

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
January 27, 2026
6:00 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.

Furthermore, notice of the change in meeting time was sent to the New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record on January 20, 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– absent (arrived 6:02pm)
Councilman Thornton – absent
Councilman Wachterhauser – 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.

Seeing no one 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:

December 9, 2025 Business Meeting

On motion by Councilman Wachterhauser, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by voice vote, the minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE *(List Attached)*

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

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator McNeilly stated he had no report for this evening.

Resolution 045-26

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION OF HAPPY TREE FARMACY STANHOPE, LLC FOR A LOCAL CANNABIS RETAIL USE WITHIN STANHOPE BOROUGH

WHEREAS, Chapter 68 of the Code of the Borough of Stanhope requires that any person, business, or organization, prior to operating a cannabis retail shop within Stanhope Borough, shall first apply for and secure from the Borough of Stanhope Council a local Class 5 cannabis retail license; and

WHEREAS, Happy Tree Farmacy Stanhope, LLC has applied for a local cannabis retail license for property located at 177 Route 183, Block 11701, Lot 20, in Stanhope Borough, and has submitted all application information required by the Borough Code; and

WHEREAS, Happy Tree Farmacy Stanhope, LLC has applied for approval from the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission, for a Class 5 cannabis retailer license; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council deems the application information submitted is sufficient to grant a resolution of support, to allow Happy Tree Farmacy Stanhope, LLC to move forward in applying for New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission approval and obtaining Stanhope Borough Land Use Board and other approvals required prior to the Mayor and Council granting a Local Cannabis License.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, hereby adopts this resolution of support for the application of Happy Tree Farmacy Stanhope, LLC for retail cannabis use, which support is conditioned upon, among other things, approvals obtained from the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission, Stanhope Borough Land Use Board, Zoning, Police Department, Fire Official and Health Department, and a final Borough license; and

BE IT RESOLVED that Happy Tree Farmacy Stanhope, LLC shall apply for and obtain all necessary approvals listed above, and other applicable requirements, and comply with all State and Borough requirements, including payment of the Borough local cannabis fees and taxes.

Councilman Riccardi stated the name of the applicant on the application is Happy Tree Farmacy Stanhope, LLC, not Happy Tree Farmacy, LLC. The word Stanhope needs to be added to the resolution. The correction to the name of the company was made.

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

Resolution 046-26

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER AND PAYMENT TO PORTOFINO BUILDERS FOR MAIN STREET SIDEWALK/CROSSWALK WORK

WHEREAS, a contract was entered into for Main Street sidewalk and crosswalk work (the "Project"), between the Borough of Stanhope and Portofino Builders, after public bid and award, and as part of a Local Aid grant, for an original contract price of \$73,803.30, on October 14, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Portofino Builders has submitted Invoice #1264 in the amount of \$29,241.00, for completion of the sidewalk and driveway apron replacements and installation of the detectable warning surfaces for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the work performed by Portofino Builders, which the Borough Engineer finds the invoice accurately reflects, includes an increase of \$6,929.00 due to the need to replace additional segments of concrete sidewalk, driveway aprons and driveway restoration; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Engineer has reviewed the invoice, and agrees a change order and the total payment request of \$29,241.00 is appropriate due to the higher quantities of sidewalk, driveway apron and restoration than were estimated; and

WHEREAS, with the change order increase of \$6,929.00, the total contact award of \$73,803.30 is increased 9.4% to \$80,734.00.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Borough approve of the change order and payment to Portofino Builders of \$29,241.00 for Main Street sidewalk and crosswalk work, resulting in a total contract amount of \$80,734.00 is approved.

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 047-26 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGET APPROPRIATION RESERVE TRANSFER BETWEEN 2025 APPROPRIATION RESERVE ACCOUNTS

WHEREAS, certain transfers of funds for various 2025 budget appropriations are necessary to cover anticipated expenditures; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-59 provides that all unexpended balances carried forward after the close of the year are available, until lapsed at the close of the succeeding year, to meet specific claims, commitments or contracts incurred during the preceding fiscal year, and allows transfers to be made from unexpended balances which are expected to be insufficient during the first three months of the succeeding year;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the Chief Financial Officer shall and is hereby authorized to make transfers between appropriation reserve accounts of the 2025 Municipal Budget as follows:

CURRENT FUND		
FROM		
Financial Admin, S&W	\$4,500.00	
TO		
Fire Department, OE		\$3,000.00
General Admin, S&W		\$1,500.00
TOTAL	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00

Resolution 048-26 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACTS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE FOR THE YEAR 2026

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope has a need for professional services for the year 2026 of Borough Attorney, Borough Labor Attorney, Bond Attorney, Borough Engineer, Borough Planner, Borough Auditor, Conflict Counsel and Municipal Advisor; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has determined and certified in writing that the value of the position of each of the agreements will exceed \$17,500.00; and

WHEREAS, the anticipated term of each contract is one year; and

WHEREAS, Laddey, Clark & Ryan, LLP has submitted a proposal to provide legal services as Borough Attorney and as Labor Attorney for the year 2026; and

WHEREAS, Robert Beinfield, Esq. of the firm Hawkins, Delafield and Wood has submitted a proposal to provide legal services as Borough Bond Attorney for the year 2026; and

WHEREAS, Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd. has submitted a proposal indicating that it will provide engineering services as Municipal Engineer and Municipal Planner for the Borough of Stanhope for the year 2026; and

WHEREAS, Nisivoccia & Company, LLP has submitted a proposal indicating that it will provide auditing services as Municipal Auditor for the Borough of Stanhope for the year 2026; and

WHEREAS, Phoenix Advisors is hereby retained as Municipal Advisor for the year 2026 to assist with the issuance of Bond Anticipation Notes; and

WHEREAS, each of the aforesaid professionals has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification certifying that they have not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Borough of Stanhope in the previous one year and that the contract will prohibit said professional from making any reportable contribution through the term of the contract; and

WHEREAS, each of the aforesaid professionals has completed and submitted a Political Contribution Disclosure Form; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer of the Borough of Stanhope has certified the availability of funds for these contracts pursuant to NJAC 5:30-5.4;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the Mayor and Clerk be and the same are hereby authorized to execute individual agreements with each Borough Professional named herein above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Business Disclosure Entity Certification and the Determination of Value be placed on file with this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notice of the above contract shall be published by the Borough in accordance with the provisions of the Local Public Contracts Law.

Resolution 049-26

AUTHORIZE SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH SUSSEX COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY FOR THE PROVISION OF CERTIFIED RECYCLING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO CERTIFY AND SUBMIT THE 2025 RECYCLING TONNAGE REPORT TO NJDEP

WHEREAS, New Jersey's Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) requires that reports or other recycling-related documents be signed/certified by a Certified Recycling Professional (CRP); and

WHEREAS, the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act (N.J.S.A 40A:65-1, et, seq.) (hereinafter, "the Act") provides that local units of government may enter into a contract to provide or receive any service that either local unit participating in the Agreement is empowered to provide or receive within its own jurisdiction, including services incidental to the primary purposes of any of the participating units (N.J.S.A. 40A:65-4); and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope will prepare the 2025 Recycling Tonnage Report; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope has requested the services of the SCMUA in the form of the District Recycling Coordinator as a Certified Recycling Professional to certify and submit the required 2025 Borough of Stanhope Recycling Tonnage Report to NJDEP by April 30, 2026; and

WHEREAS, SCMUA has the qualified staff to certify the Recycling Tonnage Report prepared by the Borough of Stanhope and electronically submit it to NJDEP on behalf of the Borough of Stanhope under the terms and conditions set for in the Shared Services Agreement.

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

1. The Mayor is hereby authorized to sign the Shared Services Agreement with SCMUA, for the provision of a Certified Recycling Professional Services to certify and submit the 2025 Recycling Tonnage Report to NJDEP.
2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Romano 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

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 050-26

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 27, 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 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

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

2026 Municipal Budget – Administrator McNeilly stated the budget discussions can begin without the CFO present. Administrator McNeilly will relay any questions back to the CFO and then the CFO will be asked to be present at the second meeting in February to review the budget. The plan is to be able to introduce the budget at the first meeting in March and if that is not possible, the budget would definitely be introduced at the second meeting in March. Councilman Romano asked if the budget has to be completed by the second meeting in March. Administrator McNeilly stated if the introduction is not done by then, he and the CFO will be concerned. The State wants the budgets in Trenton by early April. For good practice here in Stanhope, all the things that connect to the budget such as the salaries for the non-union employees have a cascading effect and the Capital Budget needs to be moved along. The process this year is slightly behind by our standards.

Administrator McNeilly stated he prepared a 2026 Expenses Summary. Certain line items have been highlighted and notes have been provided. Blue highlighting represents a 0% increase request. The yellow highlighted items indicate a budget decrease. The length of terms for contracts and agreements has also been provided. In the budget, the Tax Impact page, in the upper right-hand corner, shows based upon how the budget is right now in Google Sheets with all the requests and recommendations. The overall budget dollar increase is \$142,720.00, which represents a

3.46% increase. Administrator McNeilly stated this is what he wants to focus on right now, because this can be controlled. The re-evaluation and the change in the tax rate will cause things to move around a bit. There have been increases to the insurances. Departments have decreased their costs and supplies have decreased across the board, which has helped.

Administrator McNeilly stated the current budget represents a 5% salary increase for the unrepresented employees. Administrator McNeilly stated, in an effort to get the Borough out of the crater it is in salary wise, it is his opinion that a second year at this percentage will help. The assessment letters indicate where the tax point was for 2025 and it projects where 2026 may be. However, the unknown is the other entities that are part of that figure such as the county tax, library tax, school taxes etc. Mayor Wronko asked the governing body if they are in favor of the 5% increase for the employees or would they like to have a discussion on this. Councilman Romano stated the governing body is aware of the problems we have filling positions with the salaries we are working with now. We cannot find anyone who wants to work in Construction or as a CFO/Tax Collector. We cannot find anyone who will look at the Assistant Administrator position. Councilman Romano stated he is of the opinion that 5% is reasonable and stated he does not like focusing on the percentage as much as what the dollar amounts are. Because what is 5% really in terms of the dollars. Mayor Wronko stated it depends on the roles. Administrator McNeilly stated, for the employees in this group, a 3% increase would total \$12,000. At 4% it is approximately \$16,000 and at 5% it is \$20,515 at 6% it would jump to \$26,000 - \$27,000. Mayor Wronko asked if there is a realistic number that could be discussed which would solve or help the issue that Councilman Romano mentioned in order to make the positions more attractive. Administrator McNeilly stated going with 5% this year and last year, is a 10% increase over two years which bests both contracts, which is good. There have been many years when the contracts did much better than the staff. This is a broad stroke because it is not like corporate businesses that can do true surgeries. Administrator McNeilly stated he is of the opinion 5% is a good number for a public entity. Councilman Riccardi asked how the salaries for these positions will compare to others nearby if the increase is 5%. Administrator McNeilly stated he does not have that information. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the salaries for the Borough are comparably lower than the surrounding towns. Administrator McNeilly stated in specific things the Borough is lower due to a lot of decisions that were made over a lot of years when there were really low increment changes. The increases in the past were at 1%, 1 ½% and 2%. Now this is like a catch-up time. An entry level keyboarding position in Netcong or Byram is hiring at \$20-\$25 per hour. The Borough's rate structure right now, with people who have been here between 11 and 15 years, just pierce at \$25 per hour. Administrator McNeilly stated it is a fact that the biggest way to increase your salary is to jump around from place to place. This increase will move some people away from the \$20, \$22, \$23 per hour rate to allow us to at least get someone in Construction for office help. The positions of CFO or CFO/Assistant Administrator, or positions along that level, will have to be addressed at a different time.

Councilman Wachterhauser asked how many employees are in this group. Administrator McNeilly stated there are 7-8 employees, some of which are part-time. Councilman Smith asked if by increasing the salaries to attract and hire people, would that also increase the insurance costs. Administrator McNeilly stated we are only trying to fill positions where people have resigned so this would be a break even. Some people waive benefits. The Construction Secretary position is open and the CFO/Assistant Administrator position, which was the CFO/Tax Collector position, is open. There is a soon to be Tax Collector in house. Administrator McNeilly explained that the way the tiers are set up for the pension system, Assistant Administrator's cannot move up and stay in the pension system. Administrators are getting harder to hire and it is already impossible to hire a CFO. Mayor Wronko stated it appears that the 5% increase will bring some people up to a fairer wage for the existing staff and it will allow for flexibility in hiring. Administrator McNeilly stated this will help but it will not completely fix the issue. Back in 2011 the DPW had a contract with a 0% increase followed by a 0.5% increase. A 5% increase is a big number. Councilman Wachterhauser stated 5% is not a big number monetarily. This will help to bring the salaries up, but it is not a huge sum of money to make up for the difference of what has gone on for years. Administrator McNeilly stated from an employee standpoint the 5% is appreciated but the health insurance is going to take up most of it. Government employees were originally poorly paid and richly benefited but that is no longer the case.

Mayor Wronko took a straw poll for approval from the governing body to approve a 5% increase in salary for the non-contracted employees. The results are as follows: Councilman Smith – yes; Councilman Wachterhauser – yes; Councilman Riccardi – yes; Councilman Simpson – yes; Councilman Romano – yes; Councilman Thornton – absent

Councilman Riccardi asked if the salary for the CFO position will be able to be discussed later on. Councilman Romano stated when the time comes the negotiations will dictate the amount. Mayor Wronko asked if additional funds should be added to the budget for that time to provide flexibility. Administrator McNeilly stated he is of the opinion that additional funds are already provided in the budget for that purpose. Salary wise the retirement from the police department and some changes within the DPW's contract are benefitting the salary budget. The hiring would be something that might take place later in the year and as such would not require a year's worth of a salary for that position. Councilman Riccardi asked how long the office can get along in this situation. Administrator McNeilly replied it is not perfect and he has even asked the professors that teach the classes for recommendations and they have no one to recommend. Councilman Smith asked if the recruitment advertising budget could be looked at. Administrator McNeilly stated the position has been advertised to the community, the CFO/Tax Collectors association and in Morris County. Currently, Stanhope has a Deputy Tax Collector who wants to move up. One of two situations will occur with hiring. A new person will be hired and then it is a matter of time for how long that person stays or you get someone who is on their way down.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated the Crossing Guard budget Line 10524013 has increased 71%. Administrator McNeilly confirmed there is an increase due to the increase in the number of hours for the crossing guards and additional personnel have been added. Mayor Wronko stated Line 10524024 Equipment Purchase has increased 273% and asked if this is equipment for new officers. Administrator McNeilly confirmed this.

General Administration – No changes were made.

Mayor & Council – No changes were made.

Municipal Clerk – This budget had a -3% decrease due to the elimination of the Gramco Maintenance Contract for recording, which is no longer utilized, and Codification was reduced due to the fact some of the ordinances were codified in the previous year. No changes were made.

Financial Administration – No changes were made.

Audit & Computer Services – Councilman Smith asked why the budgeted amount is more than was spent in 2025 and in previous years. Administrator McNeilly stated there are costs included for the DeskPro software which were not in the previous budgets. The sonic firewall needs to be updated which has a subscription which did not exist in the past. Mayor Wronko asked why the 2025 charged is much less than the budgeted amount. Administrator McNeilly stated there are still outstanding charges which have not been included in the final totals for the amounts spent in 2025. Half of the cost for Quiktechs is in the General Budget. Councilman Smith asked why the Nixle system is budgeted for more than was charged previously. Administrator McNeilly stated in a past year the number of Nixle messages exceeded the allocation so the budget was increased in anticipation of the number of Nixle messages that would be needed during the gas line project. This will be the last year the extra funding is budgeted. The funds that are not spent sit for two years and then go back into the reserve and into the surplus to be utilized. Councilman Wachterhauser asked what the DocuScan Maintenance charges are for and why nothing has been charged in 2024 or 2025. Administrator McNeilly stated there should be a charge for 2024. Perhaps it has been coded incorrectly. This is the service used by the Construction Department to view the scanned permit files. The scanning of the documents has been delayed due to the lack of personnel due to the fact the files all have to be sorted and cleaned out prior to being sent out. This is a charge that is billed at the end of the year. Administrator McNeilly stated having the files scanned has helped a great deal with processing OPRA requests. It is a good system, and we need to take better advantage of it. Once the Construction Permits are completed, the scanning of the documents in the records storage building can begin. No changes were made.

Tax Collector – No changes were made.

Tax Assessment – Line 10515025 Meetings & Seminars has a 186% increase, but the dollar amount is only going from \$70.00 last year to \$200.00 this year. Administrator McNeilly will ask for the backup for the increase. No changes were made.

Legal & Engineering Services – Councilman Wachterhauser asked what Line 10516524 COAH-Housing/Fair Share is used for. Administrator McNeilly stated these funds are in place for unseen circumstances such as last year when, long after the budget process, a land analysis was required. This is now a forever document, which was possible because these funds were earmarked in the system. Some funding should always be tucked aside for items that could arise in an off cycle. There is additional funding in another line item elsewhere in the budget. Councilman Riccardi asked if \$45,000 needs to be budgeted again this year due to the fact that analysis was done last year. Councilman Romano stated Fair Share is in the wind again. Administrator McNeilly asked Borough Attorney, Ursula Leo, for her opinion on the funding needed for this line item. Attorney Leo stated on March 15th the ordinances have to be done. Discussion took place regarding the work to be done in 2026. Attorney Leo stated she is of the opinion the Borough will not need \$45,000 for COAH-Housing/Fair Share and she suggested placing \$25,000 in the budget. Administrator McNeilly suggested \$30,000. The governing body agreed to remove \$15,000 from this line item. Attorney Leo stated this is a ten-year cycle and once everything is prepared for March 15th and presented to the Court, we will follow up with the court hearings and then this issue will not cycle back again until 2035. However, there will be a five-year check-in and annual reports.

Administrator McNeilly stated Bill Hamilton, Borough Planner, will be attending the next Mayor and Council meeting and he asked Attorney Leo if she would be available to attend as well. Attorney Leo stated she will attend the meeting.

Land Use Board – No changes were made.

Regional Planning Board & Affordable Housing – No changes were made. Councilman Wachterhauser stated he recalls the Lake Board asking for additional funding and he asked if that had been approved. Administrator McNeilly stated that request was for egg addling and it was not approved. Councilman Riccardi asked if the Lake Board submitted a request for their budget. Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk, stated the Lake Board submitted their budget request letter in October.

Construction – No changes were made.

Zoning Officer – No changes were made.

Insurance – Administrator McNeilly stated the first three-line items, Liability Insurance, Workers Compensation and EPL/DOL Deductible are the result of a lot of good work by the staff. This is affected by the actions and safety records. Councilman Riccardi asked if the Health Insurance budget includes funding for when we are fully staffed. Administrator McNeilly confirmed this and stated there are employees who take the waiver, but funds are kept in the account in case situations change. No changes were made to this budget.

Public Safety – No changes were made.

Fire Department – Councilman Wachterhauser stated the Fire Department has requested a multi-function copier, similar to the one at Borough Hall. The copier would be used for scanning documents and printing reports etc. The Fire Department cannot afford that on their own and inquired as to whether or not a copier could be added to the contract that Borough Hall has. Administrator McNeilly stated there are two copiers contracted. One at the Borough Hall Office and one for the Police Department, which are high volume environments. The DPW has a small copier, which is just a step up perhaps from a desktop copier. The Fire Department is not an office that is staffed full-time and that would be a lot of money to tie up on a piece of office equipment. Mayor Wronko stated the State has changed many things with their reporting systems and are moving to electronic filing. Administrator McNeilly stated a smaller copier might be an option depending on the volume of copies and scanning they are anticipating. Councilman Wachterhauser will speak with the Fire Department. Administrator McNeilly will place \$2,500 as a place holder for now on page 6C. No other changes were made.

Road Maintenance – Councilman Smith stated the DPW did a great job this past weekend with the snowstorm. Councilman Smith stated the budgeted amount for road salt is much higher than what has actually been spent in previous years and asked if this budgeted amount is because the Borough needs to stock up on road salt. Administrator McNeilly stated the Borough can only hold so much. The DPW made sure they had 600-800 tons prior to the storm and there is more coming in next week. Administrator McNeilly stated he is of the opinion that the budgeted amount should remain due to the fact that the cost for the contracts through the co-op are unknown at the present time.

There is a snow trust fund to cover catastrophic situations. The budget could be dropped back to \$45,000 from \$50,000. The Road Salt Line 10529032 decreased to \$45,000.

Fuel Pump Issue - Councilman Riccardi asked what the issue was with the fuel pump. Administrator McNeilly stated there was a sensor in the bottom of the tank which was bad. It was telling the tank that it was empty. The sensor has been replaced, and the fuel pump is fixed.

Solid Waste Collection – Administrator McNeilly stated this budget is contractual. The contract for Solid Waste is good until May 31, 2028. In December of 2027, the process will begin to go out to bid.

Police Department – Mayor Wronko asked Sergeant Joseph Johnson, Officer in Charge present in the audience, if he was aware that the budget for the vehicles had decreased. Sergeant Johnson stated the budget was prepared by Chief Pittigher prior to his retirement. Councilman Riccardi stated the Vehicle Lease/Purchase has decreased but the Maintenance budget has increased. Administrator McNeilly asked Sergeant Johnson if the department will be getting one car or two this year. Sergeant Johnson replied there will be one car. Administrator McNeilly stated in the past the budget had included two cars, which would account for the decrease. No changes were made.

Building & Grounds – Councilman Riccardi asked if there are funds available in this budget for doing work at the basketball court. Administrator McNeilly stated funds are not included in the budget. Councilman Wachterhauser stated the basketball court was being used as a parking lot the other day with the snow. Administrator McNeilly stated it may be an option to use some natural items such as rocks to line the area. Administrator McNeilly stated this is the year the mulch will be added. No changes were made.

Main Street & Sparta Road Street Lights – Administrator McNeilly stated almost all the funding needed for the first 10 streetlights for Main Street has been allocated in the Capital Budget. The next Capital Budget will capture the rest of the lights for Main Street. The funds for the Sparta Road streetlights are elsewhere in the budget. Administrator McNeilly stated it is hard to imagine that we have lost three streetlights, a crosswalk indicator and a water hydrant on a road that was narrowed and had the speed limit was reduced. Insurance money will be received. However, the way those funds are processed make it unavailable right away.

Shade Tree Commission – No changes were made.

Vehicle Maintenance – No changes were made.

Board of Health & Animal Control – Administrator McNeilly stated the Animal Control Contract is good through 2028. No changes were made.

Recreation & Public Events – Administrator McNeilly stated the Celebration of Public Events is a Mayor & Council budget item. The \$1,000 is a place holder. If the Mayor and Council are planning any events, this line item can be changed. Councilman Smith stated this year is the 250th Anniversary of the United States and asked if some type of event should be planned for the 4th of July. Mayor Wronko asked Administrator McNeilly if he had an idea of what events in the past have cost. Councilman Romano stated that the Recreation Committee holds Family Fun Day in July. Instead of holding a separate event, perhaps adding to Family Fun Day would be a better option. The governing body decided to increase the Celebration of Public Events Line 10542020 to \$3,000.

Environmental Commission – No changes were made. Administrator McNeilly stated the Environmental Commission does a lot with a very small budget.

Utilities – Mayor Wronko asked if the internet is included under Utilities and stated that he is of the opinion that the internet service should be increased to a high-speed fiber line. The cost would be negligible but would make a big difference. Administrator McNeilly stated he will make a note to follow up on the internet. Councilman Riccardi asked about the increase in the budget for the Cell Phones. Mayor Wronko asked if this is because of the DPW. Administrator McNeilly confirmed some of the cost is for the DPW. The contract portion is approximately \$3,600.

Condo Services – Administrator McNeilly stated the set portions of this budget are for the recycling and garbage costs. The other amounts are place holders which will be determined on how the winter weather goes. No changes were made.

Stormwater Management & Municipal Court – Administrator McNeilly stated the shared court service with Andover Borough is in place until the end of 2028. No changes were made.

Capital, RUT & Debt Service – Administrator McNeilly stated the Capital Improvement Fund has to be kept up due to the fact that is where the seed money comes from for bonding and water repairs. The Debt Payment is getting to the half a million mark which is very good. No changes were made.

Grant Expenditures – Administrator McNeilly stated the grant amounts are not known at this time. No changes were made.

Water Budget – Administrator McNeilly asked to hold this discussion for next month and stated that the Borough Auditor, Ray Sarinelli, Sr., had stated when giving his report in December that some increases may need to be made to the increment steps on the water side. The sewer side is fine. The water side is being watched closely. Administrator McNeilly stated it would be best to discuss the water and sewer budgets when the CFO is present to answer any questions.

Capital Plan – Administrator McNeilly stated the Capital Plan includes \$4,000 for the Street Lights. Councilman Smith asked if the Fire Truck that the Fire Department will be asking for would be budgeted in Capital. Administrator McNeilly stated the Department Heads are responsible for providing their budgets, capital and long-term capital. The Fire Department will have to provide the information and costs for the fire truck. A \$500,000 truck, that is one thing. A \$750,000 is another. When the cost gets to one million dollars that is difficult. And a \$1.5 million truck is not something the Borough can afford. Administrator McNeilly suggested that when the time gets closer, the existing piece of equipment to be replaced should be sent out to a responsible company for an assessment. Maybe it needs something but may not have to be everything. They may be able to overhaul the existing truck and have it function for another 15 years. The Fire Department needs to explore all the options. Councilman Riccardi stated the ambulance has already been overhauled and that is not an option this time. Administrator McNeilly stated the Ambulance Squad has been advised to bring their request to the governing body sooner rather than later also. Administrator McNeilly stated in 2027 the chipper needs to be replaced. The chipper has been overhauled four times. The DPW salt shed has to be replaced. The new salt sheds use a fabric hoop top which then has to be replaced every ten years or so. This is less expensive than other salt sheds, but it is still a \$100,000 expense. The shed will need to be replaced in 2027 or 2028. The backhoes are in great shape and are well taken care of. The mason dumps are in great shape and will get 20-25 years from them. The DPW uses pickup trucks which will need replacing. They just do not hold up. Administrator McNeilly stated in his opinion there should be some rethinking about how a ladder truck comes in, how it is used and where it spends most of its time. A ladder truck is a massive capital outlay. Councilman Smith asked if there are grants available. Administrator McNeilly stated it used to be that a grant would be available for one truck per state. Now it is one truck per region, and it is mainly based on income. The Borough has done well in obtaining grants for fire equipment.

Councilman Romano stated he and Administrator McNeilly have gathered information about purchasing permanent electronic speed monitoring signs for Delaware Avenue, Valley Road and Sagamore Road and two more portable signs. This is not included in the budget as yet. Councilman Romano stated in his opinion this would be money well spent. The Police Department cannot monitor the area constantly. The signs will show that the governing body is concerned about the speeding issues. Administrator McNeilly stated the quote from Radar Systems, utilizing the current standard form that we have, and installing three additional signs, like those on Sparta Road, will cost \$3,695 each. Purchasing two battery powered signs, which attach to sign stanchions, will cost \$3,000 each. The additional software would be added and the strobe lights. The total cost would be approximately \$17,000. Administrator McNeilly stated he will add this to the capital budget.

CLOSED SESSION

1. The general nature of the subject matter(s) to be discussed is as follows:

1 – Attorney-Client

2. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter(s) will be made public at the conclusion of each individual specified subject matter.
3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi, and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was adopted.

The Mayor and Council went into Closed Session at 7:36 P.M.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

At the conclusion of the Closed Session, the Mayor and Council reconvened the public meeting at 7:37 P.M. with all present.

ORDINANCE

Ordinance for Introduction and First Reading [Public Hearing on February 24, 2026]

Mayor Wronko offered the following ordinance for introduction and first reading which was read by title.

Ordinance 2026-01

AN ORDINANCE OF BOROUGH OF STANHOPE, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AMENDING THE BOROUGH CODE, INCLUDING THE ZONING MAP, REZONING BLOCK 11802, LOT 1 AS HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, AND AMENDING CHAPTER 100, “LAND DEVELOPMENT, ARTICLE XIV, ENTITLED “HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONES”, SECTIONS 100-89, 100-90 AND 100-91.

WHEREAS, the governing body for the Borough of Stanhope wishes to amend its zoning map to rezone certain properties presently located in the Industrial Zone to High Density Residential; and

WHEREAS, the governing body wishes to amend Chapter 100 of its ordinances entitled “Land Development”, Article XIV to modify the principal and accessory uses and the required conditions in the High Density Residential Zone to, among other things, provide a realistic opportunity for affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, the governing body also wishes to amend Chapter 100 of its ordinances entitled “Land Development”, Article XVIII which imposes design standards for development in the Borough.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, in the County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The Code of the Borough of Stanhope is hereby amended and supplemented, as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 100, Land Development, Article VII, Zoning Districts and Zoning Map is hereby amended and supplemented by designating Block 11802, Lot 1 to be zoned High Density Residential, and the Borough Zoning Map shall be so revised.

Section 2. Chapter 100, Zoning, Article XIV, High Density Residential Zones, is hereby amended by adding the following new subsections to Section 100-89 – Principal Use, as follows:

- C. Townhouse and condominium residential units as part of an inclusionary housing neighborhood provided no townhouse or condominium building contains more than 12 units and provided at least one affordable unit is constructed on site for every five market rate units.
- D. Stacked multifamily apartment residential units in buildings containing no more than 25 units.
- E. Conservation area, recreation and open space.

Section 3. Chapter 100, Zoning, Article XIV, High Density Residential Zones, is hereby amended by deleting existing Section 100-90.B and adopting a new subsection B to section 100-90 – Accessory Uses, as follows:

B. In addition to “Accessory Uses” permitted as defined by Section 100-3, the following accessory uses shall be permitted in the HR Zones:

- (1) Private garages
- (2) Off-street parking in accordance with RSIS
- (3) Patios and decks
- (4) Fences and walls
- (5) Signs
- (6) Trash Enclosures, Solid waste/Recycling areas
- (7) Stormwater management and other utilities
- (8) Hot Boxes if required by any utility authority
- (9) Monument Sign
- (10) Building-mounted signs for identification and emergency services
- (11) Recreational uses and residential amenities including, but not limited to common open spaces, walking paths, gazebos, tot lots, gardens, maintenance building(s).
- (12) Leasing/Maintenance office
- (13) Accessory buildings or structures required for maintenance and operations
- (14) Electronic vehicle charging stations
- (15) Stormwater management basins and associated structures
- (16) Accessory uses on the same lot and customarily incidental to a principal use.
- (17) Cluster mailboxes
- (18) Generator for apartment buildings

Section 4. Chapter 100, Zoning, Article XIV, High Density Residential Zones, subsection 100-91, A – Required conditions for Principal Buildings, is hereby amended by the addition of the following:

- (10) Minimum Distance Between Buildings (side to side) - 25 feet
- (11) Minimum Distance Between Buildings (rear to rear) - 50 feet
- (12) Minimum Distance Between Decks – 20 feet
- (13) Maximum Building Length - 180 feet
- (14) Minimum Townhouse facade offset– 2 feet between units
- (15) Minimum Apartment facade offset– At least 2 feet offset every 50’
- (16) Maximum Building Height - 45 feet
- (17) Maximum Stories - Three

Section 5. Chapter 100, Zoning, Article XIV, High Density Residential Zones, subsection 100-91- Required conditions, is hereby amended by adding a new Subpart C – Additional requirements, as follows:

C. Additional requirements.

(1) Apartments and townhouses shall only be developed as an inclusionary residential development with a 20% set aside of units very low income, low- income and moderate income affordable units pursuant to the Fair Housing Act, the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) Rules, the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC) and any rules promulgated by any Department of New Jersey government, including the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

(2) The development shall provide a minimum of a ¼ acre cleared lawn area or areas for open play.

- (3) A fenced tot lot shall be provided as part of the overall development, to include:
 - a handicap accessible path to neighborhood sidewalks;
 - a pavilion for shade and outdoor seating with trash receptacles, *and*

- a facility including at least 1,500 square feet enclosed by a fence with play features to support a range of activities for tots, children consisting of weather resistant play equipment which shall include climbing and sliding activities and which provides equipment for at least 3 additional activities such as swinging, spinning, balancing, jumping, hanging, creative play, crawling, hiding, rocking, rolling, bouncing, digging, sand and water play.

Play apparatus shall comply with all applicable government agency requirements for playground design and safety. Design and construction of playgrounds must conform to the requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- (4) Sidewalks shall be provided on at least one side of all streets.
- (5) The driveway length between the garage door and the edge of pavement shall be:
 - at least 20 feet where no sidewalk exists, and
 - at least 26 feet between the garage door and edge of pavement when the sidewalk is proposed.
 - No more than a 12% slope.
- (6) More than one principal building or structure shall be permitted per lot.

Section 6. SEVERABILITY. The various parts, sections and clauses of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable. If any part, sentence, paragraph, section or clause is adjudged unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby.

Section 7. NOTICE. The Borough Clerk is directed to give notice at least ten days prior to a hearing on the adoption of this ordinance to the Sussex County Planning Board and to all other municipalities and persons entitled thereto pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-15, and N.J.S.A. 40:55D-62.1.

After introduction, the Borough Clerk is hereby directed to submit a copy of the within Ordinance to the Land Use Board of the Borough of Stanhope for its review in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-26 and N.J.S.A. 40:55D-64. The Land Use Board is directed to make and transmit to the Borough Council within 35 days after referral, a report including identification of any provisions in the proposed ordinance which are inconsistent with the master plan and recommendations concerning any inconsistencies and any other matter as the Board deems appropriate.

Section 8. REPEALER. Any ordinances or parts thereof in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed as to their inconsistencies only.

Section 9. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon 1) adoption; 2) publication in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey; (3) filing of the final form of adopted ordinance by the Clerk with a) the Sussex County Planning Board pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-16.

On motion by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing ordinance was introduced.

Roll Call:

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

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Simpson, and unanimously carried by voice vote, the Mayor and Council instructed the Clerk to post the ordinance and authorized publication of same.

ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney Ursula Leo stated she had no report this evening.

Councilman Wachterhauser asked Attorney Leo to confirm the procedure for the Land Use Board Ordinance once the residents are noticed. Attorney Leo stated there are 35 days to consider and then the ordinance would be adopted.

Councilman Riccardi stated resolution 045-26 in support for the cannabis business was adopted earlier this evening and an amendment was made for the name of the company, which is Happy Tree Farmacy Stanhope LLC. Councilman Riccardi asked Attorney Leo if she had any comments with regard to the application. Attorney Leo stated she reviewed the application which the Borough Clerk forwarded to her. Everything matched up. Now that they have the resolution of support, they need to proceed to the next step.

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 7:40 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk for
Ellen Horak, RMC
Borough Clerk