

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 3, 2026

The Council Meeting of Tuesday, February 3, 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 McMahan
Rashaad Bates

Also in attendance were:

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Michael Trail, Norristown Police Chief; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning; Amanda Ciarlante, Deputy Director of Finance; Richard Lockhart, Deputy Fire Chief; Keith Gordon, Manager, Building & Codes Enforcement; Robert Romano, Fleet Supervisor; Bri-Ana Hawkins, Director of Parks & Recreation

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES

There was a **motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Councilwoman Colson**, to approve the Minutes from the January 5, 2026 Re-Organization and Council Meetings. **The motion passed 6-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council President provided the Announcements.

Montgomery County presents “Black History Month” 2026 celebrating 100 years of Black History. Virtual presentations will be held from 12pm to 1:30 pm on February 4th by the Pottstown NAACP and on February 11th by the Charles Blockson Afro-American Collection and February 18th by the Historical Society of Montgomery County where there will be an in-person program on February 25th from 11:30 am to 1 pm. Lunch will be provided.

Advanced Center for Hypnosis, 216 Cherry Street, Norristown – Professional Hypnosis services to help quit smoking, weight loss, stress management, overcoming fears of public speaking. There are also classes to learn drone and aviation training, photography and podcasting, a room for children and adults and a music program.

Town Hall with Councilman McMahon on Thursday, February 5th from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Library. He said there will be a presentation by the Library staff about the renovations. The Town Halls will happen every Thursday after first Council meeting and he will go throughout the District that time of month at different venues.

Councilwoman Robinson shared that she works full-time with Theatre Horizon, which is award-winning and nationally recognized. She said there will be a show called “XOXO Montco’s Variety Show” from February 11th to February 22nd. The cast is predominantly from Norristown and they wrote and created the show. She said not to worry about ticket costs because there are ways to engage such as “pay what you can”, junior, senior and industry discounts and discount codes or free as her special guest. Autism drama students are the opening prologue on February 14th. This will be a family-friendly, sensory-friendly event.

Town Hall Meeting with At-Large Councilwoman Jasmine Griffen. George Washington Community Center on February 12th at 6:30 pm. Enjoy an open dialogue with one of your at-large council members about community issues in your District, or all of the town.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

Tiffany Todd – He said they are working on having the other meetings recorded. He said that HARB is now being recorded. He noted they need to work on the technology.

Snow Update

George Nave, Superintendent of Public Works, noted he has been working for Public Works for 34 years. He spoke about the work that Public Works has been doing since the recent snowstorm. He said it is a team effort and explained that they have a Brining machine and plenty of salt. He said that some surrounding areas ask them for their Brine and salt. He commented that the problems began when the snow stopped. He said they moved 3600 tons of snow. He explained what happens when the residents clean out their parking space and the snow gets put back into the street. He recommended that the residents shovel the snow onto the sidewalk leaving a 30 inch path.

Several of the Council members voiced their appreciation for the work Public Works has done. Councilwoman Colson specifically thanked Danielle for taking all the calls.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Laura Smith – She commented that one of the “Ambassadors” at a recent meeting lived out of town. She wants that verified. She asked, “Where are the youth?” She said they are always looking for jobs. “Why haven’t we hired anybody from Norristown?” She voiced her concern for houses that are turned into apartments. She said that needs to be figured out. She asked if there could be a meeting regarding having block parties. She said there needs to be a plan in place regarding the snow removal with parked cars after her car was blocked in.

Taria Mayo – She gave her opinion regarding the hiring of a Deputy Chief saying to consider hiring one of the two previous officers that held the position because it will not incur additional costs to taxpayers and they have already been interviewed, background checked and they already possess the credentials. She

said that if approved, there needs to be 3 Public Hearings. She added that in the next 6 weeks a couple of organizations will team up from February 2nd to March 9th for a youth drone and music podcast at 214 Cherry Street from 5-7 pm, Mondays only. Food provided.

PRESENTATIONS

Norristown Special Events Presentation – Tracie Henry

Ms. Henry presented a Power Point regarding the 2026 Special Events. She explained what the events are about.

The titles covered included: “Who Is Our Demographic?” She said it is Millennials and Gen Z at 70%. She explained what they want and how they are addressed.

“Why Special Events Matter?” She said to have fun and celebrate the community and it builds morale.

“What’s in it for you as a Sponsor?” She told them that it is not an expense but an investment and an opportunity to associate their brand.

She provided details of the planned Events:

“Izzy’s Earth Day Party on April 25th with “Hoppy Hour” after the party at vonC Brewery.

“5th Annual Juneteenth on June 19th”

“July 4th Parade and Party in the Park”

“Winter Village on December 7th and 8th”

She said to follow her on Facebook and the Municipality’s website.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

Resolution 26-10: request for Municipal Council approval of a Resolution rescinding Resolution 25-69 and authorizing the creation of a Deputy Police Chief position

Mr. Leonard Lightner asked Council to rescind the appointment of the individual to the position as the Deputy Chief but keep the request to have a Deputy Chief position and to ask the Civil Service Commission to create the Rules and Regulations for that position. He said that the required qualifications are according to Borough Code and the appointment must be a sworn Officer within the ranks.

Councilman McCoy asked if this position would pull an Officer off the streets?

Mr. Lightner responded that until the Civil Service makes the rules, we cant say that they won't come off the patrol.

Councilwoman Griffen asked for the case number in the Charter so the constituents can look up the provisions. Sean Kilkenny said the case number can be found online under the Borough Code.

Councilman McCoy asked why this position is necessary.

Chief Trail said he was brought on board to standardize and professionalize the Police Department. He said the talent and teams need to be developed within the organization. He added that previous Deputy Chief positions were not codified, they were appointments. He said he needs a strong #2 to help strengthen the community.

Council President Bates asked the Solicitor if they are able to change the Rules and Regulations made by the Civil Service Commission.

Sean Kilkenny told him that the Commission can forward them and Council can negotiate with them.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Colson, seconded by Councilman McMahan**, to authorize the establishment of the rank of Deputy Police Chief within the Norristown Police Department, to provide assistance to the Police

Chief in administrative and operational functions and to promote the health, safety and welfare of the community. This Resolution rescinds Resolution 25-69 to allow the position to be created and filled in accordance with newly adopted Civil Service Rules and Regulations for the appointed position. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Proclamation declaring a Disaster Emergency due to Winter Storm Fern

Leonard Lightner explained that a Snow Emergency is declared prior to the Council meeting so Council can ask for a State of Emergency to be ratified at the next council meeting.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Colson, seconded by Councilman McMahan**, to ratify a Disaster Emergency Proclamation in response to Winter Storm Fern and to authorize continued emergency response actions necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare. **The motion passed 6-0.**

FLEET

Resolution 26-09: request for Municipal Council to approve the disposal of seven surplus vehicles and equipment

Fleet Supervisor, Robert Romano, said that vehicles and equipment in the packets provided have been held onto longer than they should have. He said that when the new ones come, they are then disposed of. He noted they will end up being put on a Government auction site.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Colson, seconded by Councilman McMahan**, to approve Resolution 26-09 requesting the disposal of seven surplus vehicles and equipment. **The motion passed 6-0.**

PARKS AND RECREATION

Resolution 26-08: request for Municipal Council to authorize the execution of a three-year contract with Zambelli Fireworks for an amount not to exceed \$104,575.00 for the provision of fireworks displays for the annual party in the park celebration held each year on July 4th

Bri-Ana Hawkins, Recreation Director, noted that Zambelli is the best fireworks company in the world and she shared that she received many compliments about the past fireworks.

She said they would like to have a three-year contract to lock in the rate and avoid increased fees the following years.

Councilwoman Robinson asked why the pricing was more expensive for this year.

Ms. Hawkins explained that it is option B for “America’s 250th.”

Councilwoman Colson recommended moving forward with a one-year contract and find less expensive companies.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Colson, seconded by Councilwoman Griffen**, to amend the three-year contract to have a one-year contract with Zambelli Fireworks. **The motion passed 6-0.**

POLICE

Resolution 26-04: Memorandum of Understanding between the Norristown Police Department and Bode Cellmark Forensics, Inc.

Chief Trail noted that 3 or 4 years ago, the County started a local DNA Testing Base to compile DNA locally for local crimes. He said this agenda item has to do with updating pricing for the next 2 years and nothing to do with the original MOU.

He said that a past Council approved the original MOU that stated the guidelines and how the data will be used.

Councilman McCoy asked if the Municipality retains any oversight on the uploaded DNA?

Chief Trail said the DNA sits in a repository and anyone with access to that repository can access the DNA data.

Councilman McMahon was concerned that ICE and DHS can access it given the current community crisis.

Chief Trail said it does not show immigration status, only crime status. He said he can provide the information from the original MOU that explains the process.

Councilwoman Griffen said they need to know the terms of the original agreement.

Councilman McMahon said he is working on a package of legislation regarding immigration enforcement and one is to rescind contracts with companies that collaborate with ICE and he is not interested in adding a new one. He asked if it is possible to find a company to provide these services that wouldn't be involved with ICE and would like a period of time for that to be pursued.

Chief Trail said the repository has strict standards and it may be difficult for many labs to meet those standards. He feels that BODE is the "go-to" because they have met those standards. He asked Council to submit any questions they have to him.

Councilwoman Robinson said she is confused that this is about pricing. She said it is listed on the agenda about data-sharing permissions but did not receive info about these permissions. She questioned - What is the ask?

Chief Trail had a document from BODE that he read from regarding a modification replacing the pricing tables. He said everything else remains.

Councilwoman Robinson said she needs more information about what BODE's responsibility is in sharing information.

Chief Trail said he will work on that for Council to review. He added they will continue until they run out of the Test Kits they currently have and then the DNA Testing program will cease.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilwoman Colson, to table Resolution 26-04. The motion passed 6-0.

Motion: application for PCCD Grant FY 2026-28 Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP)

Chief Trail asked for funding for 2 programs: the Hero Program which is a youth development program specializing in STEM with 2 sessions in the Fall and Winter. Each session has 35 children. It goes for 12 weeks and is fully funded. The second program is for the integration of a drone for the Police Department. He said it's a camera used in time of crisis and for large gatherings at public events.

Chief Trail said he is asking for the PCCD to review the grant application in the amount of over \$498,000 for the programs.

Councilman McMahon said he supports the Hero Program but is cautious about the Drones. He said the ad promoting it appears as "gearing up for battle."

Chief Trail said there needs to be some talk with Council about uses for the Drone.

Councilwoman Robinson said that the community could be involved once the funding is obtained. She suggested letting the community decide if they want a drone. She said she is concerned with security cameras and others not covered. She said it appears the Stakeholders are involved after the purchase.

Chief Trail said there was no time to discuss and the proposal is here.

He added that Drones are widely accepted practices but said he understands the concerns.

Councilwoman Robinson asked if Police Officers would be running the Hero program?

Chief Trail said there is a curriculum and the Grant does pay for their time.

Councilwoman Robinson asked about pairing with any community organizations?

Chief Trail said the Hero program can involve using volunteers.

Councilwoman Robinson said she feels this is a missed opportunity for a partnership.

Councilman McCoy suggested partnerships and added there are about 7,000 plus non-profits that can collaborate with the Police Department and Council.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Griffen, seconded by Councilman McCoy,** to table the motion for an application for PCCD Grant FY 2026-28 Violence Intervention and Prevention. **The motion passed 6-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

NASD request for Permit and Land Development Fee Waivers

Jayne Musonye said that any Land Development comes with fees and the calculated fees for this request total \$11,348.13. She said that only Council can waive fees.

Superintendent Chris Dormer noted they had a presentation in October of 2025. He said they invested in renovating the school buildings and they are in Phase 3 of the 6 major Phases.

He said Phase 1 was approved by the School Board and there has been progress on all 3 Phases for the Cole Manor School, the Norristown Administration Building and Hancock Elementary School.

He said that West Norriton and East Norriton had waived their Land Development fees and he has been working with Jayne Musonye on the process regarding the Hancock site in Norristown.

The Chief Operating Officer, the Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor were also present to ask to waive the fees for the Consolidated Land Development.

Councilman McMahon questioned if the reason for the ask is to cover the cost, not waive the fee.

Mr. Dormer said they are looking for the same as the other Municipalities that waived the fees.

Councilwoman Colson asked if the others were in-house and not third parties?

Councilwoman Robinson asked if there could be a consolidated process?

Jayne Musonye explained that once the application is submitted, they get all reviewers together for their feedback. She said that meeting back and forth could cost more so in order to move faster, they have a Pre-application Meeting and they invite all to review the Sketch Plan. She said this cuts off 2 or 3 months of the process.

Mr. Dormer said the waiver is only for the Hancock project located in Norristown.

Sean Kilkenny said that Council can choose to grant or not to grant the waiver or do a partial waiver.

Council conferred.

There was **a motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Council President Bates**, to approve the NASD request for a waiver for Land Development fees. **The motion failed with all 6 members voting no.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Santangelo
Clerk of Council