

ETNA BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

TUESDAY, March 18th, 2025, at 7:30 P.M
For approval on April 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the Etna Borough Council was held on March 18th, 2025. Chairman Becki presided and called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Roll was called, and members present were Mr. Iannuzzi, Ms. Semler, Ms. Schaefer, Mr. Burke, Mrs. Rothmeyer-McElhaney, Ms. Helbling Mr. Trader, Mrs. Gabriel, and Chairman Becki. Also present were Mayor Tuñón, Manager Ramage, Police Chief Rodman, Solicitor Rushford, Assistant Fire Chief Todd Lunn, Shaler Hampton EMS Executive Director Eric Schmidt and Public Works Director Joe Balistrieri.

Mayor Tuñón led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Minutes from January 21, 2025, and the February 18, 2025 were presented to Council and accepted with no additions, corrections, or deletions.

A motion to accept and file the Treasurer’s Report was made by Councilwoman Schaefer and seconded by Councilwoman Gabriel. Motion carried.

Fund 01 General Account	\$ 433,802.22
Fund 05 Education Account	\$ 281.91
Fund 03 Payroll Account	\$ 1,030.69
Fund 04 Police Fund	\$ 17,341.04
Fund 21 Hockey	\$ 4,098.13
Fund 30 Capital Improvement	\$ CLOSED
Fund 33 Christmas	\$ 5,233.86
Fund 34 Etna Senior Center Fund	\$ 1,069.21
Fund 35 Liquid Fuels Account	\$ 20,534.92
Fund 36 War Memorial Fund	\$ 6,390.47
Fund 38 Sanitary Trunk Line Account	\$ 167,114.57
Fund 39 Middle Street Escrow Account	\$ 6,795.28
Fund 42 Capital Reserve	\$ 343,426.02
Fund 44 Sewer Account	\$ 118,264.37
Fund 45 Project Escrow Account	\$ CLOSED
Fund 46 Riverfront Park & Trail	\$ 477.69
Fund 48 Etna Green Streetscape	\$ 1.00
Fund 50 GI Account	\$ 1,225.16
Fund 51 Fire Escrow Account	\$ 38,137.57
Fund 52 Infrastructure Account	\$ 70.55
Fund 53 Youth & Recreation Fund	\$ 4,595.45
Fund 54 American Rescue	\$ 356,531.81

A motion to accept and file the Treasurer’s Report was made by Councilmember Gabriel and seconded by Councilmember Trader. Motion carried.

A check register by fund (bills already paid) as well as outstanding accounts payable (bills due) were given to each member of Council.

Total Owed	\$ 2,676,616.54
Total Bills Paid	\$ 2,448,725.44
Total Balance Due	\$ 227,891.10

A motion to pay the bills was made by Councilmember Burke and seconded by Councilmember Trader. Motion carried.

Police Chief’s Report

Police Chief Rodman provided his monthly report which included: Police Stats for February, Police Committee Meeting Tuesday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m. (Borough Office), Hiring Process and request to readvertise for additional officer, incident at 7-11 with skimmer device with 8 reported thefts so far, Officer Winschel return to work and a successful Street Skate held on February 23rd.

Chief Rodman also showed Council a “skimmer” device that Officer Straw had found at the 7-11 Convenience Store on Grant Avenue. He added that these were popping up within the Pittsburgh areas with six being located already.

Engineer’s Report

Engineer Robert Maher had provided their monthly report which included the following: Source Flow Reduction Consent Order Compliance, Pine Street Bridge Rehabilitation, CDBG Year 50 Paving Contract Administration/Inspections, 51 Bridge Street Development Plan Review and Stormwater Applications, Dewey Street & Spring Street Sewer Separation Project, Streetscape Phase 4, Streetscape Phase 5.1, Streetscape Phase 5.2, Act 152 County Demolition Grant and Etna 2025 MS4 Program

President Becki said that Gateway is waiting for a contract from the North Hills Council of Government that was summited on January 13 for the road paving project.

Public Works Directors Report

Public Works Director Joe Balistrieri submitted his monthly report which included: Parker Street run-off repairs, hazardous tree removal rear of 78 Grant Avenue, benches refinished at Riverfront park, storage shed repairs at the playground, adjustments to solar crosswalk signals, replacement of two parking meters, vehicle and equipment maintenance and repair, line painting, maintenance at the borough building, answered complaints and PA ONE CALLS, pothole patching, checked all storm runs and routine maintenance.

Fire Department Report

Etna Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) Assistant Chief Lunn provided the monthly report which included: 8 Fires, 1 Service Call, 15 Rescue & Emergency Medical Service, 5 Hazardous Condition – no fire, 2 Good Intent Call, 4 False Alarm / Call. Total calls for Month 35. 1 Monthly meeting was held, 1 Memorial Day Committee Parade meeting was held and attendance at the recent Etna Street Skate.

Hampton Shaler EMS Report

Hampton Shaler EMS Report was provided by Director Eric Schmidt and included the following information: February total calls 52, 6 Canceled in Route, 2 Dead on scene, 5 No Patient Found, 2 Refused, 1 Standby Fire, 24 Transported ALS, 9 Transported BLS. In the report the EMS gave to the council, Director Schmidt stated that there had been an improvement in response times. He added that the subscriptions would be mailed out this coming week with no rate increase, which would be the third year with no increase. He thanked the Borough for using the billboards to promote this subscription drive. Councilmember Lynn asked if there was a way for someone to sponsor a family or individual who may not be able to afford the subscription at this time. Director Schmidt stated that this had never been discussed but he thought it was a great concept and something they could investigate. Director Schmidt also stated that was he and Greg Porter would be attending the upcoming ALOM Conference at 7 Springs and would be presenting together in one of the programs.

Solicitor’s Report

Solicitor Rushford submitted his monthly report which included: Right to Know, Kostov V. Reserve Police, Etna Police, and Officers in their Official Capacities, Police request for union recognition update, Porky’s, 30 Pine Street, Council In-Service upcoming training session, and police officer hiring. Solicitor Rushford also stated that item 4 on his report which was the proposed MOU with Porky’s which had been sent on February 3, to the owners of Porky’s and their solicitor, had still not been responded to as to if they were in agreement or any comments at all regarding the DRAFT MOU.

Prior to the regular Agenda, two presentations were scheduled for this evening. The first presentation was made to Police Officer Ben Straw and was made by EMS Director Schmidt. The following “Commendation of Care” certificate was awarded to Officer Straw.

“This Certificate is awarded to Officer Benjamin Straw in grateful recognition of superior care that contributed to saving a life. For saving a child from choking, December 27th, 2024, in the Borough of Etna, Pennsylvania. Awarded the 18th day of March 2025 by Eric Schmidt, Chief, Shaler Hampton EMS”. Officer Straw was also presented with a Challenge Coin. A standing ovation was given to Officer Straw, whose family was with him for the presentation. Chief Rodman commended Officer Straw’s quick action which saved this child’s life.

The second presentation was an update provided by Connect representatives working on the GET SOLAR program for members of Connect, one of which was Etna Borough. Eric Raabe, reported that Etna’s numbers had been updated since the last presentation to Council, as the Public Works facility, which had been included in the possible Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) (along with the Municipal complex on Butler Street and Fugh Hall), would eventually be relocated to the new municipal complex on Pine

Street. He reported that the numbers still showed Etna having a significant cost savings annually and over the course of the 25-year Agreement. The total estimate over the 25 years would be savings of \$137,130.00. He reminded Council that there would be no upfront costs, nor any maintenance costs over the course of the Agreement as the successful developer would be responsible for the life of the Agreement. That developer would receive tax credits for this PPA over the course of the Agreement. He added that since the Borough had been successful with a \$500,000 Air Quality Sustainability Grant for the new municipal complex on Pine Street, it was felt this new facility should not be added to the PPA as there would likely be enough funding from the grant for the solarizing of that facility. Manager Ramage reported that Eric was assisting with scheduling an appointment for the vendors to come out and give an estimate on the cost of solarizing the new facility. President Becki asked if the borough, at any point, could bail out of the PPA as perhaps it would no longer be cost effective. That ability did exist, but it was doubtful that the cost of electricity would decrease any time in the future. Councilmember Rothmeyer-McElhaney asked what might happen if the design does not generate enough energy and the borough needed more. Eric stated that this would be addressed and that if the new facility generates more energy than needed for that facility (or any of the facilities with solar), those could be spread across other borough facilities. Mr. Raabe stated that Connect was still collaborating with the solicitors from the various communities involved in the project and would be sending an updated version based on those comments by the solicitors over to BAI (the successful developer) shortly and wait for their comments. He ended by saying after that had all been completed, they would come back to each municipality to enter into the PPA. Manager Ramage stated that she would also be hoping to have the Energy Audit conducted on the new facility through the \$50,000 grant received from the DEP, which complimented the energy efficiency of the solar installation.

Agenda

1. Traffic Study Meeting, Bridge/Freeport Streets, proposed ONE WAY

President Becki reminded everyone that a public meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 25 at 7:30 p.m. at Fugh Hall to discuss the possibility of making both Bridge and Freeport Streets One Way. He added that Trans Associates would be in attendance to make a presentation. He added that Manager Ramage had sent letters to all affected properties, inviting them to the meeting or asking for their comments in advance, should they not be able to attend. Manager Ramage confirmed that letters were sent to all residents, businesses, and property owners from Bridge Street between the intersection with Freeport and Butler Streets, as well as those on Freeport Street and Butler Street from Bridge to Freeport Street.

2. Zoning Map Correction Ordinance

The following Ordinance, which reads in part, was taken up for adoption on a motion made by Councilmember Trader and seconded by Councilmember Semler.

Ordinance No. 1398

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF ETNA, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE BOROUGH OF ETNA ZONING ORDINANCE BY FIXING THE ZONING MAP BY RECLASSIFICATION OF THE AREA IN ATTACHMENT “A” FROM C-1 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT TO R2 AND REPEALING PRIOR INCONSISTENT ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES; CONTAINING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE”

The Ordinance was adopted by Roll Call, with all members present voting AYE, unanimously Motion Carried.

3. Residential Parking Permit Ordinance

A motion was made by Councilmember Schaefer and seconded by Councilmember Gabriel that the following ordinance, which reads in part, be taken up for adoption:

Ordinance No, 1399

‘AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF ETNA, COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 1376 OF 2018 TO ELMINATE PERMIT PARKING ON PINE STREET”

Councilmember Rothmeyer-McElhaney asked if there had been any complaints in this area due to the reopening of the Etna Deck Hockey facility and both Chief Rodman and Manager Ramage reported that they had no complaints.

Upon Roll call, the Ordinance was adopted unanimously with all in favor, Motion Carried.

4. Police Department Hiring Update

President Becki stated that the council had interviewed the police officer candidate who had passed both the oral and written police tests. He stated that if Council so wished, the candidate could be given a Conditional Offer of Employment. He stated that the Conditional Offer meant that the candidate could accept the position, upon successful completion and passing of several tests including a drug and alcohol test and a psychological examination. The candidate's name was Valerie Bednar. Councilmember Rothmeyer-McElhaney made the motion seconded by Councilmember Trader, that Ms. Bednar be given the Conditional Offer of Employment, and if successful with completing and passing all required tests and examinations, she be hired for the position. On a Roll Call Vote, all members voted in the affirmative and the Motion carried unanimously.

5. Etna Riverfront Park Use Request

A request for use of the Etna Riverfront Park for community Yoga classes from May 1 through September 11 on Thursday evenings from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. had been received. Again, the classes were with a suggested donation of \$5.00. The Classes will once again include a kid's class which will run from June 5 through August 21. A motion was made by Councilmember Rothmeyer-McElhaney and seconded by Councilmember Linn to grant permission for this usage. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Recreation Committee Meeting

President Becki set March 31 for a meeting of the Recreation Committee to be held at the Municipal Building beginning at 7:00 p.m.

7. Sidewalk & Cooking Premises Ordinance

President Becki reminded everyone that the Borough had intended to update the current ordinance to catch up with the times and address matters such as food trucks, use of sidewalks and outdoor eating and cooking areas. He stated that this had been put on hold for a while due to the uproar on social media which was not necessarily accurate. He added that some comments received during that time from businesses were taken into consideration and would be a part of the proposed changes such as signs for sales on sidewalks, and food trucks and other present-day activities that our outdated ordinance just did not address. He wanted to get a meeting together so that the Borough can begin to discuss these proposed changes. This was currently being discussed at the Police Committee meetings who will draft the proposed changes and bring forth that draft for the council's viewing, comments, and input.

8. Emergency Operations Committee Meeting

President Becki set May 12 at 7 p.m. for a meeting of the Emergency Management Committee which included the Police and Fire Chiefs, the Manager, the Emergency Management Coordinator, himself, Mayor Tuñón and Vice President Gabriel.

9. Allegheny County Hazard Mitigation Plan Report

Manager Ramage reported that Allegheny County had begun the process of updating their 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan and that she and Chief Rodman were participating in the process. She added that she has participated in this Plan development since at least 2010 and that the process was different this time. She stated that it is critical that municipalities participate in this update, as they normally do not have their own Hazard Mitigation Plan, and for assorted reasons, it was critical to participate in the Plan. Not only does it open up funding, but it also addresses virtually any kind of hazard that could hit a community or the County, such as flooding, terrorism, cyber-attacks, landslides, etc. She stated a community had to participate in the planning process, which allowed communities to include projects proposed to help address and mitigate potential hazards. She added that because Etna Borough had specifically named in one of the previous Plans, that the Municipal Complex was located in a flood hazard area and needed to be floodproofed, the borough became eligible for funding for that project. She had filed the current forms due by March 31, but due to the process, she was unable to have the Emergency Management Coordinator, Chief Rodman also submit the same form. She explained due to the staff shortage he had been working night turn and the ability to meet to discuss the various potential disasters, she turned the form in and later found out that only one form could be submitted per community. She said she was able to get them to open it back up and that she and Chief, who was currently reviewing her responses, would submit another form by the deadline.

10. 30 Pine Street Update

President Becki stated that the closing on the property had been held on March 7 and that the approved Bond Issue had gone through on March 5. He stated that the Borough had been discussing this potential purchase and had included updates on the monthly Agenda for the last several months, updating Council as to the status of the environmental reports and other pertinent information regarding this purchase. He

stated that the next step would be to begin preparations for the rehabilitation of the facility. Manager Ramage stated that she was collaborating with the Mayor regarding getting a Request for Proposals together for a Planning Agency to assist with the design and specification stage of the project. She stated this was needed so that the most effective and efficient use of space were utilized and with the Public Works operations moving here as well as the Police Operations, there would need to be renovations to the warehouse areas of the building. She also stated an elevator was needed for ADA access to the second-floor office space. A committee of herself, the Mayor, and both Police and Public Works Department heads would be meeting once an overall guideline was developed. She also stated that Councilmember Iannuzzi was gracious enough to offer a tour of the McCandless Public Works facility to Director Balistreri that would be happening next week. President Becki offered to meet everyone there this coming Saturday for those on Council who had not been able to see the inside of the facility yet. Everyone would meet at 10 am this Saturday, March 22.

Council / Mayor and Manager Reports:

Manager Ramage provided her monthly report which included: – Main Street Matters Grant, Dewey Street Sewer Separation Grant, Locust Street City of Bridges home construction update, TriCog Land Bank, Alcosan Sewer Transfer update, potential joint Comprehensive Plan update, In-Shaler magazine, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Allegheny Valley Railroad, Code & Rental Inspection program update, and resurfacing of Pine Street, Pine Alley and Sheridan Alley update. She also stated that the Borough would now be moving forward with both the Air Quality grant start and the Energy Efficiency Grant from DEP.

Council/Committee Members Reports

Councilmember Burke passed.

Junior Councilmember Grace Helbling shared that the Shaler Area High School Band had participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City and that the wind ensemble had received a first-place award.

Councilmember Trader spoke at length regarding issues he kept hearing about at the Etna Senior Center. He stated he felt there were issues with the numbers of attendees being reported. He also reported that the Director had stated she had expected more support from Council with very few coming to visit. He said when he was there only three people were there. He also added that they believed there was a parking issue at the Center as well. A lengthy discussion took place regarding the fact that most council members work and are unable to attend, and that more from the Commons could attend. Manager Ramage stated she would be happy to include an article in the upcoming newsletter. Councilmember Semler offered to make a flyer for the upcoming newsletter if she had the information needed. The Manager stated she would get that info over to Ms. Semler. Councilmember Iannuzzi stated that he could not understand if they had small numbers, how they would be having an issue with parking with so few people attending.

Councilmember Gabriel stated that the Garden of Etna would have two workdays, one on April 12 and the other (rain date) on April 13 and all were welcome to come and help. Councilmember Linn stated that he would be attending the upcoming ALOM conference.

Councilmember Schaefer passed.

Councilmember Rothmeyer-McElhaney stated that she was glad to be touring the new facility and added that Deck Hockey had been going well. She thanked the Public Works for their assistance with getting the facility open and ready and maintained.

Councilmember Semler reminded everyone that the Rent Rebate program was open, and she had flyers detailing the requirements. She reminded everyone that social security wages were cut in half for reporting purposes, which really made the program available to many more. She stated that anyone needing assistance would call Senator Williams office and someone would be happy to help.

Councilmember Iannuzzi stated he had nothing to add to his previous comments.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Tuñón stated that this had been a very meaningful evening for the Etna Police Department with Officer Straw being recognized, the potential hiring of a new officer, and the Chief giving a bit of a show and tell for Council with the skimmer demonstration. He added that he was excited about the possibilities and opportunities for our borough staff with the new municipal facility. He stated that this alone let our employees know how much they are valued working here for the Borough. He was looking forward to assisting with the next steps and to be a part of the committee to move the improvements to the facility forward.

Public Comment

Mr. Joe Ober from 5 Spring Street Extension stated that the lane coming down Washington Street on the hillside was an absolute mess. He added that it was so bad on that side, that many cars were moving into the oncoming lane to avoid that side of the road, and he felt this was dangerous. Manager Ramage reported that there is always an issue on that side due to the water runoff from the hillside which the borough has tried to address in the past. The Public Works Department will take a look at this and see if they can come up with any ideas to address this issue.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Schaefer and seconded by Councilman Linn Trader to adjourn the regular meeting of Etna Borough Council to go into an executive session to discuss personnel issues. Motion carried.

Time: 9: 00 p.m.

Councilmember Schaefer made a motion to reconvene the Regular session of Council, which was seconded by Councilmember Linn. Motion carried.

TIME: 10:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Councilmember Trader and seconded by Councilmember Schaefer to adjourn the regular meeting of Council. Motion Carried.

TIME: 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Mary Ellen Ramage, Manager

Date: April 15, 2023