

Borough of Sinking Spring
February 12, 2026
Council Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Sinking Spring was called to order on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., by Council President Tracy Peterson. After the pledge to the flag, Elizabeth Egelman called the roll reflecting the following Council Members present:

Tracy Peterson
H. David Miller
Denise Stine
Lisa Gantner
Brian Hoffa
Robert Metzgar
John Egelman

Other officials present: Mayor Gary Cirulli; Charles Haws, Barley Snyder, Borough Solicitor; Lowell Leaman, ARRO Consulting; Michael Hart, Borough Manager; Police Chief James Oxenreider; and Elizabeth Egelman, Borough Secretary, who recorded the minutes of the proceedings.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from 1-5-26 Council Reorganization meeting, and 1-5-26 Council Meeting

Motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Mr. Hoffa and seconded by Mrs. Stine. The motion passed unanimously.

Visitors/Public Comment

Mr. Kline of 28 Winding Brook Drive addressed Council prior to the SRJ Real Estate presentation. He commended the borough's snow removal crew for their exceptional work during the recent heavy snowstorm. He then raised a recurring concern regarding parking violations on Cacoosing Avenue, specifically that vehicles were consistently parked in violation of the posted 6 AM–6 PM no-parking restriction. Mrs. Stine stated that she would like to make a motion to change the signs to read 8 AM–4 or 5 PM on weekdays only, with no restrictions on weekends. There was no second.

SRJ Real Estate Presentation

Attorney Alex Elliker, representing SRJ Real Estate, along with engineer from Hawk Valley Associates and architect Scott Graham, presented a revised development plan for the properties at 4100 Penn Avenue, which includes the post office site. The presentation provided context, noting that a zoning application had been filed in the fall and that the original plan—calling for two apartment buildings, 20 units, and approximately 19.33 units per acre—had drawn significant criticism from Council in November regarding parking, congestion, and open space.

In response to that feedback, the applicant revised the plan by eliminating one of the two proposed apartment buildings entirely. The revised proposal calls for a single three-story, 13-unit residential structure to be located on the southern portion of the combined lots, reducing density to approximately 13.98 units per acre. The building would include covered parking, three accessible ground-level units, and five two-bedroom units on each of the two upper

floors, averaging approximately 1,450 square feet per unit. The revised plan meets the 2.25-parking-space-per-unit requirement, with 33 designated spaces serving both the residential building and the existing post office. The applicant stated that the number of required variances had been reduced from approximately 18-20 to an estimated 8-11, with remaining variances expected to relate primarily to the small residential (R-5) zoning sliver at the southern edge of the property, impervious coverage, and the co-location of two uses on a consolidated lot.

A procedural discussion arose regarding the appropriate process for the application. Council members expressed that they expected plan revisions to pass through the Planning Commission before being presented to Council. Mr. Haws clarified that while going through the Planning Commission is the typical path for subdivision and land development plans, an applicant seeking zoning relief is not legally required to follow that process before filing with the Zoning Hearing Board. He confirmed that a sketch plan had been submitted and reviewed, and that it was at his suggestion, given the large number of variances involved, that the applicant came before Council informally. The Solicitor noted Council has the right to participate in or oppose the Zoning Hearing Board proceedings.

The applicant indicated that the Zoning Hearing Board had offered dates in both March and late April, and that they would likely accept the late April date, allowing time to resubmit the revised sketch plan for engineering and Planning Commission review beforehand. Council offered no formal motion or statement of support or opposition, but indicated the revised plan was a step in the right direction and directed the applicant to proceed through the formal review process.

Correspondence

Municipal Officials Dinner – March 4th 2026

Council acknowledged receipt of the invitation for the Municipal Officials Dinner on March 4, 2026, at a cost of approximately \$70 per person.

PennDOT Letter concerning traffic signals at Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing intersection

Council discussed a letter received from PennDOT regarding the traffic signals at the Penn Avenue/Columbia Avenue/Cacoosing Avenue intersection. Council President Peterson expressed strong frustration that the borough continues to receive public criticism over signal timing and the prohibition on right turns on red at this intersection, despite the fact that the intersection is under PennDOT's jurisdiction. She noted that the borough had requested variances and improvements, all of which PennDOT denied, and that PennDOT indicated it would only consider adjusting signal timing. Council agreed that the letter should be made public through the borough's social media, website, and newsletter so residents understand that the borough's hands are tied. It was suggested that the communication be condensed into brief bullet points for public readability.

Approval of the Bills for January 2026

Motion to approve the bills for January 2026 was made by Mr. Hoffa and Seconded by Mrs. Stine. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Treasurers Report for January 2026

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 2026 was made by Mr. Hoffa and Seconded by Mrs. Stine. Motion carried unanimously.

Western Berks Fire Department Report January 2026

Mr. Renshaw reported that the department responded to 1,473 calls for service in 2025, a new record surpassing the previous record of 1,388 set the year prior. He noted that when he was hired in 2015, the department handled approximately 800 calls annually. He reported three significant grants received: a \$78,000 LSA grant for a new command vehicle, a \$52,000 grant from the State Fire Commissioner's Office directed toward the capital fund for a new fire engine ordered the prior year, and a \$7,500 grant from Buckeye Pipeline Partnership for equipment acquisition. He also noted that 75 percent of calls in 2025 were within the department's four municipalities, representing over 1,000 in-borough calls. In response to a Council member's question about response time benchmarks, the Chief referenced the NFPA 1710 standard, noting the department targets getting 15 personnel on scene within 8 minutes for fire emergencies. Average dispatch-to-arrival time was reported at 5 minutes and 33 seconds, with an average time on scene of 36 minutes.

Western Berks Ambulance Report Dec. 2025 and January 2026

The Western Berks Ambulance Report was noted as available in the packet.

Revitalization

Mr. Hoffa reported that they have a meeting coming up next week.

Unfinished Business/ Possible Action Items

A. Amendments to Master Fee Schedule

Council reviewed the proposed amendments to the Master Fee Schedule included in the packet. A typographical error was identified on page 2: the new residential building permitting fee was listed as \$5.30 per square foot when it should read \$0.30 per square foot, consistent with the standard residential rate. The item was tabled to the March meeting to allow all Council members time to review the schedule and address the correction.

B. Appoint Fire Marshal

Mr. Hart reported that he had spoken with Mr. Renshaw, who agreed to serve as Fire Marshal within defined limits. Mr. Renshaw was willing to be formally named as Fire Marshal for plan review purposes—such as confirming fire apparatus access to structures—but declined to take on arson investigation responsibilities, which would continue to be referred to the State Police or private investigators due to certification requirements under Act 120. Council approved the appointment.

Motion to appoint Jared Renshaw as Fire Marshal. Moved by Mr. Hoffa. Seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Approve Advertising Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Parking of Major Recreational Equipment

Council discussed amending the existing zoning ordinance, originally adopted in 2016, which requires recreational vehicles, campers, and boats parked in rear or side yards to be placed on a hard impervious surface. The impetus for the amendment was that several residents received notices of violation and faced significant costs to install concrete pads. The Borough Manager noted the borough is unique among surrounding municipalities in

imposing a hard surface requirement. The proposed amendment would allow parking on concrete pavers or blocks of at least 4 inches in thickness and 12 inches square, placed at every point of contact, rather than requiring a full impervious surface. The Borough Solicitor outlined the formal amendment process: submit to both the municipal and county planning commissions for a mandatory 30-day review period, advertise the ordinance twice in the Eagle, and bring it back for adoption at the April meeting. Council approved advertising the amendment through this process. Mr. Metzgar stated on the record that he would be voting against the amendment, preferring the original stricter requirement.

Motion to approve advertising the Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Parking of Major Recreational Equipment for adoption at the April meeting. Moved by Mrs. Gantner. Seconded by Mrs. Stine. Motion carried.

New Business/ Possible Action Items

A. Resolution 2026-02 Appointing the Berks County Treasurer's Office as the Borough Tax Collector – 4-year term

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-02 appointing the Berks County Treasurer's Office as the Borough Tax Collector for a four-year term. Moved by Mr. Miller. Seconded by Mr. Hoffa. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Appoint Gabriel Hirsch as the Deputy Tax Collector

Mr. Hart noted that as part of the county's arrangement, the borough is required to have a designated on-site individual to accept tax payments. Gabriel Hirsch was appointed to serve in this capacity.

Motion to appoint Gabriel Hirsch as Deputy Tax Collector. Moved by Mr. Hoffa. Seconded by Mr. Eagelman. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Resolution 2026-03 Requesting a DCNR-C2P2 Grant for Sinking Spring Playground Sport Court Project

Council approved the resolution authorizing a grant application to DCNR's C2P2 program for the Sinking Spring Playground Sport Court (fitness court) project. Mrs. Gantner noted that the final location of the court had not yet been determined and requested a meeting with the Rec Board to discuss placement options.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-03 requesting a DCNR-C2P2 Grant for the Sinking Spring Playground Sport Court Project. Moved by Mr. Eagelman. Seconded by Mrs. Gantner. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Approve Wexcon Quote of \$18,000.00 for Sewer Manhole Repair

Mr. Hart explained that televising of sewers on Crest Avenue—a street scheduled for paving—revealed a broken lower section of a drop manhole. The repair will convert the drop manhole to a straight-pipe configuration with an interior drop, which is less preferred but significantly more cost-effective. The work will be completed prior to paving using Wexcon at CoStar contract pricing of \$18,000.

Motion to approve the Wexcon quote of \$18,000 for the sewer manhole repair on Crest Avenue. Moved by Mr. Miller. Seconded by Mrs. Gantner. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Approve Telco Payment #1 for Pedestrian Crossing Signal Project

Council approved the first payment request from Telco for the pedestrian crossing signal project in the amount of \$40,565.00. A Council member inquired about the significant price variation among the four rectangular rapid flashing beacon assemblies listed in the payment application, with individual units ranging from approximately \$7,500 to \$15,000. Mr. Hart indicated he was uncertain of the exact reason and would review the plans to determine whether the higher-cost unit represented a main controller or a different configuration.

Motion to approve Telco Payment #1 for the Pedestrian Crossing Signal Project in the amount of \$40,565.00. Moved by Mrs. Stine. Seconded by Mr. Metzgar. Motion carried unanimously.

F. Accept David Garrett's Letter of Resignation from WWTP

Council accepted the resignation of David Garrett from his full-time position at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Hart reported that following a conversation with Mr. Garrett, who had accepted a position at the Lebanon treatment facility on a two-days-on, two-days-off schedule, Mr. Garrett expressed willingness to remain available to the borough on a per diem basis after completing his initial training period. Council approved accepting the resignation and retaining Mr. Garrett as a per diem employee at his current hourly rate, with no overtime and no benefits.

Motion to accept David Garrett's resignation as a full-time employee and to retain him as a per diem employee at his current rate with no overtime or benefits. Moved by Mr. Miller. Seconded by Mrs. Stine. Motion carried unanimously.

G. Approve Advertising to Hire for WWTP

Motion to approve advertising to hire a full-time employee for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Moved by Mrs. Gantner. Seconded by Mrs. Stine. Motion carried unanimously.

H. Appoint Trish Wertz and Steve Gass to Civil Service Commission

Council thanked Trish Wertz and Steve Gass, who were present at the meeting, for their willingness to serve. Both were appointed to the Civil Service Commission.

Motion to appoint Trish Wertz and Steve Gass to the Civil Service Commission. Moved by Mr. Hoffa. Seconded by Mr. Egelman. Motion carried unanimously.

I. Reaffirmation of Spring Market Shops, Final Plan dated May 1, 2025

Mr. Hart explained that the Spring Market Shops Final Plan had been approved previously but was delayed due to outstanding legal agreements and maintenance agreements. All required agreements have since been executed. Mr. Haws noted that because more than 90 days had elapsed since plan approval, a reaffirmation letter was prepared acknowledging that all conditions had been satisfied as of the date of the current meeting, resetting the 90-day clock for plan signing and recording.

Motion to reaffirm the Spring Market Shops Final Plan dated May 1, 2025. Moved by Mr. Metzgar. Seconded by Mrs. Stine. Motion carried unanimously.

Environmental & Municipal Engineer's Report – No Action Items

Mr. Leaman reported no action items. He noted ongoing construction inspection of the pedestrian crossing flashers, continued support to the wastewater treatment plant. He stated that they continue to work slowly through plans for the next phase of the intersection for Krick and that Bowman is working on the study and content for that and then we will need to go back to PennDOT for options.

Committee Reports

Chief Oxenreider went over his report for January 2026. Mrs. Peterson requested that a public notice be posted on social media and the borough website advising residents to lock their vehicles and remove valuables, citing a recent spree of vehicle break-ins in the area.

Discussion also arose regarding the delineators on Route 724 that have been damaged or destroyed. Mr. Hart indicated the posts would be reinstalled once weather permitted. Mr. Egelman asked if we could install a traffic enforcement camera at the location as an alternative or supplement to the physical delineators. Chief Oxenreider stated that it would need a power source. Mr. Hart stated that he could investigate it. Mr. Hoffa also mentioned the ongoing problem of vehicles blocking the intersection.

Borough Manager: Mr. Hart highlighted the borough's snow removal response following the recent major storm. Crews plowed all streets and then worked with three contracted triaxial dump trucks and a large snowblower to haul and relocate over 25,000 cubic yards of snow within one week, depositing it at the yard waste site, the playground, and other available lots. Council commended the effort.

Newsletter: The Borough Secretary noted that Hometown Press had already reached out regarding the newsletter production timeline, which requires six weeks from submission to delivery. Given the lead time, the Easter egg hunt on March 28 could not be included. All Council members were asked to submit articles. It was agreed that the PennDOT traffic signal letter would be included as a concise, bullet-pointed piece.

Library: Mrs. Peterson reported that the library received written confirmation that it would continue operating as a passport acceptance facility, as it is a government-affiliated entity. She anticipated increased passport demand as other non-government facilities lose authorization and suggested that an additional part-time staff member may need to be hired to accommodate the volume.

Mayor Cirulli raised a safety concern about vehicles exiting the private driveway adjacent to the new residential development onto Broad Street without stopping, nearly causing a collision. Mr. Hart was asked to contact the property owner to request installation of a stop sign at that exit. Mr. Hart noted a potential complication, as a borough stormwater culvert with minimal cover runs beneath the potential sign location. Mr. Haws confirmed that exits from private driveways onto public streets can be required to have stop signs and are fully enforceable. Mr. Miller asked whether the stormwater culvert had been inspected after construction-related blasting and heavy truck traffic. The Manager confirmed a pre-construction inspection was performed but acknowledged a post-construction inspection had not yet been done and agreed to keep it in mind.

Administration: Mr. Metzgar asked if the police officer hiring process was underway. Chief Oxenreider stated that the advertisement was posted February 9 and the application deadline is March 9.

Parks & Recreation: Mrs. Gantner reported that the Easter egg hunt is scheduled for March 28 at 10 AM. Due to the high number of school snow days, the playground program will begin on Thursday, June 11, and conclude on Wednesday, August 12—a slight adjustment to the typical Monday start. Registration fees are proposed to increase by \$10, with resident fees set at \$145 per child and non-resident fees at \$195 per child for the nine-week program. The fee schedule will be updated accordingly.

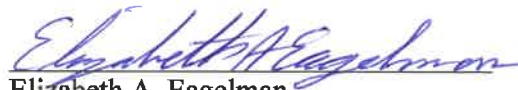
Mrs. Stine made a motion to change the No Parking signs on Cacoosing Avenue. She would like the time to be from 8 a.m. to 4 or 5 p.m. and no restrictions on the weekend. She stated that on the weekends there is nowhere to park. Discussion ensued concerning options, alley parking and making it a one-way street.

Mr. Egelman inquired about the status of the speed table installation on Ruth Street. Mr. Hart confirmed that the bid packet for the spring paving project had been issued with two to three speed tables included as bid options. He noted that PennDOT requires a traffic study to warrant the installation of speed tables on a state-related road, and that he had contacted LTAP—a state program that provides free traffic count and study services—to conduct the required analysis. He noted that traffic volumes on Ruth Street are significantly higher during playground season and that the study timing would account for that. The paving itself can proceed regardless of the speed table determination, with the speed tables added as an option if the study supports their installation.

Adjournment:

Mr. Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth A. Egelman
Borough Secretary