 N. Congress Street, Alvarez residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to relocate the front door and construct new steps to the door.

HARB recommended to approve moving the side door to front with the following changes: the door will be wood with the lower section paneled and the upper section with a single or multiple (2 or 4) lights, the door casing will be 5/4, the steps will have a concrete base topped with flag stone, blue or slate and the existing door opening will be infilled with a window that matches the window in the same section and the rest of the opening will be enclosed with the siding previously approved.

COA 2025-039, Applicant: Frank Pasquale, 203 Washington Avenue, Pasquale residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the garage roof.

HARB recommended approval of the application as submitted.

COA 2025-024, Applicant: Laura Shepherd, 501 Washington Avenue, Shepherd residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace porch roofs.

HARB recommended approving the replacement of the porch roof with the following recommendations: the existing overhang, crown molding and built-in gutter system will be restored. This will include restoring the original drainage system by inserting tapered pieces to guide water to interior downspouts, lining the gutters with membrane or soft copper, and adding a 1" copper drip edge. The new standing seam metal roof will have seams no higher than 1". Where the metal roof meets the stone, the receptor will be covered with another piece of metal and will maintain the shadow lines of the standing seams. At the hip of the roof, a u-shaped slip joint should be installed that has the same look and height as the other standing seams.

❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to follow the recommendation of the Historic Architectural Review Board and deny the following Certificate of Appropriateness.

COA 2025-029, Applicant: Kevin Buckthorpe, 105 E. Centre Avenue, Buckthorpe residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the vinyl siding on the house.

HARB made a recommendation to deny the application as presented with the recommendation that the original wood siding be restored.

Mayor's Report – John Burke – presented at the Work Session

Solicitor's Report – Greg Heleniak – presented at the Work Session

Manager's Report – Craig Totaro

Manager Totaro reported that his current primary focus has been working on the preliminary budget to be presented to Council next week.

The Manager stated that he's been working with PECO gas to manage the road work as best as possible, and any road access issues should be addressed with him. Manager Totaro stated that the PECO project on Penn Street should only take two weeks as opposed to two months; new signage should reflect that change either tomorrow or Friday.

The Manager stated that the old PECO poles could remain for some time while telecommunication wires are transferred to the new poles. Mr. Totaro added that there is a large backlog of poles, consisting of thousands within our region, waiting to be installed with no current state law regulating the duration.

President Heinz requested that Manager Totaro ask Comcast to assist with moving telecommunication wires in the Borough as Comcast's request for an easement under our main municipal parking lot is negotiated. Solicitor Heleniak offered to assist the Borough Manager in elevating the Borough on PECO's priority list.

President's Report – Emily Heinz

Topics Advanced from previous meetings

President Heinz noted that the following action items have been discussed at Council Work Sessions and recordings are available on the Borough website calendar.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Woldorf, and passed unanimously, to approve an escrow release in the amount of \$6,260 to Newtown Friends Meeting after all outstanding invoices have been paid.
- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve a change to the plans of Court & State Street LLC, allowing the elimination of an ornamental wrought iron fence on top of the brick wall.
- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to adopt Resolution 10-15-2025A, amending the fee schedule for food trucks.

Solicitor Heleniak announced that fees associated with food trucks are listed in the soliciting and vending section of the revised fee schedule.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to adopt Resolution 10-15-2025B, authorizing the Borough to apply for a PECO Green Region Grant.
- ❖ A motion was duly made and amended by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to adopt Resolution 10-15-2025C, approving a promotional banner on Washington Avenue for the Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot 5K in honor of Officer Brian S. Gregg with the following amendments and conditions that Section 5 will be amended to reflect that no commercial advertising will be included on the banner, that the event organizer will provide the Borough with an indemnity agreement for the Borough's responsibilities listed in the Resolution under sections 8 and 9, and the event organizer will provide proof of permission to utilize the proposed utility poles prior to the erection of the banner.

Although Council expressed support regarding the banner for this 5K run due to its honoring Brian S. Gregg, they requested assurances that the banner be mounted safely, shared concern over the proposed location of the banner at a crosswalk on Washington Avenue, stated opposition to accepting responsibility and liability for the banner as written in the PennDOT resolution, do not want to set a precedent for future 5K runs, and more. Solicitor Heleniak offered suggestions to amend the motion and resolution to address concerns.

Carly Bovell, Turkey Trot 5K Organizer, stated her willingness to comply with all the conditions as mentioned in the approval. Ms. Bovell stated that she didn't expect the banner placement near the crosswalk to be too distracting, noting the number of signs currently along Washington Ave. President Heinz requested that the applicant reach out to the neighbors on either side of the crosswalk. In response to Councilor Woldorf, Ms. Bovell stated that they have a company printing and installing the banner.

Tara Grunde-McLaughlin, Resident, shared her support of this event that honors Officer Brian Gregg's memory and is being held in partnership with the Newtown Borough Police

Department (NBPD). Ms. Grunde-McLaughlin noted that the event's charity partner provides tuition and other financial support for children of fallen police officers.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to authorize a Decorative Pole and Banner Agreement with The Newtown Experience Group, subject to revisions.

Councilor Woldorf questioned the designation of The Newtown Experience as a "non-profit business association" in the agreement and requested that this be changed to "non-profit corporation" as the organization is officially listed on the state website. She also suggested amending the advance notification requirement from 60 days to 30 days for the Borough's reserved right to display banners.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to waive parking time limit restrictions in the business district on Thursdays through Sundays from Friday, November 28th through Wednesday, December 31st; waivers do not include the 30-minute parking spaces.
- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve the change in sidewalk material to brick pavers as approved for the driveway at 35 S. Chancellor Street.

Rebecca Rescate, Resident, responded to clarifying questions presented to her by Councilor Woldorf.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to deny alcoholic beverage permit for the Borough Lot at 23 North State Street by NR2F1 Foundation on 10/18/2025 from 10:00am to 1:00 pm.

Council and the Solicitor agreed that the permit application was not complete and therefore could not be approved in time for the organizers to use the municipal parking lot for this event. The Manager will notify the event organizer.

Approval of Minutes

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve September 16, 2025 Council Meeting minutes.

Budget & Finance –Emily Heinz, Gail Foley, & Julia Woldorf

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Foley, seconded by Councilor Woldorf, and passed unanimously, to accept, subject to audit, the Consolidated Expenditure Report for the month of September totaling \$295,561.25.

Personnel/Committees of Council Appointments – Gina Tognini

Councilor Tognini announced the following vacancies on the Committees of Council:

- Civil Service Commission – Recording Secretary
 - Human Relations Commission – 3 Members
 - Newtown Bucks County Jt. Municipal Authority (NBCJMA) – 1 Member
- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini and seconded by Councilor Phillips, to approve the appointment of Julia Woldorf to the *Newtown Bucks County Joint Municipal Authority* for the remainder of a five-year term through December 31, 2026. A motion was then made by Councilor Bauman, seconded by Councilor Foley, and passed with Councilors Phillips and Woldorf opposing, to table the motion.

Mayor Burke stated that volunteers are what makes this community great and felt that John Duggan, the second applicant to the NBCJMA, should be given the opportunity to be included as a member. The Mayor added that the meetings of the NBCJMA are public so anyone can attend.

Councilor Phillips stated that Councilor's Woldorf dedication qualifies her for this position, and she would provide Council with the feedback they desire from the authority; he expressed his preference for a Councilor to fill this vacancy. Councilor Tognini noted the additional volunteer opportunities that are also available.

Jonathan Guy, Resident, spoke of Mr. Duggan's expertise in the environmental sector and disagreed with appointing a Councilor as opposed to allowing a qualified volunteer to assume the role.

Courtney Lang, Resident, suggested that Council appoint Mr. Duggan for the vacant position and assign Councilor Woldorf as a Liaison, benefitting from the knowledge and expertise of both people.

In response to President Heinz's stated interest in tabling the motion, Councilor Woldorf reported that the NBCJMA is anxious to fill the vacancy as soon as possible.

Councilor Foley agreed with tabling the motion, speaking with Mr. Duggan, and considering Courtney Lang's suggestion to include both Mr. Duggan and Councilor Woldorf on the NBCJMA.

Old Business - none

Announcements

Councilor Woldorf reported that the NBCJMA will record their meetings, and post them on YouTube the following day, beginning next month.

Public to be Heard - none

President Heinz called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 P.M. Councilor Tognini so moved, Councilor Phillips seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy S. Musto
Borough Secretary

Attendees

Don Marshall
Chris & Donna Gusty
Bob Musto
Tara Grunde-McLaughlin
Doug Turner
Laura Shepherd
Courtney Lang
Johanna Hager
Carly Bovell

Warren Woldorf
Bob & Trish Linkenheimer
Mike Sellers
Jon & Susan Guy
Peggy Levin
Maryellen Raymond
Arthur & Irene Rodgers
Rebecca Rescate
Nathan Torok