

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
April 28, 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 – present
Councilman Wachterhauser – present

Mayor Wronko – present

CITIZENS 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:

March 10, 2026	Work Session and Agenda Meeting & Closed Session
March 24, 2026	Business Meeting

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Smith and carried by a majority voice vote, the minutes were approved. Councilman Riccardi and Councilman Thornton abstained from the minutes of March 10th and Councilman Wachterhauser abstained from the minutes of March 24th.

CORRESPONDENCE *(List Attached)*

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Simpson 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 Fire Department for the month of March reported 5 calls for service, 16 man hours, 4 drills, 101 man hours, 1 meeting and 6 special details. The total number of man hours volunteered was 214.75.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated the Police Department for the month of March reported 439 calls for service, of which 161 were motor vehicle stops.

Councilman Wachterhauser stated the Zoning and Code Enforcement report for March issued one notice of violation.

Finance & Administration – Councilman Romano/Councilman Thornton

Councilman Romano stated the tax collections for the month of March totaled \$153,731.77. The year-to-date total is \$3,447,028.27. The collection for the first quarter taxes is slightly below 97%.

Councilman Romano stated the water collections for the month of March totaled \$125,566.59 and the year-to-date total is \$172,158.42. The sewer collections for the month of March totaled \$180,423.69 and the year-to-date total is \$242,835.77.

Community Development – Councilman Smith/Councilman Simpson

Councilman Smith stated the Zoning report indicates there were 5 zoning permit applications approved and There were 7 inquiries responded to and one property was registered as abandoned for the month of March.

Municipal Infrastructure – Councilman Thornton/Councilman Romano

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

Councilman Thornton stated he had no report.

Information Technology – Councilman Riccardi/Councilman Wachterhauser

Councilman Riccardi stated 7 new tickets in DeskPro were created in March. There were 8 tickets which were closed out. There are still 9 outstanding tickets. Several of those tickets are DPW issues. Councilman Riccardi asked Administrator McNeilly to follow up on those tickets.

Boards/Commissions – Councilman Simpson/Councilman Smith

Councilman Simpson stated the Recreation Committee hosted the annual Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, March 28th, at Musconetcong Park. The event was extremely well attended and was run efficiently. Councilman Simpson extended his gratitude to the Recreation Committee for doing an outstanding job as always. Councilman Simpson also thanked the Stanhope Ambulance Corps and the Stanhope Hose Company for their assistance.

Councilman Simpson stated the Environmental Commission hosted their annual clean up day on Sunday, March 29th, at the Valley Road School. There were 42 participants who helped to clean the Borough trails and walkways. Councilman Simpson thanked all those who participated along with the Environmental Commission. This was a successful clean up.

Councilman Simpson stated the Board of Health held the free rabies clinic on Friday, April 10th. The event was very well attended. Councilman Simpson thanked the Board of Health for hosting the event and he thanked the Fire Department for providing the location for the clinic.

Councilman Thornton stated there was an issue brought up back in February with regard to the Recreation Committee. Councilman Thornton asked for an update on that issue. Councilman Simpson stated the Recreation Committee has concerns with the purchasing procedures. The members make purchases and then are reimbursed. Councilman Simpson stated he reviewed the Borough's vendor list. Councilman Smith and Councilman Romano have stated that those vendors should be utilized rather than purchasing items on their own. The vendor information was provided to the committee, and they are reviewing the list. Councilman Simpson stated he attended the January and February Recreation Committee meetings to discuss this and Councilman Romano and Councilman Smith attended the February meeting. The goal is to move away from the reimbursement process by using accounts that are already in place.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

EPA Closeout – Administrator McNeilly stated the Borough received \$45,000 in grant funding from the EPA for paving the road for the waterline project at Sunset Avenue, Ridge Road and Overhill Road. The final project statement and closeout will go out in mid-May.

Main Street Lights – Administrator McNeilly stated the DPW is installing the new LED light heads on Main Street. The first lights to be installed will be done in the darkest areas. The Christmas lights will be taken down now.

E-Waste / Shred Day – Administrator McNeilly stated even a soggy day could not prevent a successful shred and e-waste day. The shred truck had a line for most of the morning. The e-waste will be transported to the recycling vendor in Randolph later this week. Some residents did bring tube televisions which cannot be collected at this event. This is why it is beneficial to have a DPW employee present to monitor the drop offs while the Recycling employee monitors that area.

Stanhope Mountain Property – Administrator McNeilly stated the developer for the Stanhope Mountain property wishes to revisit the overlay zone for Lot 11, which was discussed during the COAH plan back in February. There was a last-minute request to include this lot at that time. However, the governing body did not want to readdress a document that was ready to be submitted. The overlay contains lots 9.01 and 9.02 but lot 11 is essentially removed, as is the next lot behind that lot. Lot 11 and the other lot are still located in the Light Plan Industrial PIC Zone which cannot be accessed. The developers are now asking if it would be possible to have a discussion, now that the document has been submitted, to request an expansion to the overlay for consideration. This would not affect the document. It would strictly be Stanhope Borough's decision to make Lot 11 part of that. Administrator McNeilly stated he suggested to the developer that they should develop the highway frontage from the Black Forest to Acorn Street at the same time that the other area would be developed. The developer will look into this if lot 11 can be brought in. Attorney Ursula Leo stated this could be a request for rezoning or the issue may have to go to the board for approval. Councilman Wachterhauser stated, in his opinion, when this issue was brought up previously by the Planner it was too last minute to consider. Councilman Wachterhauser is of the opinion that building warehousing in that area would be acceptable, but he is not in favor of adding additional housing based on the process which took place on the lot near the high school. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the affordable housing obligation has been met with the property near the high school. Attorney Leo stated no, the Borough still has an affordable housing obligation which would be addressed with every application. There is still an unmet need that exists. Attorney Leo stated part of every settlement that the Fair Share Housing Council adopts ensures there are sufficient resources, water etc. Everything possible was done for the plan which is in place. Mayor Wronko asked Attorney Leo if meeting with the developer to discuss the issue would be recommended. Attorney Leo confirmed this would be beneficial. Administrator McNeilly asked if the governing body would like him to arrange with the developer to attend the May 26th meeting. The governing body agreed.

Rental Property Lead Inspection – Administrator McNeilly stated the Borough is required to have a lead inspection program in place. Attorney Leo stated, since May 2023, when the law came into effect, basically all rentals built in 1978 or earlier, for single family, two family and multi family have to be inspected for lead. When someone puts their house up for sale, testing can be done by a company of the homeowners choosing or the municipality can appoint a certified company. Administrator McNeilly stated LEW Environmental Services in Mine Hill provides this service at a direct charge to the rental property owner. They perform the inspections, process the paperwork to the town and the State and they collect the fees. LEW currently is contracted with the following

Sussex County towns: Andover Borough, Andover Township, Branchville Borough, Franklin Borough, Fredon Township, Hamburg Borough, Hampton Township, Hardyston Township, Lafayette Township, Montague Township, Ogdensburg Borough, Sandyston Township, Sparta Township, Sussex Borough, Vernon Township and Wantage Township. Administrator McNeilly stated an ordinance has to first be adopted and then the Borough can contract with a vendor. Administrator McNeilly asked the governing body to review the ordinance, and it will be placed for introduction on the May 26th meeting.

2018 F550 Mason Dump Truck – Administrator McNeilly stated the 2018 F550 Mason Dump Truck has an issue in that the veins of the turbo have been injected into the motor. The truck is at Hoover's. Some scoping work has been done, and it has been determined that the engine has completely had it and cannot be repaired. Ford does not have crate motors any longer. They build motors. The cab of the Ford trucks have to be removed in order to do work on the engines. This in itself is a job which the Borough had to do a few years ago. The estimated cost of the repair is north of \$38,000. The cost of the trucks run around \$160,000. This truck is 8 years old. Administrator McNeilly stated when the leaf trailer had issues, an insurance claim was filed to obtain funds, approximately \$55,000, to replace the trailer. An insurance claim has been generated for the truck. The truck was ready to begin the salting operation when the damage occurred. If the insurance claim is unsuccessful, the \$40,000 will have to be budgeted and spread over three budgets. An emergency appropriation may be required. The report from Hoover's was received in March. The truck and frame are in great shape and there is no rot at all. Replacing the motor would be the right choice.

Stored Vehicles - Councilman Wachterhauser asked Administrator McNeilly if the 6-7 vehicles which are being stored at the DPW yard can be put up for auction. Administrator McNeilly stated he and the DPW Superintendent have this on their list of things to do.

Bills List Paperwork - Councilman Thornton asked if binder clips could be used instead of paperclips because the papers tend to come loose. Councilman Thornton asked if something is divided among multiple budgets, are multiple checks issued? Administrator McNeilly confirmed checks would be issued from each budget. Councilman Thornton stated not all the paperwork in those instances has supporting documentation attached. All the purchase orders/vouchers need to have backup paperwork attached. Councilman Romano stated the vendor only signs one. Administrator McNeilly stated a discussion should be held with the Finance Department to resolve these issues.

Linden Avenue Signage - Councilman Wachterhauser asked about the status for the signage on Linden Avenue for the Ambulance Squad. Administrator McNeilly stated he will follow up with the DPW Superintendent.

Xerox/Copy Machine for Fire Department – Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the copy machine which has been appropriated for the Fire Department has been obtained. Administrator McNeilly stated the budgets are in place and the Fire Department can move forward and order the copy machine. The copier would be ordered through Staples, or the Fire Department can submit a request for approval to order from another vendor.

Main Street Lighting – Councilman Thornton asked if Administrator McNeilly has noticed that the new Main Street lights are extremely bright. Administrator McNeilly stated he will look at the lights this evening. Perhaps the sensor will need to be covered. The new lights are LED.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Road Closure Request – Dan Callaghan – Mayor Wronko stated a road closure request has been received from Dan Callaghan. The request involves a roadway which is partially in Stanhope and partially in Hopatcong. Approval will be required from both municipalities. Councilman Thornton stated the closure is not for a block party, it is for a private party. Councilman Thornton is of the opinion that a precedent should not be set for permitting a road closure for a private party. Councilman Riccardi asked if this type of road closure has ever been done before. Administrator McNeilly stated the road closures have been for block parties. Those closures are required to maintain access for emergency vehicles. This request is for Hazel Street, and it is the very last house in Stanhope before crossing into Hopatcong. The house directly across from the resident requesting the closure is located in Hopatcong. The road cannot be closed without approval from

both municipalities. Access would not be a problem because there is access from the other side. The request is for the road to be closed from 9am to 6pm. Administrator McNeilly stated from a public safety standpoint, this is a very long time. Mayor Wronko stated he is not in favor of granting this request. Councilman Wachterhauser stated if this were a block party and all the residents were attending and in favor that would be a different story. The governing body did not approve the road closure. Administrator McNeilly stated the consensus is that road closures are granted for block parties but not for private parties. The governing body agreed.

Outside Rate Increase Request – Chief Johnson – Mayor Wronko asked Chief Johnson, present in the audience, if he would like to explain the outside rate increase request. Chief Johnson stated he has spoken with other police departments and he realized that the Borough is charging less than other departments in the area. When the officers are doing outside overtime details the cars are running for long periods of time, sometimes 12 hours and this puts a strain on the vehicles and uses fuel as well. At this time, the Borough is only receiving just over \$9.00 per hour. Other towns are getting anywhere from \$25.00 to \$75.00 per hour for administrative fees. The officer is receiving approximately \$100.00 per hour. The pay is on a sliding scale with the Police Chief receiving the highest pay when doing outside detail and that would bring the current administrative fee below the \$9.00 per hour amount. Chief Johnson suggested changing the fee to be the same as what Netcong PD and Byram PD charge, which is an administrative fee of \$25.00 per hour.

Mayor Wronko took a straw poll of the governing body and asked if they were in favor of increasing the outside detail administrative fee to \$25.00 per hour. The results are as follows: Councilman Smith – yes, Councilman Wachterhauser – yes, Councilman Thornton – yes, Councilman Riccardi – yes, Councilman Simpson – yes, Councilman Romano – yes. Administrator McNeilly stated chapter 82 of the code book will need to be updated. Attorney Leo stated she will prepare a resolution.

Resolution Opposing Senate Bill S-1836 – Attorney Ursula Leo stated Senate Bill S-1836 would allow a religious or non-profit organization to convert their warehouse property into residential communities that include affordable housing without having to go through the local board if certain conditions are met. This takes away local control. Attorney Leo stated she is of the opinion that it would be a good idea for the Borough to oppose this legislation. The Borough worked hard on the affordable housing plan that has been adopted and this would permit these groups to ignore that plan. Councilman Riccardi stated this would only apply to certain types of buildings. Attorney Leo confirmed this and stated this is more about opposing the principal behind the legislation.

Mayor Wronko took a straw poll of the governing body and asked if they were in favor of opposing Senate Bill S-1836. The results are as follows: Councilman Smith – yes, Councilman Wachterhauser – yes, Councilman Thornton – yes, Councilman Riccardi – yes, Councilman Simpson – yes, Councilman Romano – yes.

Townwide Garage Sale – Mayor Wronko stated residents have been asking if there will be a townwide garage sale this year. This event is not on the calendar for this year. The people who have run the garage sale in the past and organized the lists and printing of the lists are no longer volunteering to do so. Mayor Wronko suggested that the Borough have a date for the garage sale but there would not be a registration or lists or maps provided. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if a fee is charged for residents having a garage sale. Administrator McNeilly stated no fees are charged. Administrator McNeilly stated the garage sale dates back 40 years with the work being done by the Stanhope Chamber of Commerce. In the past registration forms were printed and sent out in the water bills. The registration forms were sent in to Borough Hall. The Chamber would take those lists and prepare a list of residents participating and the items being sold. Then a map was marked and copies made for distribution that morning at various locations. This was a lot of work. Administrator McNeilly stated a date can be set for the garage sales to take place but there is no one available to do the printing and distribution of the lists and maps. The date can be posted on social media and on the website. The date for the garage sale will be June 13th. Administrator McNeilly stated if the governing body wants to hold the garage sale next year with a registration, there will need to be volunteers to do the work. This is not something that can be done in the office.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

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

Resolution 081-26 AUTHORIZING A STIPEND FOR THE ASSISTANT TAX COLLECTOR FOR ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

WHEREAS, due to the ongoing absence of a full-time CFO and Certified Tax Collector, Tammy Minniti, the Borough’s Assistant Tax Collector, continues to be the lone full-time employee in the Borough’s finance department; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council would like to recognize Ms. Minniti with a stipend of \$630.00 per month retroactive to January 1, 2026, for her additional duties until a permanent full-time Tax Collector can be appointed, effective immediately; and

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Mayor and Council does hereby approve the stipend for Tammy Minniti in the amount of \$630.00 per month, prorated based upon days performing the additional duties, until such permanent full-time Tax Collector can be appointed.

On motion by Councilman Simpson, 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– yes |
| Councilman Simpson – yes | Councilman Wachterhauser – yes |

Resolution 082-26 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF ADDITIONAL STIPENDS TO LINDA CHIRIP AND TAMMY MINNITI FOR CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT WORK

WHEREAS, the Borough Construction Secretary position has continued to remain vacant and Borough employees Linda Chirip and Tammy Minniti have been covering the work of a Construction Secretary, in addition to their regular Borough employee duties; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the additional services, the Borough provided a stipend of an additional \$200.00 per week to Ms. Chirip and Ms. Minniti for these temporary additional duties; and

WHEREAS, the Borough has approved salary adjustments for calendar year 2026; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Chirip and Ms. Minniti shall receive a weekly stipend of \$215.00, for the additional Construction Secretary duties, until a new Construction Secretary is hired and trained.

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Mayor and Council does hereby authorize the stipend of \$215.00 per week to Ms. Chirip and Ms. Minniti, retroactive to January 1, 2026.

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– yes |
| Councilman Simpson – yes | Councilman Wachterhauser – yes |

Resolution 083-26

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

WHEREAS, at the Municipal Tax Sale held on October 28, 2025, a lien was sold on Block 11501 Lot 2 Qualifier C0056, also known as 456 Audubon Court, for 2024 delinquent sewer and water charges; and

WHEREAS, this lien which is known as Tax Sale Certificate #25-00003 was sold to Pro Cap 8 FBO Firsttrust Bank at 0% interest and a Premium of \$8,900.00; and

WHEREAS, Rajiv Dharia, property owner, has effected a redemption of certificate #25-00003 in the amount of \$2,248.05; 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 #25-00003 and Interest	\$2,248.05
Premium Paid by Lienholder	8,900.00
Total From Current Fund:	\$2,248.05
Total From Tax Premium Account	8,900.00

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 Pro Cap 8 FBO Firsttrust Bank is entitled to the redemption in the total amount of \$11,148.05; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Financial Officer be authorized to issue a check in the total amount of \$11,148.05 for the total redemption of certificate #25-00003 payable to Pro Cap 8 FBO Firsttrust Bank, PO Box 774, Fort Washington, PA 19034; 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 Simpson, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 084-26

**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 28, 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 Thornton and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – yes
Councilman Simpson – yes

Councilman Smith – yes
Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Wachterhauser – 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.

Seeing no one 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 Smith, and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was adopted.

The Mayor and Council went into Closed Session at 7:41 P.M.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

At the conclusion of the Closed Session, the Mayor and Council reconvened the public meeting at 7:50 P.M. with all present.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Simpson and unanimously carried by voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk for
Ellen Horak, RMC
Borough Clerk