

MINUTES
HEALTH & SANITATION COMMITTEE
MARCH 3, 2026

The Penn Township Health and Sanitation Committee convened on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 7:03 pm. Present were Chairman Arnold, Commissioners Heiland, Baile, Elksnis, and Rice. Also present were WWTP Superintendent Lank, Township Manager Sweeney, and Assistant Township Manager Klinefelter. The following items were discussed:

ANNOUNCEMENTS: There were none

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: The minutes of the previous Health & Sanitation Committee meeting were approved as written.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: There were none.

CONSIDER AMENDING RESOLUTION 1019 TO PERMIT COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES TO INSTALL AND UTILIZE DEDUCT METERS: WWTP Superintendent Lank explained that Resolution 1019 was passed to repeal a policy established in 1999, allowing deduct meters for residential properties using water for pools, irrigation, and other non-sewer purposes. The resolution was later amended to eliminate new residential deduct meters due to excessive administrative burden, with existing residential users grandfathered in. However, the resolution language inadvertently failed to specifically preserve the ability for commercial and industrial properties to obtain deduct meters. Neiderer's Pools recently requested a deduct meter for filling pool service tankers from their property, which is a legitimate commercial use. The proposed Resolution 1074 would amend Resolution 1019 to clarify that the prohibition applies only to residential properties, while commercial and industrial properties remain eligible for deduct meters. This item will be added to the Board of Commissioners' agenda.

NEWSLETTER: The Committee was informed that the Township newsletter was received from Roller Printing approximately a week and a half ahead of schedule. Distribution began on Thursday, February 26th. A total of 2,000 copies were printed.

FOOD DRIVE AND SHREDDING EVENT: The annual Food Drive and Shredding Event is scheduled for Saturday, April 25th from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. All donated food will go to New Hope Ministries.

TIMBER LANE UPDATE: Due to recent weather conditions including snow and muddy conditions, the crew has not been able to return to work on Timber Lane. The crew will begin spot repairs on Beck Mill Road around the 300 block, working after school buses have passed in the mornings. Flagging will be required but traffic will not need to be stopped. Staff is also televising sewer lines throughout the Township to identify additional repair work and potential lining projects.

DISCUSS SEWER RATES: WWTP Superintendent Lank thanked Assistant Township Manager Klinefelter for preparing an excellent spreadsheet and informational flyer regarding sewer rates. Superintendent Lank recommended maintaining the originally proposed \$12.00 base rate increase and \$1.00 per thousand gallons overage rate increase. He noted that revenue projections are estimates and not guaranteed, pointing out that the Township experienced approximately a 15% revenue shortfall last year (approximately \$800,000 short of predictions on the revenue side alone, in addition to the \$800,000 deficit between revenue and expenses).

Superintendent Lank proposed incorporating an annual cost-of-living increase into the ordinance to avoid large rate increases every 7-10 years. This could be tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or another appropriate measure. The Committee discussed various approaches, including automatic annual increases versus reviewing rates each year during the budget process.

The Committee discussed the timeline for implementation, with the goal of having any rate increase take effect with the October billing (reflecting meter reads from the end of August), which would be halfway through the year. To meet this timeline, a resolution would need to be passed by the April Board of Commissioners meeting.

Assistant Township Manager Klinefelter's flyer was discussed, which provides historical context (rates were \$53 in 2009, increased to \$55 in 2019, and have remained at \$55 for the past 17 years) and comparisons to other municipalities. The Committee debated whether to include a specific proposed rate increase amount on the flyer. After discussion, the Committee agreed to have the flyer revised to show a proposed rate increase of \$12 per quarter. This approach would allow the Township to potentially reduce the increase if appropriate while ensuring adequate revenue. The flyer will clearly state this is a "proposed" rate and encourage residents to attend Health & Sanitation Committee meetings to discuss the rate adjustments.

The Committee emphasized the importance of being proactive rather than reactive with rate increases going forward and agreed to continue discussion at the April meeting.

OTHER MATTERS: WWTP Superintendent Lank reported that the lab building, one of the original structures from 1963, requires urgent masonry repairs. A contractor inspection revealed that brick mortar is deteriorating, allowing water infiltration behind the bricks. The freeze-thaw cycles this winter have accelerated the damage. Contractor Randy Brady provided a quote of approximately \$24,000 to complete all necessary repairs and seal the entire building, which should last at least 10 years. Superintendent Lank requested permission to use funds from the contingency capital expenditure line item, which has \$50,000 budgeted for unforeseen items. After discussion, it was clarified that since the funding is already in the approved budget, no formal vote is required. The Committee supported the decision to proceed with the repairs as soon as weather permits.

CITIZEN'S QUESTIONS TO THE COMMITTEE REGARDING DISCUSSION ITEMS: Michael Schwartz, 5167 Grandview Road, asked several questions:

- Confirmed that existing residential deduct meter users are grandfathered as long as they continue to use at least 4,000 gallons per 12-month period and do not sell their property.

- Asked about the possibility of electronic meter reading. Superintendent Lank explained that while the water company has invested in electronic meters, the cost for individual deduct meters (approximately \$10,000-\$15,000 each) would be prohibitive for residents.
- Emphasized the importance of being proactive rather than reactive with rate increases, which the Committee agreed with.
- Asked about the status of the recycling center decision. The Committee indicated they are still collecting data through March and will discuss it once all data is available.
- Raised safety concerns about Anthracite's bulk pickup service, noting that drivers are using standard trash trucks with clamps to pick up large items like pallets and dishwashers, which has resulted in items being dropped and creating potential hazards. The Committee clarified that Anthracite's operational procedures are outside the Township's control, but residents should contact Anthracite directly with concerns and then contact the Township if issues are not resolved.
- Asked about communication methods. The Committee discussed the challenges of reaching all residents, noting that despite 18 public meetings about the trash contract transition, attendance was minimal until after the contract was signed. The Township is working to improve communication through the new website, Facebook presence, newsletters, and informational flyers.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Klinefelter
Township Secretary