

MINUTES
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
JUNE 1, 2026

The Penn Township Public Safety Committee convened on Monday, June 1, 2026, at 7:00 PM. Chairman Heiland and Commissioners Arnold, Baile, Elksnis, and Rice were present. Also present were Police Chief Merwede, Fire Chief Clouser, Township Engineer Bortner, Zoning Officer LeFevre, and Township Manager Sweeney. The following items were discussed:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Heiland announced that there was an executive session held on Monday, May 18, 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 May 4, 2026, Public Safety Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Ms. Christina Dickinson, Hammond Avenue, addressed the Committee regarding concerns about sidewalk conditions, speeding, and suspected drug activity within the Township. Ms. Dickinson stated that deteriorating sidewalks and reckless driving, particularly speeding and failure to stop at intersections, negatively impact pedestrian safety and quality of life. She expressed concern for children's safety and the overall community environment. The Committee explained that sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of individual property owners in a First-Class Township and noted that sidewalks are generally only required with new construction. Discussion also occurred regarding speeding concerns, with Township officials advising that increased police visibility, speed signs, and targeted enforcement may be used in response to complaints about specific locations or neighborhoods. The Committee explained that municipal police departments in Pennsylvania are not authorized to use radar for speed enforcement, as that authority is limited to the Pennsylvania State Police. Residents were encouraged to contact state legislators regarding potential changes to state law. It was further explained that officers may still address unsafe driving behaviors through other enforcement methods and that visible police presence is often used to discourage speeding and criminal activity. Ms. Dickinson stated that she values the community and wished to see continued efforts to improve safety and quality of life for future generations. Township representatives also highlighted ongoing improvements to neighborhood parks and recreational areas throughout the Township.

DISCUSS OFFICER MYERS' PROBATIONARY STATUS:

Chief Merwede reported that Officer Myer's probationary period is scheduled to end on June 23, 2026. He reported that Officer Myer has performed well during her probation, noting no complaints or policy violations and describing her as a strong team member within the

department. The Chief requested a recommendation to move Officer Myers to regular employment status. Committee members expressed support for the recommendation and should be added to the Board of Commissioners Meeting Agenda for consideration.

REVIEW OF FIRE COMMISSION MEETING:

Fire Chief Clouser reported that commission revenue is currently trending approximately 14.2% above budget, while expenses are approximately 8.9% over budget. He explained that the Treasurer and accountant provided a report outlining the reasons certain budget line items are exceeding projections early in the year. On the EMS side of the budget, revenue is approximately 10.1% above budget and expenses are approximately 8.7% over budget, primarily due to increased call volume, and fuel cost.

The Commission approved participation in a new Verizon Wireless public safety program to replace department iPads with upgraded 5G-capable devices at a reduced cost. Approval was also granted for agreements with PPA Recovery Systems for billing of consumable medical supplies and Municipal Marketing Services to improve EMS subscription processing through live database updates. The Commission further approved tuition reimbursement for EMT Tessa Richardson and Advanced EMT Jordan Coney upon successful completion of paramedic training, replacement office furniture, and a lawn care agreement with Piney Creek Lawn Services for the Clover Lane station. Maintenance at the remaining stations continues to be handled in-house by firefighters.

Chief Clouser reported that EMS Week was recognized through social media highlights featuring full-time EMS providers, along with public information related to recent fire incidents in the Borough and Township.

OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Chief Clouser reported on a residential fire that occurred on Poplar Street in the Borough during the previous week. He explained that the fire was determined to be accidental and caused by an electrical issue. Although no injuries were reported, the family experienced significant smoke damage and loss of personal belongings.

He provided update on the new Pierce engine currently under construction, which remains on schedule for delivery in July. Photos of the painted cab were shared with the Commission, and the apparatus is expected to move into the chassis assembly phase. The Commission also received an update regarding the refurbished ambulance. Two staff members traveled to North Carolina to retrieve the vehicle and were expected to return the following day. The ambulance was anticipated to arrive back in Hanover later in the evening due to travel time.

Commissioner Heiland requested an update regarding the annual audit process. Chief Clouser reported that the auditor had been contacted and provided with the first nine months of EMS call and billing information. Additional documentation is being compiled and submitted, including dispatch records, call dispositions, and billing data for EMS responses. It was explained that the process is time intensive and that efforts are being made to improve monthly tracking moving forward to assist with future audits. Committee members emphasized the importance of completing the audit and offered staff assistance if needed.

EMA UPDATE:

Chairman Heiland reported Mr. Waltman was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a written report for the record. Highlights of the report included responses to two fire incidents, storm damage events, monitoring of the Memorial Day Parade, and a hazardous materials incident. Mr. Waltman also reported completion of general administrative responsibilities and ongoing emergency management training. The report was accepted into the record, and no additional matters were presented.

OTHER MATTERS: There were none.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS TO COMMITTEE REGARDING DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Ms. Christina Dickinson, Hammond Avenue, asked about recent fire activity in the community and whether residents should be concerned. Fire Chief Clouser reported that the department has recently responded to several fires, including three arson incidents that were unrelated and not random in nature, as well as several accidental fires. Chief Clouser explained that multiple recent fires involved lithium-ion batteries, particularly from e-bikes, and encouraged residents to follow fire safety information being shared through the department's Facebook page and upcoming website. He added that lithium-ion battery fires are often caused by damaged batteries, lower-quality products, or incompatible replacement chargers. He recommended that damaged batteries be removed from homes and placed away from structures due to the risk of thermal runaway and fire.

Chairman Heiland noted that fire service operations are now shared between Penn Township and Hanover Borough, and recent fire activity reflects incidents occurring across both municipalities. He explained that the regional approach helps improve service and maintain costs while supporting fire and EMS operations.

Ms. Dickinson also inquired about the arson investigations. Chief Clouser advised that one arrest had been made and that the remaining incidents continue to be investigated with suspects identified.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Sweeney
Township Manager