Council of the City of York, Pennsylvania

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Betsy Buckingham, Vice President of Council
Elizabeth Bupp, Member of Council
Teresa Johnescu, Member of Council
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MINUTES

November 4, 2026

6:00 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER: President Edquina Washington called the November 4, 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: Nancy Griffin, City Planner; and Assistant Solicitor Brett Flower.

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

Members of the Youth Council Committee: Jada Gonzalez, Youth Council Committee member.

I. Public Comment:

Manuel Gomez (Resident) thanked City Council members for spearheading the recent neighborhood cleanup effort. He shared that while he was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict, he felt he was still contributing by participating in the upcoming York White Rose Run. Mr. Gomez explained that proceeds from the race will benefit Bell Socialization Services and encouraged Council members and residents to sign up, stay active, and support community organizations.

There being no further public comment, the public comment session adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

II. Called Legislative Meeting to Order at 6:01 p.m.

III. Roll Call

IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

V. Moment of Silence was observed.

VI. Action on previous meeting Minutes of October 20, 2026 (legislative). Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes and unanimously approved them as written.

VII. Presentations, Awards and Announcements

► David Gonzalez, YCEA – Brief presentation on York County Municipal Development Playbook.

David Gonzalez of the York County Economic Alliance (YCEA) presented the York County Municipal Development Playbook, a key initiative of the York County Economic Action Plan (EAP). The playbook addresses three major barriers to economic growth: housing, childcare, and transportation, providing municipalities with model ordinances, zoning updates, and funding resources.

Gonzalez highlighted local challenges in York City, including a median household income of about $48,000 versus $84,000 countywide, aging housing stock, significant housing cost burdens, a 605-seat childcare shortage, and transportation barriers, with many residents relying on lengthy public transit commutes.

To address these issues, the playbook recommends policies such as transit-oriented development, complete streets, childcare-friendly zoning reforms, and zoning updates that allow "missing middle" housing types like ADUs, triplexes, and quadplexes.

Councilman Supler asked about the impact of higher-density development on emergency services, infrastructure, schools, and municipal spending. Gonzalez responded that municipalities must still evaluate public safety and infrastructure capacity through existing review processes and noted that zoning reforms are intended to encourage private-sector investment rather than rely on taxpayer-funded subsidies.

Councilwoman Bupp asked about the sources of the presentation's income and housing statistics. Gonzalez stated that the data primarily came from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, and said full citations would be included in the presentation materials and made available through YCEA.

VIII. Meeting(s) Scheduled:

► Legislative Meeting: The next legislative meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on November 11th.

► Council Committee Meeting: There are no committee meetings held in November or December.

IX. Reports of the Youth Council Committee:

Youth Council Committee Member Jada Gonzalez was in attendance.

10/19/26 – York NAACP: On October 19, Youth Council Committee members attended "An Evening with PA House Speaker Joanna McClinton," hosted by the York NAACP. The event provided attendees with the opportunity to hear from Speaker McClinton and gain valuable insight into state government, public service, and civic leadership. Participation in the event furthered the Youth Council's mission of encouraging civic engagement and exposing members to diverse perspectives from elected officials and community leaders.

10/20/26 – City Council Meeting: On October 20, Youth Council Committee representatives were present at City Council's legislative meeting. Their participation provided exposure to municipal decision-making, where they heard presentations on community programs from the Human Relations Commission, public safety investments in rail trail cameras and fire equipment, the city's FY2020 audit report, and local land development proposals.

10/24/26 - Neighborhood Cleanup: On October 24, Youth Council Committee member Denham Greenslade proudly participated in the York City Council Community Cleanup event, joining residents, community partners, and local leaders in an effort to beautify public spaces and strengthen neighborhood pride. Working together to remove litter and improve the appearance of the community, Youth Council members demonstrated their commitment to civic engagement and public service while helping make a positive and visible impact throughout the city.

10/26/26 - Youth Council Committee Meeting: On October 26, the Youth Council Committee convened for an exciting and informative introduction to local government. Participants had the opportunity to hear from President Washington, Mayor Walker, and City Clerk Thompson, who shared their personal backgrounds and provided valuable insight into the structure of government and the responsibilities of their respective roles. Councilwoman Johnescu, who had previously shared her background and experiences during an earlier Youth Council meeting, was also in attendance and contributed additional perspective and insight throughout the discussion. Following the presentation, City Clerk Thompson led an engaging behind-the-scenes tour of City Hall. A highlight of the visit was exploring the Clerk's archives, which preserve historic documents dating back to 1787, offering a fascinating glimpse into the city's rich history. The group also toured several executive branch departments and concluded the experience with a special visit to the Mayor's Office.

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. 78 - A Resolution
Accepting the recommendations of HARB. (View)
Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
Originator: HARB

Resolution No. 78, Session 2026, A Resolution accepting the recommendations of HARB in issuing certificates of appropriateness for work to be done at 605 S. George St., and 208 E. Market St., was introduced by Johnescu, read at length, and motion of Johnescu, seconded by Buckingham, Resolution No. 78 came up for discussion.

Councilman Supler highlighted the application for 605 S. George St., located at Loretta Claiborne Plaza. He said this site houses the WellSpan Behavioral Health Walk-In Crisis Center (a service of WellSpan York Hospital). He said that the facility provides 24/7, open-access, immediate crisis intervention and stabilization for individuals of all ages without requiring an appointment. He shared their direct crisis line (717-851-5320) and noted that mobile crisis services are available.

Councilman Supler then asked City Planner Nancy Griffin about an item noted under "Other Business" in the HARB meeting minutes concerning a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant application and whether the proposed grant to update the historic district design guidelines would include input from City Council, residents, and local business owners in addition to board members.

City Planner Nancy Griffin responded that the grant application had been submitted by the city's consultant to update guidelines that are currently outdated. She explained that she did not yet have specific details regarding meeting composition or public participation structures but noted that further specifics would be determined if the grant is awarded.

Councilwoman Bupp commented on the second HARB application at 208 E. Market St. in that the property owners submitted their application to HARB after resolving a stop-work order issued in May, allowing Council to approve the repair of their third-floor porch so they can secure their necessary building permits.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 78 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions: None

New Business – Introduction of Bills

2. Introduction of Bill No. 26 - A Bill
Amending the FY26 budget. (View) ($100,000 for building repairs and maintenance)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Public Works (Bldgs/Elec. Maint.)

Introduction of Bill No. 26, Session 2026, A Bill amending the FY2026 budget in the amount of $100,000 for the Public Works Department/Building & Electrical Maintenance, was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, and deferred to the Nov. 17 meeting of Council.

3. Introduction of Bill No. 27 - A Bill
Amending the FY26 budget. (View) ($76,680.00 for a grant received from the U.S. Department of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) to replace the current street lighting that is electrically powered with more efficient solar lighting on S. George St.)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Public Works

Introduction of Bill No. 27, Session 2026, A Bill amending the FY2026 Budget in the amount of $76,680.00 for a grant received from the U.S. Department of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) to replace the current street lighting that is electrically powered with more efficient solar lighting on S. George St., was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, deferred to Nov. 17 meeting of Council.

New Business

4. Resolution No. 79 - A Resolution
Appointing/Reappointing members to the York Business Improvement District Authority (Downtown Inc). (View) (C. Valez, R. Gavin, N. Ali, R. Gray, & M. Knaper)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Mayor

Resolution No. 79, Session 2026, A Resolution appointing and reappointing the following was introduced by Buckingham, and read at length:

- Appointment of Chris Velez as a member of the York Business Improvement District Authority succeeding Joanne Wilmore, which term shall become effective November 4, 2026 and shall expire January 1, 2030.
- Appointment of Robert Gavin as a member of the York Business Improvement District Authority succeeding Jason Sabol, which term shall become effective November 4, 2026 and shall expire January 1, 2031.
- Appointment of Nasim Ali as a member of the York Business Improvement District Authority succeeding Eric Menzer, which term shall become effective November 4, 2026 and shall expire January 1, 2032.
- Appointment of Roger Gray as a member of the York Business Improvement District Authority succeeding Lauren Days, which term shall become effective January 1, 2027, and shall expire January 1, 2032.
- Reappointment of Mick Knaper as a member of the York Business Improvement District Authority, which term shall expire January 1, 2032.

On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, Resolution No. 79 came up for discussion.

Councilman Supler directed a legal question to Assistant Solicitor Brett Flower, asking whether membership on the York Business Improvement District Authority constitutes holding a city office or position under Section 604 of the Optional Third-Class City Charter.

Assistant Solicitor Flower replied that she was unprepared to render an immediate opinion without thorough review. She said she could provide an opinion after proper review.

Motion to divide. Based on the solicitor's response, Councilman Supler made a motion to divide the question in order to vote on the appointment of Chris Velez separately from the remaining nominees. President Edquina Washington called for a second to Councilman Supler's motion to divide. Hearing no second, the motion to divide the question DIED for lack of a second.

Councilman Supler then stated that because the solicitor could not provide definitive legal advice regarding charter compliance at that moment, he could not vote in favor of Resolution No. 79 as presented. He clarified that his position was strictly legal rather than personal, emphasizing his duty to ensure that all nominees comply with applicable statutory qualifications. He reminded Council that a similar legal question had been raised in April regarding an appointment to the Human Relations Commission

Vice President Betsy Buckingham stated that as Council's liaison to Downtown Inc., she knew the current YBIDA board was comfortable with all five nominees and looked forward to working with them. She noted that mayoral board recommendations rarely faced such procedural objections.

Motion to table. Councilwoman Bupp stated that she was uncertain what specific legal concerns existed but suggested tabling the Resolution for one meeting to allow the solicitor time to issue a legal opinion. The motion to table was seconded by Supler and FAILED by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp – 2; Nays – Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 3.

Manuel Gomez (Resident) expressed support for Chris Velez, noting that Mr. Velez is heavily endorsed within the community. He stated that while he had raised objections to board appointments in the past, he was confused by the reservations in this case and wished the legal questions were clearer.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 79 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 4; Nays – Supler – 1

As Nasim Ali & Robert Gavin were in attendance, the City Clerk administered them the Oath of Office.

5. Resolution No. 80 - A Resolution Supporting Downtown York in the PA Creative Industries Creative Districts Program. (View)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: York Business Improvement District Authority (Downtown Inc)

Motion to read by short title: A motion was made by Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, to read Resolution No. 80 by short title only. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

Resolution No. 80, Session 2026, A Resolution supporting Downtown York in the PA Creative Industries Creative Districts Program was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, and on motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnbescu, Resolution No. 80 came up for discussion.

Sarah O'Brien (Downtown Inc) explained that this program provides $50,000.00 annually in grant funding ($250,000.00 total over five years). She noted that BID tax revenues have not increased since

1998, making this state funding critical. She reported that a dedicated task force had been established to set strategic goals and that Downtown Inc had launched a public Cultural Asset Map cataloging over 300 creative assets in York. She explained that the program requires a 10% local match ($5,000.00 annually), but assured Council that this requirement could be met entirely through in-kind Public Works and public safety services without requiring cash from the City of York.

President Washington asked what the benefits of this program would be.

Ms. O'Brien responded that this would support plans for public art installations, creative placemaking, a grant for live street entertainment in Center Square and Royal Square, and funding to construct an urban trail safely linking downtown York's three micro-districts.

Vice President Buckingham added that the Director of Pennsylvania Creative Industries attended the morning Downtown Update meeting, and stated that the district designation generates dual economic benefits by supporting local artists and serving as a major driver for regional tourism.

Manuel Gomez (Resident) said he saw nothing but upsides to securing state designation and funding for York's creative economy.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 80 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Supler, Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington – 5; Nays – 0.

XI. Requests for Future Meetings: None

XII. Council Comment

President Washington thanked community members, Council members Buckingham, Supler, and Johnescu, Youth Council Member Denham Greenslade, and Mayor Walker for participating in the recent City Council Community Cleanup. She announced that Council is working with Mayor Walker's administration to organize a larger, community-wide spring cleanup.

Vice President Buckingham encouraged residents to complete the community survey available on the Downtown Inc website.

Councilman Supler shared public safety information provided by the York County Coalition on Homelessness regarding Overnight Cold Weather Shelters for the Code Blue season (November 1 through March 31):

- Primary Code Blue Shelters: Life Path Christian Ministries (367 W. Market St., York) and Changing Lives Shelter (Hanover). Individuals must register before 5:00 p.m., with entry between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Overflow shelter dining room access is located at 370 W. Clark Alley.
- Secondary Code Blue Shelters: Bell Family Shelter (families with children and single women), Covenant House Youth Shelter (individuals under age 21), and YWCA York Access (domestic violence emergency shelter).
- Daytime Resources: Friends and Neighbors (located in the welfare office basement, formerly the Union Lutheran coffee spot) and UPMC Street Medicine outreach services (717-317-2611).

Councilwoman Bupp recommended that property owners concerned about Columbia Gas meters review the HARB meeting minutes from October 22, which contain detailed discussions on gas meter sizes. She also announced that Pennsylvania SNAP provides vouchers covering up to half of SPCA fees for feral cat Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs, encouraging interested residents to contact them via email.

XIII. Administration Comment: None

XIV. Adjournment: There being no further business, the November 4, 2026 meeting of Council adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk

Edquina Washington, President of Council