

Newtown Borough Council -- Work Session Minutes
February 4, 2026

Video time: 0:41

The regular monthly Work Session of Newtown Borough Council was called to order at 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at Borough Hall – 23 North State Street in Newtown Borough, PA. [This meeting was recorded.](#)

President Heinz asked those in attendance to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Councilors Heinz, Bauman, Foley, Phillips, Tognini, Woldorf; Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin; Chief Sabath; Solicitors Heleniak & Passero; Engineer Fountain; Manager Totaro

Public to be Heard *Video time: 1:17*

Gina Santoro, Business Owner, expressed frustration about the poor condition of streets and crosswalks resulting from snow removal efforts following the recent storm, which has affected local commerce and safety. Ms. Santoro described accidents she witnessed from her storefront and the inability of someone in a wheelchair to navigate a crosswalk. Ms. Santoro requested a plan be put in place as soon as possible, and that it be communicated to the public.

Barbara Parson, Business Employee, commented on the difficulty for pedestrians crossing streets and noted that State Street, as a snow emergency route, should be properly cleared. Ms. Parson stated that her employer is losing business due to these conditions; she added that businesses also suffered due to the detours that began last summer due to PECO construction which adds to frustration.

Donna Kushner, Resident, stated that retail customers have lost parking spaces due to the snow which is adversely affecting the business district; residential neighbors are angry for losing a traffic lane as well as on street parking.

Ron Fesmire, Business Employee, stated that he was a maintenance contractor with the Borough for 25 years and reported that the Borough paid Scott's All-Seasons, Contractor, to haul away the large snow piles in the past. Mr. Fesmire noted that reimbursement funds are available during Pennsylvania state of emergency declarations and questioned why additional snow removal didn't take place. In response to Mr. Fesmire, President Heinz announced that Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin, Emergency Response Coordinator, is conversing with Scott's All-Seasons to determine whether additional snow removal can take place without damaging the road surfaces.

Engineer's Report – Michele Fountain *Video time: 13:44*

Engineer Fountain reported that the Frost Lane project has been completed and a meeting with PennDOT is pending to discuss the Liberty Centre project. The Engineer announced that she is beginning her review of plans for the 110 N State Street subdivision and land development project.

In response to Gina Santoro, President Heinz stated that she, Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin, and the Borough Manager agreed that the snow removal was not satisfactory and they're taking steps to

mitigate the damage and improve the plan going forward. Manager Totaro stated his email response to Ms. Santoro will be sent tomorrow.

In response to Councilor Woldorf, Engineer Fountain stated that she is working with the Borough Manager to devise a road project plan in 2026.

Mayor's Report – Tara Grunde-McLaughlin *Video time: 16:00*

Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin announced that she is looking into what went wrong with the recent snow removal, and how to prepare for snow events and improve processes in the future.

The Mayor announced that the Newtown Business Association (NBA) has submitted a special event application for the annual Antique & Classic Car Show. Following discussion among Council and Chief Sabath, Angelo Louridas, NBA Applicant, was requested to submit a layout plan showing the proposed locations of port-a-potties and food trucks for the event, to be reviewed by Council at the next Council Meeting. The NBA was also asked to review the borough's food truck ordinance, ensure all food truck vendors are aware of permit requirements, and apply for necessary permits for food trucks and host site. President Heinz stated that Mr. Louridas can direct any further questions to either Manager Totaro or Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin.

Solicitor's Report – Greg Heleniak *Video time: 26:06*

Solicitor Heleniak continued the discussion regarding changes to the Food Truck Ordinance which focused on regulations for mobile food vendors, setup and breakdown times, site plans, inspections, the maximum number of food trucks allowed, insurance requirements, the distinction between food trucks and carts, discretion for established events like Market Day, and more, while maintaining standards for safety and business impact. The Solicitor will draft proposed changes to the food truck ordinance (including revised definitions and possible exception/modification language for special events) and provide it to Council for a vote to advertise at the next meeting.

Manager's Report – Craig Totaro *Video time: 46:50*

Manager Totaro announced that he is working on end of year financial reporting.

President's Report –Emily Heinz *Video time: 47:25*

Review agenda items proposed for February 26, 2026 Council Meeting -none

Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) – Julia Woldorf *Video time: 48:07*

Councilor Woldorf discussed the progress of the local climate action plan with Council, explaining that she, Manager Totaro, Tim Markey and Summer Bound, EAC Members, are working with Penn State students and professors to develop a LCAP plan. Councilor Woldorf noted that the students presented their initial findings two weeks ago, which included an inventory of the borough's carbon emissions. Tim Markey provided an update on their current work, highlighting that residential energy is the leading source of emissions, followed by commercial energy and transportation. The team is now focusing on identifying practical options for residents and businesses to increase energy efficiency,

with the goal of saving money while reducing emissions. Councilor Woldorf mentioned that the students will continue their research and provide more information in the coming months, with a final presentation and report expected by spring.

The EAC discussed a native plants grant for a public educational activity involving container plantings, with Councilor Woldorf presenting the opportunity and Manager Totaro needing to sign a statement allowing planters on public property. The group agreed to approve the grant application and address maintenance details later, with Councilor Woldorf noting the application is due February 15th. Council will vote to ratify their decision at the next Council meeting.

Personnel/Committees of Council Appointments – Gina Tognini *Video time: 59:33*

Councilor Tognini updated the council on the following vacancies:

- Human Relations Commission – 3 Members
- Recreation Board - 1 member
- Vacancy Board - 1 member

Councilor Tognini announced that Katrina Maples and Diane LeBas have applied for the Recreation Board and Vacancy Board, respectively. Council will vote on their appointments at the next meeting.

Old Business *Video time: 1:00:59*

Councilor Bauman discussed three main points from recent Joint Historic Commission meetings: bringing back a consultant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) to discuss preservation options, conducting a survey of properties outside the historic district for potential historical interest, and exploring the possibility of a moratorium on development. Solicitor Heleniak confirmed that a moratorium is not an option due to legal constraints pertaining to property rights.

Councilor Woldorf shared the development of an ordinance regarding electric vehicle (EV) chargers. The group discussed the installation of electric vehicle chargers in public rights-of-way, focusing on safety concerns, reserved parking spaces, and maintenance costs. Councilor Woldorf proposed that chargers should only deliver power when actively charging a vehicle to prevent accidental electrocution, and the group agreed this was a necessary safety measure. Councilor Woldorf also outlined the scope of the ordinance, which would cover residential, commercial, and new construction parking areas, and sought feedback on the technical and financial feasibility of implementing such safety features. Council emphasized the importance of considering potential issues such as car accidents, maintenance of chargers, and the impact on public street parking. The discussion also touched on the possibility of installing charging stations in municipal lots and exploring public funding options.

Councilor Bauman provided an update on the retaining wall application in front of 239 Court Street. It will be requested again that HARB review the application again and provide a formal recommendation to council.

Announcements - none

Public to be Heard *Video time: 1:27:45*

Charles Swartz, Resident, expressed his embarrassment with the borough's response to recent snowfall, highlighting issues with street cleaning, noting that two-way streets are limited to one-way, and the declaration of a snow emergency. Speaking as a former Mayor, Mr. Swartz reported that snow emergencies are to be established and handled by the Mayor, Police Chief, and Fire Marhsall, in partnership with Scott's All Seasons, Contractor. Mr. Swartz shared his correspondence with Scott's All Seasons and the limitations that had been imposed on snow removal. Mr. Swartz noted that the Borough's other contractor was sent to respond to his neighbor's need for off-street parking but was unable to move the snow. Mr. Swartz observed a near collision at the intersection of State St. and Centre Ave. between a vehicle and two pedestrians in a crosswalk due to obstructed sightlines caused by large snowbanks.

President Heinz called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 P.M. Councilor Woldorf so moved, Councilor Foley seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy S. Musto
Borough Secretary

Attendees

Angelo Louridas
Gina Santoro
Barbara Parson
Charles Swartz
Karen White-Zoom
Jeff Werner-Zoom
Diane LeBas-Zoom
Mike-Zoom

Ron Fesmire
Donna Kushner
Judith Ritter
Tim Markey
Bob Musto-Zoom
Warren Woldorf-Zoom
Nicole Rodowicz-Zoom
Maryellen R-Zoom