The City of York Pennsylvania

Office of City Council
101 S. George St.
York, PA 17401

Edquina Washington, President
Betsy Buckingham, Vice President
Elizabeth Bupp, Member
Teresa Johnescu, Member
Ryan Supler, Member
Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk
P: (717) 849-2246
F: (717) 812-0557
dthompso@yorkcity.org

COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 23, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Council meetings are streamed LIVE for viewing only on the following social media platforms:
FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/CityofYorkPA/
YOUTUBE: https://www.youtube.com/c/WhiteRoseCommunityTV.
2026 MEETINGS: Click here to view 2026 Council Meetings Dates
LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS: Click here to view full list of 2026-2027 Liaison Assignments

LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS

Fire/Police	Public Works	Econ & Comm Development	Business Admin
Ryan Supler	**Betsy Buckingham**	**Teresa Johnescu**	**Elizabeth Bupp**

***Bold text indicates Chairperson**
Note: General Committee is chaired by Council President or designee and includes all Council members.

CALL TO ORDER: President Washington called the September 23, 2026, committee 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.

Members of the Administration in attendance included: Tammy Harvey-Bethea, Interim Director of Economic & Community Development; Capt. Matthew Irvin, Police; Nancy Griffin, City Planner; and Assistant Solicitor Gedd Schweikert.

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

I. Called committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Committee Issues for the October 6 & 20, 2026 legislative Agendas as follows:

POLICE/FIRE (Supler)

1. **Bill amending the FY26 Budget.** ($62,322.00 for a JAG award) (View)
Submitted by: Solicitor (Police)
►Legislative Agenda: October 6, 2026

Captain Irvin explained that $27,370.00 serves as mandatory pass-through funding designated directly for the York County Regional Police Department. The remaining $34,952.00 allocated to the York City Police Department is divided across three purchases: a motorcycle transport trailer for the police motor unit during official travel, four fixed-point surveillance cameras equipped with License Plate Reader (LPR) capabilities, and funding for the rental and operation of a zipline attraction at the police department's annual Fall Fest event.

Captain Irvin further explained that while the cameras possess LPR capabilities, the department's operational plan is to deploy the four fixed units specifically along the Rail Trail pedestrian corridor between Philadelphia and Princess Streets. This location was targeted due to rising quality-of-life concerns, homelessness, open drug usage, and physical fights along that stretch of the trail. He stated that the static cameras will be aimed directly at the Rail Trail pathway to monitor pedestrian traffic rather than directed at adjacent roadways to capture motor vehicle license plates. He added that the deployment will be paired with highly visible surveillance warning signs so that trail visitors are fully aware the area is monitored, providing a sense of security for cyclists and walkers. Captain Irvin then clarified that the department lacks a real-time crime center or dedicated personnel to watch live video feeds, rather, recorded video will only be accessed retroactively if a crime or major incident occurs, operating similarly to the mobile camera trailers reviewed in prior months.

Councilman Supler questioned the financial allocation for the Fall Fest zipline, asking whether utilizing federal grant funds for entertainment attractions was the best operational use of funds.

Captain Irvin responded that the zipline was specifically included in the federal grant application narrative submitted several months ago and subsequently approved by federal administrators. He explained that over the past five years, Fall Fest has expanded significantly into a major community engagement initiative provided to residents entirely free of charge. Utilizing federal JAG grant funds covers major attraction costs like the zipline without burdening local taxpayers or drawing from the general fund.

Councilman Supler then asked whether a separate accounting line item was required to transfer the pass-through funds to the York County Regional Police Department, and Captain Irvin confirmed that the Regional Police will submit an invoice to the City, which will be processed as a standard check payment through a designated expenditure line.

Councilwoman Bupp asked about liability and insurance coverage for the zipline attraction.

Captain Irvin confirmed that the contracted vendor, Three Monkeys Inflatables, carries full primary insurance responsibility for the zipline, rock climbing wall, and inflatable bounce houses.

Manuel Gomez (Resident) spoke in opposition of the surveillance cameras. He stated that license plate reader systems, such as Flock and similar brands, have drawn strong bipartisan condemnation nationwide from figures spanning Congressman Scott Perry to Governor Josh Shapiro, leading to legislative bans in multiple states. He explained that automated LPR systems scan over 100,000 license plates per minute, attaching precise GPS timestamps to every scan to construct long-term travel histories, enable retroactive surveillance, and generate predictive AI profiles. Mr. Gomez reminded Council that he led the public campaign 15 years ago that established a municipal moratorium on LPR technology in York. He warned Council against enabling digital surveillance dragnets, stressing risks to privacy and noting that federal agencies like ICE frequently request LPR data. He criticized the lack of mandatory public audits and chain-of-custody tracking for municipal surveillance data in York. Mr. Gomez urged Council to consider practical alternatives, stating that installing adequate public lighting along the Rail Trail would be far more effective at improving actual pedestrian safety than installing surveillance cameras.

Councilwoman Bupp asked who owns the cameras, who will perform the installation, and whether specific positioning details would come back before Council.

Captain Irvin responded that the City currently owns no fixed-point cameras, making these four units the City's first fixed surveillance installation. The cameras under consideration are Verata/Fircotta units, sold and installed locally by ESI at a total cost of approximately $18,000.00. He reiterated that the cameras are static units (not 360-degree pan-tilt-zoom cameras controlled remotely) and are intended strictly to monitor the trail corridor.

Councilwoman Johnescu noted that because the $18,000.00 purchase price falls below the formal Council approval threshold under municipal Article 137, the procurement will not come back to Council for a vote, thereby limiting formal Council oversight and public reporting.

President Washington reminded Council members and the public that the vote in committee is strictly procedural to decide whether to place the item on the upcoming legislative agenda and does not constitute final legislative enactment.

DECISION: A motion was made by Buckingham, seconded by Washington, to place this item on the 10/6/26 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

2. Bill amending Article 171 "Firefighter's Pension Fund" (To incorporate terms of the Teamsters Local 776 bargaining agreement) (View)
Submitted by: Solicitor (Fire/Rescue)
►Legislative Agenda: October 6, 2026

Assistant City Solicitor Schweikert explained this is to formally codify collective bargaining terms established under a 2018 arbitration award with Teamsters Local 776 into the municipal code, correcting an administrative omission.

Councilwoman Bupp asked what happens if Council voted against this amendment. Solicitor Schweikert replied that because the pension terms stem from a legally binding arbitration award, failure to update the codified ordinances results in recurring audit findings against the City during Commonwealth Act 205 state pension audits.

DECISION: A motion was made by Johnescu, seconded by Bupp, to place this item on the 10/6/26 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (Johnescu)

3. Resolution No. 69 establishing stormwater management fees. (For small projects under 2,000 sq.ft.) (View)
Submitted by: Nancy Griffin (Planning/Zoning)
►Legislative Agenda: October 6, 2026

Planner Griffin explained that municipal ordinance mandates a three-tiered stormwater management fee structure: a fee in lieu of stormwater management for small projects between 1 to 499 square feet; a flat application fee paired with two site inspections by MS4 Coordinator Latrice Brown for middle-tier projects between 500 to 1,999 square feet; and full stormwater plan reviews and engineering calculations conducted by the City Engineer for major developments exceeding 2,000 square feet.

Planner Griffin shared permit data gathered from OpenGov between January 1, 2026 to today. During that period, she said the City issued 149 small zoning permits for residential improvements such as parking pads, driveways, sheds, and garages. Of those 149 permits, 29 fell into the middle tier of 500 to 1,999 square feet (representing approximately 19% of small permits). However, only 2 projects required physical stormwater site inspections, both involving new single-family home builds of approximately 640 square feet on subdivided parcels requiring seepage pits or infiltration trenches to capture roof runoff.

Vice President Buckingham noted a calculation error in the proposed fee table. Under the proposed $1.00 per square foot rate, an applicant building a 300 square foot driveway would be charged a $300.00 fee, which was higher than the flat fee assessed for the larger 500 to 1,999 square foot tier that

included two physical staff inspections.

Planner Griffin acknowledged the flaw, explaining that the $1.00 per square foot figure was benchmarked against suburban municipalities such as Manchester Township and West Manchester Township without adjusting for York's dense urban layout or consulting third-class cities like Lancaster or Harrisburg. She agreed to revise the resolution to flat fee amounts, suggesting $50.00 to $75.00 for the small tier and $100.00 for the middle tier, and to correct a typographical error in the table where the middle tier was incorrectly labeled as "less than 2,000 sq. ft." instead of "500 to 1,999 sq. ft."

Councilwoman Johnescu expressed concern that inflated stormwater fees would unfairly burden local homeowners, driving residents to perform unpermitted weekend construction to bypass municipal permits.

Councilwoman Bupp asked about baseline permit expenses, and Planner Griffin clarified that standard zoning permits carry a flat fee of $35.00, whereas UCC construction permits (required only if electrical or plumbing work is involved, such as in a garage) are calculated as a percentage of overall construction market value.

Manuel Gomez (Resident) commended Council for catching the fee calculation error and urged a conservative fee structure that protects small residential upgrades and potential future affordable housing initiatives, such as tiny homes.

President Washington requested that the administration complete further research into third-class city fee structures and revise the resolution before Council takes action.

DECISION: A motion was made by Bupp, seconded by Buckingham, to keep this item in committee until further research is completed and reported back to Council. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

GENERAL (Washington)

4. Bill No. 22 - Establishing Article 324 "Licensing of Smoke and Vape Shops". (View)

Submitted by: Solicitor (Council/Washington)

►Legislative Agenda: October 20, 2026

Councilwoman Johnescu expressed concern that enacting vape shop regulations without a clear enforcement framework would merely add to the city's existing list of unenforced ordinances. She stated that while regulating vape shops is vital to protect minors, Council must ensure the administration has a viable operational plan for enforcement before passing legislation.

Director Harvey-Bethea discussed departmental capacity and administrative enforcement challenges. She explained that enforcing vape shop licensing requires an all-encompassing multi-departmental effort involving the Police Department, Public Works, DCED, and Business Administration, as well as dedicated budget allocations for personnel. She stated that DCED staff are currently operating under severe strain, with all available personnel dedicated to executing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant projects prior to the federal expenditure deadline of January 4, 2027. She requested that Council pause action on the vape shop legislation until after January 4, 2027, allowing the administration time to convene inter-departmental work sessions to establish budgeting, staffing, and enforcement protocols.

President Washington stated that youth in our elementary, middle, and high schools are becoming addicted to and overdosing on vaping products sold by profit-driven store owners who view children merely as dollar signs. She stated that while inter-departmental planning is necessary, municipal leaders must stop making excuses and take decisive action to protect children's lives.

Councilwoman Bupp suggested releasing the legislation from committee but adjusting the effective date in Section 324.03 of Bill No. 22 from January 1, 2027, to February 1, 2027, providing the administration additional time following the ARPA deadline.

Clerk Thompson provided procedural guidance to Council, explaining the difference between holding a bill in committee versus voting it out. She advised that voting a bill out of committee and introducing it at a legislative meeting triggers mandatory newspaper advertising expenses, and strict statutory enactment timelines (typically 30 days). She recommended keeping the bills in committee while inter-departmental work sessions occur, avoiding premature advertising costs or enactment deadlines.

Councilwoman Johnescu asking what recourse Council possesses if the executive branch fails to enforce enacted ordinances, which President Washington stated while Council holds legislative and investigative powers under the municipal charter, it cannot legally compel executive branch enforcement.

Councilman Supler shared findings from a regional Tobacco Healthy York presentation, recommending that Council consider a 1,000-foot buffer radius around schools and public facilities, remove prohibitions on residential parcels, and adjust food and parking regulations. He asked why new vape shops, such as one at Philadelphia and Beaver St., continue to open despite Council working on regulations.

Planner Griffin explained that because York's current zoning code lacks a specific definition for smoke and vape shops, they are legally classified as "Retail General," which is a permitted use by right in the Central Business District (CBD).

Councilman Supler noted that the Planning Commission removed religious buffer language due to First Amendment separation concerns.

Manuel Gomez (Resident) objected to Section 324.06 of Bill No. 22, which mandates store surveillance equipment without establishing technical standards or granting legal authority to compel footage turnover during non-criminal matters. He also objected to provisions prohibiting vape shops on parcels attached to residential units, warning that profit-driven operators will render residential apartments vacant to secure commercial leases, thereby exacerbating the local housing crisis.

Michael Walker (Resident) warned about constitutional vulnerabilities under Supreme Court commercial speech and property rights precedents (1st, 2nd, and 4th Amendments). Mr. Walker stated that individual vape shops generate between $2,000,000.00 to $4,000,000.00 in annual revenue, providing store owners with substantial financial capital to litigate against the City. He urged Council to engage directly with store owners, community members, and legal counsel between now and January to craft legally sound legislation that withstands court challenges.

DECISION: A motion was made by Washington, seconded by Johnescu, to keep this legislation in committee at this time. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

5. Bill No. 23 - Amending Part 13 "Planning/Zoning Code". (Relating to smoke and vape shops) (View)
Submitted by: Solicitor (Council/Washington)
►Legislative Agenda: October 20, 2026

DECISION: As Bill No. 23 is the companion piece to Bill No. 22, a motion was made by Washington, seconded by Johnescu, to keep this legislation in committee at this time. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

III. Council Comment

Councilman Supler expressed disappointment regarding the Mayor's veto of Council's recently enacted fiscal procedure updates under Article 137. He stated he will review the administration's written objections to evaluate next steps, emphasizing the importance of establishing resilient, transparent fiscal policies that serve York taxpayers.

Next, Councilman Supler announced a free community screening of "West Side Story," curated by community leader Delma Rivera, is scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Appel Center as part of the Hispanic Heritage Month Film Series.

Councilman Supler then announced that the York City School District will host a virtual "Budget Listen and Learn" session on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and invited the public to attend.

Lastly, Councilmember Supler highlighted upcoming community events, including First Friday on October 2, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (featuring the annual Halloween Pet Parade on N. Beaver St. and a Cultural Fair across from the York County History Center), and the Police Department Fall Fest on Saturday, October 3, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in front of the police station.

IV. Administration Comment: None

V. Next Committee Meeting October 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items due by 12 noon and 10/21/26.

VI. Adjournment: There being no further business, the September 23, 2026 Committee meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk

Edquina Washington, President of Council