



Borough of West Chester, Pennsylvania
West Chester Borough Council
Committee to Reestablish Rail Service to West Chester

MEETING MINUTES

PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting of the Committee to Reestablish Rail Service to West Chester

LOCATION: West Chester Borough Hall, Room 232

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, April 8, 2025, at 7:00 PM

TEAMS LINK: [MEETING LINK](#)

Meeting ID: 243 349 623 894

Passcode: 7M594X

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1. **Call to Order** 7:00 PM
 - a. The meeting was called to order with committee members present. A quorum was not reached, and the approval of the March meeting minutes was tabled.
2. **Summary of the Meeting** –The Committee reviewed major developments including:
 - a. Progress on Borough Council presentation materials for Annual Report
 - b. Discussion of proposed station locations (including combined Westtown/Cheyney University station)
 - c. Equipment strategy discussion (battery-electric vs. diesel hybrid locomotives)
 - d. Track condition, rehabilitation needs, and cost assumptions
 - e. Funding strategy, including state grant opportunities and matching requirements
 - f. Coordination with Media Borough and regional municipalities
 - g. Nonprofit (501(c)(3)/(c)(4)) organizational updates
 - h. Public outreach and stakeholder engagement strategy
 - i.

3. **Attendees**

Attendee	Affiliation
Jason Levinn	RR Committee
Craig Blizzard - phone	RR Committee
Steve Laarkamp	RR Committee
Barbara Clarke	RR Committee
Nate Lichtenstein	Delaware Valley Association of Rail

	Passengers (DVARP)
David Tennent	Railway Engineering Maintenance Suppliers Association (REMSA)
Alden Richey	Community

4. Business

a. Review of Open Action Items

#	Full Description	Due Date	Responsible Party	Comments
20	Develop a template for a letter writing campaign to all major stakeholders	3/31/2026	Barker	Template under review; minimal feedback received; recirculate for comment
35	Student/Resident Transit Surveys	3/31/2026	Barker	Westtown survey received; Cheyney outreach ongoing.
43	Meet with Sen. Kane's staff to discuss applying for state grants for the pedestrian bridge. Identify engineering firms for bridge design funding	5/31/2026	Levinn/ Laarkamp	Reach out to setup meeting following initial discussions with engineering firms.
46	Project Presentations to Media Borough and Middletown Township	2/28/2026	Laarkamp	Positive initial meeting; pursuing letter of support
47	501(c)(3) organizational development	3/31/2026	Young	Officers needed; bank account pending
48	Borough Financial Contributions Summary (2018 and 2021 studies)	3/15/2026	Levinn	Compile 2018 and 2021 study contribution data.
49	Turks Head Trail (THT) Reciprocal Letters of Support	4/15/2026	Barker	Mutual letter drafting in progress.
50	Engineering Firm Outreach	4/31/2026	Levinn	Focus on bridge feasibility consultation

b. Borough Financial Contributions Summary (2018 and 201 studies)

- i. The Borough contribution in 2021 for the VPP Economic Impact study was \$9,000 toward a total project cost of \$21,000 plus an additional \$5,000 for an equity study for a total Borough contribution of \$14,000.

c. Engineering & Operations Discussion

- i. The Committee reviewed a draft Annual report to be submitted to Borough Council.

- ii. Proposed service includes stations at Westtown / Cheyney University, with continuation to Wawa.
- iii. Discussion emphasized:
 - 1. Need for parking at new stations
 - 2. Feasibility of cross-platform transfer at Wawa
 - 3. Preservation of right-of-way for potential future double tracking
- iv. Track conditions were discussed:
 - 1. Significant rehabilitation required (ties, rail replacement, upgrades to Class III track)
 - 2. Preliminary cost estimate (~\$50M) considered rough and subject to engineering validation

d. Equipment Strategy

- i. The Committee discussed propulsion options:
 - 1. Battery-electric locomotives (preferred long-term solution)
 - 2. Diesel-electric or hybrid alternatives as interim options
- ii. Key considerations:
 - 1. Cost of locomotives and coach refurbishment
 - 2. Operational efficiency and environmental benefits
 - 3. Charging feasibility and range performance

e. Funding & Grants

- i. Update provided on \$25M state funding item (legislation is pending passage in the PA Senate).
- ii. Committee discussed:
 - 1. Need for engineering firm to support grant applications
 - 2. Matching fund strategies (state + private + nonprofit contributions)
 - 3. Importance of broad municipal support to strengthen applications
- iii. Additional grant opportunities (e.g., bridge funding programs) were noted.

f. Community & Municipal Outreach

- i. Positive interest expressed
 - 1. Request for supporting materials (e.g., WCU letter)
- ii. Strategy discussed:
 - 1. Expand outreach to surrounding municipalities (Westtown, Thornbury, Middletown, etc)

2. Build regional coalition of support

g. University Coordination

- i. Continued engagement with:
 1. West Chester University
 2. Cheyney University
- ii. Cheyney station planning considerations:
 1. Walkability vs. parking access
 2. Pedestrian bridge requirement due to creek
 3. Integration with campus circulation

h. Nonprofit Development (501c3 / 501c4)

- i. Both entities established; next steps include:
 1. Appointing officers
 2. Opening bank account
 3. Enabling fundraising and grant participation.

5. Public Outreach

- a. Committee members reported:
 - i. Engagement at community events (e.g., Growers Market)
 - ii. Interest from residents and potential volunteers
 - iii. Opportunity to expand outreach via sustainability and transportation committees

6. New Business

- a. Discussion of additional grant writing support needs
- b. Consideration of engaging consultants specializing in grant applications
- c. Continued coordination with sustainability advisory groups and regional stakeholders.

7. **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May13, 2026, at 7:00 PM (Room 232 and via Microsoft Teams)

8. **Adjourn** -8:00 PM

Committee Membership

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| • Jason Levinn, Chair | • Craig Blizzard | • Kim Bove |
| • Jim Sargent | • Steve Laarkamp | • Liz Young |
| • Bill McCann | • Charlot Barker | • Barbara Clarke |
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