STROUDSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 20, 2026

A regular meeting of the Stroudsburg Borough Council convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Stroudsburg Borough Municipal Building with the following members present: Council President Matt Abell, Council Vice-President Erica McCabe, Council Pro-Tem J. Zac Christman, Council Member Joseph Shay, Council Member Victoria DeVries, Council Member Cheryl Joubert, and Council Member Claire Crawford-Braun.

Also present were: Borough Manager Larry Kopp, Junior Council Member Emilie Protsko, Borough Solicitor Christopher Brown, Esq., Street Superintendent Brian Ace, Zoning/Codes Officer Kenelle DeStefano, and Executive Assistant Becky Smith.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Abell addressed the negative press and recent posts to social media. If anyone is looking for answers regarding Borough matters, please reach out to Borough Manager Larry Kopp or any Council Member. September 2024 Mr. Kopp learned that DCED would be restarting the funding for the Main Street Matters program. Requirements for the program include having a strategic plan formed and in place and hire a Downtown Manager. This was discussed by the Redevelopment Committee and Mr. Kopp contacted DCED who met with the committee in November 2024. Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau and Downtown Business Association representatives were invited to the meeting. A presentation was given by Mr. Kopp at the last December 2024 Council Meeting and began planning for it in 2025. Bill Arrowood from DCED gave a presentation at a public meeting in the beginning of 2025; and a public overview of the program was held on June 10th with many people in attendance. Shortly after that, the Borough began advertising for applicants, hoping to have someone in place by the fall. The sooner the position is filled, the sooner the Borough gets its money back. The hiring committee included the Redevelopment Committee, the Downtown Business Association, the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, and Chamber of Commerce. The Borough relied on each organization to relay the information to each of their members. The Borough received approximately three dozen applicants which Larry Kopp prescreened, most being underqualified. At this point, Mr. Abell asked Michael Moreno if he would be interested in applying, since none of the applicants seemed to be invested in the downtown. Mr. Moreno worked in business development over the years with ESU and Chamber of Commerce, and at the time was pursuing a master's degree in public administration; also, he became a Certified Borough Public Official. Mr. Moreno did not agree to apply for the position at the time as he was in the middle of getting his master's degree and was set to graduate in December 2025 and didn't want anything to interfere with this. Mr. Kopp and Mr. Abell spoke on July 15 about extending the search through the end of the year, which Mr. Moreno was not aware of. Steve Ertle submitted his resume on July 21st. Two other applications were received and interviewed in the fall. The hiring committee extended the search to obtain a better pool of applicants, something employers routinely do to gather more qualified applicants. This second round of advertising provided a stellar candidate, who was scheduled for an interview on November 17th, but unfortunately cancelled on the day before the interview due to accepting another position closer to his home. Other candidates were interviewed, and Steve Ertle was given his second interview, after which the hiring committee felt he was not the right fit for the position. Since the committee was not satisfied with the remaining candidates, Mr. Kopp asked Mr. Moreno to reconsider applying for the position. He agreed to an interview on December 6th, he was the only second-round candidate who is a Borough resident, and the hiring committee voted unanimously to recommend the Borough hire him. During Executive Session

held on December 16th, Council was asked not to publicly announce Mr. Moreno's hiring so he could provide his current employer proper notice. He was offered the exact salary amount that was budgeted. Regardless of how one feels about Michael Moreno or the hiring process, Mr. Abell genuinely wants to see our downtown thrive and prosper and begs everyone to give Mr. Moreno the chance to do what he was hired to do.

Approval of Council Meeting Minutes for the biennial reorganization and regular meeting on January 5, 2026

The minutes of the biennial reorganization and regular meeting on January 5, 2026 were approved on a motion made by Ms. DeVries, seconded by Ms. McCabe. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Monthly Administrative Reports

The following monthly reports were approved on a motion made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. DeVries: Right-To-Know Report, Parking Report, Fire Department Report, and the Police Department Report. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Accept Unaudited December 2025, Treasurer Report

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. DeVries to accept the Balance Sheets, FY 25 vs FY 24, and the Budget to Actual Report. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Old Business

There are two vacancies on the Monroe County Control Center Board of Directors. It was confirmed that Mary Pat Quinn's and Joanne Kochanski's terms expired December 31, 2025. Each vacancy is for a two-year term from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2027. Ms. Kochanski stated she and Ms. Quinn have been members of this board for years and have missed very few meetings, which are held once a month on a Tuesday at noon. She also noted that the MCCC is in the middle of a large project of which the current board members have knowledge. Michael Schroder and Mehmet Barzev, both fire department members, also expressed interest in becoming members of this board. Ms. McCabe believes it is necessary to have representation from the fire department on the MCCC board and confirmed that Mr. Schroder is able to attend the monthly meetings.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe to appoint Michael Schroder and Mehmet Barzev to fill the two vacancies on the MCCC Board of Directors.

Mr. Christman asked what the ongoing project is, to which Ms. Kochanski said replacement of equipment, and they are working on obtaining grants for such equipment. Ms. Kochanski expressed her concern of possible conflicts of interest regarding personnel matters if members of the fire department are appointed to the board, as there are MCCC staff members who are also members of the fire department. Mr. Shay believes continuity is good, and he likes the idea of Mr. Schroder or Mr. Barzev being appointed to one of the vacancies, but not a total change of guard. Ms. McCabe stated the current members do not provide updates to Borough Council and will need to start giving regular reports. Ms. Kochanski stated she will come to every meeting. Mehmet Barzev said he and Mr. Schroder are very qualified to be members of this board; he is chief of an EMS organization and has experience with grants; also, there will be no bias towards fire department employees at MCCC. Mr. Schroder added that there was a $30,000 increase to the MCCC budget for 2026 that was voted on by Borough Council, but no information was provided regarding the reason for the increase. Ms. Kochanski stated she will make a report at least once a month to Council. Mr. Abell reiterated there is an expectation as the role of the appointed members to report regularly back to Council.

Ms. McCabe rescinded her motion to appoint Mr. Schroder and Mr. Barzev.

A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Mr. Shay to appoint Ms. Kochanski and Mr. Schroder to fill the two vacancies on the MCCC Board of Directors. Ms. McCabe stressed Mehmet Barzav's role as the Borough's Emergency Management Coordinator, who deals with 911 emergency services in the climate we currently live in and believes he should have an extensive role with the Control Center. Solicitor Brown confirmed there is no conflict being a member of the fire department, the Emergency Management Coordinator, and on the MCCC Board of Directors. Ms. Kochanski clarified Mehmet's role of Emergency Management Coordinator is part of the county which is downstairs of the building, and the 911 Center is upstairs, which is separate. Mr. Christman rescinded his motion to appoint Ms. Kochanski and Mr. Schroder. Mr. Shay agreed to rescind.

A motion was made by Mr. Shay to appoint Ms. Kochanski and Mr. Schroder to fill the two vacancies on the MCCC Board of Directors. There was no second to Mr. Shay's motion, therefore the motion failed.

A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe to appoint Ms. Kochanski and Mr. Barzev to fill the two vacancies of the MCCC Board of Directors. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain) Mr. Abell requested a letter be sent to Mary Pat Quinn thanking her for her years of service on the board.

A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe to accept Robert Llopis' request to withdraw his appointment from the Planning Commission that was approved at the January 5, 2026 Council meeting. Mr. Llopis is unable to make the meetings at their scheduled time. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to appoint Robert Llopis to the Zoning Hearing Board, filling a vacancy with a term ending December 31, 2028. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

There is a vacancy on the Planning Commission with a term ending December 31, 2026. Interested individuals can submit a letter of interest to any Borough Council Member or Borough Manager Larry Kopp.

A discussion to appoint a Mayor with a term ending December 31, 2027 was held. The following individuals provided a letter of interest and were present at this meeting for consideration: Brianna Farnbaugh, Michael Schroder, Felix Betran, Kerri Manning, and Ellen Currie. Each candidate spoke a few words about themselves. Five other letters of interest were received, however, those candidates did not show up in person at this meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Shay, seconded by Mr. Abell to appoint Michael Schroder as Mayor with a term ending December 31, 2027. There was a tie and the motion failed. (3-yes, Mr. Shay, Mr. Abell, Ms. Joubert; 3-no, Ms. DeVries, Ms. McCabe, Ms. Crawford-Braun; 1-abstain, Mr. Christman)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Crawford-Braun to table this item. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 1-no, Mr. Shay; 0-abstain) Mr. Abell advised this item will be on the February 3, 2026 Council Agenda for further discussion. Mr. Shay suggested the five candidates who were not present at tonight's meeting be disqualified, and only the five who showed up tonight should be considered for the Mayor's position. Mr. Abell confirmed there will be five candidates: Brianna Farnbaugh, Michael Schroder, Felix Betran, Kerri Manning, and Ellen Currie.

There was a recess from 8:21 p.m. to 8:36 p.m.

New Business

A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe to approve a Special Event Application from the Monroe County Bar Association for the annual Law Day 5K and 5-Mile Races (Edwin Karwitz Memorial Race) to be held on Sunday, April 26, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., contingent upon receiving the event fee and certificate of insurance. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Mr. Kopp discussed a Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) for 2026 for the Borough of Stroudsburg's Non-Uniformed Pension Plan. The plan's governing document states that a cost-of-living increase may be provided but it is not required. By comparing the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), U.S. City average from November 2025 to that of October 2024, Girard Pension Services, LLC. arrived at an increase of 2.7%. Ms. McCabe is in favor of the increase based on the current economic climate for the retirees who collect the pension. A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to approve a Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) for 2026 for the Borough of Stroudsburg's Non-Uniformed Pension Plan. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 1-no, Mr. Shay; 0-abstain)

A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. DeVries to approve a Resolution of the Borough of Stroudsburg, County of Monroe, authorizing and implementing changes to the designated Pension Plan Officials for the Nationwide Pension Case 10660, and approve Charels Schwab Trust Bank as the custodian of the Borough of Stroudsburg's Non-Uniformed Pension Plan assets. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

There was a discussion about Stroudsburg's contributions to America250. Monroe County is hosting a parade; Ms. Crawford-Braun is interested in having a float in the parade, and Tarah Probst volunteered to participate. Mr. Abell appointed the following individuals to the America250 Ad Hoc Committee: Joe Shay, Claire Crawford-Braun, Emilie Protsko, Michelle Riegel, Ellen Currie, and Jessica Delfino. Mr. Kopp will coordinate a meeting in the near future. Ms. Crawford-Braun passed around the Keystone Art for council's approval, which was submitted by a local high school student. After discussion, this topic will be added to the next Council Agenda.

Committee Reports

Codes Committee – Mr. Abell reported the committee discussed the potential Real Estate Transfer Ordinance. The next meeting is January 28th at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom; Mr. Abell encouraged anyone with questions, concerns, or input to join the public meeting.

Budget Committee – No report.

Parking Committee – The next meeting is Monday, January 26th at 5:15 p.m.

Recycling Committee – No report.

Sewer Committee – No report.

Street Committee – The next meeting is Wednesday, January 21st at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Personnel Committee – Mr. Kopp advised a Parking Enforcement Officer left, the position has been advertised, and he is interviewing applicants.

Public Relations/Media Committee – The next meeting is Thursday, January 22nd at 6:00 p.m.

Redevelopment Committee – Mr. Abell advised the committee met last week and discussed a 10-year priority list.

I-80 Expansion Task Force Committee – Jessica Delfino advised two appeals have been made to the Environmental Hearing Board; there is a Go Fund Me campaign to raise funds for legal representation that is being sought by the committee for these appeals. The eagle near exit 307 has been named and there is another eagle living along I-80.

Parks and Rec (SROSRC) Committee – No report.

Junior Council Committee – The first meeting of the year is Monday, February 2nd at 5:00 p.m.

Mental Health Committee – Ms. Crawford-Braun reported the committee met January 16th, with many ideas discussed, including free mental health training for Borough employees, and a mental health resource page included on the Borough's website.

Council Member Reports

No report.

Solicitor's Report

No report.

Manager's Report

Mr. Kopp advised Pelham Advisors would like to set up a focus group with council members on an upcoming Saturday. It was determined that March 21 works for most; Mr. Kopp will provide Council with more details. Pelham Advisors will be sending a draft survey for review.

Borough Manager Report
January 20th, 2026

Meetings

Delta/Funding Status Meeting	January 2nd
Historic Marker Dedication Class	January 5th
Chamber Public Policy Meeting	January 9th
Pelham/Check-In	January 9th
SARP Executive Committee Mtg	January 12th
Denny Peters/BCO	January 12th
Jim Evanisko	January 12th
Kim Guerin/Downtown Manager	January 12th
Claire/Borough Council	January 12th
Downtown Business Association	January 13th
Brian Abernathy/Pelham/Downtown Plan	January 13th
Bill Arrowood/Downtown PA	January 14th
Puryear Plaque Planning	January 15th
Parking Opening Interview	January 20th
Pelham/Check-In	January 20th
Chris Barrett/Downtown Manager	January 20th
Parking Opening Interview	January 22nd

Infrastructure/Streets/Capital Projects

Quick Build / Main Street Project. Labor & Industry letter for approved Borough Labor; working determination for Mural Artists' hourly wage requirements. Four mural locations approved by property owners. Met with PPG for Thermoplastic Crosswalks; finalizing locations and cost.

Creek Walk Trail. Statewide LSA, DCNR and DCED GTRP Grants submitted. Going forward with the levee portion of the trail with awarded grant funds, Conservation District approved Erosion & Sediment Control Plan.

Parking Garage Repair/Rehabilitation. Contract and Bonds received. Work in Spring 2026.

Levee Erosion Mitigation. Emplacing rip rap on the Brodhead Creek side of the levee to stop erosion. DCED Flood Mitigation Grant submitted. Work in 2026.

Paving 2026. CDBG Project (Kramer Avenue) now in Spring 2026.

Grants Strategy 2024-25

Not Funded USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All Planning Grant. Submitted.

Not Funded 2024 PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant. Submitted. For Five Points Roundabout.

Not Funded DCED's Flood Mitigation Program. Submitted. Grant amount of $84,991.

Not Funded DCED Greenways, Trails & Recreation Program. Submitted. For Stroudsburg Creek Walk Project.

Not Funded USDOT Safe Streets for All. Submitted. Stroudsburg Vision Zero Plan for Main Street

Not Funded Monroe County Hotel Tax Allocation. Submitted. For Placer AI subscription.

Not Funded 2024 Statewide LSA Grant. For Creek Walk Trail & Footbridge. Submitted to DCED.

2025 Statewide LSA Grant. Submitted. For engineering for Five Points Roundabout.

Monroe County LSA. Submitted. For new parking meters for the remainder of the Borough.

PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA). Draft application submitted. Presentation to NEPA Alliance on December 16th.

Office of the Budget (OMB) Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP). Submitted. For Borough Building improvements.

Main Street Matters Program Grants. Submitted. For Business Improvement Grants.

PennDOT Automated Red Light Enforcement Program (ARLE). Received pre-application approval from PennDOT. Submitted. For Park & Broad Streets traffic signal.

Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program. For engineering study for Main Street Project. Will be resubmitted when the grant program reopens.

2025 DCED PA Small Water & Sewer Program. Submitted. For slip lining sewer and water lines.

2025 DCNR Grant C2P2 Grant. Submitted. Working on finalizing easements.

2025 DCED Multimodal Transportation Fund. Submitted w/BCRA. For complete street restoration, paving plus water line replacement.

Office of the Budget (OMB) Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP Grant). Received $500,000 for Parking Garage Repairs.

2024 Monroe County LSA Grant. Received $200,000 for Parking Garage Repairs.

PMVB Beautification Grant Program. Received $8,500 for Bollards & Sleeves, requested amount.

2023 Statewide LSA Grant. Received $250,000 for the Creek Walk Project.

2023 Monroe County LSA Grant. For Parking Garage Repairs. Received $250,000.

2022 Monroe County LSA Grant. Received $500,000 for the Main Street Project.

RACP Grant. Scope approved by DCED. Preparing PMP Report. Going out to bid.

Monroe County Hotel Tax Allocation. Received $9,847 for equipment for Dog Park. Equipment received.

DEP Levee Inspection Reimbursement. $3,975. Reimbursement received.

Borough Funds Investment in CDs

Received rates from Wayne Bank; less than current ESSA rates. Contacted PGLIT, waiting for response.

Parking Enforcement Officer Opening

Scheduled two interviews this week so far. Received numerous applications, screening as I receive them.

Downtown Visioning/Strategic Planning

Met with Pelham Associates on January 9th. Second meeting on the 20th. Scheduled final interviews. Scheduling Focus Groups for March. Pelham attended Downtown Business Association Meeting in January.

Solid Waste Ordinance

New trash carts delivery December 29-31 went smoothly. Casella pick-up of carts complete last Friday, working on locating and securing and remaining. Working on "paper alley" pick-ups.

Sewer Units/Trash/EDU Reassessment

Reassessment complete. Coordinating with County to update Assessment and 911 databases.

Commercial/Residential Recycling

Residential inspections complete. Sending out notices.

Residential Rental Property Inspections

2025-26 inspections underway.

Monthly E-Newsletters

Winter Newsletter in January.

Safety Committee

Safety Training and Safety Committee Meeting scheduled for January.

Borough Newsletter

Winter Newsletter in January.

Bicycle Racks

Three racks remain to be installed: 745 Main, 401 Main & 33 North 7th Streets. North 7th Street was approved with a slightly changed location. Installation in Spring 2026.

August Priorities

Main Street Manager Implementation
LSA/Main Street Project
Downtown Visioning/Strategic Plan
Summer Projects Planning

Engineer's Report

No report.

Zoning/Codes Officer Report

No report.

Street Superintendent's Report
No report.

Approval of Bills on Warrants 260120
A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe to approve the payment of bills on Warrants 260120. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Public Input for Non-Agenda Items
Cindy Blake recommended Council Members utilize microphones. Jessica Delfino reminded everyone of a free open mic night on Wednesdays at Signature Saloon. NEPA Comedy Festival is seeking volunteers. Michael Blake said the employees did a great job plowing! Mr. Blake asked the process for applying for and receiving grants. Ms. McCabe advised the Borough applies and need advocacy and support from state representatives. Mr. Blake suggested ice rink rules and hours be posted to Facebook. Lastly, Mr. Blake reported graffiti around town, specifically on the Krawitz Law building. Michael Schroder added that graffiti in town is out of control, and the Borough has the ability to enforce it. There is graffiti on dumpsters and the trestle at the old coal yard. Jessica Delfino asked if there is a community/neighborhood watch, and if the cameras in town could have a live feed so people can report issues when they see any. Mr. Abell stated the town could benefit from more cameras, but would pose a security issue if camera locations were advertised. Dulce Ridder volunteered to receive emails from anyone who sees graffiti and shopping carts throughout town and she will forward the information to Borough Staff. Michelle Riegel suggested the ice rink be set up at Helen Amhurst Park again; Brian Ace advised it is too uneven there. Kerri Manning asked the status of 558 N. 5th Street; she advised there are squatters living there with the door ripped off and windows open, also a garbage can was delivered. Mr. Kopp will follow up. Robert Smith asked the status of trash collection in the alleyway behind his house. Kate from Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau requested the Pocono C3 program assist with litter in our area. Pete Begley asked why the Borough does not have to answer questions asked by the public during a meeting and asked how that does not violate the first amendment. Ms. Ridder asked if Solicitor Brown enabled hiring Michael Moreno for Downtown Manager. TJ Lopez asked the status of parking safety sticks; Ms. McCabe advised the Parking Committee has not heard back and she will bring it up at the next committee meeting.

Executive Session
None.

Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m., on a motion made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. DeVries. The motion was carried. (7-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)