

**EPHRATA BOROUGH COUNCIL
REORGANIZATION / WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 5, 2026**

The Ephrata Borough Council Reorganization Session was called to order by President Zimmerman at 7:00 PM on Monday, January 5, 2026, in the Council Chambers of the Borough Office, 124 South State Street.

Attendance:

Present:

- President Greg Zimmerman
- Council Members: Alan Armstrong, Nancy Aronson, Timothy Barr, Alan Buohl, Kory Musser, Chad Ochs, Victor Richard

Absent:

- Mayor Thomas Reinhold

Also Present:

- Borough Manager Karen Gerhart
- Police Lieutenant Kenneth Lockhart
- Solicitor Isaac Wakefield (Salzmann Hughes)

Visitors:

- Larry Alexander, *The Ephrata Review*
- Steve Aronson, 424 Lake St., Ephrata
- Tim Auker, 542 N. State St., Ephrata
- Deb Buohl, 235 E. Walnut St., Ephrata
- Gina Burkholder, 113 Washington Ave., Ephrata
- Jean Lausch, 950 Hammon Ave., Ephrata
- Ralph Mowen, 221 Irene Ave., Ephrata
- Curt Ochs
- Gayle Ochs, 1193 Lincoln Heights Ave., Ephrata
- Gil Ochs, 1193 Lincoln Heights Ave., Ephrata
- Jamie Ochs, 843 Fairview Ave., Ephrata
- Kayleigh Ochs, 843 Fairview Ave., Ephrata
- Kristen Zimmerman, 947 Dawn Ave., Ephrata
- Trish Zimmerman, 947 Dawn Ave., Ephrata

Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance: The meeting commenced with a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda: Borough Manager Karen Gerhart confirmed:

1. The agenda was posted on the Borough's website and at Borough Hall no later than 24 hours before the meeting.
2. The agenda included all matters of Borough business subject to deliberation or official action.
3. No changes were made to the agenda after posting.
4. The agenda was available to meeting attendees.

President Zimmerman asked for a motion to accept the agenda as posted.

Motion: Mr. Barr moved; Vice President Richard seconded.

- **Result:** Motion carried unanimously.
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Oaths of Office

Magisterial District Court 02-2-07 Judge Torrey Landis took the floor to administer the Oath of Office to the following members of Borough Council:

- Chad Ochs, who was duly elected to the Office of Council Member from the First Ward for a four-year term.
- Alan Buohl, who was duly reelected to the Office of Council Member from the Second Ward for a four-year term.
- Tim Barr, who was duly reelected to the Office of Council Member from the Third Ward for a four-year term.
- Alan Armstrong, who was duly elected to the Office of Council Member from the Fourth Ward for a two-year term.
- Victor Richard, who was duly reelected to the Office of Council Member from the Fourth Ward for a four-year term.

The newly elected and reelected members of Council presented their signed affidavits of residency to the Borough Secretary and took the Oath of Office.

Nominations

1. President:

- Solicitor Wakefield opened nominations for the Office of President of Council. Mr. Richard nominated Mr. Zimmerman. Solicitor Wakefield called for additional nominations. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Solicitor Wakefield declared nominations closed. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Vice President:

- Solicitor Wakefield opened nominations for the Office of Vice President of Council. President Zimmerman nominated Mr. Richard. President Zimmerman nominated Mr. Richard, and Ms. Aronson nominated Mr. Musser. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Solicitor Wakefield declared nominations closed. A roll call vote resulted in four votes for Mr. Richard and four votes for Mr. Musser, creating a tie. Due to the Mayor's absence, who would serve as the tiebreaker, Borough Council decided to defer the election of the remaining slate of officers, including Vice President and President Pro Tempore, to the January 12, 2026, Voting Session.

Opportunity for Citizens to Be Heard: President Zimmerman invited public comments.

With no one wishing to speak, President Zimmerman closed the public comment section until the end of the agenda.

Discussion of Committee Actions:

Budget and Finance Committee

- Adoption of Resolution Appointing Yvonne Allard as Assistant Secretary (*January 5, 2026*)
- Adoption of Resolution Appointing Trevor Greth as Treasurer (*January 5, 2026*)
- Adoption of Banking Resolutions Updating the Borough's Authorized Signers
- Elected Tax Collector Resignation
- Adoption of Resolution Appointing the County of Lancaster to Collect Borough Real Estate Taxes for the 2026 and 2027 Fiscal Years

Development Activities Committee

- Enactment of Ordinance No. 1602 Amendment of the Code of the Borough of Ephrata, Chapter 319 Zoning, to Permit Multi-Family (Apartment) Dwellings which may be in the Same Building or Same Lot as Allowed Non-Residential Uses in the Neighborhood Commercial District-2 as a Use by Right
 - Solicitor Wakefield announced that a Public Hearing will be held on January 12, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

Personnel Committee

- Ratification of the Following Ephrata Borough Council Documents:
 - By-Laws
 - Rules of Order
 - Code of Ethics/Conflicts of Interest Guidelines
 - Council Meeting Guidelines
 - Committee Meeting Guidelines
 - Budget Night Policy
 - Elected Officials Travel Policy
 - Right-to-Know Policy
 - Telecommunications Policy
 - Whistleblower Policy
 - Personnel Committee Performance Management Process (PMP)
 - Performance Evaluation Guidelines – Borough Manager and Chief of Police
 - Performance Evaluation/Borough Manager
 - Performance Evaluation/Chief of Police

Committees – No Meetings Held in December 2025

- Budget and Finance Committee
- Development Activities Committee
- Public Safety Committee
- Highway Committee
- Municipal Enterprises Committee
- Community Services Committee
- Special Projects Committee
- Personnel Committee

Committee Recommendations

Budget and Finance Committee

Mr. Richard moved, and Mr. Buohl seconded, that Borough Council adopt Resolution No. 2026-01 appointing Yvonne Allard as Assistant Secretary.

- **Result:** Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Richard moved, and Ms. Aronson seconded, that Borough Council adopt Resolution No. 2026-02 appointing Trevor Greth as Treasurer.

- **Result:** Motion carried unanimously.

Opportunity for Citizens to Be Heard: President Zimmerman invited public comments.

- Ralph Mowen, 221 Irene Ave., Ephrata, stated, "... it's great being out here (in the audience)" and congratulated the newly elected and re-elected individuals.

With no one else wishing to speak, President Zimmerman closed the public comment section.

Discussion/Announcements:

- Ms. Aronson advised that Friday, January 9, 2026, is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, noting that the Ephrata Cloister Restaurant will be offering police officers and civilian support staff a complimentary meal. Additionally, on Friday, January 23, 2026, from 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., the Pancake Farm will donate 50% of all proceeds toward the startup of the Ephrata Police Department's canine unit.
- Mr. Musser extended a welcome to Mr. Ochs and welcomed back those who were reelected.
- Mr. Barr congratulated Mr. Zimmerman on his role as Council President, as well as the members who were newly elected or reelected.
- Mr. Ochs expressed that he is excited and ready to serve.
- Mr. Armstrong noted that it is good to be back and expressed hope that everyone had a nice holiday season.
- Mr. Buohl welcomed Mr. Ochs, congratulated those who were reelected, and expressed confidence that Mr. Zimmerman will provide strong leadership.
- Mr. Richard reiterated previous comments by welcoming Mr. Ochs and congratulating Mr. Zimmerman, noting, "...full steam ahead, we have a good crew!"
- Lt. Lockhart congratulated those who were newly elected and reelected, noting that he looks forward to working with them.
- Solicitor Wakefield noted that Council will be meeting in an Executive Session immediately following the meeting.
- Ms. Gerhart welcomed Mr. Ochs and congratulated the reelected members.
- President Zimmerman expressed that he is looking forward to working with all Council members, Solicitor Wakefield, and staff. He thanked Council for their trust in him to carry the gavel.

Executive Session

- Entered at 7:25 PM; exited at 8:05 PM to discuss potential litigation.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Gerhart
Secretary

SJF