

Council of the City of York, Pennsylvania

Edquina Washington, President of Council
Betsy Buckingham, Vice President of Council
Elizabeth Bupp, Member of Council
Teresa Johnescu, Member of Council
Ryan Supler, Member of Council

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MINUTES March 17, 2026 6:00 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER: Vice President Betsy Buckingham called the March 17, 2026, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 101 S. George St., York, PA, with the following members present: Ryan Supler, Elizabeth Bupp, Teresa Johnescu, and Betsy Buckingham, Vice President, with Vice President Buckingham presiding. President Edquina Washington was attending the National League of Cities Conference in Washington, DC and was therefore absent.

Members of the Administration in attendance included: Tammy Harvey-Bethea, Interim Director, Bureau of Housing Services; Monica Kruger, Director of health; Jim Gross, Interim Director of Public Works; and Brett Flower, Assistant Solicitor.

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

I. Public Comment:

Alyssa Jackson (York County) stated this was her fifth consecutive meeting. She expressed community concerns regarding the conduct of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and announced she is working with CASA to reintroduce the Trust Act legislation in the coming months.

Tyler Nell (York County) said he is now attending his third consecutive meeting and spoke in support of holding ICE accountable, describing their tactics and conduct as despicable and inexcusable.

There being no further comment, the public comment session adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

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

III. Roll Call

IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

V. Moment of Silence moment of silence was observed.

VI. Action on previous meeting Minutes of [March 3, 2026](#) (legislative). Council dispensed with the reading of the Minutes and unanimously approved them as written.

- VII. Presentations, Awards and Announcements: None
- VIII. Meeting(s) Scheduled:
 - ▶ **Council Committee Meeting:** Scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on March 18th.
 - ▶ **Legislative Meeting:** The next legislative meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on April 1st.
- IX. Status of Prior Committee Referrals: See minutes of [February 25, 2026](#).
- 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. 23 - A Resolution
 Accepting the recommendations of HARB. ([View](#))
 Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
 Originator: HARB

 Resolution No. 23, Session 2026, A Resolution accepting recommendations of the HARB to issue certificates of appropriateness for work to be done at 159 S. Penn St., 18 S. George St., and 245 E. Poplar St., was introduced by Johnescu, read at length, and on motion of Johnescu, seconded by Buckingham, Resolution No. 23 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham - 4; Nays - 0.

Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions

- 2. Final Passage of Bill No. 1, Ordinance No. 2 - A Bill
 Amending the FY2026 Budget. ([View](#)) (\$164,550.00 for a PennDot Green Light Go grant for Rt. 30 at PA Ave., Fairlane Ave. & Roosevelt Ave.)
 Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
 Originator: Public Works

 Final Passage of Bill No. 1, Ordinance No. 2, Session 2026, A Bill amending the FY2026 Budget in the amount of \$164,550.00 for a PennDot Green Light Go grant for traffic signal improvements on Route 30 at Pennsylvania Ave., Fairlane Ave. & Roosevelt Ave., which was introduced by Buckingham at the March 3 meeting of Council, and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 1, Ordinance No. 2, passed by the following vote: Yeas - Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham - 4; Nays - 0.
- 3. Final Passage of Bill No. 2, Ordinance No. 3 - A Bill
 Amending the FY2026 Budget. ([View](#)) (\$52,000.00 for Plans of Safe Care services)
 Introduced by: Edquina Washington
 Originator: Economic & Community Development (Health)

 Final Passage of Bill No. 2, Ordinance No. 3, Session 2026, A Bill amending the FY2026 Budget in the amount of \$52,000.00 for Plans of Safe Care services, which was introduced by Washington at the March 3 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 2, Ordinance No. 3, passed by the following vote: Yeas - Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham - 4; Nays - 0.

4. Final Passage of Bill No. 3, Ordinance No. 4 - A Bill Amending the CDBG Budget. ([View](#)) (To reflect unexpended funding rollovers from 2025 to 2026)
Introduced by: Edquina Washington
Originator: Economic & Community Development (BHS)

Final Passage of Bill No. 3, Ordinance No. 4, Session 2026, A Bill amending the CDBG Budget to reflect unexpended funding rollovers from 2025 to 2026, which was introduced by Washington at the March 3 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 3 came up for discussion.

Financial Breakdown of the Rollover

Councilwoman Bupp initially expressed confusion regarding the specific amount being requested for the rollover, noting that the supporting documentation was unclear.

Director Harvey-Bethea broke down the figures from three different accounts that remained unexpended as follows:

- HOME ARP: \$41,844.98
- CDBG: \$2,724,339.42
- HOME (Revenue and Expenditure): \$1,326,712.00

Councilwoman Bupp totaled these figures at \$4,092,895 and questioned if that was the full amount being requested for the rollover. She also pointed out a technicality in the ordinance's wording, suggesting it should specifically mention both the CDBG and HOME budgets rather than just CDBG, a correction Director Harvey-Bethea agreed was accurate.

Technical Process: "Rollover" vs. "Replacement"

A major point of clarification involved the nature of the rollover. **Director Harvey-Bethea** explained that the term is somewhat of a misnomer because the entire budget is actually being replaced in the City's OpenGov system to ensure it reconciles with HUD's IDIS system.

- System Reconciliation: Harvey-Bethea noted that she cannot piece a budget together; the full budget for the line items must be updated so that revenue and expenditures match across systems.
- 2026 Funding Estimations: She clarified that the 2026 numbers currently in the budget are merely estimations based on previous years, as the City has not yet received its actual 2026 funding.
- Payment of Subrecipients: Harvey-Bethea emphasized that this housekeeping is an annual necessity. If the funds are not rolled over, subrecipients will not be able to be paid for their outstanding bills because the money would not appear in the 2026 budget.

Public and Council Comments

Manuel Gomez (Resident) commented on the discussion, stating that while he appreciated the Council's questions, the public must put in a minimum effort to understand that these funds are not bags of money sitting idle. He argued that the situation is not as sensational as it might appear at first glance.

Councilman Supler mentioned that some community members had reached out to ask why these funds were not being exhausted faster. Director Harvey-Bethea responded by stating that framing finances are really complicated and that after adding up the actual 2024 and 2025 money, the department does not actually have that much to work with.

Vote

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 3, Ordinance No. 4, passed by the following vote: Yeas - Supler, Johnescu, Buckingham - 3; Nays - Bupp - 1. Bupp explained that she could not vet the \$4 million figure or vote in favor of the ordinance because she had not yet seen the final

year-end numbers for 2025. Councilwoman Johnescu stated she voted "Yes," thanking the Director Harvey-Bethea for answering her emails and helping her understand the complexities before the meeting.

New Business – Introduction of Bills: None

New Business

5. Resolution No. 24 _____ - A Resolution Approving submission of the 2025 CAPER. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
Originator: Economic & Community Development (BHS)

Resolution No. 24, Session 2026, A Resolution approving submission of the 2025 CAPER, was introduced by Johnescu, read at length, and on motion of Johnescu, seconded by Buckingham, Resolution No. 24 came up for discussion.

Councilwoman Bupp thanked Director Harvey-Bethea for the previous day's CAPER meeting and for fielding questions.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 24 passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham – 4; Nays – 0.

6. Resolution No. 25 _____ - A Resolution Adopting the 2026-2027 Rules & Procedures of Council. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
Originator: Council/City Clerk

Motion to read by short title. A motion was made by Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, to read Resolution No. 25 by short title only. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 25, Session 2026, A Resolution adopting the 2026-2027 Rules & Procedures of Council, was introduced by Johnescu, read by short title, and on motion of Johnescu, seconded by Buckingham, Resolution No. 25 came up for discussion.

Councilman Supler's Objections

Councilman Supler voiced concerns regarding several amendments. His primary objections included:

- The 30-Minute Time Limit: He opposed a new maximum of 30 minutes for the total public comment period.
- Elimination of the Second Comment Period: The proposed rules completely removed the second opportunity for public comment typically held at the end of meetings.
- Continuance Requirements: He objected to the requirement that individuals who did not get to speak within the time limit must resume their comments at the next scheduled meeting.
- Residency Concerns: Supler expressed worry that if non-residents utilized the entire 30-minute block, local residents and taxpayers might be prevented from participating in the discussion.

City Clerk Thompson's Response

City Clerk Thompson provided a response to these changes, emphasizing the efficiency of the legislative process.

- Legal Perspective: She noted that as a legislative body, Council only legally obligated to allow general public comment on specific items before them; therefore, providing a general comment period at the beginning is gracious.
- Operational Burden: Clerk Thompson shared that in previous years, meetings without these limits resulted in Council members sitting through two hours of public comment before reaching the legislative session. This often led to Council staying until 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. to pass legislation while being tired and grumpy, which she argued was not conducive to effective governance.
- Alternative Communication: She reminded the public that they can still address Council members via phone or email outside of formal meetings.

Council Comment

Vice President Buckingham supported the Clerk’s view, noting that Council has been liberal in the past, often exceeding the 30-minute limit to ensure everyone was heard. She viewed the rules as a necessary framework while maintaining that the body remains committed to hearing from the community.

Public Comment

Manuel Gomez (Resident) offered a historical perspective, stating that despite decades of participation and even being removed from the podium by police in the past, he has never felt stifled. Gomez argued that the presence of cameras has turned meetings into a spectacle for some, leading to extraneous comments that are not germane to the business at hand. Gomez argued against residency requirements and emphasized that non-residents often bring specialized knowledge that is a crucial resource for the city.

Procedural Clarification

Before the final vote, **Councilwoman Bupp** asked whether the resolution required three or four affirmative votes to pass.

Clerk Thompson explained that Council is currently operating under the 2024-2025 rules. Under Rule No. 2(A), only three Council members are required to approve the rules. She added that Section 2.3 of the revised rules also sets the requirement at three affirmative votes. She noted as well that although a proposal to increase the threshold to four votes was included in the rewrite, Council voted against that change in committee.

Vote

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 25 passed by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham – 3; Nays – Supler – 1.

XI. Requests for Future Meetings: None

XII. Council Comment

Vice President Betsy Buckingham

- **Street Cleaning**: Vice President Buckingham reminded residents that street cleaning resumed today, March 17. She urged residents to pay close attention to street signs to ensure vehicles are moved, which helps keep the city clean and allows residents to avoid fines.
- **Literary Highlights**: Buckingham highlighted two books recently published by members of the York community:
 - ***Unlikely Good* by Rev. Aaron Anderson**: Described as a guide for tackling community problems and building bridges to make York a better place.
 - ***Empty Hands* by Roy Hughes**: A story about a York City native who overcame what Buckingham described as unsurmountable challenges during his childhood.

Councilwoman Elizabeth Bupp

Councilwoman Bupp highlighted the following:

- **Crispus Attucks of York:** She gave a shout out to the organization for its 95th anniversary meeting. She encouraged residents to visit their website to read their annual report, which details their successes, audits, and fundraising efforts.
- **History Center:** She also noted that the new History Center is expected to open very soon.

Councilman Ryan Supler

Councilman Supler provided updates on the following:

- **Homelessness at Bantz Park:** Supler reported on a recent call with the York County Coalition on Homelessness. He stated there are currently 59 tents at Bantz Park, 43 of which are occupied. He expressed concern over reports of vandalism and looting and stated his intent to work on compassionate legislative solutions regarding encampments.
- **Bias-Motivated Conduct:** He announced that he recently met with Solicitor Flower and the Human Relations Commission (HRC) Chair, Ms. Mina Edmonson, to review drafts of bias-motivated conduct legislation and HRC updates. He expects these items to be on the next committee agenda.
- **St. Patrick's Day:** He then wished the community a happy St. Patrick's Day, praising the volunteerism and community pride displayed during the weekend's festivities.

XIII. Administration Comment: None

XIV. Adjournment: There being no further business, the March 17, 2026 legislative meeting of City Council adjourned at 6:40 pm.



Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk



Betsy Buckingham, Vice President of Council