

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
August 26, 2025
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

SALUTE TO COLORS

Mayor Wronko invited all those present to stand in a salute to the colors.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT AS TO COMPLIANCE WITH P.L. 1975

Adequate Notice of this Meeting has been provided according to the Open Public Meetings Act, Assembly Bill 1030. Notice of this Meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice sent to the New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record on January 8, 2025, and was placed on the Official Bulletin Board in the Municipal Building.

In the event the Mayor and Council have not addressed all items on this Agenda by 10:00 PM and they are of the opinion that they cannot complete the Agenda in a reasonable time period, the Mayor and Council may exercise their option to continue this meeting at an agreed to date, time and place. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of this Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Council Members:

Councilman Riccardi – present	Councilman Thornton – present
Councilman Romano – present	Councilman Wachterhauser – present
Councilman Simpson – absent	Councilman Zampino – present
Mayor Wronko – present	

CITIZEN'S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Rich Perry stated there is a public safety issue with regard to trees along Brooklyn Road which are entwined into the power lines. The trees have been standing dead for at least three years. Mr. Perry stated he has a friend in Stanhope who had a dead tree on his property. The neighbor complained to the town and then his friend received a letter informing him that the tree had to be removed. There are three or four huge trees on Brooklyn Road going up the hill from town that look like they could come down at any time. Mr. Perry asked what the Borough can do and stated he is aware they will be expensive trees to remove. Administrator McNeilly stated there is a requirement in the Borough which requires dead trees to be removed from a resident's property. The Borough does not go out looking for such trees. Now that this issue has been brought to our attention, the Borough will check to see if these trees along Brooklyn Road are on residential property. If the trees are in the right away of the County road, Sussex County would be responsible for removing them or clearing them when they drop. Administrator McNeilly stated he will pass this concern onto the Code Enforcement Official. Many of the trees are Ash trees.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Mayor Wronko read aloud the list of minutes being presented for approval:

July 8, 2025	Work Session & Agenda Meeting
July 22, 2025	Business Meeting

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Wachterhauser and carried by a majority voice vote, the minutes were approved. Councilman Romano and Councilman Thornton abstained from the minutes of July 22, 2025.

CORRESPONDENCE *(List Attached)*

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Thornton and unanimously carried by voice vote, the list of correspondence was accepted and ordered placed on file.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety – Councilman Wachterhauser/Councilman Riccardi

(Police, Fire, Ambulance, Court & Violations Bureau, Emergency Management)

Councilman Wachterhauser stated the Police Department, for the month of July, reported a total of 323 calls and 127 of those calls were motor vehicle stops.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated the Fire Department, for the month of July, reported 18 calls for service, 5 mutual aid calls, 1 EMS assist, 3 drills, 2 training, 23 special details and 5 meetings for a total number of man hours volunteered of 497.75 hours.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated a report was not received from the Ambulance Squad for July.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated Code Enforcement reported 4 complaints and 3 reinspections.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated the County Fire Marshal, for the month of July, reported 5 inspections took place and one property received 3 notices of violation which will be followed up on.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated he is working on dates to schedule a meeting with the Fire Department and possibly the Ambulance Squad for sometime in September.

Finance & Administration – Councilman Romano/Councilman Thornton

Councilman Romano stated the property taxes for the month of July totaled \$191,132.58. The year to date total is \$6,929,100.74. Almost 99% of the first quarter taxes have been collected and a little over 97% of the second quarter have been collected. The third quarter is currently at approximately 4% which is online with last years collection percentage.

Councilman Romano stated the water collections for the month of July totaled \$33,897.37 and the sewer collections were \$46,114.32. Both figures are in line with our expectations.

Community Development – Councilman Zampino/Councilman Simpson

Councilman Zampino stated he had no report for this evening.

Municipal Infrastructure – Councilman Thornton/Councilman Romano

(Water Distribution, Sewer Collection System, Road Construction & Maintenance, Buildings & Grounds)

Councilman Thornton stated he had no report for this evening.

Information Technology – Councilman Riccardi/Councilman Wachterhauser

Councilman Riccardi stated two weeks ago he had the initial meeting with the representative from DeskPro. A spreadsheet has been created laying out which departments will be utilizing the software. A working test case will be entered to get the program ready for use. Mayor Wronko asked if there have been any issues encountered. Administrator McNeilly stated the only issue was on the financial side and dealing with vacation schedules. Councilman Riccardi stated that DeskPro is ready to move forward. Administrator McNeilly stated getting the software added to the website has not been resolved as yet. Councilman Riccardi stated DeskPro has a prebuilt form that can just be added as a new page to the website.

Boards/Commissions – Councilman Simpson/Councilman Zampino

Councilman Zampino stated he had no report for this evening.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Administrator McNeilly stated he had no report this evening.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Justin Dannecker (Troop 91) Proposed Eagle Scout Project – Mayor Wronko stated Justin Dannecker is back tonight to update the governing body on his plans for his Eagle Scout Project and the Mayor invited Justin to come forward to give his presentation. Justin stated his proposal for his Eagle Scout Project is to install a corn hole court at the Pennington Park on Dell Road and repair the left side of the fence. Mayor Wronko stated at the last meeting Justin had proposed installing a horseshoe court but the council felt that may have had too many dangerous elements. Justin has revised his plan to include corn hole, which is a safer option. Mayor Wronko asked the governing body if they had any questions for Justin. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if Justin will be constructing the boards himself and asked what they will be made of. Justin’s Advisor replied that Justin will be constructing the boards out of AZEK, which is a PVC product. Councilman Riccardi asked if the boards will be affixed to the ground so they cannot be removed. Justin stated the boards will be attached in a secure manner. Administrator McNeilly stated Justin provided a copy of his proposal this morning for review. The proposal is laid out very well and the concerns for safety have been addressed. Councilman Romano agreed and stated the proposal looks good. Justin’s mother stated that Justin has applied for an extension with the Boy Scout Council due to his age. The Boy Scout Council cannot approve the extension until they are notified that Justin’s project has been approved. Administrator McNeilly stated once Justin receives approval for the extension, his advisor will give him the packet to start the project and that will require a signature from the Borough which Administrator McNeilly will sign. Justin’s mother stated they are hoping to receive notice from the Boy Scout Council in approximately two weeks. Councilman Thornton asked if the governing body can do anything to help move the process along. Mayor Wronko stated if a letter is needed Administrator McNeilly can provide one. Justin’s mother stated she will let the Administrator know if that is needed. Mayor Wronko took a straw poll asking for approval of Justin Dannecker’s Eagle Scout Project. The results are as follows: Councilman Romano – yes; Councilman Riccardi – yes; Councilman Thornton – yes; Councilman Wachterhauser – yes; Councilman Zampino – yes. The governing body unanimously approved Justin’s Eagle Scout Project.

2nd Amendment Organization – Mayor Wronko stated he received a note from one of the 2nd Amendment Organizations and emailed the information to the governing body for review. The organization is asking the Borough to consider reimbursing the \$150.00 fee for people who have applied for their carry permits. Mayor Wronko stated there are nine (9) other municipalities who approved this and that is why they are reaching out. Councilman Romano stated the governing body is very reticent about waiving fees and we have been consistent in not waiving fees. There have been non-profit groups who have requested various fees to be waived and those requests were denied. Councilman Romano stated he is of the opinion that the governing body should stay on that same course. Councilman Thornton stated he agrees with Councilman Romano and he is of the opinion this is not something that causes a hardship to the residents. This does not need to be done as a show of support for the 2nd Amendment. Every time we are elected we put our hand on the bible and swear to uphold the Constitution and that includes the 2nd Amendment. Councilman Riccardi asked the Borough Attorney if the governing body has any authority to refund the fees due to the fact the fees are mandated by state statute. There are state statutes where the Borough is allowed to provide refunds however, this law does not offer that. Attorney Leo asked if this is a state statute for a state permit fee or a local permit fee. Councilman Riccardi stated part of the fee is kept locally to defray the cost for the permit fee process on the local side and part of the fee goes to the state police fund. Attorney Leo stated if there is a mandated fee that goes to the state that would still have to be paid. Mayor Wronko stated the organization is requesting the refund of the \$150.00 that does not go to the state. Councilman Riccardi stated that it is still mandated by the state that the fee has to be collected. Attorney Leo stated she would have to research the issue. Councilman Wachterhauser stated he would be in favor of refunding a portion of the fee if it is not an undue burden on the municipality if this was just a fee that was arbitrarily put forward by Trenton. The fees would be returned to an

individual, not an organization. Councilman Zampino stated he would be in favor of refunding the fee due to the fact, like Councilman Wachterhauser stated, the fee would be going to an individual and not an organization. However, Councilman Zampino stated he does see Councilman Romano’s point about not setting a precedent. Mayor Wronko stated he is aware that Councilman Simpson was also in support of waiving the fee. Mayor Wronko asked Attorney Leo to research the issue to be discussed again at a future time. Councilman Thornton asked, in the interest of transparency, how many members on the governing body have firearm permits. Several members have firearm permits but none have carry permits and one is exempt.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

CONSENT AGENDA (All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the Borough Council and were enacted by one motion of the Borough Council with no separate discussion.)

Resolution 149-25

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE APPROVING SOCIAL AFFAIR PERMIT

WHEREAS, Lakeland Little League has filed an application for a Social Affair Permit for an event to be held on September 27, 2025, with a rain date of September 28, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the submitted application form is complete in all respects, fees have been paid and the application has been properly reviewed and approved by the Chief of Police;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope do hereby approve the Social Affair Permit for the Lakeland Little League for their event to be held on September 27, 2025, with a rain date of September 28, 2025.

Resolution 150-25

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CROSSING GUARD

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope provides crossing guards during school days throughout the Borough under the supervision of the Chief of Police; and

WHEREAS, the Chief has identified a need for a new crossing guard, commencing on or about August 25, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Chief has recommended Paul Sofia to act as a crossing guard to be assigned to such duties as may be required by the Chief of Police.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the Chief be and is hereby authorized to employ Paul Sofia as a crossing guard, effective August 25, 2025.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and carried by a majority of the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolutions were duly adopted. Councilman Wachterhauser abstained from Resolution 149-25.

Roll Call:

Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser – abstain 149-25 / yes
Councilman Simpson – absent	Councilman Zampino – yes

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 151-25

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has certified that funds are available in the proper account; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has approved payment upon certification from the Borough Department Heads that the goods and/or services have been rendered to the Borough;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the current bills list, dated August 26, 2025, and on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief Finance Officer and approved by the Chief Finance Officer for payment, be paid.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Thornton and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes
Councilman Simpson – absent	Councilman Zampino – yes

ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney Ursula Leo stated she had no report this evening.

CITIZEN'S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Joe Concetto, Franklin Councilman, stated his municipality has adopted the resolution to reimburse residents for their carry permits. The statute does state that the municipalities have to collect the fees but it does not state what can be done with it afterwards. Usually it goes into the general expenses and what not. That is where the legality is that the funds can be reimbursed back to the resident. Mr. Concetto stated any member of the council that wants to apply for a carry permit would have to do so through the State. They would not be permitted to file through the municipality. The fee would not be reimbursed to the council and therefore it is not a conflict of interest. The cost for a carry permit used to be \$20.00 but once it became possible to obtain a carry permit, the State of NJ raised the fee from \$20.00 to \$200.00. All of the permits were increased drastically. A Pennsylvania license is good for five (5) years and costs \$25.00. The State of NJ raised the fees to try and take the option away from the average resident. There are costs for fingerprinting, qualifying, background check etc. which can put quite a strain on people. The licensing is renewed every other year. Some towns are concerned about the funds, but it is not a ratable which can be counted on. Mr. Concetto stated he hopes that the governing body will join with some of the other towns and support this resolution to give back to the people. This is a constitutional right and the people are being charged for it over and over again.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk for
Ellen Horak, RMC
Borough Clerk