



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, November 12, 2025, at 7:00 PM

TEAMS LINK: [MEETING LINK](#)

Meeting ID: 243 349 623 894

Passcode: 7M594X

Dial in by phone +1 814-580-5758,,279105431#

-
1. Call to Order 7:02 PM
 - a. The Committee convened with a reduced number of members present due to travel, family matters, and schedule conflicts. A quorum was not met; therefore, October minutes will be approved at the December meeting.
 - b. **Summary of the Meeting –**

The committee reviewed ongoing coordination with Chester County Planning Commission, updates to the ridership discussions with DVRPC, status of the pedestrian bridge grant work, the updated Five-Year Financial and Operating Plan, and outreach efforts with local universities and community groups.

2. Attendees

Attendee	Affiliation
Jason Levinn	RR Committee
Barbara Clarke	RR Committee
Craig Blizzard -phone	RR Committee
Charlot Barker	RR Committee
Steve Laarkamp	Member of the Public
Scott (Amtrak employee)	Member of the Public

3. Business

a. Review of Open Action Items

#	Full Description	Due Date	Responsible Party	Comments
8	Confirm the WC-Wawa Rail Service is included in the Chester County Transportation Priority Projects (TPP) (Check with Borough Planning Department and County Commissioners) Set meeting with Matt Edmond, Chester County Planning Commission Director	11/21/2025	Norley	County leadership supportive; schedule meeting/ lunch
20	Develop a template for a letter writing campaign to all major stakeholders	11/30/2025	Barker	Template under review; minimal feedback received; recirculate for comment
22	Coordinate ridership updates with DVRPC	11/15/2025	Norley	Discussion of next grant cycle (July 2026) and ongoing data collection
35	Student/Resident Transit Surveys	10/22/2025	Barker	Surveys to be separated by school (WCU, Cheyney, Westtown) final drafts to be circulated
42	Quarterly Briefing to Borough Council	11/18/2025	Levinn	Will include financial plan and updated project phasing
43	Meet with Sen. Kane's staff to discuss applying for state grants for the pedestrian bridge	11/30/2025	Bove/ Levinn	Priority item— requires follow-up; staff contact offered to assist with grant application

45	Quarterly Briefing to Borough Council	1/14/2026	TBD	Maintain standing rotation for presentations
----	---------------------------------------	-----------	-----	--

- b. Five-Year Financial and Operating Plan
 - i. The updated financial plan was presented, including ridership assumptions, operating schedules, and capital cost projections. The plan now separates Year 0 construction from Years 1–5 operations. Ridership estimates are based on the 2011 DVRPC study, reduced to 35–50% to maintain conservative assumptions.
 - ii. Two equipment scenarios were compared: diesel locomotive with standard coaches, and battery-electric locomotive equipment. Battery-electric operation shows approximately \$250,000 in annual operating cost savings, but procurement challenges remain due to limited availability in the U.S. market.
- c. Operating Plan Highlights
 - i. 8 round trips per weekday
 - ii. 20-. minute shuttle run time
 - iii. 70- minute total trip to Center City via Wawa transfer
 - iv. Temporal separation with WCRR and freight operations
 - v. Quiet zones and grade crossing upgrades required
- d. Track and Infrastructure Coordination
 - i. Discussions with WCRR Operations Manager Derek Slifer indicated that major rehabilitation may require full replacement of track and ties to reach Class 3 standards. A Request for Information (RFI) is proposed to obtain contractor estimates on work scope, cost, and scheduling windows that avoid interfering with WCRR tourist operations.
- e. University and Community Outreach
 - i. Survey coordination continues with West Chester University and Westtown School. Additional outreach is needed for Cheyney University. Committee members will request survey results by late November to support planning. Engagement with Media Borough officials is ongoing, with a goal of establishing inter-municipal support.
- f. Sustainability and Outreach
 - i. The committee continues to participate in sustainability and community events, including the Environment and Bike Summit at Penn State Great Valley. The committee also supports initiatives proposed by the Sustainability Advisory Committee regarding bird-friendly and dark-sky policies.
- g. Nonprofit Development (501 c(3))

The committee reviewed IRS correspondence concerning the C4 filing. The newly formed nonprofit will manage fundraising, grants, and operator procurement. Additional board members are needed.

- h. New Action Item
 - i. Presentation to Media, 11/13, appeal to Joy Washington and Bob McMann for support and advocate. The slide deck to be sent to Steve Laarkamp to review with the committee in Media
 - i. Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 7:00 PM (Room 232 and via Microsoft Teams)
 - j. Adjourn -8:11PM
-

Committee Membership

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| • Jason Levinn, Chair | • Craig Blizzard | • Kim Bove |
| • Jim Sargent | • John McGee | • Liz Young |
| • Jordan Norley | • Charlot Barker | • Barbara Clarke |
-