

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday
July 13th, 2026**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Tokmajian, Jr., Council President
Joe Wenzel, Jr., Council Secretary
Ed Kisselback, Council Member
Joseph Knowles, Council Member

SUPPORTING STAFF PRESENT:

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

2. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND STAFF:

Council President Tokmajian introduced the Council Members and Supporting Staff.

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION – POLICE OFFICER AWARDS:

William McVey, Director of Public Safety, indicated that the officers on the street doing the job that they do so remarkably well and are so proud. It’s always nice to take time, especially at a Council meeting for the general public of Bensalem to see what a great job the 911 Responders do. This evening the Bensalem Police Department will be honoring some of their heroes and read the following into the record:

Corporal Noah Pultro

On January 8, 2026, at approximately 12:44 a.m., you responded to 1446 Gibson Road C44 for a report of a male who was bleeding from his arm and possibly losing consciousness. While enroute, you were advised by Bucks County Police Radio that the victim was now reporting he had been shot in the arm.

Upon arrival, you located the victim suffering from a gunshot wound to his upper left arm and observed significant blood loss. Without hesitation, you applied a tourniquet to control the bleeding until emergency medical personnel arrived. Medical personnel on scene later confirmed that your prompt application of the tourniquet was a critical life-saving intervention and directly contributed to saving the victim's life.

In recognition of your training, professionalism, quick thinking, and decisive life-saving actions, you are hereby awarded the Bensalem Police Department Life Saving Award.

Officer Cliff Snyder & Officer Richard Adams

Director McVey indicated that Officer Adams was on vacation and could not be there, but they will be honoring both of these fine Officers.

On March 25, 2026, you responded to a disabled vehicle in the area of Byberry & Galloway Roads, where you discovered a 73-year-old female unconscious behind the wheel. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, you both acted swiftly to gain access to the vehicle by breaking a window and safely removing the unconscious driver. You immediately began life-saving measures and CPR.

As a direct result of your prompt actions and coordinated efforts, the patient, identified as Susan Rose, regained a pulse and was transported to the hospital for further treatment. Hospital staff later credited your life-saving intervention as a significant factor in the patient's complete recovery.

In recognition of your professionalism, decisive actions, and unwavering commitment to preserving life, you are hereby awarded the Bensalem Police Department Life Saving Award.

Ms. Rose, with tears in her eyes, hugged Officer Snyder and graciously thanked him for saving her life. Director McVey indicated that he was so thankful that she was alive and thanked Ms. Rose for being here tonight to celebrate this with the Township's officers.

Corporal Steve Ambs; Officer Mike Sheehy; Officer Chris Pennington; Officer Brett Beaumont

On May 2, 2026, at approximately 12:37 hours, you responded to Windward Lane for a reported cardiac arrest involving a 57-year-old male.

Upon arrival, officers located the patient unresponsive on the bedroom floor. Working together, you immediately initiated CPR and continued life-saving efforts for an extended period, rotating responsibilities as needed until Bensalem EMS personnel took over the care of the patient.

As a result of your prompt actions and coordinated response, the patient, identified as Sean Clements, responded positively to the life-saving measures and was subsequently transported to Jefferson-Torresdale Hospital for further treatment.

In recognition of your professionalism, teamwork, perseverance, and commitment to preserving life, each of you is hereby awarded the Life Saving Award by the Bensalem Police Department.

Mr. Clements and his family thanked each Officer.

Director McVey indicated that it was great that Mr. Clements was alive and it was great to see the training of these Officers get put in action and have a positive result. Thanked Mr. Clements for being here to celebrate with the Police Department this evening.

Director McVey indicated that our Police Officers do a tremendous job every day serving the Bensalem Community with integrity and distinction. It is not every day that you get called upon to save a life. These Officers train for hundreds of hours each year over the course of their career to be prepared. The cases you just heard are an example of their professionalism and commitment to excellence and people's lives were saved as a result.

Thanked the Officers who were honored and thanked all of the Officers present for what they do every day. (applause)

Director McVey indicated that Chief Dave Sassa, who is the Chief of County Detectives for Chester County and will be presenting the next award. He is a colleague of Director McVey who serves on the Crime Commission Committee together, a true professional in Police work. Mr. Sassa does an exceptional job leading his Detective Agency and is coming forward to recognize one of the members of the Bensalem Police Department.

Chief Sassa indicated that it was an honor and privilege to be the Chief of the Chester County Detectives in West Chester. He commands a County Detective Agency of 25 and works for the District Attorney.

Chief Sassa is here this evening to recognize Detective Sergeant Glenn Vandergrift for his contributions to Chester County. Chief Sassa has been in law enforcement for many years. Over 15 years ago when most Police Departments around the Bensalem area were talking about DNA and how to implement DNA and what can be used for DNA, the Bensalem Township Police Department was already using DNA.

They had already created their own database initiative; they were solving crimes. Bensalem was first in the Commonwealth. The previous Director, Fred Harrah, his intuition and using forensic DNA to solve these smaller crimes was impressive. When Chief Sassa was appointed to his executive position he indicated that he wanted to emulate that department. Bensalem was eliminating people; they were linking crime scenes from smaller crime scenes to big crime scenes in Bensalem. Nobody else was doing that. There is a State Police lab and a FBI lab, but Bensalem created their own and they were successful.

They had to obtain funding and he went to the person whom he considered to be an expert and that is Sergeant Vandergrift. He is the forefront of this DNA initiative; he deserves a lot of credit for helping them. They obtained funding, and he gave them points, he gave them strategic planning points. He gave them operational reasons on how to do these things. Policies, how to implement them in certain investigations from homicide to low-level crimes.

It is important that they solve a crime and the public has trust in what they do as investigators, as a Police Department. The Bensalem Police Department is the National model for what they have done and they continue to do and be on the forefront.

Sergeant Vandergrift answered so many questions from their detectives, and their prosecutors. He helped develop their policy; he helped develop their initiative. He came to Chester County and personally trained with some other trainers over 125 Police Officers, Detectives, Chiefs of Police and State Troopers, and showed how this program worked before they started the initiative.

Chief Sassa is proud to say in three years since they have started this program, they have built their database up to over 3,000 samples and over 1,200 hits. Meaning 1,200 times they linked cases with cases in Chester County, in Bucks County, in Philadelphia, in New Castle County and other areas of the Commonwealth. Sergeant Vandergrift deserves a lot of credit for what he did for Chester County.

Law enforcement is a team sport. They share information, they share intelligence information and share training; they share personnel and that is how they are successful. His gratitude to Sergeant Vandergrift is a reflection on the leadership of his department.

Chief Sassa read the following to Sergeant Vandergrift:

In recognition to your dedication and effort and assisting with the implementation of the Chester County District Attorney Office Rapid and DNA program presented to you today, July 13th, 2026.

Director McVey indicated that Sergeant Vandergrift started doing this in 2010, 16 years later. In-between Bensalem and Chester he also trained Montgomery County, all of their Police Departments, and some other areas across the state.

Council President Tokmajian congratulated Director McVey for leading the best Police force in the County, and quite frankly the state. Those that received awards this evening is a pure example as to the reason why they continue to support emergency responders, police and fire, because they are quite the best here in Bensalem. When you see a police car racing down the street, you don't know what they're going to respond to, but they are putting their life in danger and they are saving lives as well. You really don't realize that until it personally affects you. Thanked all of the officers present for all that they do every single day.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT-LIMITED TO AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:**

Council President Tokmajian 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:**

Councilman Kisselback motioned to approve the Council Minutes for June 22nd, 2026 as presented. **Council Secretary Wenzel** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Natasha Bica, 2047 Hansell Drive, they had water issues on their street. Last Monday, July 6th, 2026 their street flooded along with homes taking in water. All of Bensalem has a drainage problem which Council is well aware. The people of Bensalem, your constituents, the ones who elected Council are holding Council to their campaign promises. It is time to get this done. Back in 2021 when they initially had the problems and nothing has been done since then.

Since Monday, July 6th, 2026, they have been in contact with the Mayor and Deputy Director Brian Guay from Public Works and gave them a very big thank you for coming out to their property to look at the situation firsthand. The Mayor couldn't make it today but he did send Deputy Director Guay. Ms. Bica believes this is a step in the right direction towards solving these issues. Ms. Bica invites all of Council members to do the same.

Pictures and words do not give it justice to what is actually happening in the back of their homes. It is something small that can be resolved to mitigate a portion of the problem. Seeing it with your own eyes gives you a much better perspective of the problem and issues that they deal with on a daily basis. Speaking with people who live in flood prone areas is the only way to get an idea of what actually happens and come up with a plan to mitigate these issues with them. No one knows their home like they do.

It is possible that anyone who is dealing with these floods can tell you where it is coming from and what they think could resolve it. Ms. Bica indicated that none of the residents are engineers or architects, or anything like that, but they live there, they see where it is coming from and they see the problems that it is causing them. Cleaning out and fixing the retention pond that is behind their houses is only the beginning and a fraction of the issues on their street.

Hansell Drive, which connects Street Road and Hulmeville Road, needs more drains on the street to catch some of the water that rushes down their street, which in turn overflows into their driveways and into their homes. Having the water go into multiple drains could help the problem slightly.

The drains that they have now are only two that lead to the pipe that goes into Street Road which is a State-owned street; but there have been many other projects that Bensalem and PennDOT have worked together on and this is something that could be done.

Ms. Bica indicated that the infrastructure of this Township is not adequate for all that has been built in the past 10 to 15 years. This has to be upgraded in order to manage the growth in this township. They need answers and permanent solutions to the sewage issues as well. Having pipes run through the Armstrong property and into Hansell Drive was an engineering mishap.

The flooding situation on Hansell Drive should be a priority. Living with the smell of sewage and the possibility of it backing up into their houses is an unacceptable way to live and should not be tolerated in the times that they live in and the country they live in.

Ms. Bica indicated to feel free to contact her with any questions or concerns, especially solutions to their problem. Above all they are residents of Bensalem that need actions, not words.

Ms. Bica indicated that she will be attending Council meetings regularly to remind Council that they are still in need of these things. She will provide updates on her end as to how the conditions have been, but will be very persistent until things get done.

Ms. Bica wants a timeline and the timeline needs to be strict and complied with.

Ms. Bica wanted to thank the Mayor and Deputy Director Guay for being in constant contact with her which she felt was a great step in the right direction, but they need more.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he knows of the issues on Hansell Drive and what it looks like down there and agreed with Ms. Bica that it is not an overnight fix. Armstrong, he believes is part of the problem, which is privately owned. From all different avenues they did reach out to, but not sure of the ownership structure at this point; Administration reached out to the owner of Armstrong, as well as himself indirectly, trying to help abate some of the issues there.

He reiterated Ms. Bica's comments in terms of the Township Public Works and the Administration being there and addressing those issues as soon as possible.

Ms. Bica indicated she had no complaints about the Township's Public Works Department. They have been amazing throughout this whole thing. Ms. Bica contacted the Mayor and the Mayor is the one that sent out Deputy Director Guay; who has been nothing but helpful and they are in contact with him and very responsive to their emails.

Ms. Bica indicated that something needs to be done with the Armstrong property.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he agreed and was looking at two things, a short-term fix as much as they can to alleviate what is going on. The long-term fix is really putting in permanent water infrastructure on that property.

Councilman Knowles indicated that they did incorporate that into the development that was fortunately or unfortunately going behind there. The Township wanted extra things, but this never happened.

Ms. Bica indicated they never built anything and now there is a property sitting there with trash all over the place, discarded furniture which is not ever her problem. The problem is the retention pond because that is what abuts her property and what causes issues in their backyards.

Council Secretary Wenzel asked Solicitor Pizzo if this would be more or less an issue from the property owner more than a Township issue? Could the residents of Hansell Drive collectively get together and go after the owner of the Armstrong property for not keeping up their property?

Solicitor Pizzo indicated if a private property owner causes harm to a neighboring property owner, there is the potential there for civil action between the property owners. He would be reluctant to sit there and discuss publicly what they might or might not do visive that neighboring property. He would be happy to meet with them privately to discuss it. But, generally speaking many of the issues that come in front of Council during Public Comment are actually disputes that are between private property owners for which the Township doesn't have standing in some regards, and this may be one of those instances.

Ms. Bica indicated that she contacted an attorney regarding the Armstrong property and they do not have the funds to do that for their street. She was told that it would cost each resident 10 to \$15,000 and would not get money back from that. It is just going to make him do something that he should have been doing the whole time. The Township is the middle guy, the voice of the residents of Hansell Drive to contact the property owner. They have no way to contact him. The only information that she has is the name of a company that he owns, that which is after that property got foreclosed on. It went back to him and that's the only reason why she knows that because she has been following this and there is no contact information for that person.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that they will jointly cooperate with the landowner and figure out a resolution.

Ms. Bica indicated that she knows the Township has started something and things are in the works and appreciates that, but needs to be a part of this 100%.

Council Secretary Wenzel asked Ms. Bica if it was flooding out in front of her house as well?

Ms. Bica indicated that her front yard did flood but that was a separate issue. Other neighbors get flooding in the back of their houses and they live closer to Hulmeville Road and nobody knows where that water is coming from.

Council Secretary Wenzel stated that if the issue is coming from resident to resident, that is a civil issue, but if it's an issue that's on the street that is an issue for the Township to handle more or less. The Township can have the Township Engineer at least look at issues that may...(interrupted by constituent)

Coleen Rispo, 2032 Hansell Drive, takes on all the water from that building straight down Hulmeville Road. It dumps down Hulmeville, it dumps down their street, it dumps into a 4 ft. storm drain that goes out to Wendy's to Street Road. That storm drain is not big enough to handle, and know you've dismantled the Armstrong property and they are not maintaining it. The resident can't keep calling the property owner. The Township needs to have it maintained and bill them. Take it out of the Township's Miscellaneous Fund.

It is Ms. Bica's understanding that there is a department that is supposed to actually go after them and hold them accountable.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that Building and Planning or Public Works would be those that the Township would get involved with at the Township level. When they start having those discussions in terms of fixing the water management and figuring out what they are going to do with that site, they will be happy to have Ms. Bica to be part of those discussions.

Ms. Bica indicated that she understands that their houses were not built in the right places but that retention pond is supposed to help mitigate some of the problems.

Councilman Knowles indicated that hopefully the Township can have a temporary solution like Council President Tokmajian said, they can have a temporary solution to help and clean the basin, do whatever the Township can do now. He thinks that the property is going to change hands and someone is going to develop it and the Township will make sure they hold their feet to the fire to make sure they give the Township the proper drainage. They had a whole retention basin and everything like that.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that to Ms. Bia's point it is a Townshipwide problem and the Township is looking at that and making it part of the 2027 budget.

Kimberly Daniels, 2046 Hansell Drive, indicated that 5 years ago yesterday was the major flood where she got 5 ft., of water in her family room, garage, laundry room, hot water heater, everything gone. She indicated that Council President Tokmajian came to Hansell Drive, walked through the resident's houses and told the residents that they would get this resolved. Every time it rains, she is worried, she is sick because the only drain is right outside of her house. If she is not outside with a rake getting all of the debris out of the drain, then it is all coming down her driveway and into her house again. There has to be some estimate of time. They are already at 5 years, how many more years do they think it will take? The stress of rain is unbearable.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that this evening they started talking through what the resolution looks like and the flooding issues that they have seen across the Township.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that the Township could actually look at the front road streets. To send an engineer on someone else's property, Township cannot send their engineer onto Armstrong property, which is privately owned.

Lorraine Barber, 2819 Marion Avenue, indicated that she was aware of a project done at the golf course and Woodbine Avenue. However, Marion at Brown is absolutely horrible, they have a river that runs past. She has spent \$50,000 every time it rains, she has to redo everything. She can't sell her house because who is going to buy it when it floods? She has lost everything three times. She has PTSD from water. She has quick dam bags at her back door, she has sealed her back door. The water is coming off of Street Road and off of Brown Avenue.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that Eddington lacks sufficient water management.

Angel Ordonez, 2922 Ogden Avenue, in 2021 he had flooding at his house and had lost everything. The Township helped him dispose of the debris from his house. The sewer is in front of his house and his house is the lowest part.

Ms. Bica asked if the Township can send the streetsweeper to clear their street before and after a rain?

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he spoke to the Director of Administration, John Chaykowski and he indicated that the Township is going to increase the frequency of cleaning out those drains.

Kimberly Daniels indicated that she spoke to the Township in regards to Hulmeville Road and the drains that are covered with debris. The Township sent an email to PennDOT in which Ms. Daniels was cc'd on and it never got done and she asked if the Township could get a hold of PennDOT again to clear those drains.

Robert, Schueller, 1981 Hansell Drive, indicated that they were going to build a road back there. That's just going to make it worse because if you cover the ground the water has nowhere to go.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that the owner of Armstrong had filed bankruptcy and will have to at some point talk to the new owner and see what the plan is.

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

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that Council met in a brief Executive Session immediately prior to this evening meeting. It lasted approximately 20 minutes. Present were the four members of Council, the Director of Administration and the Township Solicitor. During that Executive Session the Council was briefed by the Director of Administration on various emergency management responses to the significant weather event that occurred on July 6th, 2026. No official action was taken during that Executive Session, and none is required at this evening's meeting.

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

Councilman Knowles indicated that there is a lot of water problems and it is going to take a lot of money to do that. Gene DiGirolamo's mother passed away, the Mayor's sister's funeral was last week, she was 101. Harry Kramer's son passed away at a young age. Keep all of those people that are associated with the Township in your prayers.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated that when the flooding happened on Station Avenue the Township immediately reached out to the State. Their response wasn't the most exciting thing, it was "Oh, wow". That was the State's response! The Township is waiting to see if they can work together with the State to try and alleviate some of the stress that there is in the Township.

Spoke to residents in Village Green who have road issues and have flooded PennDOT's website with issues neighborhood wide, and received a response in a timely manner. Recommended to the audience to upload their pictures on PennDOT's website or call 1-800-FIX-ROAD but it is easier to do it online because you can upload photos and issues to their website. They do respond back with information, but sometimes it is not what you want to hear.

Drove through Hansell Drive to see if there was any kind of construction equipment and stuff on Armstrong property to see if they did anything.

Councilman Kisselback indicated that he can certainly understand their aggravation and intent of problems occurring because it is not like it was yesterday. You can imagine the Township's problems trying to work with PennDOT. There is the Armstrong property where the Township thought they had it under control, or at least approaching it, and then the developer bailed out. Council was in discussion regarding the Armstrong property prior to the meeting this evening in terms of stormwater management problems which is throughout the entire Township.

Solicitor Pizzo have a pleasant evening.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he did ask the Mayor to meet with him and Director Chaykowski of some of the more recent flooding issues. They talked about three general areas. Council went into this year recognizing that they really had to get ahead of the flooding issues that they saw across the Township.

They went into this with the understanding that they were going to make this a team effort to try and address some of these areas. Particularly this evening they talked about Hansell, they talked about the Eddington area, and they talked about Station Avenue. Hansell, they recognized that there are two, a short-term and a long-term fix and talked about options for both. The Township will follow up on the Eddington area on those two particular areas. Brown and Marion Avenues,

Brown and Eddington and 2922 Ogden Avenue; and recognizes that there is work to do down in Eddington. It is not going to be a cheap fix but it certainly has to be addressed.

Lastly, the Station Avenue project, the Township did reach out to PennDOT. They did provide three different options which are being looked at; they are very high level and will be scheduling a meeting with PennDOT sometime in August. At that time, the Township will bring up some of the issues that they have seen across the Township, which include the State roads, particularly with the issue about the drains being blocked along Hulmeville Road.

The Township is making headway trying to cooperatively speak with the State elected leaders, as well as PennDOT, to get ahead of and try to address some of the flooding issues that they see across the Township.

Spoke to Director Chaykowski about potentially including some funding to support fixing and addressing some of the flooding problems that they are seeing in the forthcoming Budget in December.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

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

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of July 13th, 2026 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

www.bensalempa.gov or www.youtube.com

Respectfully Submitted,

Debora F. McBreen
Recording Secretary