

# Council of the City of York, Pennsylvania

Edquina Washington, President of Council  
Betsy Buckingham, Vice President of Council  
Dr. Felicia O. A. Dennis, Member of Council  
Elizabeth Bupp, Member of Council  
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## MINUTES September 2, 2025 6:00 p.m.

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**CALL TO ORDER:** President Washington called the September 2, 2025, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 101 S. George St., York, PA, with the following members present: Elizabeth Bupp, Teresa Johnescu, Felicia Dennis, Betsy Buckingham, Vice President, and Edquina Washington, President with President Washington presiding.

**Members of the Administration included:** Michael Muldrow, Police Commissioner, Nancy Griffin, City Planner, Monica Kruger, Director of Health; and Gedd Attorney Gedd Schweikert sitting in for Assistant Solicitor Brett Flower who could not attend.

**Council Staff in attendance included:** Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk.

### I. Public Comment

Lester Abbott, York, PA, reported attending YorkFest downtown over the weekend, thanking vendors and spectators for their participation. He expressed that it is an event the city needs to continue building up.

Marie Rohleder, York, PA, also spoke about YorkFest, questioning why it was held on that particular weekend as it competed with Harrisburg and Lancaster events. She noted that most of her friends went to Harrisburg, suggesting a different date would have resulted in more participation and spectators. Despite the timing, she said she enjoyed what was there.

There being no further public comment, President Washington adjourned the public comment session and immediately called the legislative meeting to order.

### II. Called Legislative Meeting to Order at 6:02 p.m.

### III. Roll Call

### IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### V. Moment of Silence was observed.

VI. Action on previous meeting Minutes of [August 19, 2025](#). Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes and unanimously approved them as written.

VII. Presentations, Awards and Announcements

► LaAnna Walter, Outreach/Admissions Counselor, York/Adams Counties Job Corps – Brief presentation on the mission, goals and services of Job Corps.

Ms. Walter stated that Job Corps is nationwide, operating under the Department of Labor (federal government) with at least two centers in every state. She said a key requirement for participation is the ability and willingness to move to and reside on campus, with the closest campuses to York being in Hazelton and Wilkes Barre, located about two to two and a half hours north. She added that Job Corps provides food, clothing, housing, and other basic daily needs. Ms. Walter emphasized that Job Corps offers trade school education for those not suited for mainstream college education, and stated she is available to give professional presentations and answer questions. She also mentioned that she lives in the Central York School District and has been in the area for almost 20 years.

She provided her contact information: (570) 228-0267 / [Walter.Leanna@jobcorps.org](mailto:Walter.Leanna@jobcorps.org)

VIII. Meeting(s) Scheduled:

► **Legislative Meeting:** The next legislative meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on September 10th.

► **Council Committee Meeting:** Scheduled for Wednesday, September 24, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on September 17th.

IX. Status of Prior Committee Referrals: No reports.

X. Legislative Agenda: (Order of Business – Action on Subdivision/Land Development & HARB Resolutions; Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions; New Business)

### Subdivision/Land Development/HARB:

1. Resolution No. 57 - A Resolution  
Accepting the recommendations of HARB. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Elizabeth Bupp  
Originator: HARB

Resolution No. 57, Session 2025, A Resolution accepting the recommendations of HARB in issuing certificates of appropriateness for work to be coved in the following applications: **1)** Application filed for work to be done at 113 S. Pine St., **2)** Application filed for work to be done at 272 W. Market St., and **3)** Application filed for work to be done 38 N. Broad St., was introduced by Bupp, read at length, and on motion of Bupp, seconded by Johnescu, Resolution No. 57 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Dennis, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

### Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions

2. Final Passage of Bill No. 20, Ordinance No. 19 - A Bill  
Amending the FY2025 City Budget for the Bureau of Health. ([View](#)) (As follows: **(1)** By reallocating existing appropriations within the Healthy Moms Healthy Babies Home Visiting Program Grant (SAP# 4100095409) to align with current program priorities; **(2)** By reallocating existing appropriations within the HIV Prevention Program grant (SAP# 4100095584) to align with current program priorities; **(3)** Amending due to a reduction of anticipated funds within the Immunizations Program Grant (SAP# 4100089411) to align with adjusted program priorities; **(4)** by appropriating revenue and expenditures for the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) for Infectious Diseases

grant (SAP #4100087734); **(5)** By allocating revenue and expenditures for Family Health Council of Central PA (FHCCP) for the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP); and **(6)** By allocating revenue and expenditures for Family Health Council of Central PA (FHCCP) for Women's Health Services.)

Introduced by: Edquina Washington

Originator: Economic & Community Development (Health)

Final Passage of Bill No. 20, Ordinance No. 19, Session 2025, Amending the 2025 Budget for the Bureau of Health, which was introduced by Washington at the August 19, 2025 meeting of Council, and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Buckingham, Bill No. 20 came up for discussion.

Councilwoman Johnescu drew attention to section 3 of the bill, noting the CDC cut the immunization program grant by approximately 70% (from \$115,786 to \$36,281.60). She stated that federal cuts are impacting the community and asked about the impact on service delivery.

Monica Kruger, Bureau of Health Director, responded that services can continue for now, but the situation for the next year (after June) is unknown due to being in "uncharted territory" with many unknowns from the federal government. She affirmed they would continue to deliver services as long as they have supply, noting a recent record high of over 400 vaccines administered in city schools.

Councilwoman Bupp asked about the infectious disease grant and asked if more money was received there.

Director Kruger explained that many are multi-year grants, with initial funding known for 6 months and the latter 6 months anticipated. The infectious disease grant funding stayed flat. Part of this funding, related to COVID, allowed for technological upgrades to address future pandemics. She also credited the Governor for petitioning to keep this funding intact.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 20, Ordinance No. 19, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Dennis, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

3. Final Passage of Bill No. 21, Ordinance No. 20 - A Bill Amending the FY2025 Budget the Police Dept. ([View](#)) (By appropriating revenue and expenditures for the grant received for GVI outreach from the Arthur J. & Lee R. Glatfelter Foundation, in the amount of \$10,000.00.)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Police

Final Passage of Bill No. 21, Ordinance No. 20, Session 2025, A Bill amending the FY2025 budget for the Police Dept., which was introduced by Washington at the August 19, 2025 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Dennis, Bill No. 21, Ordinance No. 20, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Dennis, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

4. Final Passage of Bill No. 22, Ordinance No. 21 - A Bill Establishing Article 198 "Youth Council Committee" of the Codified Ordinances. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Council (Washington)

Final Passage of Bill No. 22, Ordinance No. 21, Session 2025, A Bill establishing Article 198 "Youth Council Committee" of the Codified Ordinances, which was introduced by Washington at the August 19, 2025 meeting of Council, and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Buckingham, Bill No. 22 came up for discussion.

President Washington read a statement emphasizing the importance of empowering York's youth to shape the city's future by creating space for their voices, ideas, and creativity. This fosters civic engagement, leadership development, and understanding of local government, while educating the Council on youth needs and perspectives.

She announced meetings with representatives from The School District of the City of York, Logos Academy, and Crispus Attucks YouthBuild Charter School, and stated that she plans to connect with York Academy Regional Charter School, Tidings of Peace, York Catholic, York County School of Technology, and The York County Home School Association.

She also plans to visit other cities and states with established youth councils for further learning.

The application period is anticipated to open in October 2025, she explained, with the inaugural Youth Council Committee launching in September 2026. This committee will allow young residents to contribute to city governance and community development.

Vice President Buckingham said our community can only benefit from bringing our youth to the table.

Councilwoman Johnescu thanked President Washington for bringing this forward. She said she was a teacher for 20 years and this would be transformative.

Councilwoman Dennis said she supports this initiative, viewing it as an excellent tool for youth and focusing on future leaders.

Councilwoman Bupp said this is a wonderful addition and could compliment students who are already serving on school councils.

Marie Rohleder, resident, shared her experience as a Girl Scout leader, acknowledging the potential of young people. She recalled a time on Long Island where two high school students on City Council influenced housing legislation to be rewritten with their "valid and valuable" input, noting that young people often "think out of the box".

Manuel Gomez, resident, stated that this initiative would be "more special" if it achieved a "cross-section of different communities coming together" to find mutual interests and solutions.

Aaron Anderson, CEO at Logos Academy, expressed 100% support, calling it a "marvelous idea," important for students, and will engage young people in civic processes. He offered his team's help and support.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 23, Ordinance No. 21, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Dennis, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

5. Final Passage of Bill No. 23, Ordinance No. 22 - A Bill Amending Article 702 "Unlawful Manufacture of Firearms" of the Codified Ordinances. ([View](#)) (To add restrictions relating to use of rapid-fire devices.)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Council (Washington)

Final Passage of Bill No. 23, Ordinance No. 22, Session 2025, A Bill amending Article 702 "Unlawful Manufacture of Firearms" of the codified ordinances to add restrictions relating to the use of rapid-fire devices, which was introduced by Washington at the August 19, 2025 meeting of Council, and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 23 came up for discussion.

Adam Garber, Cease Fire PA, explained that the ordinance addresses small devices, like Glock

switches, that convert handguns into automatic weapons, capable of firing hundreds of bullets in seconds, multiplying carnage. He stated they serve no public safety, self-defense, or hunting purpose, and allow perpetrators to "out-gun" law enforcement, referencing the death of a Police Chief in Breckonridge from an encounter with a perpetrator using such a device. He noted these devices are dangerous and Glock switches are illegal at the Federal level, but our district attorney does not have the authority to regulate but City Council can strengthen its local ordinances to regulate these weapons. City Council is regulating a small piece that's added to a device to turn it into a rapid fire, so Council is not in default for regulating this legislation for keeping the community safe. He said he hopes Council will adopt this legislation.

Police Commission Michael Muldrow expressed respect for all positions but stated that the community is "tone deaf" if they ignore the impact of gun violence, such as children "riddled with bullets." He emphasized there is no need for such firepower in a tightly inhabited community like York, with churches, schools, and homes nearby. He supported President Washington for speaking up and urged action to protect the community.

Brent Clarkson, Pennsylvania State Deputy Director for Gun Owners of America (GoA), testified against the legislation, arguing it is unconstitutional and violates state law (Title 18 PA C.S., Section 6120 - State Preemption Law), which prohibits municipalities from regulating lawful firearm ownership. He cited cases like *Ortiz v. Commonwealth* (invalidating Philadelphia and Pittsburgh bans) and *Crawford v. Commonwealth* (upholding preemption laws). He argued the bill infringes on Article 1, Section 21 of the PA Constitution (right to bear arms for self-defense) and the Federal Second Amendment (post-NYSRPA v. Bruen). He contended that bump stocks (and by extension FRTs) do not convert semi-automatic firearms into machine guns (citing *Garland v. Cargill*) and are legal federally, questioning where regulations would stop. He warned of costly litigation and urged a "no" vote.

Randall Zyler, Pastor in Etters, shared his experience of frequently hearing "rapid gunfire" from the city when he lived in North York Borough. He stated, "This has to stop," and that it is unnecessary for lawfully created weapons to be made into "weapons of mass destruction." He encouraged a "yes" vote.

Evan Alessi, resident, said with law enforcement and security background, these guns are stolen, and the \$20 parts are often obtained online (e.g., from China, like fentanyl). He mentioned 3D printing of weapons and "80% lowers." He questioned where regulation stops if it's "just an accessory," and emphasized that the issue is the money made from drugs, not guns or printers. He also shared an anecdote about recovering a law enforcement sidearm from a public bathroom.

David Kline, New Cumberland, PA resident, expressed strong support for the ordinance, despite not living in York City, due to concern for all York County residents. He found the idea of a \$20 attachment transforming a handgun into a machine gun "frightening" and urged Council to protect its citizens and provide local police with legal authority. He thanked the city for last year's ghost gun ban and urged the next step for safety.

Manuel Gomez, resident, acknowledged good intentions but stated he would not vote for the legislation. He highlighted the \$300-\$1,000 penalty, questioning its efficacy and expressing concern that local law enforcement might misinterpret it as a right to search without cause. He also expressed belief in self-preservation and warned of potential litigation.

Marie Rohleder, resident, shared her experience as a "good shooter" who traveled with weapons. She disagreed with the notion that a patchwork of local ordinances would make laws unknowable, stating she always researched laws when traveling. She also noted the lack of gun education. She added that she never carried her weapon in the city, believing she would be

more likely to be mugged and disarmed than to need to use it, and ensured her weapons were properly locked up.

Pastor Joshua Connely, York, PA, (Good News Field Baptist Church), identified as a "firm Second Amendment supporter." He noted there are over 20,000 gun laws on state and federal levels, suggesting most are not enforced against criminals, and that most crimes involve illegal/stolen firearms. He argued that laws cannot "legislate the heart" and urged a "no" vote.

Michael Walker, resident, said he believes the legislation would be a great tool. He argued that for residents, the ability to fire 70 rounds a minute plus in a concentrated area overrides self-protection, as it leads to "overkill." He questioned if Council had assessed the litigation costs that might arise, noting the difference in rules for first- and second-class cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and asked if the solicitor had provided an assessment of these costs.

Brent Clarkson, (GoA), returned to the podium to point out that Washington D.C., with strict gun laws, still has massive crime. He warned that a "patchwork" of municipal laws would make it impossible for law-abiding citizens to carry, leaving only criminals armed. He argued that the loops citizens must jump through chip away at the Second Amendment, and this ordinance is a first step towards disarming regular citizens. He also clarified that Glock switches are federally illegal, but Forced Reset Triggers (FRTs) are not fully automatic, are legal federally, and legal in Pennsylvania, and he fears this ordinance bans these as well.

Manuel Gomez, resident, said we have to remember the impacts of what will happen in the real world once this is enacted.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 23, Ordinance No. 22, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - Dennis - 1.

### **New Business – Introduction of Bills**

6. Introduction of Bill No. 24 - A Bill  
Approving the 2026-2031 Plan of the York Business Improvement District Authority. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: York Business Improvement District Authority

Introduction of Bill No. 24, Session 2025, A Bill approving the 2026-2031 Plan of the York Business Improvement District Authority, was introduced by Washington, read by short title, and deferred to the September 16, 2025 meeting of Council.

7. Introduction of Bill No. 25 - A Bill  
Amending Part 13 "Planning & Zoning Code of the Codified Ordinances. ([View](#)) (To provide for Vape & Smoke Shops as a permissible use in the EC district, and update language to include regulations governing vape and smoke shop use within the city.)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Council

Introduction of Bill No. 25, Session 2025, A Bill Amending Part 13 "Planning & Zoning Code of the Codified Ordinances to regulate vape and smoke shops, was introduced by Washington, read by short title, and deferred to the September 16, 2025 meeting of Council.

### **New Business – Items for Consideration of Consent Agenda**

8. Resolution No. 58 - A Resolution Appointing Michael A. Walker to the Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Mayor

Resolution No. 58, Session 2025, A Resolution appointing Michael A. Walker as a member of the Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority (SARAA) to fill the unexpired term of Carolyn Van Newkirk, which term shall expire the first Monday of January 2027, was introduced by Washington, read at length, and on motion of Washington, seconded by Buckingham, Resolution No. 58 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Dennis, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

With Mr. Walker present, City Clerk Thompson administered the Oath of Office.

President Washington congratulated Mr. Walker and emphasized the opportunities for community members to serve on authorities, boards, and commissions.

9. Resolution No. 59 - A Resolution Authorizing a school crossing guard agreement with the York City School District for the 2025-2026 school year. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham  
Originator: Business Administration

Motion to read by short title. A motion was made by Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu to read Resolution No. 59 by short title only. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 59, Session 2025, A Resolution authorizing a school crossing guard agreement with the York City School District for the 2025-2026 school year, was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, and on motion of Buckingham, seconded by Washington, Resolution No. 59 came up for discussion.

Vice President Buckingham clarified that this resolution pertains to the agreement between the City and the School District for crossing guards and is separate from the actual award for crossing guard services or RFPs.

Washington read the following statement:

*"During Council's August 19 meeting, Business Administrator Robertson asserted that the procurement process outlined in the Smallwood Act (Article 136) was followed for the school crossing guard RFPs. That claim demanded scrutiny. Why? Because no invitation was extended to the full Equal Business Opportunity Committee (EBOC), and no record has been provided to suggest a meeting was held. Legislated members of the committee were neither contacted nor present for a meeting.*

*At least one of the RFPs received for school crossing guard services qualified for review under Act 136, making the EBOC's involvement not only relevant but essential.*

*To give you a little background, Article 136 was re-written to help reduce marketplace barriers that hinder the formation, growth, and participation of minority- and women-owned businesses. Under this legislation, any proposal that qualifies must be formally reviewed by the EBOC, which includes key members such as a Council representative and a member of the Human Relations Commission.*

*To follow up on Administrator Robertson's assertion, I submitted a formal request on August 21 to*



*her and the mayor, asking for the meeting minutes and a list of attendees. That request went unanswered—until today, when Administrator Robertson issued an eleventh-hour response wherein she stated that she awarded 15 additional points to a vendor who qualified under Act 136. However, she also claimed she “forgot” that this qualification required formal review by the EBOC. That explanation is both disappointing and unacceptable—especially given her direct involvement in rewriting Article 136. To conveniently forget a core provision of the very legislation she helped revise raises serious concerns.*

*What makes this even more troubling is the amount of time, effort, and public resources invested in strengthening the Smallwood Act and here we have the first known opportunity to apply its updated procurement process—one that directly supports equity in contracting—and it appears to have been disregarded. Council would have respected a more transparent and candid admission instead of being met with almost two weeks of silence and then excuses, which only adds to public skepticism.*

*City Council and our residents deserve transparency and accountability—not excuses and avoidance, and I demand better from this administration.”*

Councilwoman Bupp suggested that future agreements could be multi-year to allow for proper procurement processes.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 59, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Dennis, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

- XI. Requests for Future Meetings: None
- XII. Council Comment: None
- XIII. Administration Comment: None
- XIV. Adjournment: There being no further business or discussion, the September 2, 2025 meeting of Council adjourned at 7:21 p.m.
- XV. Resumption of Public Comment Period (at the discretion of the presiding officer): None

  
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Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk

  
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Edquina Washington, President of Council