MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026

Call to Order: Council met at a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Silent Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance: A silent moment was taken followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Bruno-present; Colombo-present; Nilles-present; Ondishin-present; Perry-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of September 22, 2026, Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: Justin Emershaw of Atlantic Carbon conducted a presentation on proposed building of a coal breaker and mine tour at 702 West Broad Street, Hazleton.

Justin Emershaw presented his You Tube video and a Power Point Presentation. There were several audience members who spoke and who had questions.

Perry read a support letter from Robert Hacker, Director of Eastern Mining Collectors Association, in favor of the proposed development of a Hazleton area mine and heritage complex.

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): *Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, spoke of the proposed mine tour, building a coal breaker facsimile, and funding the project. She said a lot of the City economic developments will benefit the Greater Hazleton area and not the City. The City does not need to take the "burden" for this project. Deakos suggested City Council table this resolution again. She said the taxpayers will be paying for this venture.*

Shawn McArdle, President of Local 507, said he wishes City Council would be more enthusiastic for the City Fire Department to get more firefighters than trying to build a mine tour. He said the department asked for four more firefighters but were told to obtain grants for this. McArdle stated he is "dumfounded" over this issue. He mentioned Molly McGuire's, also, fought for better working conditions. He said the Hazleton Fire Department has a shortage on firefighters, and it is not safe.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(2ND READINGS)

Ordinance 2026-17 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 525, Vehicles and Traffic, and Chapter 325, Parking, of the Code of the City of Hazleton to Establish Westbound One-Way Traffic on Juniper Street Between Laurel Street and South Church Street; Provide for a Proposed Fifteen Mile Per-Hour General Speed Limit Subject to an Engineering and Traffic Investigation; Authorize Angled Parking and Designated School-Bus Loading and Short-Term Daycare Parking Along Juniper Street; Provide for Additional Parking on the West Side of Laurel Street; and Provide for Implementation, Enforcement, Severability, and an Effective Date **(2nd READING)**

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Ordinance 2026-18 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 138, ARTICLE IV, of the Code of the City of Hazleton, Relating to Limitations on the Number of Animals, Transitional Permits, and Enforcement **(2nd READING)**

Presented by Ondishin. Seconded by Colombo.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2026-51 A Resolution of the City of Hazleton, County of Luzerne, Authorizing the Purchase of Real Property Located at 702 W. Broad Street, Hazleton, Pennsylvania, for Purposes of Redevelopment

MOTION TO REMOVE FROM TABLE:

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Bruno.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-no; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-no; Perry-yes

MOTION TO REMOVE FROM TABLE PASSES 3-2

On the Question:

Dan Lynch said this is for the City to take stewardship of this property for redevelopment purposes. He said the only risk would be if the property fails to appreciate overtime. He feels the exposure is low.

Ondishin stated that this idea is fantastic. He mentioned he wanted to wait one more week for the people to give their opinions. He understands Mr. McArdle's complaint.

Perry asked if this is in the City budget. Mayor Cusat stated the 2027 budget is not together yet.

Atty. Donald Karpowich stated the City hired a commercial appraiser, Allan Rosen, also an attorney, to appraise the property. Mr. Rosen appraised the property at $1,300.000.

Ondishin stated there is more revenue coming into the City with new warehouses.

Mayor Cusat said the City is good with the new paving project, with Phase III starting this year. The

City will be doing another project, with the City borrowing for themselves. He said there is a deadline of December 31, 2026, for the City to get funding for this property.

Perry stated they want to know this project could succeed.

Bruno said people have been leaving Hazleton for a while. He said people have no attractions to come back to. He said the new influx, of people in the City, want to see the good for the City. Bruno stated everyone is behind this project. He suggested that the City make Hazleton a tourist attraction like Jim Thorpe is. He suggested a train system in town. Also, Hazleton Cemetery could be incorporated into this. Bruno wants to be part of this project.

Nilles mentioned Hazleton had two major breweries and a silk mill. Ariel Pardee owned a city block of Broad Street.

Perry said if the City does nothing, history will stay underground. He said this project excites everyone.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-no; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-1

Resolution 2026-62 — A Resolution of the Council of the City of Hazleton Adopting and Submitting for Approval a Revision to the City's Official Sewage Facilities Plan for the UGI Hazleton OPS Center Project, North Conahan Drive, Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (ACT 537)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2026-63 Appointments to Junior Council

MOTION TO TABLE:

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Perry.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION TABLED UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2026-64 A Resolution of the Council of the City of Hazleton Approving Continuation of the Trap-Neuter-Return Program and Authorizing an Agreement with No Nonsense Neutering

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Nilles.

On the Question:

Bruno asked what the expense is for the City. Perry stated either $40 per cat or $25 per cat with City resident paying a co-pay of $15 at check-in.

Barbara Conway said this is a great deal. She said the contract states no more than $800.00

Mayor Cusat said he is not paying for this program. He said no one from this organization has

come to talk to City Council. He mentioned no other organization gave a second proposal. Mayor Cusat said Conway is not an employee of the City. Conway said No Nonsense sent the renewal to Lynch. Nilles stated the City will choose Option #2.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2026-65 A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Statewide Funds on Behalf of Mayor Cusat City of Hazleton Revitalization Fund for the Purchase of Restaurant and Kitchen Equipment for City View Park

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Bruno.

MOTION TO AMEND:

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Ondishin.

TO ADD- NOT TO EXCEED $20,000

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

Resolution 2026-66 A Resolution of the Council of the City of Hazleton Approving a Proposed Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation of the Hazleton City Authority to Extend the Term of Existence of the Authority

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Perry.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Comments from the Audience: Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, asked if City Council gave a dollar amount for Resolution 2026-65. Nilles stated the amount should state, “not to exceed $20,000”. He mentioned the resolution needs to be amended.

Bill Hvizda, Hazleton, asked if anyone checked on his issue, from the last meeting, regarding a fine he received on a vehicle on his property. He mentioned this is a quality-of-life issue.

Atty. Karpowich said Hvizda needs to discuss this at the magistrate’s office. He said he needs to go through the process. Karpowich said he will talk with Atty. Logsdon about his issue and call Hvizda tomorrow.

Comments from Mayor: Mayor Cusat called the Hazleton Animal Shelter. The shelter suggested the City uses No Nonsense Neutering. He mentioned the organization needs to be at a City Council Meeting to discuss their programs. He said this is the right price, but the process needs to be done the right way. He stated he attended a recent seminar on this issue.

Atty. Karpowich said Mayor Cusat’s office could make the calls and get the estimates. He said there are rules and they need to be followed.

Nilles stated the City has been dealing with the cat issue since January.

Mayor Cusat said the numbered streets will be finished being milled this week and will start paving them next week. He said DPW was going to mill, themselves, but is the same cost as having the paving company do it.

Mayor Cusat said he spent about three hours in talks regarding staffing for the City Fire Department. They are looking to hire two more employees by the end of the year.

Mayor Cusat mentioned they are working on the 2027 budget. The Home Rule will be affecting the budget. Mayor Cusat said there are flyers for the Home Rule campaign. He said there will be two budgets created.

Perry asked who replaced Ralph Sharp, Director of Transit. Mayor Cusat said Mike Zullinger. His first day was today. He previously worked at Mohegan Sun for 25 years.

Colombo asked if Sharp is going to "stick around" to help Zullinger in his position. Atty. Donald Karpowich said this is a personnel matter, and they could discuss this after the meeting.

Comments from City Administrator: None

Comments from Council: Colombo stated on November 24th, there will be meals given out, to the needy, for Thanksgiving. This will be done through Catholic Social Services. He said the telephone # is (570) 455-1521.

Nilles stated the City Trail of Treats is on October 25th, 2026.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.