

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK SESSION AND
AGENDA MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2026
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 7, 2026, 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 Romano – present
Councilman Simpson – present

Councilman Smith – present
Councilman Thornton – absent
Councilman Wachterhauser – present

Mayor Wronko – present

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Cannabis License – Administrator McNeilly stated the first cannabis license application was received today. The location submitted is for the Plumbing Store. Councilman Riccardi asked how soon that could be approved. Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk, stated the application is in attorney review. If the attorney approves the application, then it will come before the governing body for a resolution of support. Then the applicant will go before the Land Use Board.

WORK SESSION

2026 Municipal Budget – Mayor Wronko stated the next scheduled meeting on January 27th will begin at 6:00PM to begin the municipal budget discussion. Mayor Wronko reminded the Council to bring their iPad which will be used to view the budget worksheets. Councilman Romano asked the governing body to review the budget prior to the meeting and prepare any questions to help move the process along quicker. Usually by this time the discussions are further ahead. Administrator McNeilly asked the governing body to email him if they have any questions regarding specific line items.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Wronko offered the following resolutions which were read by title.

Resolution 037-26

A RESOLUTION APPOINTING AN OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE STANHOPE BOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT UNTIL A NEW CHIEF OF POLICE IS SELECTED

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-118 provides that the governing body of a municipality may establish and organize a police department and appoint officers as necessary for its proper operation and oversight; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope recognizes the importance of ensuring the seamless operation of the Stanhope Borough Police Department during this transition of leadership, given the retirement of former Chief Pittigher; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council is committed to fulfilling its statutory responsibility to maintain public safety and effective oversight of the Police Department during this interim period.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that it does hereby designate Joseph Johnson as the Officer in Charge of the Stanhope Borough Police Department, effective January 13, 2026, and continuing until such time as a new Chief of Police is selected and assumes office, or until further action is taken by the Mayor and Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Officer in Charge Joseph Johnson shall assume all authority and responsibilities vested in the Chief of Police as provided under N.J.S.A. 40A:14-118 and applicable Borough ordinances, including but not limited to the supervision, management, and control of all members and employees of the Police Department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that during this interim period, the Officer in Charge shall provide periodic reports to the Mayor and Council regarding the operations and administration of the Police Department to ensure transparency and accountability.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.

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

Roll Call:

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

The Mayor and Council congratulated Sergeant Johnson, present in the audience, and wished him luck.

Resolution 038-26

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT TO MILLENNIUM STRATEGIES

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope is in need of the services of a grant consulting firm with knowledge of all aspects of the availability of applications for state and federal grants that may be available to the Borough of Stanhope on a competitive basis to assist the Borough in identifying and applying for such grants; and

WHEREAS, the services of a grant consultant constitute extraordinary unspecifiable services pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a)(ii); and

WHEREAS, Millennium Strategies, LLC has the necessary experience and qualified staff to provide grant consulting services to the Borough on an ongoing basis; and

WHEREAS, Millennium Strategies, LLC has made a written proposal to the Borough of Stanhope to provide grant consultation services; and

WHEREAS, the proposed agreement between the Borough and Millennium Strategies, LLC provides for a retainer of \$1,581 per month, which amount is not in excess of the Borough's bid threshold; and

WHEREAS, said agreement with Millennium Strategies, LLC is terminable at will by the Borough.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the Borough does hereby award a contract for extraordinary unspecifiable services to Millennium Strategies, LLC, a copy of which agreement is attached hereto;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to execute said agreement on behalf of the Borough.

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

Roll Call:

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

Resolution 039-26

**A RESOLUTION PROMOTING FOUR (4)
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)
EMPLOYEES FROM LABORER 4 TO LABORER 5**

WHEREAS, there exists a need within the Borough of Stanhope Department of Public Works to promote qualified employees in order to ensure the continued efficient operation of the Department; and

WHEREAS, it is the recommendation of the Borough Administrator and the DPW Superintendent that the following individuals be promoted to the position of Laborer 5: Kevin Cavanaugh; William Worthmuth; Louis Lillman; and Rick Crawn.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex and State of New Jersey, that:

1. Kevin Cavanaugh; William Worthmuth; Louis Lillman; and Rick Crawn are hereby promoted to the position of Laborer 5.
2. This promotion shall be effective as of January 1, 2026, with retro pay effective as of that date.
3. A certified copy of this resolution shall be provided to the Borough Administrator, DPW Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer for implementation.

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

Roll Call:

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

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 040-26

**Governor’s Council on Substance Use Disorder Fiscal Grant
Cycle July 2027 – June 2031**

WHEREAS, the Governor’s Council on Substance Use Disorder (GCSUD) established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Substance Use Disorder in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent substance use disorder in communities throughout New Jersey.

WHEREAS, The Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey recognizes that substance use disorder is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages; and therefore has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough Council further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent substance abuse disorder in our community; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has applied for funding to the Governor’s Council on Substance Use Disorder through the County of Sussex;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex does hereby recognize the following:

- 1. The Borough Council does hereby authorize submission of a strategic plan for the Lenape Valley Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2027 in the amount of:

GCSUD Grant	\$ 3,658.00
Cash Match	\$ 914.50
In-Kind	\$ 2,743.50

- 0. The Borough Council acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

Resolution 041-26

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF
REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER**

WHEREAS, at the Municipal Tax Sale held on October 30, 2024, a lien was sold on Block 11601 Lot 28, also known as 14 Maryann Terrace, for 2023 delinquent sewer and water charges; and

WHEREAS, this lien which is known as Tax Sale Certificate #24-00026 was sold to Bala Partners, LLC at 0% interest and a Premium of \$600.00; and

WHEREAS, Cotality, mortgagee, has effected a redemption of certificate #24-00026 in the amount of \$2,530.57; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that the reimbursement is now required to be made for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

Redemption Amount: Outside Lien #24-00026 and Interest	\$2,530.57
Premium Paid by Lienholder	600.00
Total From Current Fund:	\$2,530.57
Total From Tax Premium Account	600.00

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey that the Governing Body acknowledges that Bala Partners, LLC is entitled to the redemption in the amount of \$3,130.57 and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Financial Officer be authorized to issue a check in the total amount of \$3,130.57 for the total redemption of certificate #24-00026 payable to Bala Partners, LLC, PO Box 303, Pottersville, NJ 07979; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer and the Borough Tax Collector.

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Simpson and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolutions were duly adopted.

Roll Call:

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

Mayor's Appointment

Resolution 042-26 **RESOLUTION APPROVING THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF JOHN C. HULSE, JR., AS A MEMBER OF THE STANHOPE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Mayor's appointment of John C. Hulse, Jr., as a member of the Stanhope Fire Department

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Stanhope that they do hereby concur with the Mayor's appointment of John C. Hulse, Jr., as a Member of the Stanhope Fire Department effective immediately.

On motion by Councilman Wachterhauser, seconded by Councilman Smith and carried by a majority voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted. Councilman Simpson abstained.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 043-26 **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 January 13, 2026 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 Riccardi and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Smith – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Thornton – absent
Councilman Simpson – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser - yes

AGENDA ITEMS

All items listed on the Agenda for January 27, 2026 were approved.

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.

Seeing no one 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 7:07 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk for
Ellen Horak, RMC
Borough Clerk