

Meeting Minutes

Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee of Borough Council

Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 @ 6:00 PM

Committee Members: Bryan Travis, Chair
Lisa Kearns
Brian McGinnis

Staff & Representatives: Joshua Lee, Chief - West Chester Police Department
Keith Kurowski, Director of Parks & Recreation
Sean Metrick, Borough Manager
Mark Scanlon, Fire Chief West Chester Fire Department
Justin Robbins, Director of Operations Good Fellowship Ambulance Club

- I. Call to order – 6:00pm
- II. Announcements - None
- III. Comments, suggestions, petitions by residents in attendance regarding items not on the agenda. *(Please be advised that all public comments have a 5-minute time limit.)* - None
- IV. Reports - (Attachments)

A. Monthly WCFD Report

Fire Chief Marc Scanlon reports WCFD responded to 181 incidents in April, with 71 being in the borough. April 2026 had the largest number of calls in the history of the department. Prior to that the record was 170 calls during Hurricane Irma. Volunteers continue to train each month. In April there were four significant incidents, three house fires and one brush fire, none of which were in the borough. There is a waterline project on South Church Street, and the department is looking to have a fire hydrant relocated from Dean Street and Woodbine Alley to South Church Street, where there is no hydrant. There are two hydrants currently on Dean Street and Woodbine Alley that are extremely close to one another. The fire department is unsure if there will be a cost since there is work already being completed.

B. Monthly WCPD Report

Chief Lee shares that Officer Stu Smith will be retiring on Friday, May 15th. Officer Smith has a 32 ½ year career with the department and his ceremonial walkout will be on Friday at 3:00pm. The hiring process continues and Chief Lee and Mayor DeBaptiste interviewed candidates. Three candidates will be brought to council work session for approval of conditional offers of employment. He reports that one candidate will need the police academy, which starts in July. Chief Lee thanks the Civil Service Commission, the mayor, and the council for their help with the process. In April officers attended crisis intervention team training, WC has the most officers trained in crisis intervention in the county, nearly at 100%. Also, an officer, hired nearly a year ago, attended standardized field sobriety test training last month. The department continues their investigation in cooperation with the district attorney's office into the pedestrian struck crash that occurred on April 12th. The department responded to 3140 calls in April. This includes service and criminal calls. There is a homicide call on the report referring to the vehicular death that continues to be investigated. The nuisance calls are reported under "All Others". The breakdown of this shows an increase in April. Chief states he has had discussions with council, neighborhood groups, both publicly and privately about what they can do as police and law enforcement. He heard from

these conversations people would like more foot patrols and bike patrols, having more officers more visible in the neighborhoods. Bryan Travis states he has seen the bike patrols, but noticed on his home cameras that on the previous weekend he did not see a nighttime patrol car go by his home after 2am. Chief Lee explains the officers are there, but out issuing citations or taking a person to the station. An officer will be off the street for 20-30 minutes or more on station, then will return to the area immediately. Lisa Kearns has asked for data from the last three years to compare to current. Month by month and year by year comparisons. Chief will organize data in a format the committee requests.

C. Monthly GFAC Report

Justin Robbins, GFAC Director of Operations/Deputy EMS Chief, reports GFAC responded to 808 calls in April, 219 of which were in West Chester Borough. Justin shares that the crews transported patients to different locations that are not in their call area in response to hospital overcrowding. It is faster for crews to transport patients to Riddle Hospital and Christiana Care in West Grove to get a faster turnaround from these out of area hospitals that are less busy than Chester County Hospital. It is important to clear and be available for other calls for service. Saturday, May 16th is GFAC's community festival and this kicks off National EMS Week. GFAC was awarded the Distinguished Service award from the Chester County EMS Council.

D. Public Safety Committee – *Chair Report, workplan and issues raised at prior meetings.*

Chair Bryan Travis gives an update on his three goals for the committee. The first goal was truck restrictions. The borough solicitor has given Bryan a couple truck ordinances from surrounding townships, and he still needs to review them. He hopes to bring it to June's meeting. Goal two is the EMS/public safety tax/funding gap. The expense side has started to be discussed at the Finance Committee. And the third goal is quality of life issues. Tonight we are discussing unruly social gatherings. All three goals are intertwined with other committees, so you may hear discussion outside of this committee, but they originated in Public Safety & Quality of Life.

V. Old Business

A. Approve April 2026 Public Safety Committee meeting minutes (attachment) **Approve 3-0**

B. Motion to approve draft amendment to Chapter 80 – Peddling, Soliciting, Handbills and schedule a public hearing for June 17, 2026 (attachment)

Issue: Review amendments to Chapter 80

Committee Chair Travis met with borough solicitor, Kristin Camp, to discuss some of the issues the small business owners in town had brought to last month's meeting. Bryan also met with store owner Malena to get more details about the concerns she had with soliciting and possible interference with business activities, such as blocking doors, making people feel uncomfortable or unwelcomed. One addition to ordinance is adding specific location where peddling or soliciting shall occur, no fixed location with a table. Also, needed is proof of registration with the Commonwealth based on the PA Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act. Also cleaning up language or ordinance by updating exemptions in the ordinance that need to be cleaned such as removing A and B of 80-5, which refers to farmers markets and sales of goods by owner who would donate to charity. Added distance requirement for solicitors or peddlers of at least 5 feet from door for business or office. **APPROVED 3-0**

C. Motion to direct the Solicitor to prepare a draft ordinance on the use of vape shops in residential neighborhoods in proximity to parks, schools, and bus stops in the residential zoning districts. **TABLED TO JUNE MEETING**

VI. New Business

A. Discuss Unruly Social Gathering Ordinance and Criteria

Issue: Mass gatherings in residential areas.

Chair Bryan Travis shares that the idea of an unruly social gathering ordinance has been brought to committee for discussion and possible implementation. There was discussion last month, and in previous years, about this type of ordinance in response to large, loud gatherings in the southeast neighborhoods. Bryan shares that many college towns have Unruly Social Gathering Ordinances. The committee needs to decide if this is something we need. If we agree that we need it, we need to create some definitions for it. Since there are many towns with this, there are examples for the committee to review. He sees the current ordinances that correspond with this behavior, such as Chapter 66 and the point system, are long-term solutions and an unruly social gathering ordinance would be a short-term solution that would address the event itself. Lisa Kearns states yes, we need to look at it and it would cross the board in the borough. It would include short-term rentals, owner occupied, student rentals, and long-term rentals. Brian McGinnis states it is something we should consider, but with everything already in place we would need to make sure we are not over duplicating the process. Bryan Travis reminds the committee that this is just a discussion. This would address the event at the moment it is occurring. Newark, DE has both a point system and an unruly gathering ordinance. Mr. Travis shares the Newark, DE list of items on the unruly social gathering ordinance. PASSHE schools where towns have the ordinance are Bloomsburg, East Stroudsburg, and Indiana University of PA. All committee members approve of bringing this discussion to council.

Anne Carroll, representing CASE, comments that the noise ordinance which was contained in Chapter 73 is now tied into the zoning ordinance which is Chapter 112. In 112 809C 2B versus 4B. And they are repeated in 73 A2 and B2. They believe they are contradictory to each other. There is concern of the amount of money that is being spent on the solicitor to assist when the council is not quite there with their information. Mr. Metrick mentions another question is what this ordinance has that current statutes and state statutes currently don't have. Sean Berry comments his appreciation that the committee is looking at an ordinance that would have the ability to protect neighbors in the borough. Jim Sergeant of South Walnut Street feels the unique problem is that WCU is a dry campus and this pushes all of conduct issues off campus. If the university allowed those of age to drink on campus, there may be more control. We cannot continue to allow the behavior of those who behave badly, there needs to be ramifications.

B. Motion to permit colored lights to be installed on Gay Street in recognition of Pride Month

Issue: Strings of rainbow lights wrapped around light poles along Gay Street for month of June

APPROVED 3-0 Michael Hartman, of West Barnard Street, shares that Phoenixville and Media paint crosswalks and our crosswalks in town are brick, so he came up with this creative idea for Pride Month. The Chester County Equity Alliance agreed to assist with the fundraising and funding of the lights.

C. Motion to approve resolution to destroy police records that have exceeded the retention periods as required by PA law. (attachment) **APPROVED 3-0**

D. Special Event Applications (SEAs) (attachments)

Issue: Approve Special Event Permits **All APPROVED 3-0**

1. 7.9.26 Clydesdales Parade – downtown West Chester (Hosted by: Downtown West Chester and Penn Distributing)
2. 6.12.26 World Cup Watch Party – Open Air Market (Hosted by: Downtown West Chester, West Chester Parks and Recreation, Kildare's)
3. 9.12.26 Up on the Roof Fundraiser – Chestnut Street Garage (Hosted by: Downtown West Chester)

4. 10.11.26 F4 Chili Cook-Off – downtown West Chester
5. 10.17.26 Unite 4 HER 5k – downtown West Chester
6. 12.5.26 Jingle Run – 5 k loop (Hosted by: Care Center Foundation)

VII. Other Business

Committee member Lisa Kearns brings the suggestion of a companion ordinance to the Vape Shop one being drafted now. The companion ordinance would prohibit the manufacture, sale and public use of Kratom and its synthetic concentrate. Kratom is derived from the leaves of tree grown in Southeast Asia and acts on the same brain receptors as opioids, heroin, and fentanyl. There are no FDA approved uses for Kratom or its synthetic concentrate. All branches of the US military have banned Kratom. She would like to prevent the next opioid type epidemic. Mr. Travis asks if other entities have this route to ban a specific product? Lisa states Scranton has it in Pennsylvania and the state of California has cities that have passed ordinances too. Pennsylvania has been discussing banning it, but may take some time to pass through the channels. Lisa shares a draft of an ordinance she has started. The committee agrees to put it on the June committee agenda.

VIII. Adjournment 7:16pm

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