Highspire Borough Council Regular Minutes
October 20, 2026

Council President A. Kay Sutch called the Highspire Borough Council meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

The prayer was offered by Member R. Sutch then followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Council Members Present:	A. Kay Sutch	Robert Sutch
	Dorothy Matesevac	Michelle Phillips
	Tyler Thatcher	

Borough Manager:	Mark Stonbraker
Mayor:	Von Hess
Assistant Borough Manager:	Deanna Proctor
Public Works Director:	Randy Kreider
Solicitor:	Rachel James
Engineer:	Frank Chlebnikow

Mark Accorsi, Vice President, Member Carolee Roman and Codes & Zoning Officer, Rachel Vega were absent.

Citizens in attendance: Jenna Condran, Fire Department
Brianna Clark

Minutes:
President A. K. Sutch presented the meeting minutes for the September 8, 2026 Workshop Meeting and the September 15, 2026 Regular Meeting and asked for questions regarding them. Hearing none, a motion to accept the minutes was made by Member R. Sutch and Seconded by Member Matesevac. Motion approved unanimously.

Financial Reports:
President A. K. Sutch presented the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements from Hamilton & Musser, PC, CPAs for the month of September 2026 and asked if there were any questions regarding them. Hearing none, a motion to accept the reports was made by Member Matesevac and seconded by Member R. Sutch. Motion approved unanimously.

Mayor's Report:
Mayor Hess reported that he attended the following meetings and events:

- September 19, 2026 – Participated in the Car Show, stating that there were 155 cars. He thanked Mike Anderson, Tyler Thatcher, Mark Stonbraker, Mark Accorsi, Randy Kreider and the road crew and Jenna Condran with the Fire Department for their participation.
- September 22, 2026 - Attended the Environmental Advisory Board meeting to discuss plans for the 2027 Arbor Day celebration.
- October 15, 2026 – Attended the Highspire Borough Authority meeting.

Mayor Hess also reminded members that Trick-or-Treat will be held on Saturday, October 31, 2026 from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and that on December 5, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. there will be a Community Christmas Gathering.

Public Safety Directors' Report:
Public Safety Director Mark Stonbraker had nothing to add to his report.

President A. K. Sutch presented the Mayor's Report and Public Safety Director's Report for the month of September 2026 and asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, she noted that the reports could be filed.

Fire Department Reports:
Jenna Condran reported that the firehouse will be open for Trick-or-Treat, and residents are welcome to set up in the parking lot to distribute candy.

Mrs. Condran announced that the Department, in partnership with the Mountainview Road Food Pantry, plans to host its Community Thanksgiving Dinner again this year. She added that the local news media, which covered the event last year, will be notified and invited to cover this year's dinner as well.

Mrs. Condran also reported that the Department plans to hold a fundraiser selling poinsettias and wreaths and applications for Bucket Drives have been submitted for the remainder of the year. Once approval is received from the state, the dates for the Bucket Drives will be scheduled. Additionally, she reported that a supplier has been secured for Christmas trees this year, with sales expected to begin on Thanksgiving Day or the following Friday.

President A. K. Sutch asked if there were any further questions concerning the Fire Chief's Report and Fire Department Treasurer's Report for September 2026. Hearing none, a motion to accept the reports was made by Member R. Sutch and seconded by Member Thatcher. Motion approved unanimously.

South-Central Emergency Medical Services Report:

President A. K. Sutch presented the South-Central Emergency Medical Services Report for August 2026 and asked if there were any questions regarding the report. Hearing none, she noted that it could be filed.

Citizen's Comments:

Brianna Clark asked which department is responsible for enforcing animal control laws in Highspire, specifically those pertaining to dogs. Manager Stonbraker stated that the Police Department typically handles enforcement of the Borough's dog laws.

Ms. Clark then asked Solicitor James about the penalties for violations of Borough codes. She questioned why the Borough's ordinance allows for up to ninety (90) days of incarceration when state law reportedly establishes a maximum of thirty (30) days, and asked why the Borough's penalty exceeds the state limit.

Solicitor James stated that she would need additional information and an opportunity to review the specific ordinance provision Ms. Clark was referencing before providing an answer. She invited Ms. Clark to meet with her after the meeting and identify the relevant section of the ordinance so she could review it further.

Committee Reports (see below):

Public Facilities:

Member Matesevac reported that no-parking cones had been placed on Market Street, Paxton Street, and Chestnut Street, indicating that parking was prohibited Monday through Friday. However, work had not yet begun.

Public Works Director Kreider Stated that he had received an email from the general contractor responsible for the paving project. The contractor had subcontracted the curbing, handicapped-accessible corners, and ramps, but had encountered issues with the subcontractor. According to the email, the subcontractor was expected to begin work on the curbing and ramps the following day, Wednesday.

Member Matesevac inquired about the status of the Lumber Street project concerning eminent domain proceedings. Solicitor James reported that two properties within the Borough were delaying the project because the owners had not signed the temporary easement agreements. The Borough adopted the necessary resolutions and ordinances authorizing declarations of taking for both properties, and the declarations were subsequently filed.

Solicitor James stated that since then, one property owner has contacted the Borough and signed an easement agreement, resolving the matter. She reported that she has been working to determine the appropriate just compensation for that property and will provide further details later in the Solicitor's Report.

Regarding the second property, Solicitor James reported that the Borough had not received a response from the property owner, either in support of or in opposition to the taking. The period for filing preliminary objections to the eminent domain taking has expired. Solicitor James advised that the Borough must now offer just compensation for the taking itself and recommended an amount ranging from $600 to $1,000.

Sanitation Committee:

Member Phillips had nothing to report.

Finance Administration:

Member Thatcher reported that a budget meeting was held at 6:00 p.m. prior to the Borough Council meeting to continue discussions regarding the 2027 budget. An additional budget meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., prior to the Workshop meeting.

Member Thatcher noted that an increase in real estate taxes may not be necessary; however, the cost of trash services has increased, and Dauphin County is likely to raise its taxes. He also commended Manager Stonbraker for his work in preparing the budget, noting that his efforts have made the process easier for the Finance Department.

Personnel:
Member Roman was absent.

Community Development:
Vice President Accorsi was absent.

Public Safety:
Member R. Sutch discussed the possibility of installing a sprinkler system in the file room. Council members discussed the proposal and its potential implementation.

Staff Activity Reports (see below):
Borough Manager:
Manager Stonbraker had nothing to add to his report.

Code Enforcement:
Code Officer, Rachel Vega, was absent.

Public Works:
Director Kreider reported that leaf collection has begun throughout the Borough. He noted that staff will need to remain diligent in coordinating leaf collection with ongoing roadwork and the continued falling of leaves.

Highspire Authority:
Deanna Proctor reported that the Authority meeting was held on Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. The Authority continues to work toward resolving outstanding temporary easement agreements for the Iron Avenue Swale project. She added that the Biosolids Project is complete; however, RETTEW will continue working with Director Kreider to address the remaining items on the project punch list.

Member Thatcher inquired whether the Wastewater Treatment Plant was still using the spray system for odor control. Director Kreider Explained that the spray system is being maintained as a backup and that the odor issue, which was caused by a biological issue within the plant's operations, has been resolved. He further explained that delays between filling the digester and beginning the dewatering process, attributable to the contractor, contributed to the odor. Director Kreider confirmed that the issue has been resolved and conditions at the plant are currently satisfactory.

Grant Administrative Report & Fire Dept. Financial Report:
Assistant Manager Proctor had nothing further to add to the report.

Sewer Billing, Adjustments & Reconciliations:
Assistant Manager Proctor reported that Solicitor Rachel James is working with Debbie Ebersole to address delinquent sewer accounts and associated liens. She noted that some liens exceed $15,000 and continue to increase with each billing cycle. As the Borough has exhausted its available legal remedies to collect the outstanding balances, Solicitor James will explore the legal process for pursuing acquisition of the affected property.

Safety Committee:
Member R. Sutch had nothing to report.

President A. K Sutch presented the Staff Activity Reports for the month of September 2026 and asked for a motion to accept them. Motion to accept moved by Member R. Sutch and seconded by Member Matesevac. Motion approved unanimously.

Solicitor's Report:
Lumber Street Project:
Rachel James, Solicitor, advised the Board that two properties had previously delayed progress on the Lumber Street project. For one property, the condemnation process was completed, and the period for filing preliminary objections has expired. The remaining step is to issue a just compensation offer, subject to authorization from Council. She recommended that an offer of $600 was presented for consideration.

She continued that for the second property; an easement agreement has been executed and is scheduled to be recorded this week. Authorization from Borough Council is also required for the easement compensation amount, which has been established at $350.

It was noted that both amounts are less than $2,000. Upon receipt of Council's authorization, the necessary compensation offers and payments may proceed. The Board was further advised that title to both properties has been acquired and that the engineering work is otherwise ready to proceed.

Motion moved by Member Phillips, seconded by Member R. Sutch to amend the Agenda to add the authorization of payment for just compensation for the two Lumber Street properties. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Thatcher, seconded by Member Phillips to authorize Rachel James, Solicitor, to proceed with the just compensation package for the two Lumber Street properties, with expenditures not to exceed $1,000 for each property, for a total of $2,000. The first amount will cover the property owner's attorney's fees associated with the temporary easement, and the second amount will cover compensation for the permanent acquisition of the property on Lumber Street. Motion approved unanimously.

Cherry Street – Road Dedication, Municipal Services and Limited-Service Agreement:
Solicitor James reminded Council that, at the previous meeting, a citizen had raised questions regarding Cherry Street. She requested further research into the project's status, and the matter was introduced for further discussion.

Solicitor James advised Council that Cherry Street has never been formally dedicated or accepted by the Borough. A review of the records did not identify any deeds of dedication or recorded acceptance; therefore, Cherry Street remains a private road.

A memorandum outlining the Borough's available options was provided. The options discussed were:

1. Limited Services Agreement: Enter into an agreement with the property owners to provide limited services, such as snowplowing.
2. No Municipal Services: Continue the current arrangement, under which the Borough provides no services to the private road and has no obligation to do so.
3. Formal Dedication and Acceptance: Pursue the process of obtaining the subdivision plans, contacting the developer, verifying compliance with applicable requirements, and completing the necessary dedication and acceptance procedures.

It was noted that the formal dedication and acceptance process would likely be difficult, time-consuming, and the costliest option. Discussion followed regarding the location of the private roadway and the tax status of the adjoining properties. It was noted that the properties along the private portion of Cherry Street are generally located within Highspire Borough, although certain nearby properties are located within Lower Swatara Township.

Council discussed the possibility of renewing or updating a previously used limited services agreement as a potential alternative to pursuing formal dedication and acceptance. The agreement would include liability protections for the Borough and clearly define the limited scope of services provided. It was proposed that all affected property owners be required to agree to the terms, with the agreement potentially remaining in effect when ownership changes. Solicitor James stated that she will prepare an updated draft agreement for review at a future Council meeting.

No final decision was made. The matter remained under consideration, with a recommendation that the Borough consider authorizing an update to the previous limited services agreement for further review.

Collection of Outstanding Liens and Unpaid Bills:

- Solicitor James advised that the Borough intends to pursue collection of outstanding liens and unpaid bills more aggressively.
- She stated that she will prepare a draft ordinance establishing attorney's fees associated with collection proceedings under the applicable municipal lien laws.
- The proposed ordinance will be presented to Council for review, advertisement, and consideration for adoption at the next meeting.

418 and 420 Market Street Properties – Tax Sales and Potential Acquisition:

- Solicitor James provided an update on the scheduled tax sales for the properties at 418 and 420 Market Street.
- The repository sale for one property has a minimum bid of $2,000 and will be conducted through a sealed-bid process. The other property is scheduled for an upset sale with a minimum bid of $1.
- Both sales are scheduled for November.
- Solicitor James recommended that the Borough consider purchasing both properties for potential redevelopment or resale to a developer.
- Solicitor James discussed the Borough's previous redevelopment efforts and examples of properties that have subsequently been developed.

Motion moved by Member Phillips, seconded by Member R. Sutch to amend the agenda to add authorization for the acquisition of 418 and 420 Market Street properties through the upset and repository sale. Motion approved unanimously.

No motion was made regarding the proposed acquisition of 418 and 420 Market Street. Borough Council requested that Solicitor James conduct a title search to identify any outstanding liens or unpaid taxes associated with the properties before proceeding with a decision. Solicitor James stated that she would gather the necessary information and present her findings at the November 2026 Borough Council meeting.

Engineer's Report:

Frank Chlebnikow, Borough Engineer, noted that he included a project status report in Council's meeting packets for informational purposes. The report is used internally to track ongoing projects and provide updates on their status. He added that Council members may direct questions regarding specific projects to the appropriate staff members.

Mr. Chlebnikow advised Council that the contract deadline for the New Enterprise project is October 31, 2026. If the work is not completed by that date, the contractor will need to request an extension. Weather permitting, paving may continue into November.

Council discussed concerns regarding the placement and duration of no-parking signs on Lumber Street and the impact on residents' parking. Mr. Chlebnikow stated that he will contact the contractor to clarify the schedule and determine whether signage can be adjusted to correspond with the work being performed on individual streets.

Mr. Chlebnikow advised Council that the Borough was not awarded funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for the Park Phase II project. However, a grant application submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) through the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program remains pending.

Mr. Chlebnikow also discussed the possibility of additional funding through the Statewide Local Share Account (LSA) grant program. Further information is pending.

Member Phillips discussed whether the Public Works Department could assist with removing existing playground equipment and completing portions of the planned park improvements to reduce project costs.

Mr. Chlebnikow indicated that Public Works may be able to assist with certain tasks, including playground equipment installation or removal, depending on staffing and seasonal workloads. He noted that specialized work, such as tennis or pickleball court surfacing, may require outside contractors.

It was noted that the project scope and potential Public Works contributions could be evaluated once funding is secured and the project is prepared for bidding.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Motion moved by Member Matesevac, seconded by Member Phillips to direct staff to release the October 2026 contribution to the Citizens Fire Company #1 of Highspire as indicated in the 2026 General Fund Budget (Fire Protection – Contributions – Fire Company 411.500). Amount to be paid to the Company $3,500.00. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Thatcher seconded by Member R. Sutch to approve the Dauphin County Local Share Municipal Grant (LSMG) Agreement between the County of Dauphin and the Borough of Highspire requesting debt relief in the amount of One-hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars ($150,000.00) for the Lumber Street Repair Project. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Matesevac, seconded by Member Phillips to approve to approve the Dauphin County Local Share Municipal Grant (LSMG) Agreement between the County of Dauphin and Citizens Fire Company #1 requesting funding in the amount of Eight-five Thousand Dollars ($85,000.00) to purchase and install a 48kW natural gas-powered generator at the fire station. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member R. Sutch, seconded by Member Matesevac to approve publication of Highspire Borough Ordinance #665 of 2026 amending Chapter 24 of the Codified Ordinances of the Borough of Highspire, establishing fees which may be charged by the Borough Tax Collector for any requests for certificates of payment status, or duplicate bills, as well as, fees regarding returned checks. Member Phillips abstained from voting, stating that she had not had sufficient time to review the ordinance and was unsure of its contents. The motion carried.

Motion moved by Member Phillips, seconded by Member R. Sutch to approve Highspire Borough Council Resolution #23 of 2026 authorizing the purchase of electricity supply services through EMEX, LLC for public use on an online auction website. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Thatcher, seconded by Member R. Sutch to cancel the bid received for the 2025 Market Street Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Repaving Project (Lumber Street to Chestnut Street) and keeping it sealed due to the lack of receiving two responsible bidders. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Matesevac, seconded by Member R. Sutch to authorize RETTEW to prepare and submit an amended Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application to Dauphin County Economic Development (DCED) for the 2027 funding year. The grant application would be for roadway improvements to Lumber Street from Second Street to Industrial Avenue / Aviation Way. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Matesevac, seconded by Member Phillips to deny the Quality-of-Life violation appeal by Mr. Timothy Hughes re: 612 Second Street, Highspire for property maintenance. The motion to deny the appeal was approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Thatcher, seconded by Member R. Sutch to deny the Quality-of-Life violation appeal by Mr. Kenneth Heisey re: 175 Second Street, Highspire for tall grass, weeds, vegetation in the right-of-way and clear-sight triangle. The motion to deny the appeal was approved unanimously.

Motion moved by Member Matesevac, seconded by Member R. Sutch to deny the Quality-of-Life violation appeal by Ms. Milra Shancie Hill re: 34 Wetzel Street, Highspire for weeds. The motion to deny the appeal was approved unanimously.

Approval of Payroll and Bills:

President A. K. Sutch asked for a motion for approval of the payroll and bills. Motion moved by Member Matesevac and seconded by Member R. Sutch. Motion approved unanimously.

President A. K. Sutch asked if there was any other business to be discussed.

With no other action to be taken, President A. K. Sutch asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion moved to adjourn the meeting by Member Matesevac, seconded by Phillips. Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna J. Proctor

Deanna J. Proctor
Assistant Borough Secretary