



Minutes
City of Coatesville
Regular Meeting – 1 City Hall Place, Coatesville, PA
Council Chambers
Monday August 11, 2025

Council Present: President Lavender-Norris; Councilwoman Charrisse Allen, Councilwoman Villa Hunt, Councilwoman Khadijah Al Amin, Councilwoman Tiniera Turner-Green and Councilwoman Fran Scamuffa
Council Absent: Vice President Carmen Green
Staff Present: James Logan, City Manager; Roberta Cosentino, Assistant City Manager; Chief Jack Laufer, Police Department; Chief Peter Huf, Fire Department; Jessica Arthur, Finance Department; Robert Jefferson, Solicitor; and Ruthann Mowday, Recording Secretary

President Lavender Norris announced an Executive Session was held earlier this evening to discuss personnel, real estate and legal matters. The meeting was called to order at 7:48 pm.

President Lavender Norris announced Vice President Green would not be in attendance.

Approved Minutes

Ms. Al Amin motioned to approve the July 14, 2025 meeting minutes; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. Ms. Turner-Green was not present for the vote.

Approval of Accounts Payables

Ms. Scamuffa motioned to approve the accounts payables; Ms. Al Amin seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. Ms. Turner-Green was not present for the vote.

Presentations

There were no presentations at this time.

Discussion Items

There were no discussion items at this time.

Citizens Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)

There were citizens hearings on regular action items at this time.

Ms. Al Amin motioned to close citizens hearings on regular action items; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Regular Action Items

1. Receive and consider a motion to appoint Charles Leather to the Board of Housing Appeals for the term 2025-2027

Ms. Scamuffa motioned to table the appointment of Charles Leather to the Board of Housing Appeals for the term 2025-2027; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Allen asked the housing appeals, what is that? Is that for landlord-tenant-code-type thing? People are coming with questions or concerns about their housing. I'm not aware of what this is. Who could define it? Mr. Jefferson explained the Board of Housing Appeals is contained in section 136-15. And it says, "The City Council shall appoint a Board of Housing Appeals consisting of three members who shall be residents of the city." The Board of Housing-- the primary function is to provide for the reasonable interpretation of the provisions of this particular code, which would be housing standards, chapter 136. If the city enforces the housing standards under chapter 136, the Board of Housing Appeals is the place where that interpretation would go. It's on e-code. Ms. Allen asked I just want to have-- I want to just have a conversation, but I'll ask for permission to email my questions to the solicitor. Is that okay, or should I ask James or Roberta first? Mr. Jefferson replied if you want to give it to them first, if then they can answer it, they can. If they have questions, they know where to get me.

Mrs. Hunt asked is he here? President Lavender Norris asked did we not establish presence? Mrs. Hunt replied we did. Yes, we did. Mr. Logan stated well, I think for the committees and commissions, I don't know if he was aware of them, meaning that we have been trying to find or appoint another member for this particular Board. So I don't know. President Lavender Norris said So we could either table or-- yeah, if we table, then we can revisit on our next meeting when he can be available. [crosstalk] President Lavender Norris asked staff just let Mr. Leather know that he'll need to be present for appointment.

2. Receive and consider a motion to approve the ADP Contract proposal for payroll and related services in the amount of \$12,934.00 annually

Ms. Al Amin motioned to approve the ADP Contract proposal for payroll and related services in the amount of \$12,934.00 annually; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

3. Receive and consider a motion to approve the request from the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County to permit the placement of purple ribbons in Downtown Coatesville in October 2025.

Ms. Allen motioned to approve the request from the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County to permit the placement of purple ribbons in Downtown Coatesville in October 2025; Ms. Al Amin seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Allen asked even though that Ms. Winky stepped down. She retired. Will she still be a part of this: do you know? Because I know before she was the one who-- Chief Laufer replied what she has communicated to us is that she's going to remain very active in the community, so I'm sure she will be present for that. But her replacement will coordinate it. Ms. Allen asked because wasn't it like a ceremony or something, like, we all met up and did something first and then went downtown to hang up the ribbons? Chief Laufer explained it's always been right after Coffee with the Chief in October that we then go out after Coffee with the Chief and place the ribbons. Yes.

4. Receive and consider a motion to approve the contract between the City of Coatesville and the Mula Group for compaction testing of soils, materials testing, and core sampling of concrete areas in the amount not to exceed \$10,000 for the Ash Park improvements.

Mrs. Hunt motioned to approve the contract between the City of Coatesville and the Mula Group for compaction testing of soils, materials testing, and core sampling of concrete areas in the amount not to exceed \$10,000 for the Ash Park improvements; Ms. Scamuffa seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Allen asked what are they going to be testing for? Like if the soil is contaminated, is it viable for grass to grow or plant? Ms. Cosentino replied sure. I can speak a little bit to this. So as you know, we currently have our design group, JMT, who's overseeing the entire project. And we have Cedarville who's kind of doing the day-to-day inspections over there. What this is, is another level of third-party inspection of the contractor's work to ensure that the soil they're putting down is compacted tight enough that the cement that they're going to be pouring is going to be at the right PSI level. So they're going to do testing of it. Make sure that the footings are strong enough for the pavilion building. This was an add-on to kind of the inspection work that Cedarville is not able to do. So we're looking at the new lay group to do. And it is a do not exceed. And they are looking to get started pretty soon. And this does not put the project over budget. This is within the budget for the project.

Ms. Al Amin motioned to close action items; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Reports

1. Solicitor

Mr. Jefferson thanked Madam President. I have provided a more detailed attorney-client privileged report to Council. Since Council's last meeting, I communicated and continued to communicate with outside Council regarding no litigation matters; provided an opinion about the Ash Park development; provided an opinion about a known pension matter; continued to communicate with third parties and applicants Council regarding land development matters; participated in a digital conference call regarding a known personnel matter. My office and I are working on two right-to-know matters. Finally, I communicated with the city's opioid Council regarding the national opioid settlement. That is my report unless there are any specific questions.

2. City Manager

Good evening Madam President, the Council, and our public. Just want to start with a few items. For an executive, I provided to Councilwoman an update on personnel matters and real estate matters. In regards to our public meeting, I just wanted to start here by saying, if you haven't been following the news lately, SEPTA signs are going up. State funding has not yet been approved in SEPTA mass budget or has not approved the SEPTA budget. And right now, you're going to start seeing, early this fall, schedules to reflect a 20% reduction in the service. A number of those service reductions will start on August 24th and 25th. Most cuts will occur in the Philly metro area, but some will impact our bus and mail services within the college communities. As you all know, this is going to be a devastating blow to how people get to and from work. A lot of college students are going to be impacted by this particular reduction in services. And we hope that our elected leaders in Harrisburg will come to an agreement that will fund something and restore these services that they're going to be cutting. So please, as I said before, write to your local representatives, state representatives, and let them hear you because this is really going to be devastating for our region.

A little bit later, Jessica is going to provide some comments on our financial stability. I just want to thank her publicly on the work that she's been doing. The city's financial stability continues to improve under her watch. And as I said, she's going to be commenting on the next four months. The city is exploring investing in future purchases for public works, the police department, and the fire department in addition to building repairs and software updates. These investments are necessary as the city continues to grow, exhaust, deplete, and outlive outdated equipment and devices. As usual, Council will be informed of any future investments and revise some future budget considerations.

The city continues to work with local investors and property owners to identify the best [inaudible] issues on a number of commercial properties in the United States. The County is engaged in a number of our conversations regarding supporting grants for demolition and new housing projects. We are very excited that the Brandywine view project will be getting underway in the next several months. And that, of course, will have a tremendous impact on the housing shortage that we have here in the City of Coatesville. You have seen a few emails announcing funding for Ash Park, multimodal projects and stormwater projects. I want to thank ECOM partners and other stakeholders that are assisting the city in maintaining a consistent level of concentration on our economic and development efforts. In addition to that, I would also like to add a comment about the city-wide efforts to balance our economic development. The city's focus for revitalization and development is just not for the downtown district. We are very interested in the east and western development environment because we have to have a balanced economy. The entire city benefits from all of these projects. So you will see more activity on the west end-- or in the west end, as well as activity on the east end moving forward.

And lastly, a few entertainment comments. Sounds of Summer, this Friday, August 15th from 6:30 to 9:30, the Gospel All-Stars for our City Council will be part of the committee. And special thanks to Councilwoman Hunt, Councilwoman Norris, for putting together this collective of local church choirs that we'll be entertaining folks this Friday evening. Plenty of food provided by Mr. Grubb, and we hope you all come out, bring in your lawn chairs, maybe even a blanket. I don't know, they said the weather might be-- actually, they said the weather is going to be 90, so leave the blanket. But please come out to support this wonderful event.

Gospel All-Stars is going to be one of our first introduction of a new kind of musical performance for ourselves. So come on out and enjoy it. We will end the season on Friday, September 19th, with the musical performance by Best Kept Soul. And the food that evening will be provided by the London Family Foundation. Last two bullets I have. This Coatesville Unity Day is this Saturday from 3:00 to 9:30 at Gateway Park, followed by fireworks. And that will feature games, flag football, moon toss, jump house music. We're going to have our first DJ Cipher. And again, this is all part of the City Council's leadership on Unity Day and Sounds of Summer.

And the last item I have is the-- I passed around the flyer the National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum. As you all know, the City of Coatesville participates on this monumental memorial event. This is for the 9/11 commemoration. The National Iron & Steel Museum will hold a

community service on Thursday, September 11th, 2025, from 8:30 to 10:30, honoring and remembering the events on September 11th, 2001. The service will take place at Steelworkers Memorial on the Museum Grounds, which is a 30-foot steel column from the World Trade Center. They are requesting members of Council to attend.

3. Assistant City Manager

Ms. Cosentino thanked Madam President. To start, I'd just like to give you a quick update on the Ash Park project. Thank you to everyone who attended the groundbreaking that the city hosted on July 28th. We had in attendance, US Representative Houlihan, State Senator Comitta, State Rep. Dan Williams, and County Commissioner Mary Moskowitz, as well as members of Council, of course. And many of our staff members were also able to attend in addition to many community partners, collaborators, and principal residents. We had nearly 100 people at the groundbreaking, and it was really incredible to see all of the support. So thank you to everyone who came. As you can see from Ash Park, construction is ongoing currently. The demolition work is complete, and the pavilion with the restrooms, which is the largest building that will be placed on Ash Park, has actually been delivered already. So we are well on the way to seeing vertical construction soon. And we're meeting regularly with the contractors. The entire Ash Park team meets regularly to ensure that the project is staying on track and everybody's communicating. So things are going well there. Also, I wanted to share that the city has also started discussions around the dedication of Cambria Terrace with Habitat for Humanity. We're still in early phases of those discussions, but that has begun, and Habitat has received a punch list from the city.

Also, I want to share some excellent news that I hope everybody will be really excited about, which is that it was announced either last week or the week-- I think it was last week. The city has received CRP funding from the County in the amount of \$460,000 to address our stormwater infrastructure. So what that means for us in plain language is that we now have the funding to replace, not 18 that we originally were planning for, but 25 old, outdated, non-functioning stormwater inlets throughout the city. So we're very excited. We're going to be working with Carroll Engineering Group to continue on the surveying of those inlets. And we actually had our pre-contract meeting today with the County. So we're hoping to move along very quickly with that project.

And also, a couple more things. In your packets, you have the code report for the month of July. As you'll see, we are continuing to have another strong month with completing rental inspections with code enforcement. Those cases went down a little bit, but you have to keep in mind it was August and we had some vacations and that kind of thing. So we are still continuing strong with all of those numbers. You'll see our permitting hit the highest we've had this year, which means that there's been more residential permitting in the month of July than any other month. So we're seeing a lot of work being done on homes. I will just add to this. What you're not seeing in this report quite yet, is the number of emergency calls and compliance inspections that our department receives. And those could come from our fire department or police department that might have eyes on something that we don't. It could come from somebody reporting sewage leak or somebody reporting an issue in their apartment that the code department needs to come out and look at.

And I just wanted to explain that because that is something that comes up quite a bit in our office, either via a complaint on our website or a phone call to our office or sometimes an email. So I just wanted everybody to be aware of that as well. And last but not least, earlier I handed out a flyer, but I also wanted to just share publicly that the Allies for Housing is hosting a housing summit at the Brandywine Center on Thursday, August 21st. And I believe it starts at 4 o'clock. And they're really looking to have a robust conversation around housing and maybe some innovative ideas around land use. So I hope everybody can join. And that's it. Thank you.

4. Finance Report

Mrs. Arthur wished everyone a good evening. In your packets tonight, you will find the Circle Square report for the first half of the year. As you can see in the general fund, it's right on target for where we should be compared to budget. I did look at the first six months in '25 versus '24, and found that the revenues in '25 were 2% higher over the same time period last year, while the expenses only increased very slightly at a tenth of a percent over last year. We will continue to work with departments to help manage any future costs. You may also notice that the expenses for the solid waste and capital reserve are trailing behind some. This is due to timing. As you can see in tonight's accounts payable packet, this will adjust as the invoices are received, especially for the work that is started in Ash Park.

I wanted to share some great news tonight that we received at our quarterly pension meeting last month. After the actuary's yearly calculations, we were informed that all of the pension funds are now 100% funded. This is due to the decisions made years ago to stop kicking the can down the road, as Rich would say, and add additional funding to the plans. Well, the efforts have paid off. With this news, we are very excited to let you know that due to this, we are able to drop our assumed interest rate from 7.5% to 7.25%. Doing this allows us to keep the plans 100% funded, still maximize our state aid while cutting our minimal municipal obligation by 33%. The city always has the option to add additional funding, but the minimum obligation will be lower for the 2026 budget.

Speaking of the budget, we have already started working on the 26th budget. We are in the very beginning stages with just recently completing the department budget meetings. I will be getting the budget meeting timeline to you very soon. That will conclude my report for tonight. Is there any questions?

5. Police Report

Chief Laufer thanked Madam President. You may have noticed that missing in your packet tonight is the statistical report provided by us through the County 911 center. They're having some technical problems on their end, and they assured us that we would have those numbers sometime this week, but unfortunately, not to be able to report to Council. But the statistics that we do have for the front desk here in the city was the total number of calls received by the front desk for the month of July, was 1,585. And that was down slightly from the month of June, where we saw 1,629. Happy to report that we had zero Narcan administration for the police department for the month of July. So that's a great stat that we would hopefully be able to continue with. We had two car seat checks, installations provided by our technicians, perhaps attributed to a lot of people who are busy in the summer months and away on vacation or whatever the case might be. Normally, we're a little higher on that. We do have a

Coffee with the Chief coming up in September, which will kick off our fall campaign for Coffee with the Chief. And that is on September the 3rd. And that is being hosted by the Brandywine Center at the Conference Room from 8:30 to 10:00

We have our annual report from Chester County Lethality Assessment Program from the Domestic and Violence Center of Chester County. And typically, I do like to highlight this report and just to kind of give you an idea of the really good hard work that our police officers do month in, month out every year. And it's unfortunate, but Coatesville leads the County every single year in number of total screams for domestic violence, which were 82 for the year. And then also, we lead with number of high danger screams at 61. So it's not a statistic we should be proud of, necessarily, other than to recognize that our officers are doing the best that they can and the hard work, making sure that we are completing all of our lethality assessment for domestic violence to try to ensure that the victims receive the services that they need and also the safety that they deserve. So that's a stat that, although we're not proud of, it recognizes the hard work that the officers do day in and day out.

Also, I'd just like to take a minute to recognize patrol officers from two weeks ago. Shift supervisor, Corporal Chris McCarthy, was the shift supervisor. And responding sergeants were Sergeant Boyle and Sergeant Harris, along with the patrol officers, that they responded to a threatened suicide. When they got there, they were confronted with a male subject with a rifle to his head. And Corporal McCarthy, who is on the Chester County Emergency Response Team, receives additional training over and above that which the normal officer receives. He's a longtime member of the response team. And we have five officers on the tactical team and one officer on the negotiations team for the County. And that's a big commitment for the department. But this is where that training pays off. Corporal McCarthy was face-to-face in the living room with this subject with a rifle. He negotiated with them for over 45 minutes while his other fellow officers provided cover, both lethal and non-lethal cover, which enabled him to concentrate and focus solely on negotiating with this subject with a rifle to his head. And after 45 minutes, he was successful in getting the man to put the rifle down without any shots being fired and potentially, obviously, save his life and potentially somebody else's life too. So although it happened this month, so it wouldn't be considered in our packet. I thought it was noteworthy that we recognized Corporal McCarthy's extraordinary service to the city and being able to negotiate face-to-face with an armed suicidal subject and get a successful resolution. So we're very proud of Corporal McCarthy, the other officers, and we're in the support role, and we recognize what they do every day. [crosstalk] We will put him in for recognition the next time we have an award ceremony, So yes, he and the other officers will be recognized.

This coming Wednesday-- we have a couple of events coming up this coming Wednesday. We have the kickoff for ShotSpotter, which is-- so they call it the kickoff campaign where we have to have all the stakeholders present that will be impacted in rolling out the infrastructure. We have the school district, the 911 center and the district attorney's office. I'll be present for a kickoff meeting to really review the technology and the infrastructure that needs to be put in place. So that's this Wednesday. At the same time, we have the Zachariah Walker dedication on Strode Avenue that is envisioned to be, I believe, a rolling parade from the city into Valley and then into East Southfield. So we will have a presence there to make sure that that gets through the city safely. MS. Allen asked a question about Zachariah

Walker? It's going to start in the City of Coatesville. And then which part is Valley? That's what I always get confused. Ms. Al Amin explained there's a short section of Valley Township. As you're leaving southbound on Strode, you go into Valley Township first, and then you go into East Southfield. Yeah, very short section is Valley Township.

Ms. Scamuffa asked about National Night out. Chief Laufer explained -- . I'm sorry, Madam President. Councilwoman Scamuffa, even though technically it's in next month's report, because it happens in August, because it was something that just happened, was National Night Out last Tuesday night. We had an officer with a table and a vehicle up at the Regency for the whole duration of their National Night Out celebration. And then we also had the water race track, the police department's water race truck out and about, hit all the parks within the city, ended up in Regency, and had quite a few kids you may have noticed on our Facebook page. And then we were fortunate enough to run into Councilwoman Scamuffa and her husband in the west end as we were wrapping up the night. So it was a fun night for all. We were thinking about next year's event for National Night Out. We would like to try to do something a little different. We're hopeful that our new Ash Park, at least phase one and two, will be completed by next August. And we'll have a brand new facility there that we might try to host us for our own National Night Out event in Ash Park. So it's something we'll be looking forward to and planning for next year.

Citizens Hearings Non-Agenda Items Only (3 Minutes) – Residents/Tax Payer/Property Owner
Shadell Quinones

Ms. Quinones thanked Madam President, Lavender Norris, Councilwomen, city staff, good evening to you all. I'm here this evening because I wanted to make a formal invitation to City Council for the attendance of the Zachariah Walker Remembrance that will take place, as Chief said, on Wednesday, August 13th. I intended to, if you have not received yet, send at least to Madam President, the full schedule to be able to get out to everyone that is outlining the day. I know that Councilwoman Al Amin, as well as Councilwoman Hunt, has had contact. You certainly have been a part of the planning. But again, I greet you on behalf of the Coatesville branch of the NAACP and wanted to make this formal invitation for you to attend the day with us on Wednesday.

Buthaindri Mudanat

Good evening. My name is Buthaindri Mudanat. I live in Lincoln Highway, crossed from 13th Avenue. The alley behind, I lived there for a long time, almost 47 years, and I never complained. The alley behind Diamond Street from the beginning, from 1315 till the other exit, you can't walk. You can't drive your car. It's holes, and it's getting worse. I never complain except this year because it's getting worse. And I did call one time, and they said they don't have money. Now I heard the budget is getting good. At least, you can't tell me you don't have money. And I pay my taxes. And I'm a good customer. I never had a problem. Not me, but my neighbor used to have problems, but now me. And she knows Madam President. Good. And I don't know what you're going to do to me. Don't tell me you don't have the money, please, because you're going to see me every time here. Ms. Cosentino stated I'll just make a quick comment about the potholes in the roadwork. We have gotten several complaints about Diamond in that area and a few other areas as well. And we're collecting quotes for some roadwork. We can't do a huge project this year, but we are looking to address some very critical areas.

Ms. Al Amin motioned to close citizens hearings on regular action items; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Special Events

There were no special events at this time.

Council Comments

Ms. Scamuffa thanked everyone for coming out tonight. Chief, I'm sorry for stealing next month's thunder for National Night Out. But I had to get it out there. It was just so nice to see you guys out in the west end too. And I saw you travel through the city. I got to give a shout out to Richie's Water Ice. That's where you got the water ice from, where the water ice comes from. Probably the best cherry water ice that I've had. So great job, Richie's. So thank you, everybody. Appreciate you. And have a safe night home.

Ms. Al Amin thanked everybody for coming out. Chief, if you could give Corporal McCarthy and the other officers a personal thank you from me-- I think that is phenomenal that they were actually able to save the gentleman. Mental health issues are real. And unless you've experienced or you have a family member or a loved one or-- nobody knows what they really go through. So tell them, from me, I say, "Great job." I hope everybody can come out to Unity Day Fireworks. And it should be a great day. And if all of those that believe in prayer, if they could please keep the Turner family in their prayer, the director of 2nd Century Alliance lost her son, which is unimaginable to me as a mother. And so for those that believe in prayer, if you could keep that family, including our Councilwoman Turner-Green-- it is her nephew. And so please just keep that family in prayer. And everybody have a great night and safe travels home.

Ms. Allen thanked everyone for coming out. And I wanted to give a shout-out to the police department because I took my eight-year-old nephew there to get a bike from them and a helmet, and it was like one of the best days of his life. The enjoyment and the smile. I video'd it. I just keep looking at it because it really made his day. He was really, really excited. So I wanted Council and people here to know that our police do good work for our kids. And they're doing their best to provide and protect our youth when they're out there and to show that the police officer is not your enemy. So thank you. Have a good night.

Mrs. Hunt wished everyone a good evening. I do want to thank all of you for coming. Looking forward to the festivities of this week. It's a busy week in the city, and I'm looking forward to it all. And Chief, as well, you could extend to the officers how grateful we are for what they did in putting their lives in danger, in jeopardy. But because of their commitment, they did what they did, and so we really appreciate that. And to all the staff, as always, thank you for everything that you do to make our city run. Have a good night. See you this weekend.

Ms. Turner-Green stated I don't really have much to say. Just thank you to everyone. Thank you to Council and staff. And thank you to everyone in the chairs. And also thank you to everyone for our condolences and prayers for my family right now. Very difficult time. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend Zachariah Walker event.

President Lavender Norris shared a piece of mail that she received. "Dear Linda and Coatesville City Council, please forgive me for the oversight in not getting this note of thanks to you soon. I was

horrified when I realized that I missed sending it out. Please accept my sincere apology. I needed to express my gratitude to the entire Coatesville City Council for your support and approval of the NAACP-- I'm sorry, Juneteenth celebration. Thank you for your generosity, kindness, and patience as I fumbled my way through leading my post. Juneteenth celebration was our amazing day. And I felt like God kissed our little community. Thank you for allowing such a great day to happen. I appreciate you all, and thank you for your support. Sincerely, Shadell Quinones from Coatesville NAACP.” Thank you. That was awesome. Thank you so much. I just want to say thank you to you all for coming out, for hanging out, and just know that our future is so much brighter than our past has been. And it's because of you. Because of those of you that sit on that side and this side of the table, I appreciate all you do, all the time you invest in our community. We are one, we'll grow as one, and we'll get the work done as one. So to you, Tiniera and your family, God bless you, he keep you, and give you an extra [inaudible] to hold you up. I knew your nephew because he used to hang out with my grandson at one point. And I can't imagine where your heart is. I could say I have an idea, but I can't imagine the truth of it, the real-- so just know that I'll be in prayer for you and your family. And just trust that God knows that he knows what you need, and he'll be there and supply that need right when you need it. Trust him with it. To you all, love you all. God bless you all. Thank you all. Please have a blessed night.

Adjournment

Ms. Al Amin motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.