

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 5, 2026

The Council Meeting of Monday, January 5, 2026 was called to order by Council President, Rashaad Bates, at 6:30 PM in Municipal Hall Chambers, 235 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA.

There was a **Moment of Silence** followed by the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

The following Council members were in attendance:

William McCoy
Mydera Robinson
Natalie Colson
Jasmine Griffen
David McMahon
Dustin Queenan
Rashaad Bates

Also in attendance were:

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Michael Trail, Norristown Police Chief; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning; Vincent Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning; Kathy Pfifer, Director of Finance; Richard Lockhart, Deputy Fire Chief; Keith Gordon, Manager, Building & Codes Enforcement.

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Colson**, to approve the Minutes from the December 16th and December 22nd of 2025 meetings. **The motion passed unanimously.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Bates noted there was no Executive Session before the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Vice President announced that there are headphones with Jess in the back for those needing a Spanish translation.

Councilman McCoy asked to make an announcement. He said that last night there was another shooting. He said “there are far too many shootings” and they “can’t be treated as routine.” He said there needs to be more patrols and better communication around Public Safety. He said we need to “invest in prevention” and there is “no single fix but proven strategies.” He added, “Our young people deserve safety and our families deserve peace.” He noted there are a few advocate organizations that need assistance. Lincoln Center for Family and Youth He said he will dedicate \$1,000 each of his Discretionary Funds to the Lincoln Center for Family and Youth, Pathway to Potential and the George Washington Carver Center.

Councilman McMahon announced he will hold the first of his Town Hall Meetings on Thursday, January 8th. He said he will be going District by District. The first will be in the 4th District at the American Legion Hall from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. He said he wants to hear concerns and needs and put together some plans of action.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Lightner noted that there are no questions to respond to.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Watters, Hamilton Street – He offered his help with anything involving community and public safety. He said he visited Representative Scott’s office regarding the safety issue at the intersection of West Airy Street and Selma Streets. He said they will need a Traffic Study to get PennDOT’s attention. He said that the Municipality put up stop signs, flashing lights and painted lines. He said some recommendations on NextDoor were speed bumps, a traffic light or a flashing light with red towards Selma Street and yellow towards Airy. He also noted that the PAWC is raising their rates. He said letters can be sent to the

Public Utilities Commission or one can testify at a Public Hearing. He said he filed a formal complaint to Senator Cappelletti's office about the DEP not doing their job. He also noted he wants to prove how we've been cheated out of about \$50 million for not taking advantage of Riverfront events.

Jordan Alexander, Pine Street – He said that the local government is not paying attention to the violence. He said there is a lack of communication and hopes things will be better with the new Police Chief. He said he doesn't understand the need for more armed guards in the schools. He asked when are the criminals going to be locked up? He said the laws need to be enforced – there is no curfew enforced. He added there needs to be more Police presence and more communication by Council and the Municipal Administration with the School Board. He said he spoke to former Chair Lawrence regarding SEPTA bringing the train rides back to Reading, Hershey, etc. He said it would be "a great economic feeder."

Taria Mayo, Lafayette Street – She commented that Shelters are being built up but there is no safe space for the youth. She said there are 2 sides – left and right. She wants to propose a memorial in Crawford Park for Jermaine Pierce. Another person was with Ms. Mayo and he said that Council can't be blamed but that the community needs to stand up for what's going on with the youth.

Councilman McCoy asked, "Where are the men?" He said that the women are in the leadership roles and there needs to be an Outreach to young black men. He said the men are in the bleachers at the games. He said there needs to be a collective effort with the Police Chief and the Administrator. He said there are kids coming from 69th Street in Philadelphia to Norristown – one had a laser gun.

Ericka Wharton, 1538 Markley Street – She invited the Police Chief to come to the George Washington Carver Center because he said the kids would love to see him. She said to stop opening programs to "outsiders." She said that "parental involvement is the foundation." She addressed Leonard Lightner saying that the Carver Center is over 65 years old, and there's the Library, the Theatre and other organizations that you can "build off of". She said a lot of people come to speak before Council that are not from 19401. She said that regarding the incident at the meeting with her cousin, Heather Lewis, she advised Council members to have AED Training.

Councilwoman Robinson shared that there is quite a substantial amount of work with youth in this community. She said, “the urgency is real and there are many service organizations that help to upbuild the youth.” She said there is an overlap. She said that some things “can be shared over coffee and not over public comment.” She said she works in a non-profit and she is always open to share how funding can work. She added that “collaboration is the way.” She said she had presented a plan last year but things came up and now things need to be prioritized. She noted that she is “Highly accessible and highly responsive” and “Reach out to me.”

APPOINTMENTS

Resolution 26-01: Appointment of Professionals for 2026

Mr. Lightner noted that Council has historically proceeded with this. He said it is in the approved Budget but needs to be reviewed. He noted that regarding “Boyle Construction Management,” it is for a Feasibility Study that was discussed during the Budget sessions for a new Fire Station, a new Public Works facility and the Recreation Center. He asked Council to approve this as presented in the Resolution.

Council Vice President Queenan asked if there was a discussion with Boyle Construction and Council? He asked how they were chosen.

Mr. Lightner responded it was through recommendations and referrals.

Council Vice President Queenan said he feels that more details are needed. He said he would like to amend the Resolution and have more conversation.

Mr. Lightner said it has been discussed and that these projects were already in the process and in the Capital Plan before he came to Norristown as the Administrator. He said these are Professional Services that don’t need to go out for bidding. He said they came highly recommended by other Municipalities.

Mr. Lightner told Council Vice President Queenan that he had asked for “real numbers” during the Budget sessions so Mr. Lightner said he advised Council that a Feasibility Study would be done in order to get the true cost of the projects.

Councilwoman Griffen asked if other companies were contacted?

Council President Bates asked about the timeline and was informed that 12 weeks is the timeline for all 3 projects.

Mr. Lightner noted that they need to get underway because of 2027 Grant opportunities. He said they need a plan to present to Council.

Council President Bates asked how soon does the Feasibility Study need to be conducted?

Councilman McMahon said the study needs to be done to get the results so there will be something concrete to have discussions about.

There was **a motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Griffen**, to amend the Resolution excluding Boyle Construction Management. **The motion failed 5-2.** (Council Vice President Queenan and Councilwoman Griffen voted “yes”.)

There was **a motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Council President Bates**, to approve Resolution 26-01 “Appointment of Professionals for 2026.” **The motion passed 5-2.** (Council Vice President Queenan and Councilwoman Griffen voted “no.”)

HUMAN RESOURCES

Resolution 26-02: Request for Municipal Council approval of a Resolution ratifying the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Municipality of Norristown and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO, District Council 88, Crossing Guards Unit, for the term January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028

Mr. Lightner stated this provides stability for a 3-year term for the safety functions to ensure children get to school safety. He said that all costs were anticipated as part of 2026 budget and it helps to avoid retroactive adjustments or interruptions.

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilman McMahon**, to approve Resolution 26-02 ratifying the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Municipality of Norristown and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO, District Council 88, Crossing Guards Unit, for the term January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028. **The motion passed unanimously.**

BUILDING & CODE COMPLIANCE

Request to approve HARB COAs

Mr. Keith Gordon noted that the following requests were reviewed and approval is recommended:

517 George Street
345 West Marshall
513 Swede Street
1230 Linwood Avenue

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Colson**, to approve the HARB COAs for the above-mentioned addresses. **The motion passed unanimously.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Public Hearing: request adoption of Ordinance 25-10 for the FY2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Proposed Budget

Solicitor Kilkenny explained the process which includes opening the Public Hearing and explaining what the exhibits are which include a copy of the advertisement for the Public Hearing and a copy of tonight's presentation by

Director Musonye. He said there will also be time for Council comments and Public comments.

Director Musonye provided an explanation of the CDBG 2026 Action Plan process which involves a 5-year plan every 5 years. She noted that there was a request made in 2025 to the Department Heads and Council when they were asked for any projects they would like to see happen that are in line with the Consolidated Plan.

These would be part of the Action Plan 2026. She noted that the first Public Hearing was advertised on August 22nd and 29th of 2025 for a Public Meeting held on September 8, 2025. She said there was also a Presentation before Council on October 7, 2025. She also noted that a second Public Hearing for October 27, 2025 was advertised on October 10th and 17th of 2025. There was 30-day public comment period from October 23 to November 21, 2025. She said no one attended. She said that advertisement for Ordinance 25-10 was scheduled to be proposed to Council on December 16, 2025 but had to be rescheduled for December 22, 2025 due to an emergency during the December 16th meeting.

Ms. Musonye advised Council that if no action is taken, the funding will be jeopardized. She said that the process involves waiting for Congress with regard to allocation of project funds so she recommended approval.

Ms. Musonye reviewed the 2026 Proposed Projects: Owner Occupied Housing – she said that other funding is pursued and she said they also work with non-profits due to high construction costs – \$500,000 was received from the State; Hiring of Technical Support - \$55,000 per year is allocated; she said that Fair Housing must be followed as a condition for the Grant – she said it involves taking complaints about discrimination - \$30,000 is allocated for this; for small business development with help from Widener University - \$40,000 is set aside; the Logan Square Project \$5 million Grant - \$458,340 will be paid towards the loan; \$147,000 is allocated for those working on the Grant. Total: \$756,318.

Public Comment

Erica Wharton – She asked how to approach someone about funding opportunities for small businesses. Ms. Musonye advised her to come to the Widener University presentation next week.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Griffen, seconded by Council Vice President Queenan**, to close the Public Hearing. **The motion passed unanimously.**

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Griffen, seconded by Council Vice President Queenan**, to approve Ordinance 25-10 for the FY2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Proposed Budget. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Newly elected Council President Bates thanked his colleagues, Administration, Staff, Business Owners, residents and his family for support. He said, “It’s an honor to be here again.” He added, “We have a lot going on.” He added that everyone needs to work together and be a united front. He said he wants to talk to the residents and work with Leonard Lightner to focus on Norristown and “block out the external noise.” He also said there needs to be an open line of communication with the School Board, Commissioners and Representatives. He added “We need to fix what’s broken and amplify what’s already been started.”

ADJOURNMENT

There was **a motion by Council President Bates, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to adjourn the Council Meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Santangelo
Clerk of Council