

Council Work Session
November 5, 2025
Borough Hall

The regular monthly Work Session of Newtown Borough Council was called to order at 5:35 P.M. on Wednesday, November 5, 2025. President Heinz asked those in attendance to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Councilors Heinz, Bauman, Foley, Phillips, Tognini, Woldorf; Chief Sabath; Solicitors Heleniak & Bethala; Engineer Fountain; Manager Totaro
Absent: Mayor Burke

Public to be Heard - none

Engineer's Report – Michele Fountain

Engineer Fountain provided updates on the Court & State LLC landscape installation, 110 North State Street sewage planning module, completion of the Frost Lane sidewalk project within 1-2 weeks, and initial review of the Liberty Centre plan.

Mayor's Report – Emily Heinz for John Burke

Special Event Request:

President Heinz reported that an indemnity agreement and certificate of liability insurance are a requirement for approval of the alcoholic beverage addendum to the Turkey Trot 5K Run, sponsored by Boss Events to benefit the Bucks County Heroes Scholarship Fund in honor of Brian S. Gregg on Thanksgiving morning.

Carly Bovell, event organizer, has teamed up with Second Sin Brewing Co. which will provide a serving of beer at the finish line; she requested a waiver of the Ordinance to begin alcohol use at 10:00 A.M. In response to the Solicitor, she will comply with requests regarding the indemnity agreement.

Solicitor's Report – Greg Heleniak

Solicitor Heleniak received no questions regarding his monthly report.

Manager's Report – Craig Totaro

Manager Totaro proposed sending a letter or resolution to state government officials imposing controls and timeline restrictions on the swapping of poles and removal of double poles; he noted that 100-200 poles have been dropped off for installation in the past year. President Heinz added that the Manager is trying to do whatever he can to influence Peco to prioritize pole removal in the Borough. Council requested the removal of poles that have no connected wires.

Manager Totaro shared information about the 2021 International Fire Code Ordinance. Council will vote to advertise this ordinance at the next Council Meeting.

Manager Totaro discussed the proposed 2026 budget, noting that earned income tax is tracking higher than originally stated. Councilor Tognini requested funds be allocated for maintenance improvements to the police station. In response to Councilor Bauman, Manager Totaro advised that the minimum millage increase would be 5 mils which includes 3 mils for fire, .25 mils for ambulance, and 1.75 mils for the general fund to apply towards police. Council discussed changes in revenue and expense estimations and the reluctance to use fund reserves to balance the 2026 budget.

President's Report –Emily Heinz

President Heinz noted that the 2026 meeting schedule has been shared with Council and will be voted on at the November Council Meeting.

President Heinz requested that Councilors inform their respective committees to submit their annual reports.

Review agenda items proposed for November 18, 2025 Council Meeting

Manager Totaro announced that Council will advertise the proposed 2026 Budget as well as the Real Estate Tax Ordinance for adoption at the December Council Meeting.

Personnel/Committees of Council Appointments – Gina Tognini

Councilor Tognini announced the following current vacancies:

- Civil Service Commission – Recording Secretary
- Human Relations Commission – 3 Members
- Newtown Bucks County Jt. Municipal Authority (NBJMA) 1 Member (2 applications received)

❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Foley, seconded by Councilor Bauman, and passed unanimously, to take from the table an appointment to the *Newtown Bucks County Joint Municipal Authority* for the remainder of a five-year term through December 31, 2026.

Council considered the option to appoint Councilor Woldorf to fill this vacancy as opposed to John Duggan, applicant. Councilor Foley noted John Duggan's work experience in the environmental sector and his willingness to communicate emerging developments to Council. Councilor Tognini stated additional options in improving communications with the NBCJMA, noting that Tara Grunde-McLaughlin, Mayor Elect, had a strong working relationship with the NBCJMA when Council President. It was noted that a Council member could serve as a liaison and that all meetings are open to the public. Councilor Woldorf stated that the greatest current concern of the NBCJMA Board is with regards to the land that was purchased to build the sewer plant. Council discussed the recent rate hikes, land acquisition, attributes of each applicant, and their options to proceed in filling this one-year vacancy.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Bauman, and failed due to a tie vote, 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.

Charles Swartz, Resident, acknowledged the learning curve within the first year of board service; the knowledge and experience gained is of benefit in subsequent terms. Mr. Swartz stated the importance of supporting qualified volunteers and suggested the responsibility to ensure communication with the NBCJMA lies with Council.

Jon Guy, Resident, congratulated those in attendance who won reelection. Mr. Guy noted the political nature of this appointment and asked Council to act inclusively towards all residents.

Tara Grunde-McLaughlin, Resident and Mayor-Elect, offered her willingness to serve as a NBCJMA Liaison to ensure communications with Council.

Frank Brassell, Resident, shared his experience as a Ward 2 Judge of Elections, noting his ongoing efforts to keep everything politically neutral out of respect and appreciation for all residents. Mr. Brassell noted the importance of avoiding the appearance of impropriety, further noting that membership of the NBCJMA should be apolitical. Mr. Brassell shared Mr. Duggan's expertise and qualifications for this appointment.

Following discussion by Council and the Solicitor to consider options in the case of a tie, Councilor Woldorf withdrew her application.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Foley, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve the appointment of John Duggan to the *Newtown Bucks County Joint Municipal Authority* for the remainder of a five-year term through December 31, 2026.

Councilor Tognini announced the following volunteer terms that end in December, creating vacancies beginning in January 2026. Councilor Tognini added that many volunteers do choose to seek reappointment and new volunteers can apply for the positions as well.

- Vacancies as of January 2026 include:
 - Civil Service Commission – 1 member
 - Environmental Advisory Council – 2 members
 - HARB – 1 member
 - Human Relations Commission – 1 member
 - Joint Historic Commission - 1 member
 - Planning Commission - 1 member
 - Recreation Board - 2 members
 - Shade Tree Commission - 1 member
 - Zoning Hearing Board - 1 member
 - Board of Appeals: UCC & IFC – 1 member
 - Vacancy Board - 1 member

Planning Commission Update – Gail Foley

Councilor Foley noted that the Liberty Centre plan, formerly Steeple View Phase II, was presented at Monday's Planning Commission meeting and that more information is to come.

Old Business - none

Announcements

Councilor Woldorf announced that a presentation will be given by the architect and engineer of the pedestrian bridge project at the next Council Meeting.

Councilor Woldorf also reported that the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is hosting members of the Buckingham and New Hope EACs to discuss a Climate Action Plan at their next meeting which can be viewed on Zoom.

Public to be Heard

Jon Guy, Resident, thanked Councilor Woldorf for withdrawing her application this evening.

Charles Swartz, Resident, expressed his appreciation for those members who sought reelection and for the continuity it brings to Borough Council.

President Heinz called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 P.M. Councilor Woldorf so moved, Councilor Philips seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy S. Musto
Borough Secretary

Attendees

Warren Woldorf
Jeff Werner
Jon Guy
Charles Swartz
Bob Musto-Zoom
Bernie Sauer-Zoom
Karen White-Zoom

Warren Dallas
Tara Grunde-McLaughlin
Frank Brassell
Carly Bovell-Zoom
Diane LeBas-Zoom
Jeanne Haeckel-Zoom
Don Hayden-Zoom