

MINUTES
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MAY 4, 2026

The Penn Township Public Safety Committee convened on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 7:00 PM. Chairman Heiland and Commissioners Baile, Elksnis, Rice, and Arnold were present. Also present were Police Chief Merwede, Fire Chief Clouser, EMA Coordinator Jeff Waltman, Township Manager Sweeney, Township Engineer Bortner, Zoning Officer LeFevre, and Assistant Township Manager Klinefelter. The following items were discussed:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Heiland announced that there was an executive session held on Monday, April 20, 2026, following the Board of Commissioners meeting to discuss personnel matters. There will also be an executive session this evening following the Public Works Committee meeting to discuss personnel matters.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

The minutes of the April 6, 2026, Public Safety Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

There were none.

DISCUSS HIRING OF A NEW POLICE OFFICER:

Chief Merwede reported that after several weeks of background investigations, the eligible candidate list has been narrowed to the top three candidates. The department intends to hire one officer. The top candidate is a 24-year-old military veteran. A conditional offer of employment has already been extended to him. He has passed all required steps with the exception of the psychological evaluation, which is scheduled for Thursday.

Chief Merwede requested committee approval to hire the new officer two to three weeks prior to the police academy start date of July 6th. This early onboarding period would allow the new officer to complete firearms and taser training, review general orders, become familiar with department procedures, and meet fellow officers and staff before beginning the academy. Chief Merwede noted this practice has not been done previously but expressed confidence it would make for a smoother transition.

Discussion ensued regarding the effect of an early hire date on the probationary period. Chief Merwede indicated he would research the matter further but noted that probation runs for one year and the officer comes off field training after 16 weeks, so the early start date would not significantly affect probation terms. It was also confirmed that the officer position is already budgeted for the full year, so the early hire date will not create a budget overrun. Chief Clouser noted that the fire department follows a similar

practice of bringing new hires on approximately one week before the academy to allow them to work with all three shifts.

A question was raised regarding the swearing-in date. Chief Merwede indicated a swearing-in ceremony will be scheduled, likely in June. The committee expressed support for the early hire approach, and no objections were raised.

DISCUSS VOICE STRESS/POLYGRAPH TRAINING:

Chief Merwede reported that during a recent hiring process, the department experienced a competitive disadvantage compared to another local law enforcement agency that maintains an in-house polygraph examiner. Because the department currently relies on an outside agency to conduct polygraph testing, competing agencies may have earlier access to candidates and are able to move applicants through the hiring process more efficiently. Chief Merwede referenced an instance in which a highly qualified candidate accepted employment with another agency before the department was able to complete its hiring process.

Chief Merwede stated his intention to research having one of his officers or detectives certified in either polygraph or voice stress analysis. He noted that polygraph certification requires 60 college credits and takes approximately 12 weeks of training, while voice stress analysis training takes approximately one to three weeks. He indicated that polygraph training through the Indian Gap facility is available at no cost, though he will need to determine which officers meet the 60-credit requirement. Voice stress analysis is increasingly used by other departments, including York County Regional and New York City Police, and is generally favored over polygraph by those who use it.

Chief Merwede noted that should the department move forward with voice stress analysis, the civil service rules would need to be amended, as the current rules specify polygraph testing. He noted that the fire department's civil service rules already allow for a broader "truth detection test" or "deception test" designation. The committee expressed support for moving forward, and Chief Merwede indicated he will bring additional information to a future meeting.

DISCUSS NEW POLICE VEHICLES:

Chief Merwede reported that the two new police cruisers have been delivered to the vendor, where graphics have been applied. The vehicles are scheduled to be sent to the upfitter in Palmyra later this week for equipment installation. Chief Merwede noted the process has gone smoothly and that dealings with Enterprise have been positive thus far.

REVIEW OF FIRE COMMISSION MEETING:

Chief Clouser presented an update from the most recent Fire Commission meeting. The Treasurer reported that commission revenue is approximately 3.8% above budget and expenses are approximately 5.1% over budget. On the EMS side, revenue is 7.2% above budget and expenses are 1.8% over budget.

The Financial Personnel Committee made several recommendations that were voted on and approved:

The HR Elite services package through the iSolved agreement was eliminated at a savings of approximately \$1,725 per month. The commission will retain the same level of HR resources but will no longer have a dedicated representative; instead, different HR staff will respond to inquiries as needed. Chief Clouser noted that for personnel or labor issues involving firefighters or EMS employees, the commission typically engages the township manager or labor attorney directly.

The commission voted to redirect collections revenue from the Commercial Acceptance Company collections agency directly into the Fire Commission EMS account, rather than routing it through the Cornerstone third-party billing account. This change eliminates an additional 7.5% billing fee on amounts already subject to Commercial Acceptance's 23% collection fee.

The commission is applying to establish and internally manage a state-recognized safety committee, which is expected to yield a 5% reduction in workers' compensation insurance costs. The commission obtained the required bylaws with the assistance of Township Secretary Klinefelter.

Additionally, the commission was authorized to make a disposition of records by resolution. A minor incident at the recycling center involving improperly loaded record binders in a collection truck was handled quickly by off-duty personnel and resolved without issue.

OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Chief Clouser provided the following updates:

The ambulance refurbishment is projected to be delivered approximately May 27th. Renderings of the new lettering have been received, and the updated design will match the newer ambulances in the fleet rather than the older orange color scheme.

The new Pierce pumper is projected to be completed in July. Photos of the cab construction have been shared with board members.

New rescue equipment and new inch-and-a-half fire hose have been placed into service. Large diameter five-inch hose for the incoming pumper has been ordered through the relief association, saving the commission approximately \$41,000 in capital expenditures. Chief Clouser provided additional context on the hose: the new inch-and-a-half hose, using modern synthetic lining, can flow 150 gallons per minute, matching the performance of inch-and-three-quarter hose but at significantly reduced weight, which should reduce physical strain on firefighters. The hose has already been used twice in the field with very positive feedback from firefighters.

The 2008 Yukon, formerly the EMA vehicle, was sold through Municibid for \$7,000.

The department's website is nearing completion, and social media activity has increased. Residents were encouraged to follow Hanover Fire Rescue on Facebook.

Deputy Chief Wysocki reported that the department participated in a museum open house, placing two engines in service for the event. Department personnel also participated in the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend, contributing 275 volunteer hours and transporting 938 families of line-of-duty deaths from across the nation. The committee expressed appreciation for the department's participation in that event.

A question was raised regarding the HR service change and whether continuity of personnel would be maintained for ongoing incidents. Chief Clouser clarified that for most labor and personnel matters, the commission relies on the township manager or labor attorney rather than the iSolved HR service.

EMA UPDATE:

EMA Coordinator Waltman reported the following:

Mr. Waltman met with Rick Kinsey, the York County HAZMAT technician who responds locally from the Columbia Fire Station, regarding a proposal from AEG Environmental. AEG Environmental, located at the rear of the 400 block of Frederick Street, has approximately 20 years of experience with hazardous and non-hazardous material incidents, including stabilization, cleanup, and pool remediation. AEG Environmental has offered to erect permanent stanchions on both sides of the stream bank behind their facility at no cost to the township. The stanchions would allow first responders to quickly deploy containment booms in the event of a hazardous material release entering the storm drain system and reaching the tributary. Mr. Waltman confirmed that the installation was reviewed with MS4 representatives and, as long as the stanchions are located outside the stream bank, there are no compliance concerns. The committee viewed this as a positive community stewardship measure.

In response to a question about emergency management in West Manheim Township, Mr. Waltman confirmed that West Manheim has a part-time emergency management coordinator whose full-time position is emergency coordinator at Millersville University.

Deputy Chief Wysocki recognized Mr. Waltman for his work in uploading site plans, Tier 2 reports, and facility layout information to the department's Chief 360 platform, making critical pre-incident planning data accessible from the field via mobile device.

OTHER MATTERS:

There were none.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS TO COMMITTEE REGARDING DISCUSSION ITEMS:

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Klinefelter,
Township Secretary