

**MINUTES  
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025**

**Call to Order:** Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

**Silent Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance:** A silent moment was taken followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-present; Colombo-present; Nilles-present; Ondishin-present; Perry-present

**Minutes of Previous Meetings:** The minutes of the March 11, 2025 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

**Presentations/Proclamations/Communications:** None

**Bid Opening:** None

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**Perry stated that City Council members and City Administration held an Executive Session meeting prior to the meeting. He said it was concerning litigation.**

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**Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY):** Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, PA, spoke of **Resolution 2025-9-** Approving Phased Development and Financial Security Agreement Between the City of Hazleton and Hazleton Creek Commerce Center Holdings, LLC. Deakos asked if there will be a transfer station on one of the vacant lots. Atty. Logsdon said no. He stated the plans proposed in the resolution are not for a transfer station. Perry stated this is regarding five warehouses. Deakos stated this area is a landfill. Atty. Logsdon said representatives for Hazleton Creek Commerce Center Holdings, LLC could discuss this matter.

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**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

**ORDINANCES:**

**(1<sup>ST</sup> READING)**

None

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**(2<sup>ND</sup> READINGS)**

None

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**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 2025-8**

Appointment to the Sewer Authority

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

**On the Question:**

John Nilles nominated Robert Stefanovich. Perry voted the nominations are closed.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

**MOTION TO AMEND:**

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

**MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Roll Call (AS AMENDED):** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

## RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

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### **Resolution 2025-9**

Approving Phased Development and Financial Security Agreement  
Between the City of Hazleton and Hazleton Creek Commerce Center  
Holdings, LLC

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

### **On the Question:**

Atty. David Tshudy, law firm of Troutman, Pepper, Locke, LLC said he represents the developers of Hazleton Creek Commerce Center. He said the Hazleton City Planning Commission approved the condition plan in 2021 and have been working on financing. They are ready to “break” ground on the first building in the next few months. He said they have a few different financial security guarantees that will be presented to the City.

Perry asked if they would be constructing Building #4 first. Atty.Tshudy said yes. He said the road and Building #4 will be built first. Perry asked what the time frame would be. Atty. Tshudy said about one year. He said the total square footage for this building is 1,400,000, and total project is 5,500,000 for all buildings. He said Phase 1 work is done, but there needs to be more site work done. Ondishin made Atty. Tshudy aware of a transfer station, proposed, to be at the back of their property. Atty.Tshudy said they are aware and have no problem with this. He said there is, already, rail service near the property, and it would be continued. Perry asked if they needed DEP approval. Atty.Tshudy said they did all their mediation. Perry asked about the sewer and water structure. Atty. Tshudy said they will be discussing this with the HCA and Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority for construction. Perry asked if there was a tenant coming into the building soon. Atty. Tshudy said he cannot discuss this matter. Atty. Tshudy said the road is extended up to Buttonwood Road. Perry asked if there will be “fill” coming into the property. Atty. Tshudy said it depends on what the site plan requires.

Al Cicioni, 442-448 South Church Street, Hazleton, said he owns three businesses in the City. He said he would love to see advancement in the City, but on a “neighbor” aspect, it is not acceptable. He said he has two teams of lawyers filing litigation against the problems which started with Mr. Field. Cicioni said businesses on Route 309 had sludge, the “powers to be” have “zero” respect for the neighbors. He said there were water trucks going “up and down” 309 and is amazed the City allowed this. Perry stated PENN DOT has control of Route 309. Atty. Tshudy said he would take a look at this problem. Ondishin agreed, and hoped the mess would be kept to a minimum. Ondishin stated these are new owners. Cicioni stated he was told they would resume blasting in this area. Cicioni stated he had to replace his roof because of the wind shear. He said they cannot continue the way they have been. Perry asked Atty. Tshudy for any contact information if there are any complaints or questions from the businesses near their site.

Atty. Logsdon said this resolution is an agreement between the City and the developers, laying the plan out for the project.

Perry asked the name of the owner. Atty. Tshudy said it is Hazleton Creek Commerce Center Holdings, LLC. The majority owner is the Heath Corporation from Charlotte, North Carolina. Atty. Tshudy said they will be coming to the City for all their permits.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

#### **RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Resolution 2025-10**

Resolution of the City of Hazleton Requesting a Local Match from Luzerne County Council for the Hazleton Public Transit State Section 1513 Operating Allocation

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

**On the Question:**

Ralph Sharp stated the Hazleton Transit Authority will receive \$2,800,000 once they receive the local match of \$229,000. Sharp said City Council will need to approve the resolution, and then will go before Luzerne County Council. He stated Luzerne County will provide the full \$229,000 match.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

#### **RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Resolution 2025-11**

**PROCLAMATION- Honoring Hazleton Area High School Varsity  
Cheerleading Team**

Presented by Bruno. Seconded by Ondishin.

**On the Question:**

Perry stated he appreciates their dedication. Perry read the proclamation.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

**RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**New Business:** None.

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**Old Business:** None.

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**Comments from the Audience:** Allison Leonard, 107 Franklin Street, Hazleton, said she is here to follow-up in person. She said as a City resident and taxpayer, she is looking for the actual number, that is being saved by the City taxpayers, by cancelling the retired police officers healthcare. Atty. Logsdon said there was an email sent to Mrs. Leonard on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Mrs. Leonard said she did not receive this email. A copy of the email was provided to her by the City Clerk.

Mayor Cusat said the City's calculations show the savings would be \$1,168,000 when the last child turns 26. He said there are four other situations, currently, in arbitration, and is a total of \$3,600,000. Leonard asked if this is funded out of the police pension fund. Mayor Cusat said yes. Leonard asked Mayor Cusat if he discussed this with the pension actuary. He stated he sent the calculations to the pension actuary.

The pension actuary representative agreed “in theory”. Mayor Cusat said he felt the City did not need to pay for a study because the City used a 8% annual increase rate, and the pension representative agreed with the rate. Leonard stated the City cut many children from their healthcare plans. Mayor Cusat offered the Federal Order of Police for the police officers to pay the difference. He said there would be 12 families that would be affected.

Leonard asked Mayor Cusat how he would feel if someone would “rip” his daughter’s healthcare from her. Atty. Logsdon said this is not a fair statement. He said this issue is between the City administration and the City Police Department Union. She stated, as a taxpayer, she deserves these answers.

Anka Vilov, 432 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Hazleton, thanked Ondishin for allowing her to send information to him. She asked where they were standing with the No Parking sign between 2nd & 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. Perry said he hopes there will be an answer for her at the next City Council meeting. Ondishin told Vilov the City may have to install a sign on her property. Vilov said that is fine. Vilov asked if she needs to “raise” her sidewalk. She said a police officer told her that a neighbor is not in violation to where they are parking.

Eugene Babula, Hazleton, asked if the City has any answers to resolve the stray animal situation. He said if the City does not want to take care of the problem, he will take care of it himself. He said he was at City Hall numerous times. Several council members stated they, too, have a stray animal issue. Perry stated the City cannot kill the animals, and it is not cost-effective to hire a Vector Control employee.

Atty. Logsdon said the City has not forgotten about this issue. He said the City has been looking into a service where the neighbors could trap an animal and be neutered. Mayor Cusat said Vector does not take squirrels, dogs, cats, rabbits, etc.

Babula said his neighbors are feeding the animals. He asked if this is a code violation. Atty. Logsdon said no, it is hard to prove this.

Laura Stancu, North Poplar Street, Hazleton, asked Fire Chief Leshko to do a fire study regarding City alleys. She stated a fire truck cannot go through an alley. She asked if the City could install “No Parking” signs in the City alley’s and create an ordinance.

Fire Chief Donald Leshko asked if the City gets liquid fuels money. He said, if there is an incident, he will not put a fire truck through an alley. He said the trucks have “setback” lines. He said the City fire trucks are 100 inches wide. Ondishin asked if there is a law in PA. Mayor Cusat said he had the City engineer evaluate the City alley’s. He said the alleys are 21 feet. There are two alleys’, in the City, under 21 feet; Morris Lane and “parts” of Cranberry. He said the City could change the alleys from 21 feet to 26-28 feet. He said the City offered free HOP’s for people who would not park in the alley. He said there would be a “trial” period to get people accustomed to the change. Mayor Cusat stated the City snow plows cannot go through an alley. The DPW uses a loader to clear snow in the alleys. He said the only way is to enhance the PA State law from 21 to 24 feet.

**Comments from Mayor:** Mayor Cusat said on Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, the City will be hosting a Tulip Day. He said the City will receive 50,000 tulips from Van Hoekelen’s nursery. He said they will be disturbed at CAN DO Park. He said the City residents are allowed to take ten tulip bulbs to plant at their homes. This event runs from 11:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. There will be a DJ and food trucks available.

Mayor Cusat said on Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, is the Easter Bunny Trail at City View Park from 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.

**Comments from City Administrator:** None- absent

**Comments from Council:** Bruno stated he feels bad for Babula, but all City residents share the same problem. Schoonmaker stated there are laws in place for domestic animals. They need to be neutered.

Nilles said there is a garage at 4<sup>th</sup> Street & Manhattan Court parking trucks on the corner.

Ondishin thanked the City Department Managers for coming to the meeting to discuss their department issues.

Perry asked when the bond counsel will be coming to City Hall. Mayor Cusat stated Lynch is trying to get a schedule with the auditors. Mayor Cusat told Lynch to “shop around”.

Perry stated the Comprehensive Plan has gone to the Planning Commission. Mayor Cusat said the representatives from the borough of West Hazleton will be having their meeting tonight, and the City of Hazleton has their meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Cusat said, then, the Comprehensive Plan will be presented to the City’s Planning Commission and then presented to City Council.

Perry asked when Davis/Ferrara Drive will be opening. Mayor Cusat said after the City engineers final inspections, the engineers will make the final decision. Ondishin asked about stop signs. Mayor Cusat said they will be installed after the City takes “possession” of it.

Brian Schoonmaker, Hazleton Police Chief, stated there are six inactive parking sticks the police department will relocate in the City. Perry stated 19<sup>th</sup> Street & Vine Streets needs a parking stick. Bruno stated there needs to be one parking stick at the Hazleton Post office on Wyoming Street.

**Comments from Junior Council:** Mateo Feola said the HASD FBLA will be attending the FBLA Nationals in Anaheim, CA.

**Adjournment:** Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.