

**BOROUGH OF JENKINTOWN
700 SUMMIT AVENUE
JENKINTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

**MINUTES OF THE BOROUGH OF JENKINTOWN COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 24, 2025, 7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS:

Jay Conners	Council President
Christian Soltysiak	Council Vice President
Deborra Sines-Pancoe	Councilor
Steve Spindler	Councilor
Maxine Marlowe	Councilor
Joanne Bruno	Councilor
David Ballard	Councilor
Anne MacHaffie	Councilor
Alex Bartlett	Councilor
Aliza Narva	Councilor

GUESTS:

Gabriel Lerman	Mayor (from 7:35 p.m.)
George Locke	Borough Manager
Chief Thomas Scott	Chief of Police
Marcus Lambert	Borough Finance Manager
Mark Bickerton	Borough Traffic Engineer, Pennoni Associates
Patrick Hitchens	Borough Solicitor
Tiffany Fisher	Recording Secretary, Minutes Solutions Inc. (via teleconference)

REGRETS:

Gordon Lewis	Councilor
Alexandria Khalil	Councilor
Kenneth Riggins	Public Works Foreman

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Jay Conners, seconded by Christian Soltysiak, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2025, Borough of Jenkintown Council meeting as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

4. **APPROVAL OF PAYROLLS**

On a motion made by David Ballard, seconded by Joanne Bruno, it was resolved to approve payrolls in the amount of \$121,327.61 and invoices totaling \$316,535.40. Motion unanimously carried.

5. **MAYOR STATEMENT**

Council President read a statement provided by the Borough's mayor regarding Jenkintown Borough's position on immigration and stated that they welcome everyone who lives in, works in, or visits Jenkintown. He stated that immigrants are an essential part of the community. He clarified that the Jenkintown Borough Police Department has no authority to enforce federal immigration laws, and they do not assist ICE with any activity in the Borough. They will only be involved if a signed judicial court order is presented and will only share information as required by law. If anyone has questions about Jenkintown's position on immigration, they can contact Mayor Lerman or Chief Thomas Scott directly.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Julio Rodriguez stated that he works with the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition and noted the importance of ensuring that any immigration enforcement, communication, or cooperation is only accompanied by a judicial warrant. He highlighted the budget discussion during the November 24, 2025, budget meeting and stated the real implications of not ensuring the aforementioned. He noted that litigation due to wrongful detainment can be costly and complex.

Justin Mixon, who lives on Hillside and has an office on Johnson, urged the mayor and the police to not ask questions about immigration status or call ICE. He noted that Council voted on a policy during the September 29, 2025, meeting stating that the police shall notify ICE. He highlighted the policy released by Abington Township and suggested that Jenkintown Borough adopt the same policy.

Sue-Ann DeVito stated that she is present as an immigration advocate regarding Jenkintown Borough's police policy about immigration. She shared her objection to the assessment that was read about the policy and stated that it encourages racial profiling. She noted that she would not personally experience being questioned about her immigration status. She highlighted that the Borough could be sued for their actions within this policy. She encouraged clear language revisions to the policy. She shared that on November 24, 2025, someone was taken by ICE near the Giant. She stated that the timeline is urgent for immediate review.

Peter Wie stated that he has been living in the Borough for 22 years. He voiced his objection to the wording within the policy and his fear of being arrested. He shared that his trust with the Borough has dissipated, and he feels this policy is discriminating against all immigrants.

Mara Wei stated that she does not support the policy passed during the meeting held on September 29, 2025, that supports police cooperation with ICE. She noted her concerns with ICE reports in the media and urged the Borough to reconsider the language, as the policy does not exemplify core values that are the heart of Jenkintown. She asked Council to amend the policy and to refuse to enter into an agreement with ICE.

Whitney Schott, Mather Road, shared her opposition with the policy. She reviewed scenarios where ICE has taken people, including children, and the terror that is felt across America.

Josh Lewanowski from Wall Street and a teacher in Abington Township shared that he opposes the lack of transparency and the ambiguity of the policy. He stated that he stands in

solidarity with Jenkintown teachers and that his concern is the safety and well-being of students, not the institutions that house them or attempt to detain them. He urged clear directives, transparency, and opposition for communities who are being detained by ICE.

Alision Fraser, 416 Cedar Street, shared her opposition to the policy and that it should be the duty of non-immigrants to ensure everyone feels safe and welcome through their actions and not strictly statements. She noted that the policy as it is written allows for racial profiling. She urged a review to ensure the policy has clear language. She highlighted the undue trauma, the expenses to taxpayers, and the time-consuming nature of the policy.

Bill Fraser, 416 Cedar Street, noted his opposition to the policy regarding immigration issues. He noted appreciation for the past policy being deactivated but urged that this policy be rewritten. He added that police officers should not be calling ICE and questioned the writing of the policy that allows for this. He added that the visitor passes for caregivers seems to have been removed from the parking ordinance and he would like it to be returned.

Caitlin McMahon, 837 Greenwood Avenue, stated that the Jenkintown policy stood out as non-welcoming compared to the Abington and Cheltenham policies. She stated that she hopes to see Jenkintown review the policy to reflect a community focused on safety and kindness.

Eric Horowitz, 100 block of Cedar Street, urged the Borough to follow the example of Abington Township and Cheltenham as they do not enforce federal immigration laws nor do they ask about immigration status during traffic stops or routine police activities. The police should only act with a judicial warrant, not civil documents signed by ICE officials. He stated that local law enforcement is not legally required to honor civil ICE warrants, and there is no federal mandate.

Brian Guj, 400 block of Maple Street, is a global health worker and expressed concern about collaborating with federal institutions that can operate with total impunity.

Greg Lester, 300 block of Greenwood Avenue, stated that he does not agree with the Borough pursuing practices that are not necessary by law. He urged a revision and a public statement reflecting a policy like Abington Township.

Lila Alaman, 400 block of Maple Street, shared her disappointment with the mayor's statement. She stated that the policy currently in place was only obtained via a FOIA request and it was not publicly available. She noted that she holds confusion over what the policy is as it stands and would like to see it publicized so everyone has access to know the town policy as it is written. She read aloud the dissent statement made by the Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor and ended with an ask that the Borough review the policy and post it publicly.

Councilor Sines-Pancoe stated that she is pleased that the policy has been rescinded. She asked that a timeline be established to revise the policy and return it to Council to present it at a December, 2025, or January, 2026, meeting. She noted that a policy, unlike a proclamation or resolution, provides guidance for officers and that it is important for a statement to be made. She noted a prior concern that making a statement would lead to unwanted attention and she shared that she believed this has passed.

Councilor Narva shared her thanks for all public comments and noted that Council will address concerns.

7. PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Collection of Delinquent Municipal Claims – Portnoff Law Associates, Ltd.

Kevin Buraks of Portnoff Law Associates presented why Pennsylvania boroughs hired Portnoff Law Associates for collection of delinquent municipal claims. The written material was included in the meeting package, including client testimonials and notes of appreciation. He reviewed their eight-step process from validation notice and the related fees, up to exposing the property to sheriff's sale. He noted that they rarely make it to step eight, as the response typically comes in by step three. In 2024, only 24 properties resulted in sales, as their methods have been successful in collecting most of the delinquent claims. If the Borough hires Portnoff Law, they will meet with the Borough manager and collaborate to decide criteria in specific scenarios. He reviewed the hardship program and administration of payment plans.

Manager Locke clarified that if Council proceeds with Portnoff, the Borough will need to adopt an ordinance. He suggested preparing the ordinance for the December 10, 2025, meeting.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Engineer's Report

Mark Bickerton and Manager Locke collaborated to finalize and submit the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside grant application. Work has begun on the Green Light-Go grant application for Phase 2 improvements at Runnymede and Walnut.

8.2 Public Works Department

Public Works has completed 90% of the sign installations for the correct signage in coordination with the new parking ordinance. They assisted with the preparation of the chili cook-off and cleanup of the pumpkin drop. All PennDOT paving project field inspections were handled by Foreman Riggins, resulting in savings for the Borough.

Foreman Riggins and a Public Works driver attended training through the 2025 community forestry workshop put on by Bartlett Tree Experts and Montgomery Township surrounding native plants, insects, disease, drought management, tree planting locations, invasive plants, and tree limb rigging and pruning. They shared the knowledge with their crew to elevate Public Works services moving forward. They attended enhancing multi-generational communication, Public Works communication with residents, and municipal stormwater facilities training through LTAP, which was free training supported by PennDOT.

A sewer main blockage was identified on Mather Road after three emergency callouts. The line was fully jetted, grease and debris were removed, and a fallen access pan cover was located and subsequently removed, correcting the issue and avoiding a large expense for the Borough.

8.3 Solicitor's Report

The solicitor's office continues to provide services on an as-needed and as-requested basis.

Patrick Hitchens highlighted a portion of the Portnoff Law presentation and clarified that Borough legislation already exists regarding the ordinance. He noted that they would likely review and amend or revise what already exists, instead of creating something new.

He shared a fact regarding the immigration policy discussed during public comment, noting that the Borough code places authority for the mayor to make decisions regarding the police

department. He shared that the statement of the mayor would indicate specifics for the policy. He shared that Council would not need to collaborate to rewrite the policy, and that they do not need to vote for this policy, as per the Borough code. The mayor has responsibility over police policies. He stated that a township like Abington does not have a mayor. Section 1123.1 A and B specifically place the powers concerning the police with the mayor, whereas the Council's powers are limited regarding the police. He further clarified that nothing prevents Council from adopting or having the mayor adopt a policy and making a statement that may summarize or explain said policy in easier to digest terms.

8.4 Mayor's Report

Mayor Lerman highlighted that policies and policy statements are different. He noted that the public is likely to be hearing of resolutions and statements from municipal bodies but not their actual police policies. He highlighted that it is unlikely that any policies are being changed. He noted that all policies properly written will include the clause that they will adhere to the law. He stated that the policy is a work in progress as it was created in the last six months and it will take time to perfect.

Councilor Ballard noted that Abington Township lists their police policies online and that they do not have a section on immigration.

Marcus Lambert highlighted the need for transparency around police policies that directly impact residents, specifically people of color within the community and how safe the people of Jenkintown Borough feel. He urged the Borough to take a stance that clearly outlines protection for all people, centering around safety and protection of the community's children.

Councilor Sines-Pancoe requested a guarantee that the mayor will present an updated police policy by January, 2026.

Mayor Lerman stated that he is confident that they will have a policy in place before January, 2026, and will implement it and provide an update. He did not agree to provide a draft for Council approval but will provide an updated policy and share it with the community.

Mayor Lerman thanked all who contributed to the pumpkin drop and chili cook-off. He recognized all the Councilors, Manager Locke, and Chief Thomas Scott for attending the budget meetings for their diligent work. He highlighted the efforts of Councilor Ballard for chairing administration and finance.

8.5 Police Chief's Report

Chief Thomas Scott noted that Act 18 was enacted in 2024 by the General Assembly for Pennsylvania and it mandated that police departments across the commonwealth keep track of statistics involving car stops, pedestrian stops, and other interactions by the police departments. The act stipulated that it was based on population size and Jenkintown did not fall into these requirements and did not need to comply. Chief Thomas Scott shared that Jenkintown Borough is actively complying with this act. He noted that this is an act toward transparency, and their officers are entering the demographics of car stops, including the reason for the stop; the perceived race or ethnicity of the driver; the gender and age of the driver; whether a search was initiated, including a search of the vehicle or the vehicle operator or passengers; whether the search was conducted with the consent of the operator and the result of the search; and if the stop resulted in a warning, citation, arrest, or other response. He stated that he personally feels this information is important to track.

He noted that the police department is working diligently through training with all municipal police agencies to effect change regarding how they operate business and how officers are

trained and will be trained in the future. All officers conduct legal updates monthly through a contract with a well-known litigator who provides updated information on all cases that are approved through the Supreme Court, through all district-level courts, and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Officers will be undergoing trauma-informed training to respond to children exposed to violence as well as training related to Act 59 and mental health evaluations when exposed to a critical incident or upon request.

8.6 Manager's Report

The Light up the Square event will be held the week of December 1, 2025, and the Borough applied for a grant through PECO, of which \$900 was awarded to cover the event. The funds will pay for a special guest visit at the event, hot chocolate, and candies.

Manager Locke shared a review of the outcome of the budget meeting held on November 24, 2025, prior to the Council meeting.

Councilor Ballard thanked Manager Locke on behalf of the library for collaborating with Nina Meister and himself about the passport application acceptance program and the goal to arrange the Department of State to take over.

9. ORDER OF BUSINESS

9.1 2026 Borough Budget – Permission to Advertise

On a motion made by Jay Conners, seconded by Alex Bartlett it was resolved to publicly advertise the 2026 Borough budget as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

9.2 Ordinance 2025-4, Ch. 172 Vehicles and Traffic

On a motion made by Christian Soltysiak, seconded by Joanne Bruno, it was resolved to publicly advertise Ordinance 2025-4, making minor language revisions and adding guest passes in permit parking areas to Chapter 172 Vehicles and Traffic as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

9.3 2026 Parking Enforcement Vehicle

On a motion made by Christian Soltysiak, seconded by Steve Spindler t was resolved to authorize the Borough Manager to enter into the purchase agreement for the parking enforcement vehicle to be delivered in 2026. Motion unanimously carried.

9.4 2026 Sanitary Sewer Fees – Resolution 2025-23

On a motion made by David Ballard, seconded by Maxine Marlowe it was resolved to approve Resolution 2025-23, setting the sanitary sewer fee rates for the 2026 year as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

9.5 Borough Non-Uniform Pension Committee

On a motion made by David Ballard, seconded by Christian Soltysiak it was resolved to appoint Anthony McAlister to the Borough non-uniform pension committee for a term of two years. Motion unanimously carried.

9.6 Borough Banking – Firsttrust Bank

On a motion made by David Ballard, seconded by Deborra Sines Pancoe it was resolved to move to authorize transferring the Borough banking from Fulton Bank to Firsttrust Bank in 2026 and to begin migration of information in 2025. Motion unanimously carried.

9.7 Edmunds GovTech Code and Financial Software

On a motion made by David Ballard, seconded by Alex Bartlett, it was resolved to authorize the Borough Manager to sign the contract agreement and begin migration of information to implement Edmunds GovTech software in 2026. Motion unanimously carried.

9.8 Paragon Consulting Group – Human Resource of Professionals

On a motion made by David Ballard, seconded by Joanne Bruno it was resolved to authorize the Borough Manager to enter into an agreement with Paragon HR to provide comprehensive ongoing HR support for Jenkintown Borough (32 employees) at a cost of \$2,500 a month to begin January, 2026. Motion unanimously carried.

9.9 2025 PECO Grant – Resolution 2025-22

On a motion made by Deborra Sines Pancoe, seconded by Alex Bartlett it was resolved to approve Resolution 2025-22 approving the submittal of the 2025 PECO Green Region grant application requesting funding in the amount of \$10,000 requested for Cedar Street Moretti Park improvements. Motion unanimously carried.

9.10 2026 Borough Road Paving Project

On a motion made by Deborra Sines-Pancoe, seconded by Maxine Marlowe it was resolved to approve the 2026 Borough Road paving project to include the roads Cedar Street (Washington Lane to Summit Avenue) and the full length of Harper Avenue as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Spindler shared that someone who formerly lived on Leedom Street commented that the parking is now more available and problem vehicles have moved. He shared that another person voiced satisfaction with the parking availability on Leedom Steet post changes.

President Connors shared that the school district recently completed their final performance of Mean Girls and that it was a spectacular show in the Borough. He shared that they put on a spring and fall show that residents are encouraged to attend.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was closed at 9:13 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Director

Director

Date

Date