

BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Monday
September 14th, 2026**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Edward Tokmajian, Jr., Council President
Jesse Sloane, Council Vice President
Joseph Wenzel, Jr., Council Secretary
Edward Kisselback, Council Member
Joseph Knowles, Council Member

SUPPORTING STAFF PRESENT:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Philip Wursta, Township Engineer
John Chaykowski, Director of Administration

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 meditation or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

2. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND STAFF:

Council President Tokmajian introduced the Council Members and Supporting Staff.

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:

Council President Tokmajian asked if there were any corrections, additions, anything that Council needed to note regarding the council minutes for meeting date of August 24th, 2026.

Council Secretary Wenzel indicated one correction that he noticed was that his name is spelled wrong in the entire packet. That will have to be adjusted for the Minutes from the August 24th, 2026 Council meeting.

Council President Tokmajian asked for a motion to approve with that one change.

Council Vice President Sloane motioned to approve. Council Secretary Wenzel seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

REQUEST FOR AN ADDENDUM TO THE SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2026 COUNCIL AGENDA:

Council President Tokmajian indicated Mr. Chaykowski has asked to add a Resolution regarding the Regional Fire Training Prop. to this evening's agenda and proposed it be added as agenda item number 10A, and if Council so chooses called for a motion.

Council Vice President Sloane motioned to add the additional Resolution as agenda item number 10A for consideration this evening. **Councilman Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

5. PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING VERIZON CABLE FRANCHISE RENEWAL:

Director Chaykowski indicated that the Township participates in a multi-consortium negotiation with Verizon. It is a five-year agreement and the current agreement is expiring. The consortium hires the Cohen Law Group to negotiate with Verizon. They're very familiar with it, and they handle both Verizon and the Comcast negotiations. In front of Council is the agreement for the next 5-years with Verizon. The contribution that Verizon will pay doesn't really change. They are noting that obviously with the increase in streaming services they are seeing a reduction in subscribers, but with that, there might be an issue with payments going forward based on subscribers but we'll see what happens with that. If Council has any questions, Mr. Chaykowski would be glad to hear them.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that he had a few questions. There was a mention that they negotiate the agreement with Comcast as well. Are the agreements pretty similar?

Director Chaykowski indicated yes.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that generally speaking, all of the Townships or Municipalities that are part of the consortium have the same renewal. And typically, there's a what we refer to as a most favored nation clause that if some other township in the consortium were to get provisions superior to what we have, everybody gets them.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that it answers the next question of it being consistent. One of the things that is in the agreement that he noticed was an allowance to audit the fees only once every 3 years as opposed to every year. How often do we actually do that audit?

Director Chaykowski indicated that the Township has never had to. We've never found an issue with the fees like dipping way down or anything like that. He could not recall that any of the consortium members have ever audited the agreement or the payments themselves.

Council Vice President Sloane asked how do we know that we're getting or what we're supposed to get?

Director Chaykowski indicated they pay the Township quarterly and they do provide the Township with a quarterly subscription explanation that gives a bunch of details of as far as who's got just internet, who's got the whole package and everything like that.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that they're giving the Township essentially the role of subscribers in the area and all. Correct?

Director Chaykowski replied correct.

Council Vice President Sloane asked if the Township has 100% coverage in the township?

Director Chaykowski indicated that by either Comcast or Verizon? Yes.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated by either. With the agreements, is there any consideration of expansion for coverage to make sure that all areas are covered equally by both?

Director Chaykowski indicated that he says either. The only places that he thinks that there might be an issue is in apartment complexes. Every resident has the option to do either. The infrastructure is built for both.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that is what he thought. He just wanted to make sure. The only other question he had was that there's a liquidated damages clause in the back that's capped at 20,000 annually. Have we ever had to charge for any LD's?

Director Chaykowski indicated no, the Township has never had an issue with whether they're doing street opening permits or anything like that for doing additional infrastructure.

Council Vice President Sloane and service interruptions, that kind of stuff.

Director Chaykowski indicated never. Now, if there is a service interruption for some reason, they certainly give us advanced notice if it's a planned service interruption but never had any issues with anything.

Councilman Knowles asked if the number of subscribers they have is per Township or just the whole thing?

Director Chaykowski indicated it was for Bensalem, each municipality gets their own distribution.

Councilman Knowles indicated that is what he thought, just wanted to make sure.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that there was a period of time where the technology was such that these agreements were sort of influx back when he first got involved anymore. The renewals, you know, the township's wired, the terms and conditions stay pretty static. And as John said, you know, in this day and age, the number of households that are getting the combination of telephone, Wi-Fi, and cable TV is decreasing. The streaming services are ultimately where things are going.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that due to those circumstances, do you anticipate the drop in revenue?

Director Chaykowski They're saying that roughly viewership is about 8% down the from previous contract period. You still get it even if you just have internet. You still get a portion of the franchise agreement with that. Even if they have streaming services, whether they have Comcast or Verizon, the only option would be is if they have like a T-Mobile or a Dish or something like that.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that the last thing he wanted to note is he didn't realize that the agreement actually notes language regarding a policy for subscribers, complaints, billing and communication which is good to know as well. If there are any particular issues the Township can kind of fall back on this.

Director Chaykowski indicated both Comcast and Verizon have government specialists that if the Township should have an issue with a resident that far extreme, the Township can contact them directly

for whether it's a service interruption that's been ongoing and they're not resolving or something to that extent.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP AND VERIZON PENNSYLVANIA, LLC:**

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who was for or against the Ordinance. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment portion was closed.

Council President Tokmajian asked for a motion to accept the ordinance as it's presented this evening.

Councilman Knowles motioned to accept the ordinance for the execution of the cable franchise agreement between the Township and Verizon Pennsylvania, LLC as presented. **Councilman Kisselback** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

7. **PRESENTATION OF THE 2026 PENSION FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT AND MINIMUM MUNICIPAL OBLIGATION BY THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION:**

Director Chaykowski indicated that as he does every year there is no action that the Council has to take at this point. It's just in compliance with Pennsylvania Act 205. It is required that this is to be read into the record what the 2027 Minimum Municipal Obligation is for both for the Police the Non-Uniform and the Non-Uniform Defined Contribution Pension Plans.

Police Defined Benefit Pension	\$6,410,28
Non-Uniform Defined Benefit Pension	\$ 662,805
Non-Uniform Defined Contribution Pension	\$ 362,000

The Township receives State Aid every year from the Attorney General in the Commonwealth to help offset these costs. In 2025 it was roughly \$1,993,035 and some change. The Township is expecting for 2026 it's actually down and the state decreased the valuation number for each employee in the pension plan, it is \$1,917,043 for 2026. That's the estimated which the Township hasn't received yet but should be receiving it later this month.

If Council has any questions, the Director would be happy to answer them. But again, this is just for the record and there's no action required by Council.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that he had two questions. Is this consistent with what we've put into the budget? Or with the assumptions that bounded, I guess, by the budget assumptions.

Director Chaykowski indicated that is correct. When these come out, they get moved into the budget. Council will see the budget numbers are a little higher because you have professional services fees that get assessed to it as well. But these numbers are static and what is contributed to the pension plan.

Council Vice President Sloane asked how does that compare to what we did last year?

Director Chaykowski indicated that it's actually lower. The market has been doing better in the past year. These payments are lower than 2026.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated to make up the difference essentially. Got it, thank you John.

8. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GRANT APPLICATION OF TOWNS AGAINST GRAFFITI:**

Director Chaykowski as the Township does every year this is the annual Resolution to apply for the Towns Against Graffiti program. It is a multi-municipality program that Bensalem Township is the lead agency for. The Resolution will be submitted to the Bucks County Redevelopment Authority in the amount of \$175,000. The total program cost runs around \$199,000. The balance between the two numbers is collected through each municipality or borough has to pay an annual membership fee which makes up the difference.

The Township spends 100% of the Grant. The Township runs a fund balance from year to year if they do not have to pay anything above the \$175,000.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he is guessing that the Township doesn't have any issues collecting that difference from the other townships.

Director Chaykowski indicated that the Township had actually gained a few more members into the program. They had bounced out of it for a bit but eventually returned to the program.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this application. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment portion was closed.

Council President Tokmajian called for a motion to accept and adopt this Resolution.

Council Vice President Sloane motioned that Council approve the Resolution for an Intergovernmental Agreement to participate in the Grant Application for Towns Against Graffiti as presented. **Councilman Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

9. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR THE MUNICIAPL GRANT OPROGRAM FOR FUNDING OF THE INTERGRATION POLICE RECORD MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS(RMS) THROUGHOUT BUCKS COUNTY:**

Director Chaykowski indicated that this is an annual Grant application that the Township submits for. This program consists of 39 police departments in Bucks County. What this allows those police departments do is share their record management software um their systems between the 39 departments so that in the event our police department is looking up something and it happened in a different municipality they are able to obtain that information. The total project cost is \$118,900. That includes the software vendor and then the storage to house all the data. That number has not changed since last year.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that the Grant amount covers 100%, there's no residual cost.

Director Chaykowski indicated that was correct. The only residual cost that is in here is paid for by the Township, but that is for their storage fees. It is with Amazon that the Cloud storage is with and the Township obviously uses Amazon for their Cloud storage as well.

Councilman Knowles reiterated that this covers the entire 39 police departments in the county.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that this allows connection between all of the police departments. If they're searching for a warrant or something to that extent or if it doesn't fall in Bucks County how does the search come back if someone is outside of this county?

Director Chaykowski invited Deputy Director Race to explain the RMS System.

Deputy Director Race indicated that there is a nexus between out of county Record Management Systems as well as the Cody system. It is called Cody Cobra and that helps to facilitate the sharing of information between the other municipalities and other counties that are participating with this specific record management system.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he was guessing there's some service fee that the Township pays for the Cody then access as well?

Deputy Director Race indicated that it is all included in this.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this Grant. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment portion was closed.

Council Vice President Sloane made a motion that Council approve the Resolution for the Municipal Grant Program for funding of the Integration of Police Record Management System throughout Bucks County. **Council Secretary Wenzel** second and the motion carried 5-0.

10. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE BUCKS COUNTY 2026 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN:**

Deputy Director Race indicated that ultimately since 2004 there's been a concerted effort between all municipalities within the county acting in coordination with both PEMA, FEMA and Bucks County Emergency Management. Every 5 years the plan is reviewed. The Township certainly sends representatives to these meetings including Deputy Director Race, Sergeant Marshall, and some other members of the Emergency management Advisory Board and/or operations group to provide insight and input in reference to the effects and problems that they see within Bensalem Township. That is included within the program and it is a regional approach to the Hazard Mitigation conversation.

The reason they need to adopt this, because it allows them access and the ability to apply for potential Grants and/or other disaster relief funding if the Township were to be impacted by a disaster. The Township has to be an active participant within the Hazard Mitigation plan within the County and then therefore eligible to work in coordination with PEMA and FEMA. They are all tied together. Every five years this is done and reviewed in coordination with the Bucks County Planning Commission

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he was aware that his came in front of the Bucks County Planning Commission and asked is there any reason why the Township only sees it every 5 years?

Deputy Director Race indicated that is what is mandated. They do a review and obviously, we're constantly adapting internally within our own work group as to what we're facing and certainly in coordination with the Mayor and Council what we're seeing here at the Township level. But that's what's required by all the EMA legislation, Emergency Management legislation. And PEMA and FEMA.

Council President Tokmajian asked how does this correlate with in a scenario where if we should declare a state of emergency because I know that would somewhat open up some funds uh for us. Is that in cooperation with this or is this something separate?

Deputy Director Race indicated that it is done internally at the Township level with the Mayor. The Mayor will sign off on a disaster declaration based on whatever we may see. It could be we're going to face a blizzard and/or during COVID. We had a disaster plan and certainly a declaration established. The flooding that we face over the years, the Mayor has signed off on that. That is submitted to Bucks County Emergency Management and that essentially makes it official that we the Township are declaring a disaster and it certainly is done in coordination with once the incident has been resolved, that's the first step in applying for potential grants and funding at the conclusion of the event.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there Was anyone in the audience who was for or against this Grant. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment portion was closed.

Councilman Knowles made a motion that Council approve the Resolution regarding the Bucks County 2026 Hazard Mitigation Plan as presented by Deputy Director Race. **Council Vice President Sloane** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

10A. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM FOR FUNDING OF THE LOWER BUCKS COUNTY REGIONAL FIRE TRAINING PROP:

Director Chaykowski thanked Council for adding this Resolution on this evening's agenda and asked Chief Antozzeski to come to the podium. This is a new Grant that the Township is applying for with the Bucks County Redevelopment Authority. This has not been requested in the past. The piece of training equipment which Chief Antozzeski will be able to describe costs \$93,250.

Chief Antozzeski indicated that this particular training prop, as we're calling it, is a 20-foot long LANC container and it has multiple training sessions within it. There's a forcible entry door, forcible entry window and there's a maze inside for when we have our SCBA on to practice getting through the maze. There's a hatch on the roof so we can simulate someone falling through the floor and have to raise them to the second floor. There's a window on the second floor we have to bail out on a rope. There're all kinds of different training evolutions that we can be doing with this device. It's not made to set fires in or anything of that nature, but it has a lot of different things that can go with it.

Some of you may have been to the training site. if you haven't, we'd like to have you come up and see what we actually have there. We have a four-story concrete training building that's set up with apartments and commercial setups and things of that nature. Again, we don't burn in that building, but we do all kinds of other training. This would allow us to do other training that's not set up in that building. We would also make it available to the Lower Bucks County other fire companies in the area so they can come and train. We have career staff during the day that would train with it. Volunteers can train during the day or evenings and weekends. It's a very versatile tool and it would be available for other places. The reason we bring it up tonight is we need to have a Resolution that this board approves us so that we can file for the grant. So, this is one of those steps. There's no money out of our budget, it would be through the grant program. It's not a match or anything of that nature.

Council President Tokmajian asked Director Chaykowski if this was more of a concern in getting this Grant submitted?

Director Chaykowski indicated all the Grants have to be adopted by the end of September. That's when everything has to be submitted.

Councilman Knowles indicated just to clarify, if we get the grant, it'll be like a little separate facility than the training center that's there now.

Chief Antozzeski replied that's correct. It'll be located up there. We have a secure spot for it and everything, but it's not going to be in the building. It'll be a separate training device.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that it sounds like a great opportunity for our fire team.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this Resolution. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment portion was closed.

Councilman Kisselback motioned to approve the Lower Bucks County Regional Fire Training Prop as presented. **Council Secretary Wenzel** seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak.

The following people came forward:

Hi, my name is Stephanie Kersonen and I actually live in Norristown, 1649 Sheridan Lane, Norristown, PA. I'm here as a public educator and an animal advocate. Again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak here. I'm coming to you with a very simple question. What lawful authority does Bensalem Township have to prohibit the use of live animals as targets for shooting within the community? In 2026, I think we should be able to agree that live animals such as pigeons should not be used as shooting targets for entertainment or for sport.

Live pigeon shoots are simply are not a matter of hunting or wildlife management. They are domesticated or captive birds who are intentionally released in front of shooters and used as live targets. Many are shot but not killed immediately. Some are wounded and then left to suffer. Others may be rounded up and then killed afterwards. This is both an animal welfare issue and a public welfare issue. Pennsylvania, we have a particularly troubling distinction. We're the only state in the country where this type of live bird shooting continues openly and regularly. There is currently legislation obviously at the state level, House Bill 1097, that would address the live pigeon shoots, but the legislative process is moving really slow. I mean, it's been decades and these birds just continue to suffer. We can't simply tell people to wait for Harrisburg to act. We've been waiting way too long. So, local communities should be asking what we can do lawfully right now to protect animals and the public from this disturbing practice. So, I'm asking you to investigate this existing like your existing authority and what ordinances um to determine whether Bensalem can prohibit live pigeon shoots through your own local laws.

And if you believe you can't, I'm asking you to clearly explain why not and what legal authority prevents you from acting and what steps you can take to pursue a lawful local solution. Bensalem has an opportunity to show leadership. I spent a lot of time in Bensalem. I have a lot of family and friends here. Again, as a teacher, I always teach my students to stand up for what they think is right. And as an animal advocate, watching these pigeon shoot videos, watching the birds suffer, on the ground, I just think it's time to do something. There's nothing unreasonable about expecting our laws to reflect our values as a community. And I think we should be moving forward. Again, it's 2026. We shouldn't be protecting an archaic practice simply because it's been allowed to continue for so long. So, I respectfully ask you, what can Bensalem do to stop live pigeon shoots and will you commit to finding a lawful way to do so? Thank you.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that the Township can certainly look at their Code and the legal parameters around it.

The Mayor indicated that he certainly can comment on this. Born and raised next door to it. They shot at my dad's farm. They tried to get an easement that you can't stop him from shooting. My dad couldn't get a lawyer in Bucks County. Got a veteran Marine coming out of the service 1946. Lost in every court. My dad did except the Supreme Court. My dad wanted to sue. They didn't stop them from shooting. They moved where they were shooting, but they could no longer shoot. So, I can tell you that part and I live with it. So, I know it very well. So, I don't know. It's actually State, there's other pigeon shoots, not just here in Bensalem and the State allows them to do it. So, I don't know if you want to comment Joe on the other part but I know it very very well.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated the Township was heavily involved in the issue. It's got to be about a decade ago now I would estimate. And as you properly point out, where we ran into issues is at the State level. State laws do not ban them. Legislation, I don't know what legislation from time to time has been introduced to make them clearly illegal and it hasn't gone anywhere. The Philadelphia Gun Club here in Bensalem legally exists. They are a legally existing uh gun club. They have the right to shoot on their property. What they shoot is, of course, the question. Township, as I said, about a decade or so ago, attempted to take action to stop and we were basically we hit a wall at the at the state level. The then district attorney couldn't prosecute because technically speaking, it's not against the law. And so, a group at that time, did go to, I don't recall if it's the Delaware Riverkeeper, the DP, the Delaware River Basin Commission, one or all of them, and we're able to at least get some impact on the way shooting on that property is done. Because buckshot was going out into the river. Action was taken at that time I believe as I said by the State or some regulatory agency to stop them from doing that. But in all candor, your comments are notwithstanding, I don't even know if they're still shooting live pigeons down there or they're shooting clay pigeons or targets or what have you. The Township has received no complaints or no, you know, there hasn't been anything coming across uh certainly across my desk and I don't believe across Detective Director Farrell's desk and again to the extent that they are permitted to discharge firearms stood 10 years ago and I don't think the landscape has changed in the subsequent 10 years.

Ms. Kersonen indicated that they are still shooting live pigeons. And they just don't really announce it because they don't want people to show up and protest. I'm wondering if there's something as a Township we could do to um, institute an ordinance or make a law where you cannot shoot live animals for target practice.

Solicitor Pizzo indicated that the State has a set of laws regarding firearms and what you can or can't who can or can't own them, what you can or can't do with them. The state has laws regarding animal cruelty, the state has laws regarding hunting, and none of them prevent or outlaw shooting live pigeons. So, to the extent that the State preempts those areas of the law, the State law carries the day. Until unless and until something happens at the state level either through the courts or through adoption of legislation, it's not illegal. Um I would certainly reach out to your state legislators to as well.

Councilman Knowles indicated that he thinks that they actually purchased property adjacent to their property to give them a buffer that they didn't have before and before they put that buffer in, we were getting complaints because of how close it was to the other surrounding properties. But now they have a buffer that they purchased. I think that's why we're not getting complaints because it's more isolated.

Ms. Kersonen indicated that it's not in the public view as much. However, I think if people were more aware, they would be pretty horrified.

Councilman Knowles indicated that it's a state thing, though.

Ms. Kersonen indicated that there's nothing we can do at a township level legally to make a law or an ordinance.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he would continue to encourage that Ms. Kersonen reach out to her state legislators. Thank you very much.

Michelle Porto, 2460 Brandon Court. here to follow up because I know we were at the halfway mark on the moratorium for the data centers but need you all to be aware as well as the public to be aware that there are definitely bills being passed in the Pennsylvania state house. They did pass right after you guys met which was great about the moratorium, they passed house bill 2496 but in order for this to stick and this would help with your curative amendment process that you wouldn't have that three-year waiting period again to do it if you had to do it again.

We really need this to pass. That means the Senate bill has to come up with either a companion bill or take the bill that the House passed in June and get that passed. So that House bill was \$24.99. It did pass and then that would give other communities the same ability without maybe so much red tape or using an amendment that might be needed for some other purpose um without exhausting that and then not getting you know having 300 third what is it 36 months you can't use it again that type of policy. The Senate also needs to pass and the House passed this as well right after we met in June. The House passed House Bill 2650. This is the Shapiro sales tax exemption for data centers.

I don't know if you're all aware of this, but basically, he put in his budget and I'm not sure if that all passed, but the data centers were being given a sales tax exemption on all the equipment they're going to put into these data centers. Okay. And if you read the requirements that they have to in order to get these exemptions as an advocate against the great reset and agenda 2030 which is real it is happening I would I would you know again want that not to happen because again you're putting in you know uh energy restrictions and policies that are again going to affect us in the long run. Okay. And enslave us. So again, as an advocate for all of that, I would love for you guys to, you know, share that information for yourselves as well as others. Uh, John Burch Society has jbs.org has legislative alerts. You go to federal, or you go to state. So, in this case, these will be the state bills that we need our state legislators. And at this point, it's the Senate that needs to act on these particular bills.

There are other bills that are coming out. Jared Coleman has a bill coming out. And again, it's all about the surveillance state that's coming upon us. Now, I realize the second action I'm here about is Flock cameras and Axon cameras. So, I just saw that Montgomery County is not going to renew their, I guess contract, with Flock, but they're going to bring in Axon, which is actually even a little bit more surveillance than actually Flock was. And I realize that we need cameras. We are neighbors to Philadelphia. And as a former Philadelphia resident now living here, I totally agree with that. But we have to ask ourselves um what did our founders fight for? Right?

The Declaration of Independence we're celebrating 250 years has three grievances in it that talked about exactly what we're dealing with. It's our fourth amendment violations to privacy and we shouldn't be surveilled for, you know, warrantless reasons. It was the ritz of assistance back then under the navigation acts that allowed the customs officials to go onto the boats or into your house because they were going for smuggled goods. Okay, it's the same kind of thing. If we're driving our cars through the streets, we're being surveilled. They're taking our data. They know who's in our car. They're getting our Bluetooth information, where I've been, what I've been doing. It's all a Fourth Amendment violation. So, part of me

is asking the question, and people have asked me, where did we get the funding to do this in the first place? And how did it get passed? Did anybody not consider the impediment on our Fourth Amendment rights and the rights to privacy and not to be surveilled, especially for law-abiding Americans? And again, how long has it been in in our system? I mean, I wrote a whole little paragraph here, but that's basically the gist of what I wanted to get. So today coming out as a federal legislative act, it's called the Flock Off Act. It's House HR10221. How long has it been in in our system? I mean, I wrote a whole little paragraph here, but that's basically the gist of what I wanted to get.

And again, you can go to the federal actions under jbs.org. But basically, you know, while technology changes, our constitutional rights don't. So, I'm hoping that on top of not putting in these data centers, I'm hoping that we're going to take a look at the violations of the Fourth Amendment using these flap cameras. Yes, we do want to be safe. And as Ben Franklin rightfully said, "those who would give up their liberty their essential liberty for a little temporary safety deserves neither liberty nor safety." So, I don't again I don't know where you guys stand on this and I know I'm not trying to, you know, give the police a harder job to do. I mean, we want that safety and so forth, but at the expense of our Fourth Amendment rights, I say no. There has to be another way.

And maybe we can come up with a citizens committee or council group to meet with the police over some of these items. I also work with a group that has a charitable fund to get grants not using taxpayer dollars to the police. Love to work with them on that as well. It's called support your local police program. The person who heads that up in our organization is a former chief of police and um would love to like figure out ways to not use taxpayer dollars to pay for some of the things that our communities should be basically doing. and real charity, not money laundered taxpayer money in the form of a grant, which is essentially just laundering our taxpayer dollars. So, I'd like us not to use our taxpayer dollars to surveil us as well as, you know, try to find ways that we can work with our community and just do things better and bring back local power to the people and to you guys that are elected for us. So, thank you.

Council President Tokmajian thanked Ms. Porto and asked if there were any other public comments?

Hi, my name is **Carol**. I live at 175 Old Forge Crossing in Devon, PA. I'm here as a resident of Pennsylvania and a concerned citizen. And I want to speak to you again about the pigeon shooting because I have a few other items I'd like to discuss and have you listen. So, I appreciate your attention. For over 40 years, residents and animal advocates have been fighting to end life pigeon shoots in Pennsylvania, as you know. And for many of those years, the focus has now shifted to the Pennsylvania Gun Club, as you know, right here in Bensalem.

Historically, the closure of the Hagens PA pigeon shoot in 1999 demonstrated that sustained public opposition and pressure from animal advocacy groups such as the SPCA and many others can end this cruel practice. A recent pigeon shooting event in Dolphin County, Pennsylvania, and the public outcry that occurred as a result shows that this issue remains urgent and will not be ignored or tolerated any longer. Pigeons are sentient animals capable of experiencing pain and fear.

If any other animal, such as a dog or a cat, were shot, wounded, and left to suffer just for entertainment, those responsible would most certainly face legal charges. The fact that pigeons are the victims in this case does not make their suffering invisible or any less important. Animal protection organizations nationally are watching how Pennsylvania responds, not in small part due to the mounting evidence of the inhumane and illegal capture of pigeons and trafficking of those pigeons from New York City to Bensalem to enable these brutal activities at the gun club. Even the New York City Bar Association has taken an official position urging Pennsylvania to pass HB 1097 along with most PA humane societies, shelters, and animal organizations who oppose these horrific contests. According to Humane PA and Humane Action

Pennsylvania, Bensalem Township Council should be a leader in kindness and compassion. We are calling on you to fulfill your responsibility to prevent cruelty to animals, which is the real issue here, not the legality of shooting. The Pennsylvania Gun Club has options that don't involve harming sensitive living beings. Please, we call on you to oppose live pigeon shoots, put your support behind PA state efforts to pass legislation to prohibit these cruel practices and ensure that our community will no longer be associated with this needless abuse and suffering. By acting now, the council can get ahead of growing public concern and demonstrate that Pennsylvania and Bensalem are capable of moral and compassionate leadership. Thank you.

Council President Tokmajian thanked Carol and made one quick suggestion. You noted PA initiatives to state legislators. I would encourage you to forward that information to whomever the legislators are that are pushing that action and there our emails are on our website if you want to forward us that information and if the council members so choose that they want to reach out to those legislators then they can certainly do that. Okay.

Carol indicated that we'd be happy to do that. Thank you.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was any other public comment?

Good evening and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is **Claire Mulligan**. I live at 1910 Young Road, Pottstown, Pennsylvania. I'm here to talk about the pigeon shoots. Recently the Remington Research Group conducted a statewide public opinion survey in Pennsylvania to gauge attitudes towards live pigeon shoots. The results were striking. 78% of Pennsylvanians oppose the practice of live pigeon shoots while only 10% support it and 12% are not sure. The survey also found that 74% support legislation banning live pigeon shoot contest in Pennsylvania. Only 15% oppose such legislation and 11% are not sure. Pennsylvanians overwhelmingly agree that live pigeon shoot should be banned and that shoot should instead require the use of clay targets. And I think that makes sense.

There's simply no reason in 2026 to use a living feeling animal as a target when a clay target can provide the exact same shooting challenge without causing suffering. These pigeons aren't given a meaningful choice. They are released specifically to be shot. Some are killed immediately while others fall to the ground injured and suffer. Their suffering is not incidental to the activity. It's a consequence of what the activity is designed to be. And Pennsylvania should be better than this. We should not need to wait for every other level of government to tell us that deliberately shooting live animals for sport is unnecessary. This isn't about taking away someone's rights to participate in shooting sports, there is an incredibly simple alternative. Use clay targets. So tonight, I hope the council will listen not only to those who participate in this practice, but also to the overwhelming number of Pennsylvanians who believe that there is a better, more humane way forward. Please investigate what Bensalem can do legally to end live pigeon shoots in this community. We have an opportunity to replace cruelty with compassion and an outdated practice with a humane alternative. Thank you.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak.

Jebakumar Eugene Asirvatham and this is my wife, Evangeline Eugene. We are from 116 Derby Lane. We have never done this before. This is the first time we're doing this. We moved into this. Okay. In our entire life, 26 years in this country. First time attending this. Thank you for letting us speak. We're here with a request. It's not a complaint, but it's a request. We do not know where to go, and that's why we're here. Right behind our property is Parx Casino operations. We've been here living in this house for three to four weeks and we have a huge I think at least we have a huge problem. Right behind our property, 235 ft from our property line is the huge horseman or poop storage. And I think Parx is processing the horse

poop somewhere near their stables. And then they they're putting those in a bin and then they're moving that into this storage and then they're selling it somewhere else I believe. The whole route it's open. The trucks are open and it's a dirt road. Our property gets closer by 30 ft to the line of travel and all the dirt, organic waste material mixed with the bone dry sawdust and wood shavings settles in our backyard. I do not know why the neighbors have not it's been it is not new. It's been ongoing for many years. 2019 this community was built Derby Lane Victory Square. Our neighbors might have taken different steps, but I believe no one has approached the city council for help. So, I'm not sure. We're requesting this. Every day we clean and then I see black dust, which is the road dust, and the brown thick dust, which is from the truck. And I have videos, photos, and they have the warehouse is closed, three sides. It's huge one. The front side is open facing us, but of course, it's 230 ft. So, there's no ordinance for that.

But the materials that come out of that, it's airborne and settles in the backyard and it crosses the house, settles on our cars. It's an ongoing problem. Thank you very much for letting us uh bring this to you. It's only a humble request. We bought this house with so much struggle and so much joy that we go to this Christian Life Center that we got a home right next to the church, it's a lovely community and everything we love Bensalem we started our life 26 years back first in Bensalem and we thought yes, we it's a huge 360° turn back to Bensalem and everything was good everything was fine we are not completely against Parx because it's their business they have to do their operations.

The only thing that was it's very shocking for us in the past 3 weeks is the huge trucks that bring the manure to the store it's covered but it's not covered at the back. When it moves forward everything even if it's not windy everything is coming back when it's full after it unloads when it goes back also, I think the dust still it's there. It's happening minimum 20 times. It's not closed. That's one thing that they are taking the manure from the stable to the store. Then there's a huge truck that's coming that's taking the manure to they're buying it I think. Today, in the morning when we saw a huge truck that came to unload it, it had a tarp on its top and I was so happy. Okay, they covered it but there's nothing inside. They opened the top. They filled it with the manure. They didn't when they left, they are not closing it.

So, we are only expecting something if they can close it because I am so scared. I'm not worried about the dust on my property. We are breathing it. And I'm really scared. What if we might not know something right away? Right now, we don't have any health issues but what if we end up because it's all fugitive particles and I'm really like some help, we don't know where to go and we raised our concern to the Department of Environmental Protection but we are also here please again don't think that we are complaining again Parx operation it's not it's about the DEP. Just have to add one more thing. Okay. A little history about DEP and parks. We did our research 2010 Parx was found violating few DEP things. It's online. Everything is there. So, DEP gave them of course the penalty fine and they gave them a guidance how to run this operation. So, they closed down all the manual storage facilities and they opened this up the new arrows that I'm talking about.

They're supposed to cover everything when they move with Tarp. It's written right there and right near our community, six or seven houses, they suggested three rows of trees planting and all that. And that is also not being maintained. And the trees do a very poor job right now because we have a fence. The trees are just one or two feet above the fence. They're supposed to take care of it and all that. But few things Parx can do which can eliminate this completely. A paved road which will prevent the black dust and when trucks are moving, they could actually close it. And we don't have any problem with the noise of course noise it doesn't cross the Bensalem Township noise ordinance level which is I believe 70 decibels. At least that we can bear I'm only concerned about the health if we keep breathing that like for years I don't know how so any help or I know I've spoken to few of the Bensalem Township people and I have to say that didn't go well because they were saying they're not breaking any ordinance and we are not saying that they're breaking any ordinance. If the ordinance is not there about the air pollutants, organic material,

fugitive material coming out, I believe it's time for us to create one. The reason I spoke to my HOA, they have never approached the city council, I believe, but they are backing us up. If it moves forward, I can bring the HOA and few other members of six or seven community, they are ready to come with us.

I'm not picking up a fight or I'm not we are not looking for a win. We're looking for a compromise where both Parx and we can live peacefully together. So, we are requesting if Mayor and the President and the Council members can do something as a start.

Council President Tokmajian - thank you so very much for bringing this to our attention. I credit your bravery for coming up. I know it's not easy to do. Before we address the ordinance suggestion, let's try to fix the problem. And I don't suspect it's going to be that difficult to resolve. Bensalem Township has a really good partnership with Parx Casino and I think if they're just made aware of the issue, I think they would be more than happy to address the concern. What I would ask um if you could uh give us your contact information and what we'll do is we will ask the Mayor and his Administration then, we have some really good contacts with Parx Casino and I think the best thing is to just reach out to them from an Administration standpoint and then we we'll let them know that you came in front of us this evening and we'll see what we can do as far as working with them to come up with an amendable solution.

The Mayor - Mr. President, absolutely. they can come into the office and give me all the details, make an appointment with my office, okay? And we'll handle that and do the best we can with the casino and that's really the horsemen in the back, but the casino and the horsemen work together. So,

Mrs. Asirvatham said that they did they tell you about this problem when you bought the house? No, actually when we were happy to see the stables with the horse and everything, we saw this warehouse and we asked our, I don't want to blame them, but we asked what is they said it's the horse feed. Horse feed. So, I thought they're not eating that. No, no blame. They said horse feed. Only yesterday we just sat down three weeks living in this and we were like fools, right? Horse feed.

Council President Tokmajian indicated it shouldn't be impacting your home or your or your vehicles.

Mrs. Asirvatham said and so sometimes even if you don't see it, it's every single time that one wipe from the backyard uh table, the tech table. Brown stuff. There is no reason for the brown stuff other than the brown stuff that's sitting in the thing. We have a formal thing we put together in this.

Director Chaykowski asked if they submitted a Right to Know request the other day like last on Friday? Did you email a Right to know request asking for information? Yeah. Did you file a Right to Know request on Friday of last week?

Mr. Asirvatham replied, Yes. About the situation.

Director Chaykowski indicated that we have we have the contact information now.

Mr. Asirvatham indicated that they took a little bit of help from the online form, but you don't have to present everything, but we were just being elaborate. Sure.

Director Chaykowski indicated that we're investigating to see if there's have been any other complaints coming into the Township as part of your request.

Mr. Asirvatham that's all there documented.

Council Vice President Sloane indicated that if for some reason that you're not getting resolution through Parx or something, come back and let us know and we'll see what the next steps are that we can take.

Mr. Asirvatham indicated that they just need a fix. That's all.

Council President Tokmajian asked Director Chaykowski to please keep Council posted on it.

Director Chaykowski - Yes, sir.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that he knows the Mayor will be on it. Look, if you remember years ago when Amazon was building the site down there, we had similar issues. Before the building got built, it was middle of July. There was just a ton of dust that was going all over.

The Mayor indicated that he told them when they sold those houses, they should put in their in what's right behind them.

Council President Tokmajian - And well, I mean, you know, that sounds like an easy solution. Talk to Parx. I'm sure that they would be more amenable.

Mr. Asirvatham I mean they have a shorter route within their property but I don't know why they're taking this longer route very close to our property line but we cannot we cannot tell them what to do.

Council President Tokmajian indicated there's an easier shorter road they can go to the there's some easy solutions right closing the truck you know paving the road. I think it's something to just to speak with Parx about and let the Mayor, Director Chaykowski and the Admin work on that and they'll reach out to you and schedule some time. Thank you. Thanks for being here.

Council President Tokmajian asked if there was any other public comment? Seeing no one come forward the second Public Comment portion was closed.

12. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Council President Tokmajian - Two things and I'll start backwards. Since John is here, I wanted to just address the flock cameras piece. I saw some stuff out there about it. The question was asked of myself and I actually reached out to Director McVey and correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't believe we have a contract with Flock. Can you confirm?

Director Chaykowski - We do not.

Council President Tokmajian - Great. Okay. And some of those cameras that I looked at were on private property. And that's something that we can or cannot kind of set parameters around.

Director Chaykowski - Flock cameras?

Council President Tokmajian - Let me say this. Let me be clear. I assume they were based off of the way they looked. Okay. But it appeared as if they were on private property, the ones that I looked at.

Director Chaykowski - I actually don't know. I can't answer that question. Director McVey would probably be able to answer that better.

Council President Tokmajian - Yes, understood. But the private property owners, commercial owners have the right to contract out with Flock, I believe.

Director Chaykowski - I don't know. Yes, I'm not sure. I obviously believe they have the right to have security systems on their property. I don't know the integrals of the Flock cameras or anything like that.

Council President Tokmajian - One other point too really quick, Mr. Pizzo, I want to also make mention of the fact that there are traffic cameras. And to that extent they are there and provide value particularly for crime and for our officers and we've used them enough times to justify the fact that we have caught a number of individuals just recently with committing crime. I wanted to differentiate the discussion around the traffic cameras versus these Flock cameras that are coming out.

Then the other piece I wanted to also uh mention, uh the data center. Just to give everyone an update on the data center ordinance. We have a draft form that is being presented to Council. The intent is to put it on the September 28th agenda. That will be our first pass at looking at it. It's going to be roughly 30 plus pages. It took Mr. Pizzo some time to put together. Thank you very much for the work. I know there was a number of different things that you looked at uh with other ordinances across the county and the state. We'll take a first pass at it. We'll look at it on the September 28th agenda for council comments. And at that time public can come up and comment if they would like. But at some point, after that, we'll put it on a future council agenda to then look to take action on and at that point then it would be advertised for the public. Mr. Pizzo, do you want to add anything?

Solicitor Pizzo - No, I was going to say yes, there'll be discussion I believe is what you intend on the 28th. There will be a formal hearing for the adoption of the ordinance. The public obviously has the opportunity to speak then. I believe based on the current timeline would be in October. Both the Township and County Planning Commissions will also have an opportunity to take a pass at the ordinance provide their comments and their meetings are obviously also public meetings as well.

Council President Tokmajian - Great point. Just in terms of timing, you know, I know we mentioned September. um we got caught up with the holiday and based off of our notice requirements as far as the seven days in addition to having to give the agency that who we advertise with a certain number of days. That's where the timing fell and just based off of the amount of leg work that you've done to put the ordinance together. Based off the curative amendment we have through your end to take action on it.

Solicitor Pizzo -yes, you adopted the curative amendment. I don't know the exact date, but it was in your first meeting in June. So going out 180 days would be your first meeting in December approximately. I believe the timeline right now. Ideally, we'll adopt it in October. If for some reason we find ourselves going back to the drawing board for more significant additions or revisions, we'd still be able to go into the month of November and meet our deadline.

Council President Tokmajian - Got it. Okay. Thank you. One last thing before since we're talking about ordinances just another, I know we have a number of balls up in the air as far as ordinances are concerned right now. But I also wanted to mention I know that we had some discussion around sign ordinance and maybe if there was a need to maybe have to look at that to see if we need to make any changes that's required or you know I think there was some talk as far as that maybe not being up to date or as current as maybe it should be. So, it's something that maybe I'd ask you to take a look at if you don't mind.

Solicitor Pizzo - We will. I'll get together with Director Farrell. With your indulgence, right now we we're expecting a significant amount of feedback from on data centers from the five of you and the respective

review boards even before we get to the public. So, we'll try and get we'll try and get that tucked away by the end of the month or October.

Council President Tokmajian - And then that's fine. No rush. And to be fair, I reached out to Ken today on a number of items and I was just going to just ask him about the idea of the prospect of maybe look take a look at it. So, I didn't want to surprise him with him. He was out today. So, that's why I figured let me just bring it up and see if that was something that we could look at.

Mayor, - I was going to say maybe you could look at the ordinances, see if you see something in the signed ordinance.

Council President Tokmajian - I could certainly do that as well.

Mayor - I mean they're all there so you can take a look and make some suggestions that you think.

Council Secretary Wenzel - With the signs in general. I know a lot you need permits to advertise like specific signs, specific businesses, does that fall under that? Like lawn guy puts out like 100 signs on a mile stretch. Doesn't he need a specific permit for that or not?

Mayor - There's all kind of sign ordinances that so because they put them up. You're not allowed to have those flags out there.

Council Secretary Wenzel - That's what I'm talking about. I know the flags we allowed to have them out there. Pizza shop we had one week later down.

Mayor - They put them back up again.

Councilman Knowles - People park trucks with billboards on them.

Mayor - It's something that should be done. I agree.

Council President Tokmajian - Something we need to look at, I think.

Mayor - They're old ordinances.

Council President Tokmajian This is something we need to continue to manage and maintain some of our code and ordinances. I'll go around the room. Mr. Wursta.

Engineer Wursta nothing today, GO BIRDS!!

Council Clerk McBreen - Yes. I have an ordinance and many resolutions that will need signatures this evening.

Councilman Knowles - Yes. We're looking forward to really studying this issue with data centers and really trying to learn as much as I can and interesting doing that. I do think that I'm glad that we are not involved with the flock cameras. I didn't think we were. It's been confirmed that we're not. The cameras that are on the traffic things are like you said do provide a service to our police. I'm not a constitutional attorney, but I think that if you're in your car, a licensed car, and you're going through a stop sign and they take your tag that you give up your right to privacy because you're driving a car that's licensed and registered, but that's what they said. I don't know whether it's correct or not, but uh it does catch people

from, you know, doing stuff they shouldn't be doing. And we know who's riding through. We're adjacent to a large city in between Philadelphia and Trenton and we know who's going through our area if there's a problem. But that's the positive of it. But we have the 28th and we'll study it and go from there.

Council Secretary Wenzel had nothing this evening.

Council Vice President Sloane had nothing this evening.

Councilman Kisselback - I'll repeat everything that everyone just said.

Director Chaykowski – had nothing this evening



Solicitor Pizzo – if you walk around with one of these . You're giving somebody the ability to determine where you are at any given time. You use an ATM card to take money out of the bank. You're giving somebody somewhere the opportunity to identify that you were at that location at a given time on a given date. How much money? Well, there's that as well. You use an ez-pass on the highway as you're mandated now, you're telling someone when you got on the road, when you got off the road, and I truly believe someday they're going to use it to enforce speed restrictions as well, because if you got from this exit to that exit or this point to that point in a certain amount of time, the only way you could have done it was to exceed the speed limit. We voluntarily give up our rights to privacy every day for convenience. We're doing it all the time for convenience and just everyone should be aware and think of that while we're having this discussion.

Mayor I really like hearing that. My technology has been up to date since I was born in 1937. And I can tell you that I made it here. So, I'll give you some technology right now. We had one of our concerts postponed. So, on the 23rd the concert is going to be here. That's the 23rd next Wednesday. And so everybody I know they think they're all done but you got another great before the fall festival and the concerts and everything. So, uh, that's it. That's all I have now. There's a lot of things coming up in the next meeting. We'll be able to bring everybody up to date.

Director Chaykowski - I'm sorry, Council President. I did have one thing. I apologize. I don't know if everyone saw the township will be hosting a blood drive with the Red Cross. It's open to the public as well as township employees. On our website as well as through social media you do need to make an appointment with the Red Cross. Obviously there is a number of spots. So, if anyone is interested you could certainly do that October 27th and it'll be right here in the lobby of the township building. Great point.

Mayor - All right. Well, the only other thing I have is the 24th. The Parks and Rec Department is running the annual Fright Night and it's already sold out.

Council President Tokmajian indicated that the next meeting will be September 28th. We expect that to be a little heavier agenda.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

Council President Tokmajian - I'll ask for a motion to adjourn.

Council Vice President Sloane – so moved.

Council Secretary Wenzel – seconded.

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

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of September 14th, 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