

City of Hazleton Government Study Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Time 4:30 PM

Location: City Hall, Conference Room A, Hazleton

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 4:32 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

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 October 21, 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 Pacifico of Altoona

- Mayor and serves as Chair of the City Council
- The mayor and council members may not direct city employees or officials instead act as a body to provide direction to the City Manager
- Helped Altoona successfully exit Act 47
- The City Manager is responsible for implementing policies and coordinating city departments

Mayor Slaughter of Williamsport

- Strong mayor-council form of government
- Mayor is the Chief Executive and leader of the city, responsible for day-to-day operations
- 7-member Council
- Oversight of all municipal departments

Dr. Adam Yoder Williamsport President of Council

- Supports maintaining a 7-member council, prefers a 5–7-member council
- Council President serves a one-year term, currently discussing term limits
- Advocates for Home Rule Charter, primarily from a revenue flexibility perspective

New Business

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.

Submission Deadline

It was noted that the charter and final report must be submitted to the county 13 weeks prior to the election for the proposal to appear on the ballot. Following submission, there will be a one-month period during which changes or revisions may be made.

Discussion on Timeline and Preparation

Some commissioners indicated they were ready to vote on whether to pursue a charter. However, several commissioners expressed concern that not all members have extensive backgrounds in government and felt that additional time would be beneficial to study, consult with additional officials, and gather further input before proceeding to vote. A meeting with the mayors of Pittston and Easton is currently being arranged. It was noted that this meeting can take place as part of the drafting process of the charter. During the discussion on the proposed charter, one member remarked that if there is even one item an individual wishes to see changed, that would be reason to vote in favor of moving forward with the charter.

Public Interest and Engagement

It was stated that public interest may increase if the commission moves forward drafting the charter rather than remaining in the study or educational phase.

Next Steps and Scheduled Vote

A vote to determine whether to prepare and submit a proposed Home Rule Charter to voters is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, November 18, at 4:30 pm, on the second floor of City Hall.

Public Comments

David Dominguez inquired whether the *Citizens' Guide to the Government Study Commission* would be made available on the city's website in Spanish. He also asked if a "Public Questions" item could be added to future meeting agendas. David asked if constituents are welcome to attend meetings. He also inquired about the question that will appear when voting on the charter. Lastly David asked whether an additional Hazleton Government Study Commission public meeting could be held outside of City Hall. The questions were addressed by the committee.

Member Comments

Council Member Tom Bruno shared his perspective on the roles and responsibilities associated with serving as a current councilman, providing valuable context for the Commission's ongoing study of potential government structure and the opportunity for other means of funds other than property taxes. Tom stated that council currently works well with the mayor.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:23 PM by Yannuzzi, seconded by Bonafair. The motion carries.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Hazleton Government Study Commission will take place on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 4:30 PM, on the 2nd floor of Hazleton City Hall.