

City of Hazleton Government Study Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Time 4:30 PM

Location: City Hall, Conference Room A, Hazleton

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 4:34 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 – Present

Joseph Zeller III – Present

Patty Moorhead, Director of Financial and Data Analytics; Fred Reddig, Consultant

Recording Secretary Christine Galuska

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

Approval of Minutes

Approval of October 7, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion made by Yannuzzi, seconded by Cusat. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Invoices

There were no invoices presented for approval.

Old Business

Subcommittee Reports

GSC subcommittee held virtual discussions with representatives from other Pennsylvania municipalities in reference to Home Rule Charter:

Mayor Elisco of New Castle

- Part-time Mayor and presiding officer of a seven-member, at large City Council
- Noted that seven council members result in too many different opinions.
- Recommends a full-time mayor and five-member City Council

Mayor Shultz of Carlisle

- Population-approximately 23,500

- Annual budget-\$60 million which includes utilities such as sewer and water
- Mayor is part-time and serves on council
- The decision to pursue a Home Rule Charter was driven by issues involving the police department and tax collection
- During the Home Rule effort, it was promised no tax increase would be made
- Carlisle operates under a council-manager form of government, where the borough manager handles the day-to-day administration and operations

Mayor Brown of Wilkes-Barre

- Population-approximately 55,000
- Annual budget exceeding \$60 million
- Part-time mayor elected at-large, council members elected by district
- Public safety remains the top priority, with 90 police officers, 62 firefighters, and 66 DPW employees
- ARPA funds were distributed directly to residents

GSC Timeline

- The GSC is to report its findings and recommendations to the citizens of Hazleton within nine months from the date of election.
- The Commission may extend its work by an additional nine months if it elects to prepare and submit a proposed Home Rule Charter, and additional 2 months if it chooses to recommend elections of council members by district.
- Once adopted, no substantial changes to the Home Rule Charter may be made for a five-year period.
- The charter must be completed by mid-August 2026, approximately 13 weeks prior to the election.

New Business

Discussion on Upcoming Meeting

Commissioners discussed the possibility of changing the location and time of the November 18 meeting.

Current Commission Activities

The Commission reported that questionnaires have been distributed to members of the current administration as part of the ongoing study. Feedback received indicates that the administration is satisfied with the current relationship with the Mayor, describing the Mayor as actively engaged. Additionally, the administration stated that the Mayor is available should they have any questions.

Public Comments

None

Member Comments

Commissioner Joe Yannuzzi shared his perspective on the roles and responsibilities associated with serving as a former Mayor, providing valuable context for the Commission's ongoing study of potential government structure.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:05 PM by Bonafair, seconded by Bruno. The motion carries.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Hazleton Government Study Commission will take place on Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 4:30 PM, on the 2nd floor of Hazleton City Hall due to Election Day.