

BOROUGH OF NORTH WALES
300 SCHOOL STREET
NORTH WALES, PENNSYLVANIA

MEETING: November 18, 2025, 7:00 P.M., EST

CALL TO ORDER made by President Tarlecki at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL:	Candace Anderson	Present
	Sherwin Collins	Present
	Anji Fazio	Present
	Alexander Groce	Present
	Star Litle	Present
	Wendy McClure	Present
	Sally Neiderhiser	Present
	Mark Tarlecki	Present
	Sarah Whelan	Present
	Mayor Neil McDevitt	Present

Also, in attendance were John Filice, Borough Solicitor, David Erenius, Chief of Police, Danielle Ervin, Assistant Manager, and Junior Council member, Violet Anderson.

Manager Hart led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None.

Presentation/Consideration: NWB 2040 Comprehensive Plan 5-Yr Review/Update

Tim Konetchy, Community Planner from the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC), presented an update on the North Wales Borough 2040 Comprehensive Plan. He explained that the document comprised several sections: background, completed projects (with annotated implementation charts), spotlights for each planned theme (Community Character, Economic Development, Transportation, and Sustainability and Resiliency), priority projects, and a summary of the community survey. He further mentioned that the Borough has done a good job of following and executing the plan. He explained that there was an audit performed on the plan, at which point the Borough suggested a survey be presented to the community. The results of the survey were represented by approximately one in ten households by varying demographics, with longer-term residents having more responses. He provided a list of projects with a 2025 status update for each project and identified the following key projects that were completed: Creating the new Arts and Cultural center, updating the Borough’s Zoning Ordinance and maps, Walkability Audit and Center Street Gateway, Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance, and Ninth Street Park Improvements. He also identified priorities for 2026 and the future based on the resident survey feedback. These include Park Maintenance & Stewardship Plans, Main Street Streetscape Study, Traffic Calming Study, Single-hauler Study, and North Wales Elementary School Improvements. He then outlined the next steps for Council, which were two-fold. Council could pursue a formal adoption of the document as an “update” to the

comprehensive plan. The document could be added as an appendix to the plan, and would be something that could be referenced in grant applications, etc. This process involves public notice, public hearing, and county review. The alternative option is that Council may accept the report by resolution, and it could be reframed as a review and audit of progress made. It would still be an important guidance document, but it would be less binding.

Manager Hart asked if Council passed a resolution, in the interest of time, would attaching the plan, audit review, and resolution suffice for grant applications. Mr. Konetchy responded that it could take up to five months for the review and hearing process. She also asked if MPC would still recognize the five-year review resolution as being compliant. He responded that the only requirement is that the plan be reviewed every ten years. Mr. Tarlecki asked if prior approval for the Ninth Street Park Streambank revitalization would be held up by the new resolution. Member Little asked if Council needed to review the entire audit document as part of their due diligence. Solicitor Filice responded that it was up to Council. Member Anderson asked for clarification on some items contained in the Comp Plan. Member McClure raised a concern that the public may not be aware of the results of the survey and the next steps. She recognized that having a public hearing would take too long but wanted to make sure that the public was aware. President Tarlecki suggested that MCPC prepare a brochure summarizing the plan for easier consumption by the public. Member Whelan asked how the traffic study would work. Manager Hart explained that a lot of the initial identification comes from community feedback and traffic monitoring by the police department. Member Little added that taking the time to review with the public will allow more time to possibly recruit new members for open boards and commissions directly affected by the projects. President Tarlecki asked what the percentage of walkable sidewalks exist in the Borough, to which Manager Hart responded that it was approximately 85%.

The Council decided to table the consideration and leave the agenda item as a presentation until the public is afforded the opportunity to review.

Presentation: SALDO Ordinance Update (Repeal and Replace) – Overview

Mr. Konetchy began the presentation by identifying the key differences between Zoning Ordinance Review and SALDO. The key difference is that Zoning Ordinance Review is always applicable and primarily comes into play when a change of use is proposed. Compliance is determined by the Zoning Officer, and any deviation requires a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board – there is no administrative remedy. SALDO applies to subdivision, even if it only involves a property line change, and construction of any nonresidential building or two or more residential buildings. Compliance is generally determined by a combination of the Zoning Officer, Borough Engineer, and Borough Solicitor. He then went through the various administrative articles of the Ordinance. He highlighted Plan Processing and Review, Design Standards, various standards and requirements, special studies and reports, and amendments made to the ordinance. He ended the presentation by saying that Council will vote to advertise the public hearing and their intent to adopt the ordinance. Public notice would be made. The public hearing would be held and, following closure of the public hearing, a vote on adoption of the Ordinance would occur.

Mayor McDevitt thanked everyone who is involved in the process of preparing the materials. He followed up with a question about affordable housing being part of discussions with developers and

falling under SALDO. Mr. Konetchy responded that it could potentially justify asking that type of question if the fiscal analysis shows that the developer is making a windfall, as it affords the Council a good opportunity to ask if the developer would consider adding affordable housing. Another route is to follow up through Zoning, but explained further that in Pennsylvania, there would have to be some type of bonus program. Mayor McDevitt further asked if making a certain number of units accessible is something to be considered under SALDO. Mr. Konetchy responded that it was a good question and something that could potentially be looked upon in the future.

President Tarlecki informed Council that he was going to switch agenda items #4 and #5

Consideration: Approval of Minutes: October 28, 2025

Member McClure made a motion to Approve the Minutes of October 28, 2025. Member Little seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

Consideration: Authorize Advertisement of 2026 Budget

Member McClure made a motion to approve the Authorization to Advertise the 2026 Budget. Member Neiderhiser seconded the motion.

Manager Hart explained that several budget workshops have been held – two in public and several with the Finance Committee. She further explained that she had her final meeting with the electric utilities vendor and received updates on retirement payouts and expenditures tied to hiring for the Police Department, which changed some of the budget line items. She shared the differences between the current mill rate versus an increase of one mill rate. She also noted that the interest in the reserve account is sufficient to cover the general shortfall in operating expenses, but using reserve interest to cover operating expenses would be a decision Council would have to make. She recommended that the Borough approve a one mill, which averages approximately \$150 for a property valued on average at \$126,000 or approximately \$12 per month.

President Tarlecki pointed out that regarding the streetlights, it is unclear how much more than the anticipated doubling of electricity costs will increase in 2026, so we need to be prepared. Manager Hart stated that she performed extensive research on the increase in electricity and based on her findings, the minimum is 0.09 (kWh), and the Borough has proposed 0.04 (kWh), which is more than double, to compensate for what is believed to be additional increases to electricity expenses. Additionally, the increase will enable Ambulance Services to receive funding via tax millage versus donations. She emphasized that it is unclear what the economy will do next year, but that the Borough has to be prepared. She also explained that the Borough's sources of revenue are very limited compared to other municipalities since North Wales does not have a large business operating within the Borough where business tax is levied.

President Tarlecki added that the Council has a Finance Committee comprised of Members Fazio and Groce, in addition to himself, that met with Manager Hart regularly. The Finance Committee agreed that it would be prudent to implement a one mill increase at this time so the Borough is prepared going into 2026. He recommended that Council vote to advertise the budget and asked how the process would work. Manager Hart responded that if Council wants to advertise the budget with the increase,

she will present everything based on a one mill increase or 8 mills in total. She further added that the increase would be advertised for ten days, where the budget documents would be available publicly on the Borough website and at the Borough Office. That would end on December 9th at which point a tax ordinance would have to be created and advertised. This would require Council to meet on December 23rd to vote to adopt the ordinance.

Member Collins asked if the advertisement could include the details as to why the Council is choosing to raise the tax rate. Solicitor Filice stated that you cannot include anything more than the essential information in the advertisement, and that the details would be included in the budget reports.

Member Groce thanked Manager Hart for all the work she put into the budget. He further stated that increasing taxes is not the position the Council would like to be in, but given current and potential future economic conditions, it is necessary. He further explained that the Council has a fiduciary duty to pass a balanced budget, and if ultimately money has to be transferred to ensure there is no deficit, then the fiduciary duty is not being met. He encouraged his fellow Council members to consider the budget carefully, but to support the one mill increase.

Melanie Catanese, 421 W. Walnut Street asked Manager Hart to clarify her comments surrounding the ambulance service, specifically, that North Wales would now have an ambulance service with the additional proposed tax contribution. Manager Hart apologized that her statements caused a misinterpretation. She further explained that VMSC covers North Wales, and up until a few years ago, they were 100% volunteer. They are not volunteers at this point, and Manager Hart was merely making the point of the importance of the ambulance tax, as many times we may take it for granted how readily available the ambulance service is to residents, especially since it is not a state-mandated service. She also clarified that she was not suggesting that if there is no tax, then ambulance service would not be available. Ms. Catanese also asked if the Borough has applied for any RACP grants, to which Manager Hart responded that they were not going to do so until the current one is closed out. Lastly, Ms. Catanese mentioned that if the tax increase were to pass, the Commonwealth has a program to assist homeowners over the age of 65 or widows under the age of 65 or who have other disabilities ("Pennsylvania Property Tax Rent and Rebate program"), which, if qualified, could help refund a portion of a resident's taxes. It does not cost the Borough anything as it is fully funded by the Pennsylvania State Lottery. She asked if the Borough could advertise this at the time they advertise the budget increase. She also added that if qualified, residents are automatically considered up to an 80% rebate with the North Penn School District for school taxes.

Member Anderson asked about VITA, which is a volunteer service for tax preparation, to which Ms. Catanese responded that both the North Penn YMCA and Wissahickon Library offer similar services as well. Manager Hart added that both the State Representative and State Senator have comprehensive information on these services and others, and the Borough website has links to each of these sites.

Member McClure stated that the budget has been weighing heavily on her mind since the tax increase is not the only increase residents have to face, and that while it may seem like a small amount, when added to the other increases residents have to face, it starts to add up.

Greg D'Angelo of 915 East Montgomery Avenue reminded residents that the fire company can always use money and that the fundraisers don't raise as much as you would think. He also added that with no

volunteer fire company, the Borough would have to institute a paid fire company, as is state-mandated, which would cost more than the police department due to the more expensive equipment.

President Tarlecki stated that Member Fazio asked for a roll-call vote to approve advertising the 2026 Budget at an increased rate of 8 mills. Roll-call vote was taken, all members voted yes. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

Old Business / Committee & Board Reports / Zoning Applications

Member Little asked for an update on open seats available for committees, to which Manager Hart responded that there is a list created in December for expiring seats at year's end, but that current open positions are always published on the website.

Manager Hart pointed out that the Planning Commission and Shade Tree Commission minutes are included in the packet. Parks and Recreation Committee minutes were received the day of the Council meeting and will be included in the next meeting's packet, and HARB did not meet in November because they did not have any applications.

There are no Zoning Applications.

Solicitor / Mayor / Council / Chief / Public Works / Manager

Solicitor Filice stated that there would not be an executive session.

The Mayor thanked all of the poll workers who made Election Day earlier this month run smoothly. This election was a record-breaking one for Montgomery County in terms of turnout. Thanks to all of the candidates, regardless of the outcome of the vote - as President Obama often says, "Democracy isn't a spectator sport."

He also said that he and Councilmember Neiderhiser had the pleasure of seeing Joey Molettiere's daughter, Lisa, receive his posthumous degree last week from North Penn School District. Joseph dropped out of High School to serve in Vietnam and was killed in action there. In addition to Joey, four others also received diplomas. He thanked School Board member Jonathan Kassa and Superintendent Todd Bauer for hearing Joey's story and taking action that led to the ceremony.

Member Collins thanked Member Hart for all her hard work on the budget.

Member Whelan added her thanks and appreciation for all of Manager Hart's hard work on the budget, along with that of the Finance Committee, and also for her hard work in general. She also recognized resident Megan Surdenas for her food collection initiative that grew significantly over the past several weeks. Member Whelan was impressed at how such a small community can be so powerful, especially during difficult times like this, and set such a good example.

Member Anderson thanked Manager Hart for her hard work and also thanked the police for handling a deer incident in the community in such a swift manner. She also mentioned that she recognizes how

important the fire and ambulance services are, as she has used them in the past and appreciates their services.

Member Neiderhiser thanked Manager Hart for her work in putting the budget together. She also commented on the graduation ceremony that the Mayor mentioned and thanked the Mayor and the School Board for ensuring the program occurred. She also mentioned that she appreciates the work of the ambulance service, as she had to use it, and encouraged residents to support them. Lastly, she asked about the deer incident, to which Chief Erenius responded that it had been hit by a car and had to be put down. He explained that residents sometimes get upset or angry, expecting the Police to take the deer to a rehabilitation center, but that there's not much that can be done, so the Police put it down most humanely and safely as possible, so the deer does not suffer.

Member Little mentioned that she had met with school officials regarding food insecurities and will be following up after the holidays.

Member Neiderhiser added that the school and voting locations collected food, which was taken to Manna on Main Street in Lansdale. She also added that she was happy to see the large collection the Borough accumulated.

Member Fazio added her thanks and appreciation to Manager Hart for her work on the budget. She also said that it's been a good few weeks seeing everyone making the food donations and then seeing all the bags put out for the Boy Scouts drive.

Member McClure spoke about her visit with the Scouts to talk about her position as Vice President on the Council. They discussed various topics like cell phones, volunteering, and being part of the Scout group. She added that they collected 17,500 pounds of food. She also added her appreciation of Manager Hart being able to put together changes to the budget at the eleventh hour, along with the support of the Finance Committee and the support of Council.

President Tarlecki mentioned that long-time resident Phyllis Byrne passed away. Ms. Burn, in addition to being a long-time resident, was also instrumental with the Historical Architectural Review Board and the North Wales Historic Commission. He asked for a moment of silence in honor of Phyllis. He also confirmed with the Mayor that a proclamation will be presented to her family. He added that he will not be at the next meeting and that Member McClure would be in charge of the meeting.

Junior Council Member Anderson added that although residents may be upset over the tax increase, it is necessary as alternatives are much worse and the Borough does not want to be operating in a deficit during the current economic condition.

Chief Erenius updated everyone on Shop with a Cop to be held on December 13th. Donations can be made via the website post.

Manager Hart gave an update on Public Works, who is working on training and preparing for the winter.

She also mentioned the Vape-Buy-Back program beginning in December 2025 which includes a ten session Nicotine Cessation program.

She asked anyone who has not already done so to RSVP for the Boroughs Association Dinner.

Adjournment

Member McClure made a motion to adjourn. Member Neiderhiser seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Attest: _____
Christine A. Hart
Borough Manager