

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 Wednesday, May 20, 2026 6:00 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER: President Edquina Washington called the May 20, 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, Betsy Buckingham, Vice President, and Edquina Washington, President, with President Washington presiding.

Members of the Administration in attendance included: Sandie Walker, Mayor; Kevin Westover, Deputy Fire Chief; Nancy Griffin, City Planner; and Brett Flower, Assistant Solicitor.

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

- I. Public Comment: None
- II. Called Legislative Meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m.
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- V. Moment of Silence was observed.
- VI. Action on previous meeting Minutes of [May 5, 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, May 27, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on May 20th.
 - ▶ **Legislative Meeting:** The next legislative meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, June 2, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on May 27th.

IX. Reports of the Youth Council Committee: None

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. 44 - A Resolution Approving a land development waiver. ([View](#)) (Submitted by Royal Square for 1 S. George St.)
Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
Originator: Economic & Community Development (Planning)

Resolution No. 44, Session 2026, A Resolution approving a land development waiver of “TITLE THREE - Subdivision and Land Development, ARTICLE 1333, submitted by Royal Square, for 1 S. George St., was introduced by Johnescu, read at length, and on motion of Johnescu, seconded by Buckingham, Resolution No. 44 came up for discussion.

Councilwoman Bupp inquired about the criteria used by the Planning Commission to waive such plans and asked if the submitted plans were in accordance with city ordinances. **Nancy Griffin, Planner**, explained that the waiver process is mandatory even for projects that do not strictly warrant a full land development review, such as the current project to repurpose the building into a hotel. She noted the project did not require review from the city engineer.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 44 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 5; Nays - 0.

2. Resolution No. 45 - A Resolution Accepting a preliminary land development/subdivision waiver. ([View](#)) (Submitted by Site Design Concepts for 123-129 N. West St.)
Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
Originator: Economic & Community Development (Planning)

Resolution No. 45, Session 2026, A Resolution approving a waiver of preliminary land development/subdivision plans, Article 1333.03, submitted by Site Design Concepts on behalf of Vaughn Rimmel, for 123-129 N. West St., was introduced by Johnescu, read at length, on motion of Johnescu, seconded by Buckingham, Resolution No. 45 came up for discussion.

Councilwoman Johnescu requested clarification on the project as she was unfamiliar with it. She asked if there will be some development plans forthcoming.

Andy Barshinger, Site Design Concepts, stated that the plan involves consolidating four existing parcels into two lots to construct two single-family dwellings. He noted that the original buildings on the site had been destroyed by fire or demolished. He said plans will be forthcoming with final details.

Councilwoman Bupp asked if these were Redevelopment Authority (RDA) properties. **Mr. Barshinger** confirmed they are currently owned by the RDA and stated that final detail plans would be forthcoming.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 45 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 5; Nays - 0.

Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions

3. Final Passage of Bill No. 9, Ordinance No. 7 - A Bill
Amending the FY2026 Budget. ([View](#)) (\$73,250.00 - for purchase of vehicles)
Introduced by: Ryan Supler
Originator: Fire/Rescue

Final Passage of Bill No. 9, Ordinance No. 7, Session 2026, A Bill amending the FY2026 budget in the amount of \$73,250.00 for the Department of Fire/Rescue Services for the purchase of vehicles, which was introduced by Supler at the May 5th meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Supler, seconded by Washington, Bill No. 9, Ordinance No. 7, passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

4. Final Passage of Bill No. 10, Ordinance No. 8 - A Bill
Approving inclusion of the 2025 ordinances into the codified ordinance book. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Council

Final Passage of Bill No. 10, Ordinance No. 8, Session 2026, A Bill approving the inclusion of the 2025 ordinances into the codified ordinance book, which was introduced by Buckingham at the May 5th meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Washington, Bill No. 10, Ordinance No. 8, passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

New Business – Introduction of Bills: None

New Business: None

- XI. Requests for Future Meetings
- XII. Council Comment

Councilwoman Bupp commented on a city plan she saw on Facebook concerning Bantz Park, and the relocation of the unhoused population. She said the comments on social media showed a wide range of responses, which led her to reflect on the fundamental question of who should be responsible for taking care of adults who require assistance. Bupp compared this to the societal expectation that parents care for their children and the systems in place for seniors, whether through family support or care homes. She suggested that the role of government is one of the most divisive issues today, specifically regarding the level of support that should be provided to individuals. She referenced the book *Brave New World*, describing it as a disturbing but relevant look at these long-standing questions.

She explained that the city demonstrates its intended role through its budget decisions, noting that the general fund is approximately \$70 million. She pointed out that about 70% of that budget is dedicated to personnel costs, which covers the staff who maintain public safety, public health, business growth, and residential standards. While some funds reach residents through home repair grants or non-profit organizations, she posed the question of whether the city has the capacity to help everyone. She emphasized that the homeless population are individuals with unique personal stories and hardships.

Regarding potential solutions, Bupp highlighted the work of [LifePath](#), which is currently undertaking a \$10 million renovation of a building on Philadelphia St. She asked whether the city should consider donating more funds to accelerate such projects. Furthermore, she mentioned that the city of Harrisburg created a specific place for their homeless population to camp and questioned if York or its surrounding municipalities should adopt a similar model. One idea she proposed for consideration

was whether [LifePath](#) could host a tent city in their new parking lot to keep those in need close to essential services.

Bupp also recognized several existing community efforts, such as the [York County Re-entry Coalition](#) and [Friends and Neighbors](#). She noted the [York County Continuum of Care](#) as a group that organizes various non-profits to find solutions, but she wondered if they had enough volunteers to meet the need. Addressing the active discussions she saw on Facebook, she encouraged those who want to help to reach out and get involved with these existing organizations. Finally, she clarified that she holds only one vote on the Council and invited the public to share their suggestions on whether the city should provide more funding or take additional steps toward a permanent solution.

Councilman Supler noted that several members of the public, including himself, used the public comment section of the Human Relations Commission meeting to advocate for a [Municipal Equity Index Audit](#). This process involves auditing the city government regarding items related to the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, he mentioned that members of the public are seeking reaffirmation for a proposal concerning bias motivated conduct under Article 703, as well as updates to the Human Relations Commission's Article 185.

Supler then gave a shout out to the fire department for their assistance with a second alarm fire in West Manchester Township, which he suggested demonstrates the department's strength. He also extended his thanks to police officers for their investigative work regarding recent homicides and for their support of the outreach efforts at Bantz Park. He also highlighted a successful coffee with a cop event held at the Central Market.

Supler disclosed that he is employed by [LifePath](#) and had recently attended an outreach committee meeting with the [York County Coalition on Homelessness](#). He reported that a [LifePath](#) administrative case aide accompanied city police to the encampments to connect individuals with resources. This effort resulted in thirteen people being brought into the [LifePath](#) shelter systems, which include separate facilities for men, women, and families. Supler also noted that three individuals were brought into treatment, while another three were found to be completely unaware of existing shelter options. He shared reports from these site visits, including evidence of open drug use and serious trash pollution.

Supler said he attended a graduation ceremony at the Appell Center for the York County Treatment Courts, where he congratulated spring graduates for their hard work and their dedication to multiple months or years of sobriety. He also mentioned attending an open house at the York Area Tax Bureau and participating in ribbon cuttings for local businesses, including [Airborne Contamination Identification Associates](#) and [Collusion Tap Works](#) for their new event venue, the Sideshow.

Finally, Supler spoke about attending the [York County Fallen Officer Memorial](#) on May 8th to honor the memory of fallen Officers Schaad and Sable.

Vice President Buckingham commended Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Westover on his recent promotion and thanked him for his long-term service.

XIII. Administration Comment

Mayor Walker addressed the closure of the city's unhoused encampments, describing the situation primarily as a critical public safety issue. She stated that the administration viewed the potential for dangerous incidents as a matter of when rather than if, specifically citing recent events in Springettsbury as an outcome they wanted to prevent within the city. To assess the scale of the challenge directly, she and a collaborative team including police, fire, [LifePath](#), and Public Works personnel spent an hour and a half walking through the entire encampment area. Her assessment was that this is the largest encampment the city has ever seen and serves as a physical representation of the systemic challenges the current administration has walked into.

The Mayor explained that the city's approach has been centered on providing compassionate notice and connecting individuals with existing support systems. For several weeks prior to the public announcement, the police department and representatives from [LifePath](#) visited the site twice weekly to inform individuals about available shelter beds and case management services offered by [LifePath](#) and [Friends and Neighbors](#). While she acknowledged that the public often has good intentions when donating goods, she explicitly requested a reduction in visiting the area and dropping off items. She clarified that these donations often end up as trash that Public Works crews must clean up, which increases the risk of exposure to hazardous materials for city staff and residents.

Mayor Walker noted that the current economic reality, where affordable housing is no longer truly affordable, has exacerbated the crisis. Consequently, the city is looking beyond conventional methods to explore innovative and non-traditional resources to assist those in need. To ensure the city is moving forward with the best possible strategy, she said the administration has reached out to neighboring municipalities and the City of Harrisburg for additional advice and input. She emphasized the urgency of the situation, warning that if the city does not take action now, the risks to both the residents of the encampment and the surrounding neighborhoods will significantly worsen within the next month or two.

XIV. Adjournment: There being no further business, the May 20, 2026 meeting of Council adjourned at 6:23 p.m.



Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk



Edquina Washington, President of Council