

## **City of Hazleton Government Study Commission Meeting Minutes**

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026

Time 5:00 PM

Location: City Hall, Conference Room A, Hazleton

### **Call to Order**

This meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM by Allison Keegan, Chairwoman.

### **Roll Call**

Allison Keegan, Chairperson - Present

Rossanna Gabriel, Vice Chairperson-Present

Philip Bonafair - Present

Thomas Bruno – Present

Jeffrey Cusat - Present

Joseph Yannuzzi –Absent

Joseph Zeller III – Present

PEL Consultants Gerald Cross; Senior Research Fellow; Patty Moorhead, Director of Financial and Data Analytics; Fred Reddig, Consultant

Solicitor, Sean Logsdon

Recording Secretary Christine Galuska

**Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and moment of silence was observed.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Approval of January 7, 2026 meeting minutes. Motion made by Cusat, seconded by Gabriel. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Invoices**

There were no invoices presented for approval.

### **Courtesy of the Floor (On Agenda Items Only)**

#### **Dee Deakos**

Questioned whether a municipal elected official could also serve on the Government Study Commission. The question was addressed and answered.

Referenced a previous discussion regarding who is authorized to place items on the agenda and asked whether the option for members of the public to submit a petition to have an item placed on the agenda would remain in effect. Her question was addressed and answered.

Dee stated that she is opposed to the use of districts. She expressed concern that districts could reduce credibility and noted that districts would not change a candidate's outcome if voter participation remained low. She further stated she believed districts could potentially result in less qualified candidates.

**Nicarol Soto**

Stated that she studied Political Science in college and is a former candidate who ran for office four times. She noted the challenges immigrants face when running campaigns against local candidates. She clarified that her goal is not to empower a specific group but to promote law and order. Nicarol expressed support for districts or a mixed district system.

**Dave Dominguez**

Commented that Hazleton is lacking civic engagement. He discussed candidate options such as a hybrid system, district representation, and a “run and see what happens” approach. He advocated for the possibility of having seven council members. He also expressed support for a public referendum for sales, increasing budgetary transparency, and providing professional development reimbursement to promote better leadership.

**Old Business****PEL Pre-Meeting Materials and Discussion**

PEL requested that Commissioners review the “Questions for Consideration” materials emailed prior to the meeting. The purpose of the request was so that the Commission could discuss PEL’s recommendations and identify areas of consensus on questions where majority approval exists. As a result of this discussion, many areas of consensus were identified. This progress will allow future meeting time to be devoted to more complex or unresolved issues.

Because discussions ran longer than expected, we will resume discussion on the comparison between the Third-Class City Code and the City of Hazleton Optional Plan B after completing the “Questions for Consideration,” beginning with Question 16.

**New Business**

None

**Public Comments**

None

**Member Comments**

None

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 6:41 PM by Cusat, seconded by Bruno. The motion carries.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Hazleton Government Study Commission will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 4, at 5:00 PM, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Hazleton City Hall.