



FOX CHAPEL

BOROUGH

Minutes

Fox Chapel Borough Council Meeting Held February 16, 2026

Call to Order

Present: Harrison S. Lauer, Council Vice President; Frederick C. Leech, Bradley D. Harrison, Betsy Monroe, Barry Schaitkin, Wesley W. Posvar, Councilmembers; Jonathan Colton, Mayor

Also Present: Julie Bastianini, Borough Manager; Jeanine A. Mancuso, Treasurer; Craig Sorg, Interim Chief of Police; Larry Kurpakus, Public Works Director; Shawn M. Peterson, Assistant to the Manager; Ben Shopland, Chief of Foxwall EMS; Austin Henry, Chairperson for the Environmental Advisory Council; Aiden Drucker, Anna Grace Shultz, Kabeer Chopra, Laurence Park, Junior Councilmembers; Charles Ellis Watson, Chief of Police for Swissvale Braddock Hills Regional Police Department; Sandy Garfinkel, Dana Kellerman, Nathaniel Myers, Andrea Petri, Mary Rossillo, Michael Holden, Robert Heister, Paula Jernigan, Libby Laman, and Rachel Thompson, residents; and 16 other attendees

Via Zoom: Bruce Bowden, Solicitor; and eight other attendees

Absent: Andrew C. Bennett, Council President; Ahmed Elsayed, Junior Councilmember

Mr. Lauer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

- I. The meeting was held on January 5, 2026.

Ms. Monroe moved to approve the minutes from the Organization Meeting on January 5, 2026. Mr. Schaitkin seconded the motion, which passed with Mr. Posvar abstaining, as he was not yet an appointed member of the Council at the meeting in January.

Ms. Monroe moved to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on January 5, 2026. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion, which passed with Mr. Posvar abstaining, as he was not yet an appointed member of the Council at the meeting in January.

Resident Comments

Sandy Garfinkel, 910 Delafield Road, stated that the Borough should adopt a resolution of non-cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in civil matters. He said he is hopeful that the Borough Council is considering passing such a resolution. He also stated that this is not a party-politics issue.

Dana Kellerman, 1299 Fox Chapel Road, stated that she urges the Council to adopt a legally-binding resolution prohibiting Fox Chapel Police from entering into questioning individuals.

Nathaniel "Chip" Myers, 1299 Fox Chapel Road, stated that community policing is based on trust, and ICE strains the community.

Andrea Petri, 122 Riverview Terrace, urged the Council to adopt a resolution of non-cooperation with ICE.

Dr. Mary Rossillo, 122 Riverview Terrace, stated that she believes the Borough needs to be firm and proactive in barring cooperation with local resources or law enforcement with ICE.

Michael Holden, 14 Old Timber Trail, asked the Council not to participate with ICE.

Robert Heister, 183 Woodland Farms Road, stated that he echoed the words of those before him regarding ICE.

Libby Laman, 109 Hillcrest Road, said she did not want the Fox Chapel Police Department to cooperate with ICE and that she wants her friends to be safe.

Paula Jernigan, 109 Hillcrest Road, stated that she wants to ensure her neighborhood stands on the right side of history. She said that courage is contagious and asked the Council to take a stand.

Rachel Thompson, 225 E. Waldheim Road, asked the Council to stand with the community and protect it.

Mr. Lauer thanked the residents in attendance and stated that the Borough Council will look into the matter.

Environmental Advisory Council

II. The meeting was held on Monday, February 9, 2026.

III. Environmental Disturbance Application 25-18
205 Foxhurst Drive

Mr. Henry stated that all contingencies have been met as of February 16, 2026.

Mr. Leech moved to approve Environmental Disturbance Application 25-18, as amended with a waiver for the geotechnical report, and the standard requirements set forth in the LSSE letter dated February 16, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Posvar and passed unanimously.

IV. Tree Removal Application No. TR-26-1
Fox Chapel Golf Club

Ms. Monroe moved to approve the removal of tree No. 6 and deny the remaining balance of thirteen trees. The motion was seconded by Mr. Schaitkin. The motion passed with all in favor except for Mr. Leech and Mr. Harrison, who both voted Nay.

V. Environmental Disturbance Application No. 26-02
Old Indian Trail Court

Mr. Henry stated that the engineer had complied with the contingencies and applied for the geotechnical waiver.

Mr. Leech moved to approve Environmental Disturbance Application No. 26-02, as amended with a waiver for the geotechnical report, and the standard requirements set forth in the LSSE letter dated February 6, 2026.

Reports

VI. Mayor Report

Mayor Colton stated that he echoed Mr. Lauer's comments earlier in the meeting, and appreciated receiving feedback from the community. He said that he is working daily to develop an internal policy with the Fox Chapel Police Department regarding ICE. He also stated that he has office hours at the Borough Building every Monday and Wednesday from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Mayor Colton gave kudos to the Public Works Department for their snow removal efforts in the Borough, and first responders who coordinated ahead of time for the large snowstorm in January.

VII. EMS Report for December 2025 and January 2026

Chief Shopland stated that in 2025, Foxwall EMS provided services to 206 Mutual Aid calls and received assistance on 20 calls, eight of which required transport. Mr. Lauer stated that the Annual Report was excellent.

VIII. Public Works Report for December 2025 through January 2026

Mr. Kurpakus thanked the community for their patience and assistance during the large snowstorm in January. He said that with the warmer weather, the Public Works Department has begun storm sewer work ahead of the 2026 road paving program. He also stated that the Borough has received the Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) from Allegheny County regarding the Delafield Connector Trail, and Public Works

will begin work on the trail.

IX. Engineer Report for December 2025 and January 2026

Ms. Bastianini stated that the Borough is looking ahead to spring and summer of 2026, and should have the roadway paving contract information to the Council in April, and the Salt Storage Facility contract at the March meeting.

X. Treasurer Report for December 2025 and January 2026

Ms. Mancuso stated that the 2025 Audit took place last week and that the unofficial auditor's report indicated everything looked good. She said the Borough will post the 2026 Budget on its website on February 17, 2026. Mr. Lauer said the posted budget is very well done and includes charts. Ms. Bastianini thanked Ms. Mancuso for all her efforts in preparing for the 2025 Audit.

1. Ratification of Payments for December 2025

Ms. Monroe moved to ratify the payment of bills for December 2025, General Fund Vouchers 6271–6328 in the amount of \$727,972.07. Mr. Schaitkin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. Ratification of Payments for January 2026

Ms. Monroe moved to ratify the payment of bills for January 2026, General Fund Vouchers 6329–6382 in the amount of \$1,296,509.71. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Contract Awards

XI. 2026 Ford F600 Super Duty 4x4 Regular Cab Chassis and Truck Upfit Package

Mr. Schaitkin moved to award the 2026 Ford F600 Super Duty 4x4 Regular Cab Chassis to Laurel Auto Group via Costars Contract No. 025-E22-486, in the amount of \$70,855. Ms. Monroe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Leech moved to award the truck up fit package for the Ford F600 Super Duty Chassis to Mike's Truck Service via Costars Contract No. 025-E25-661, in the amount of \$35,750. Mr. Posvar seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

XII. Ratify New Animal Control Contract with Whiskey Acres Rescue and Sanctuary

Mr. Schaitkin moved to ratify the Animal Control Contract with Whiskey Acres Rescue and Sanctuary. Ms. Monroe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

New Business

XIII. Executive Session Meeting

Mr. Lauer stated that an Executive Session meeting was held on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 7:30 a.m. to conduct interviews with potential candidates for the Chief of Police position and to discuss personnel matters.

XIV. Appointment of New Police Chief for the Fox Chapel Police Department

Mr. Leech moved to approve the appointment of Charles "Ellis" Watson as the new Police Chief for the Borough of Fox Chapel and authorize the Council President to sign the employment agreement with Mr. Watson. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harrison and passed unanimously. Mr. Lauer congratulated Mr. Watson on his new appointment.

XV. Adoption of the Take-Home Vehicle Use Policy

Ms. Monroe moved to adopt the Take-Home Vehicle Use Policy for the Borough of Fox Chapel. Mr. Posvar seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

XVI. Approval of New Hire for the Fox Chapel Resident Recycling Center

Mr. Leech moved to approve the hiring of Steven Plavetzky for the part-time attendant position for the Fox Chapel Resident Recycling Center at \$19 per hour. Mr. Posvar seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Informational

XVII. Seasonal Parks Program Coordinator

Mr. Lauer stated that the Park Commission and Ms. Bastianini did a good job on the job description for the Seasonal Parks Program Coordinator. Ms. Bastianini said the Borough would post the job listing this week.

Executive Session

At 7:40 p.m., the Borough Council adjourned into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter and to obtain advice from the Solicitor. At 8:43 p.m., the regular meeting reconvened.

Adjournment

With no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Shawn Marie Peterson
Assistant to the Manager