

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK SESSION AND
AGENDA MEETING MINUTES
April 14, 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 public meeting has been made in accordance with P.L. 2025, c.72, N.J.S.A. 35:3-2, and the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq., inasmuch as a notice has been published on the Borough's official Internet website, www.stanhopenj.gov, which is accessible and available to the public free of charge. A direct hyperlink to legal notices published on the Borough's official Internet website is conspicuously placed on the website's homepage. Notice was also 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

Municipal Building Grant Request – Administrator McNeilly stated he received word that Senator Booker has included the Borough's project in the list from his office to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration. The Borough's project is one of 21 projects for New Jersey. This is separate from the one that goes through Congressman Tom Kean's office. Congressman Kean's Committee selected a project from Mt. Olive. Congressmen have a very finite list. The Senator can submit as many projects as he wants to. Congressman Kean's office was responsible for the \$3.3 million for the Borough's current project. This grant application request for \$2.5 million is for renovation and expansion of our Police/Municipal Complex. This grant program under Congressional Directed Spending is through the USDA under the Rural Development, Community Facilities Grants. A decision should be made close to the end of summer. The last time this project was submitted it made it all the way to the table before being denied. There is a possibility that the award for this project could be reduced to \$1 million. If that should happen, then the project would have to be done in a phased approach.

E-Waste & Shredding Day – Administrator McNeilly stated the shredding company is scheduled for Saturday, April 25th. The E-Waste Day will also be held on the same day. Notifications have been sent out.

Main Street Lights – Administrator McNeilly stated the new lights for Main Street will be delivered tomorrow and the installation will begin as soon as possible. Administrator McNeilly stated one of the globes near Church Street fell to the ground. The globe did not break but the bottom of it is broken. The globe can be replaced with the in-house supply.

Hydrant Flushing – Administrator McNeilly stated the spring hydrant flushing will be completed this week. There were some issues on Main Street mostly as a result of the paving work that was done. The shut offs were filled from millings. The full DPW crew will be back on days by Monday.

Road Resurface Gas Line – Administrator McNeilly stated that NJ Natural Gas needs to repair the roads where the gas mains were installed. Administrator McNeilly stated he and the DPW Superintendent did a street-by-street review. Most of the streets are single lane restoration as previously discussed. Back in 2021, the gas company had stated they would only provide single lane restoration where the gas lines are run. If the Borough did not agree, the gas company would not have run the lines in the Borough. The exceptions are Laura Court, King Street, Canfield Avenue, and Lower Plain Street (the one-way section) which will be full width restorations. Administrator McNeilly stated he will speak with NJ Natural Gas to confirm this. The Borough does have credit for a lane of Grove Road, Elm Street, Main Street, Sunset Avenue, Overhill Road, Ridge Road and West Drive. The credits will be discussed with NJ Natural Gas to ask for Towpath Lane and West Drive to have a full road milling and paving restoration. New Street is also in bad condition. The Borough will be paving that road and therefore will have credit for New Street as well.

Leaf/Brush Spring Collection – Administrator McNeilly stated the leaf and brush pickup town-wide will take place from May 4th to May 8th. Notifications are ready to be sent out.

Budget 2026 Timeline – Administrator McNeilly stated the Capital Budget introduction is tentatively scheduled for April 28th.

Councilman Romano asked Administrator McNeilly how many more streets still need to have gas lines installed by NJ Natural Gas. Administrator McNeilly stated the only area left is Lenape Drive South and as far as the bridge. Household connections have slowed down. Councilman Romano asked what the condominiums plan to do. Administrator McNeilly stated he has not heard from the NJ Natural Gas representative with regard to the condominiums. There are challenges. Stonegate is an all-electric development, and owners may have trouble finding a location to install a furnace.

Councilman Riccardi asked Administrator McNeilly if the County has indicated when the guardrail on Brooklyn Road will be replaced. Administrator McNeilly stated the DPW Superintendent has inquired several times and has been told it will be done when they can get to it.

Councilman Riccardi asked Administrator McNeilly if any of the winter decorations are still displayed. Administrator McNeilly stated when the memo went out stating the decorations on Main Street had to remain in place due to the lighting issues, the decorations also remained on Sparta Road. Administrator McNeilly stated he will contact the DPW Superintendent. Councilman Wachterhauser stated a dozen more banners have been ordered and should be delivered in the next few weeks. The banners should be received in time to be displayed for Memorial Day weekend.

WORK SESSION

James McNeilly Scholarship (Stanhope School) – Mayor Wronko stated the Stanhope School has asked if the Borough will provide the funding again this year for the James McNeilly Scholarship. The amount provided in previous years has been \$100.00 and Mayor Wronko asked the Council members if they were in favor of providing the scholarship this year.

Mayor Wronko took a straw poll of the governing body. The results are as follows: Councilman Smith – yes; Councilman Wachterhauser – yes; Councilman Riccardi – yes; Councilman Simpson – yes; Councilman Romano – yes. The James McNeilly Scholarship, in the amount of \$100.00, will be provided by the Borough this year.

Sussex County League of Municipalities (Annual Membership Dues) – Mayor Wronko stated the Sussex County League of Municipalities has sent an invoice for annual membership dues. Administrator McNeilly stated this was an unexpected invoice. Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk, stated she checked with the Borough's Finance Department and the records in the computer only

go back to 2022. From then to now, no invoices have been received, and no payments have been made. Meetings used to be held monthly, but the meetings have not taken place in years. Councilman Smith stated during Covid the League moved to virtual meetings which were held quarterly. Administrator McNeilly stated he is a past President of the Sussex County League of Municipalities and in the past no specific amount of funds were requested from the municipalities. When the dinners were held, there was a cost associated with those. The Borough used to send a contingent of the governing body to those dinner meetings. Ms. Horak stated the invoice is for \$150.00. Administrator McNeilly stated his opinion is to use the wait and see approach. Councilman Smith stated the League held an event a few weeks ago, which he attended. At that time, the League did state that they are trying to reestablish the group. Councilman Smith stated he too is of the opinion that a wait and see approach is a good idea. Mayor Wronko asked the governing body if they were in favor of waiting. The governing body agreed to wait.

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF THE 2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Resolution 076-26

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING READING OF THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET BY TITLE

WHEREAS, N.J.S.40A:4-8 provides that the budget may be ready by title only at the time of the public hearing if a resolution is passed by not less than a majority of the full Governing Body, provided that at least one (1) week prior to the date of public hearing a complete copy of the approved budget, as advertised, has been posted in the Municipal Building and copies have been made available by the Clerk to persons requesting them; and

WHEREAS, these conditions have been met;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the 2026 Municipal Budget shall be read by title at this Public Hearing for the same.

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

Resolution 077-26

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE ADOPTING THE 2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, that the budget herein before set forth is hereby adopted and shall constitute an appropriation for the purposes stated of the sums therein set forth as appropriations, and authorization of the amount of \$5,904,711.24 for municipal purposes.

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public for questions or comments on this resolution only. Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

On motion by Councilman Romano, 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

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

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

Resolution 078-26

**A RESOLUTION BY THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE
AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF INVOICE TO JAMES
LASALA, ESQ.**

WHEREAS, the matter of Julia Fortunato, No. SB2021-002233, filed on September 21, 2021, was transferred from Stanhope Borough’s municipal court to Jefferson Township municipal court, due to a conflict of interest; and

WHEREAS, James LaSala, Esq. is the municipal prosecutor for the Township of Jefferson; and

WHEREAS, this case involved a fatality, charges of leaving the scene, and there have been numerous Court dates and complicated discovery and there are multiple witnesses, with meetings that required substantial time; and

WHEREAS, Mr. LaSala previously submitted a request for payment in the amount of \$1,575.00 for services rendered on the case in 2025, and such payment was approved under Resolution 115-25; and

WHEREAS, Mr. LaSala has now requested a final payment for his work on this case; and

WHEREAS, NJ Court Rule 7:8-2(B)(2) specifically provides: “The municipality of the court of origin shall bear the costs of prosecution of the matter.”; and

WHEREAS, Mr. LaSala submitted an invoice on March 23, 2026, seeking payment of \$2,675.00 for legal services rendered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey that the invoice submitted by Mr. LaSala in the amount of \$2,675.00 be paid.

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, 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

Resolution 079-26

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING STANHOPE HOSE CO. #1
TO CONDUCT A BUCKET DROP**

WHEREAS, Stanhope Hose Company No. 1 has indicated a desire to hold a “Bucket Drop” July 10th, July 11th and July 12th 2026, within the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, at the intersection of State Rt. 183 and Brooklyn Road; and

WHEREAS, should the weather be inclement, the following rain dates and times will be utilized instead, at the same location: July 17th, July 18th and July 19th, 2026 within the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, Fire Department personnel are to be stationed at the above-mentioned location and all collections shall be done in a manner as to not impede the flow of traffic at any time, pursuant to the Traffic Safety Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Borough directs the Chief of Police to sign the NJDOT application for a charitable solicitation permit and to monitor compliance of the Traffic Safety Plan as necessary; and

WHEREAS, Fire Department members shall wear safety vests and traffic safety setup shall conform with the “Manual on Uniform Traffic Control”; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 16:40-3.1 et seq. requires charitable organizations to obtain approval of the Commissioner of Transportation before soliciting contributions within State highways and County Commissioners approval for county highways.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, in the County of Sussex, State of New Jersey hereby approves the Stanhope Hose Company No. 1's request to hold a "Bucket Drop" on July 10th, July 11th and July 12th, 2026, within the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, at the intersection of State Rt. 183 and Brooklyn Road and rain dates of July 17th, July 18th and July 19th, 2026 within the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the same location, per the Traffic Safety Plan and subject to obtaining approval of the Sussex County Board of County Commissioners and a charitable solicitation permit from the New Jersey State Department of Transportation.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Wachterhauser and carried by a majority of the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted. Councilman Simpson abstained.

Roll Call:

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 080-26

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 April 14, 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 April 28, 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.

Joseph Johnson, Stanhope Police Chief, thanked the Mayor and Council for the events that took place at the last meeting. Chief Johnson also thanked everyone for their support of the Police Department and to him as Chief and for the promotion of Sergeant DiLauri. Holding the previous meeting at the American Legion for their swearing in was very nice and everyone had a good time. Chief Johnson also thanked Administrator McNeilly, and the office staff, Ellen, Linda,

Tammy, Nancy and Angel for all of their help and support with all of his questions. Chief Johnson is of the opinion that this has been a very smooth transition so far. Mayor Wronko congratulated Chief Johnson again on his promotion.

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

CLOSED SESSION

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

1 – Personnel

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 7:15 P.M.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

At the conclusion of the Closed Session, the Mayor and Council reconvened the public meeting at 7:22 P.M. with all present.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Romano 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