

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday
May 27th, 2025**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joseph Knowles, Council President
Ed Kisselback, Council Vice President
Michelle Benitez, Council Secretary
Stacey Champion, Council Member
Joseph Pilieri, Council Member

SUPPORTING STAFF PRESENT:

Joseph DiGirolamo, Mayor
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Philip Wursta, Township Engineer

PLEASE NOTE:

The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of their microphone.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING:

Council President Knowles opened the meeting with a moment of silence and/or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, MAYOR AND STAFF:

Council President Knowles introduced the Supporting Staff and Council Members.

PRESENTATION OF **D.A.R.E. POSTER CONTEST WINNERS:**

Mary Ann Griffin, President of the Bensalem Drug and Alcohol Board, thanked the Mayor and the Police Department for supporting the **D.A.R.E.** Program for as many years as they have. Mrs. Griffin introduced the following individuals from the Bensalem Police Department who are the representatives for the **D.A.R.E.** Program: Detective Oliverio represents the Benjamin Rush Elementary School and School Lane Charter. Detective Yasin represents Belmont Hills

Elementary School and Cornwells Elementary School. Officer Patine represents Faust Elementary School. Officer Crozier represents Struble Elementary School and St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School; and Detective Palmer represents Valley Elementary School and St. Ephrem’s Catholic School.

Mrs. Griffin explained what each letter of the word “D.A.R.E.” stood for and how they determine the winner of the Poster Contest by using the D.A.R.E. description:

- “D” Define: Describe the problems, challenge and opportunity.
- “A” Assess: What are your choices?
- “R” Respond: Make a choice, use the facts and information you have gathered.
- “E” Evaluate: Review your decision. Did you make a good choice?

The winners received a gift card from Target. They are as follows:

Nicholas Lituma	Cornwells Elementary School - \$175 – 1 st Place
Amyra Patel	Cornwells Elementary School - \$125 – 2 nd Place
Peyton Sullo	Belmont Hills Elementary School - \$100 – 3 rd Place
Madelyn Greenwald	Robert K. Faust Elementary School - \$75 – 4 th Place
Madison Sullivan	Valley Elementary School - \$50 – 5 th Place

RECOGNITION TO GIANT SUPERMARKETS FOR THE “MEDICATION TAKE BACK DAY” 4/26/25:

Council Secretary Benitez, Executive Board Member of the Building a Better Bensalem Together (B3T), invited board members to join her along with the Chair, Director William McVey.

Statistics have shown that 23% of teens have taken a prescription drug not prescribed to them by a doctor. 47% of teens indicated that it was easy for them to get prescription drugs from their parent’s medicine cabinet. It is important to have these events to make sure that the medication is being disposed of properly. They have collected about 10 boxes semiannually. This past collection they have collected over 10,000 pounds of prescription medications. Since 2010, the inception of this program, Bensalem has always led the way as a top contributor and has collected over 241,000 pounds of prescription medications.

Giant Supermarket has been a partner since day one. Giant has been a tremendous partner with sharing information, getting it out there and giving adequate space that is visible to people, and providing lunch! It has continued to grow over the years.

Representing Giant Supermarket this evening is Katie Rutter, Barbara Hoover and Shelby Hagey.

Council Secretary Benitez presented a plaque to the Giant Supermarket representatives and read the following into the record:

Bensalem Community Partnership Award for 2025

With our deepest appreciation, the Bensalem Township Police Department and Building a Better Bensalem proudly presents this award to the Bensalem Giant Food Store in recognition of your ongoing commitment and dedication to service to “Medication Take Back Day.” The Bensalem Township Police, along with Building a Better Bensalem Together, extend our sincere gratitude for your invaluable support in promoting a safer and healthier community.

The Mayor commented on the weather the day Giant collected the prescription medications and said how it was a very rainy day and how wonderful everything flowed for them that day despite the weather.

The Mayor and Council presented the Giant representatives with a certificate for their achievement which read:

*Giant Supermarket
“Medication Take Back Day”
April 26th, 2025*



*The greatness of a community is most
Accurately measured by the compassionate
Actions of its members.
Service to others leads to greatness.
Thank you for your service to your community!*

One of the representatives from Giant indicated that they appreciate the acknowledgement; and that they do their best to help others, and enjoy their job and helping others in their community.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Council President Knowles indicated the Public Comment will be heard at the time the agenda item is heard. Seeing no one come forward the first of two Public Comments was closed.

4. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:

Council Secretary Benitez motioned to approve the Council Meeting Minutes from April 28th, 2025 as presented. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 4-0-1.

5. **CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING ON AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 225 “VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC” ARTICLE III “PARKING REGULATION,” SECTION 7 “PARKING, STANDING, STOPPING,” APPENDIX A SHALL BE AMENDED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS:**

No Parking, Standing or Stopping Anytime Sign	Direction of Travel	Location
Winchester Road	All Directions	East Side from the West Intersection with Bridgewater Road and extending to the driveway entrance of 1741 Winchester Road

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the Township had received complaints from businesses and motorists in the area that trucks and tractor trailers parking along that section of Winchester Road are making it difficult for vehicles accessing the businesses to get to their loading docks, and also, making deliveries. The trucks and the trailers along the road were also just generally creating a traffic hazard.

A Traffic Study was performed at the direction of the Administration. The Traffic Study concluded that the appropriate action would be to post No Parking, Stopping or Standing Anytime signs on Winchester Road from the intersection of Winchester and Bridgewater up to the driveway for 1741 Winchester, and that would be on the east side of Winchester Road.

The Traffic Study is part of the packet that Council has before them this evening. The Ordinance was prepared by the Administration. It was duly advertised in Bucks County Courier Times and is in a form acceptable for Council consideration.

Council President Knowles indicated that the pictures of the trailers were without cabs on them. It looked as though they were parking trailers there as storage.

Council Vice President Kisselback motioned to approve the Ordinance as presented. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Council President Knowles indicated that he should defer to the public for comment in regards to being for or against the Ordinance proposed this evening. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment portion was closed.

Council Vice President Kisselback reiterated his motion to approve the Ordinance as presented. **Councilwoman Champion** reiterated her seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION REQUESTING A GREENWAYS, TRAILS AND RECREATION PROGRAM (GTRP) GRANT OF UP TO \$250,000 FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FINANCING AUTHORITY TO BE USED FOR THE REPLACEMENT AND UPGRADES OF THE EXISTING EQUIPMENT AT BENSELEM COMMUNITY PARK:**

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the playground in the Bensalem Community Park located at Richlieu and Galloway Roads is about 25 years old, and is coming to the end of its useful life. The Township has in the Budget the replacement of that playground. This opportunity for a Grant has come from the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program. If awarded, the Grant would be for up to \$250,000 which the Township would be able to use to offset the costs of those improvements.

In order to submit the application for the Grant, a Resolution of Council is required. The Resolution is before Council and is the form of a Resolution that is required by the Commonwealth Financing Agency. They are the entity that would be administering the Grant if it were awarded to the Township by the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program. The Administration recommends that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the submission of a Grant application of up to \$250,000 from the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program for the replacement of the Community Park Playground.

Council Vice President Kisselback questioned the amount of \$772,600.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated the new playground, altogether when it is done, will be approximately \$772, 600. DCNR is providing \$386,000 toward that cost. This would be another opportunity for the Township to further offset that cost by way of an additional \$250,000.

Council President Knowles asked the location of the Bensalem Community Park which is located at Richlieu and Galloway Roads.

Councilwoman Champion indicated that the memo from Mr. Chaykowski talks about Imaginationland and asked for clarification.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that Imaginationland will be moving forward this year. The Township has secured the funding for that and the permitting process is underway. The Township is ready to proceed with the Imaginationland replacement the end of this summer early fall. The Township is awaiting permits and other approvals from the State because the money is coming through the State. The Township has to wait until they cross all of the “T’s” and dot all the I’s” on their end before the Township can put the project out to bid and move forward. The Township anticipates that the project will move forward this year.

The Grant application that is being considered this evening is for Community Park.

Council Vice President Kisselback indicated that he had a conversation early this afternoon with the Mayor regarding the recreation system. First Responders Field and their soccer field is second to none. The turf field is above anything he has seen for a soccer field. The new stadium and the lighting are exceptional. The fact of the matter is that the Administration and Council is on board with basically keeping the children in recreational state of the art equipment to make it

enjoyable. Imaginationland is packed all of the time as well as the other parks throughout the Township.

Councilwoman Champion indicated that during the Budget meeting Mr. Chaykowski talked about handicapped accessible swings. And how it is so wonderful that the Township is in the process of upgrading Imaginationland for the disabled children. It is heartwarming. She has recently said that the Township has upgraded 3 playgrounds in the last 3 years.

Councilwoman Champion motioned to approve the Resolution for the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program Grant application as presented. Council Secretary Benitez seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Councilwoman Champion added, for the record, Council discusses these things at the Budget meeting but it takes time to get everything moving; and to be sure that they are using tax dollars wisely and to get the Grants that they can to offset any cost.

7. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR ACT NO. 537, PA SEWAGE FACILITIES ACT, PLAN REVISION FOR NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT OF A PARCEL OF LAND IDENTIFIED AS THE NESHAMINY SQUARE SHOPPING:**

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the Neshaminy Square Shopping Center on Rockhill Drive is going to be expanding the portion of the shopping center dedicated to PennDOT, based on the lines that have been there at the PennDOT facility. In order for the expansion to take place it is required that Council approve an amendment to the Act 537 Plan. This is required by DEP as well as the County Water and Sewer Authority. The Resolution is the standard form that is required by the State.

Council Vice President Kisselback motioned to approve the Act 537 Processing Form for the Neshaminy Square Shopping Center. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

8. **CONSIDERATION OF A REDUCED PERMIT FEE REGARDING THE ANNUAL FIRE INSPECTION FEES FOR THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER:**

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that one of the many beautiful historic structures in the community is the King Library and the Church of the Redeemer in Andalusia. It is time for their annual fire inspection and they are requesting that Council consider a reduction of the fire inspection fees for those two buildings. Among other things, they serve as a polling location in the Township. The request is consistent with Council's policies for such requests, and if granted, it would reduce the fee from \$210 down to \$105 which is a meaningful amount to this nonprofit operation.

Council Secretary Benitez motioned to approve the reduced permit fee for fire inspection for the Church of the Redeemer. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Council President Knowles asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak. The following constituent came forward:

Jimmy Lamb, 3301 Sarmiento Drive, indicated he was there to observe the meeting, but after hearing some comments about the Township parks, wanted to add and agree that they deserve all of their accolades and approval, because he loves going to the park all the time. Firefighters Field, for instance, when he hears people talking about going to the gym; he is like why would they do that, if you could go to Firefighters Field and walk around on the outside at such a beautiful facility.

Also, in regards to the various parks, the restrooms are locked. One thing he did notice is that staffing is crucial. This would be something important to consider moving forward.

Mr. Lamb spoke to a few teachers in the district who indicated that their elementary classrooms are kind of tight at the moment.

Seeing no one else come forward the second Public Comment was closed.

10. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Solicitor Pizzo indicated how wonderful the Memorial Day Parade was and gave his thanks and commendation to VFW Post 9220, Veterans of Andalusia, for their planning, organizing and keeping the tradition alive.

Mayor indicated his many thanks to Giant for the great job that they did regarding their participation in the “Medication Take Back Day.” Also, you can drop off your prescription medication here at the Township 24/7 at Dispatch which is located back where the Police cars are parked.

Community Park Basketball Courts are closed until June 7th for special Township programming from 10:30am until 2:30pm. The courts will re-open for public use at 2:30pm.

Concert Season kicks-off tomorrow May 28th with the Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience. Gates open at 5:30pm for Season Pass holders and 6:00pm for all other attendees, concert starts at 7:00... there is still time to get your Season Passes here at the Township building Monday thru Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm. Also, this past Friday night there was a free concert and fireworks in honor of our Veterans which turned out phenomenal. A great time was had by all.

Free Electronic Recycling Event for Bensalem Residents Only! October 10th through October 20th Monday-Saturday 8:00am to 2:00pm at our Public Works Department. Please check out our website for the items that will be accepted and the items that will not be accepted.

Free Shredding Event for Bensalem residents only, Saturday, October 25th from 10:00am until 1:00pm at our Public Works Department.

Council Secretary Benítez indicated that it was great to see everybody at the parade yesterday and what a beautiful day to spend together honoring our veterans. Thanked the Police Department for making sure that everything was safe and secure, traffic flowed very well. Wished Councilwoman Champion an early Happy Birthday and thanked her for all that she does for the community! Excited about the concert season and thanked everyone involved to make it possible.

Councilwoman Champion thanked everyone, especially the Faunce family and indicated that Memorial Day is about those who gave their all for our country. Excited about the playgrounds getting approved. Will be at the Phillies game tomorrow for her birthday! Congratulated all of the students graduating this year! May they all have a wonderful, safe summer and the best of luck on their next journey.

Council Vice President Kisselback thanked those from the VFW Post 9220. Keep in mind what Memorial Day is about, it is about those who had given their life for everyone to be here today. It is a happy time in terms of celebrating what they have done for the citizens and the sacrifice they made to make America what it is today!

The Mayor indicated that the Township Building is dedicated to the Veterans and outside there is a whole section to the left of the Township building entrance that displays a plaque of the dedication. Listed are those who gave their lives to protect our freedom and liberty.



Council President Knowles enjoyed the Memorial Day parade. The crowd was great the service at the Veterans of Andalusia building remembering Captain Faunce who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. The VFW did a great job sponsoring the parade. This is how great our country is! We can be happy about the fact that we've had patriots that were willing to sacrifice their lives so that we can have freedom; and this is why it is a good thing to wish someone a Happy Memorial Day, and still have the respect to honor the people who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives.

11. **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of May 27th, 2025 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

www.bensalempa.gov

or

www.youtube.com

Respectfully Submitted,

**Debra F. McBreen
Recording Secretary**