

May 4, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Cleona Borough Council was held on May 4, 2026, at Cleona Borough Hall, 140 W Walnut Street, Cleona, PA 17042. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President O'Connor, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the Lord's Prayer.

President O'Connor announced that the meeting was being recorded and asked if anyone else was recording.

Members Present: President Jim O'Connor, Mr. Bob Moyer, Ms. Tricia Springer, Mr. Larry Minnich, Mr. Pat Haley, & Mayor Matt Zechman

Members Absent: Mr. Matt Urban and Mr. Sam Wengert

Staff Present: Solicitor Colleen Gallo, Chief Jeff Farneski, & Manager Michael Peiffer

APPROVAL OF APRIL 6, 2026 MINUTES

Hearing no corrections or additions, a motion was requested to approve the April 6, 2026 meeting minutes.

Motion: Ms. Springer made a motion to approve the April 6, 2026 meeting minutes. Seconded by Mr. Haley. Motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT – APRIL 2026

The Treasurer's Report for April 2026 was presented with the following balances:

- General Fund: Beginning balance \$1,040,380.24; receipts \$292,617.24; disbursements \$141,307.46; ending balance \$1,191,690.02

- Capital Fund: Beginning balance \$50,092.87; receipts \$40,909.56; no disbursements; ending balance \$91,002.43

- Highway Fund: Beginning balance \$65,623.08; receipts \$80.95; no disbursements; ending balance \$65,704.03

- Payroll Account: Beginning balance \$5,183.45; receipts \$54,776.14; disbursements \$55,836.59; ending balance \$4,123.00

- Park & Recreation Fund: Beginning balance \$3,126.98; receipts \$3.86; no disbursements; ending balance \$3,130.84

- Police Department Fund: Beginning balance \$523.07; receipts \$0.64; no disbursements; ending balance \$523.71

Motion: Mr. Moyer made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Larry Minnich. Motion carried unanimously.

DATA CENTER OVERVIEW

Manager Peiffer and Mayor Zechman provided a high-level overview of data centers, including classifications, infrastructure requirements, and increasing development interest in Pennsylvania.

Discussion of the proposed South Annville project included:

- Approximately 99-acre site
- Significant power and water requirements
- Zoning considerations and lack of existing local regulation
- Community concerns and limited public support

Council noted that ordinance language is being developed to address data center use within the Borough.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

FIRE COMPANY REPORT – BRIAN FLYNN

Mr. Flynn reported on operational updates, including continued development of the Fire Administrator position, pending resolution of workers' compensation classification issues.

Additional updates included:

- Approximately 60 inquiries received for the position
- Recent leadership resignations, including Trustee Dustin Sider and Bob Moyer.
- Ongoing efforts to stabilize leadership and maintain service continuity

Operational highlights demonstrated continued effectiveness of the dual-station response model and recent adjustments to dispatch protocols to ensure adequate staffing for structure fires.

Ms. Springer requested detailed participation and response data for review at next month's council meeting.

POLICE DEPARTMENT – CHIEF FARNESKI

Chief Farneski reported that the department handled 347 total incidents during the month, including approximately 145 within the Borough. He also reported issuing 32 moving violations and 29 parking citations, noting an increased emphasis on parking enforcement.

Chief Farneski provided detailed updates on several significant incidents and trends:

- Ongoing fraud and scam activity, including an intercepted \$89,000 cyber fraud attempt
- Repeat fraudulent transactions at a local coin shop totaling significant losses over time
- A vehicle stop involving fentanyl resulted in the woman ingesting a few grams, which required hospitalization.
- A suicide investigation on East Maple Street with follow-up support to the family
- Continued monitoring of domestic cases involving PFAs
- High volume of mental health and EMS-related calls

Additional updates included increased church patrols, positive community feedback, recruitment efforts, and pending arrival of a new police vehicle- picking it up this Wednesday.

MAYOR'S REPORT – MAYOR ZECHMAN

Mayor Zechman provided a comprehensive update on the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) crosswalk project.

He reported that the Borough has received a confirmed \$5,000 contribution from Jonestown Bank and continues efforts to secure additional pledged donations from local businesses.

Project estimates were reviewed:

- Approximately \$38,000 for equipment
- Approximately \$13,000 for engineering and permitting
- Additional installation and repainting crosswalk costs

The total projected cost remains between \$60,000 and \$65,000. The Mayor emphasized securing funding prior to initiating engineering work.

Regarding the Cleona 250th Celebration:

- Community picnic scheduled for June 20, 2026
- The committee is seeing increased volunteer participation
- Expanded marketing efforts through H2H Marketing
- Over 400 individuals have expressed online interest

Additional planning includes vendor coordination, entertainment, and event logistics, with final details dependent on weather and participation.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – PRESIDENT O'CONNOR

President O'Connor thanked the Mayor and Borough Manager for their continued work on data center research and noted further discussion later in the meeting.

CODE ENFORCEMENT – MR. MINNICH

Mr. Minnich reported increased seasonal enforcement activity, with approximately 20–21 notices issued for grass and weed violations.

Updates included:

- Progress on long-standing Walnut Mill property nearing resolution
- Ongoing enforcement of routine violations including vehicles, storage, and maintenance
- One additional property under more serious review

He outlined the IMPC enforcement process and clarified jurisdictional responsibilities between Code Enforcement and Police.

The Solid Waste Ordinance was confirmed ready for adoption.

PROPERTY DEPARTMENT – MR. MOYER

Mr. Moyer reported that a leaky roof was fixed on the storage shed at the playground at a cost of approximately \$250.

He also reported that replacement of the fire hall ramp has been deferred to allow for evaluation of material and fuel costs, with the intent of completing the project at a more favorable time.

No additional maintenance issues were identified, and Borough facilities remain in good condition.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT – MR. WENGERT

Manager Peiffer gave Mr. Wengert's report in his absence. He reported that the Borough has identified several areas requiring minor paving and patching on both streets and alleys.

Implementation is being delayed due to uncertainty in asphalt and oil pricing, as well as the need to coordinate with long-term roadway planning.

Discussion included the potential implementation of a roadway asset management system to improve tracking, prioritization, and long-term planning of infrastructure improvements. More to come on this at a future meeting.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT – MR. HALEY

Mr. Haley provided a comprehensive update on ongoing park and recreation initiatives, with discussion focusing on several key projects and maintenance concerns.

Stream Bank Restoration Project:

Mr. Haley reported that Steckbeck Engineering recently conducted a site visit and provided preliminary design layouts for the proposed stream bank restoration project. Survey crews staked out the anticipated limits of work to provide a visual representation of the project's impact within the park.

Key observations and discussion points included:

- The proposed restoration would significantly alter the southwest portion of the park, particularly along the walking trail
- The existing walking trail would be relocated further north, potentially encroaching into wooded areas and reducing usable open space
- Portions of the project may require grading, vegetation removal, and long-term maintenance considerations

Council expressed concern regarding the overall scope and the potential loss of recreational space, noting the importance of preserving the character and usability of the park. Mr. Haley emphasized that:

- No formal agreements have been executed at this time
- The project remains in a preliminary review and evaluation phase
- Additional discussions will be required before any commitments are made

It was also noted that the project timeline could extend over several years and that any potential compensation or mitigation measures for land use impacts have not yet been finalized.

Butterfly Garden (Eagle Scout Project):

Mr. Haley reported that the Eagle Scout project to redesign the butterfly garden began on April 25.

Updates included:

- The original figure-eight design has been revised to a more practical rectangular layout to simplify installation and long-term maintenance
- Plant selection has been carefully considered to ensure use of non-invasive, pollinator-friendly species

suitable for the local environment

- Community involvement has been strong, with approximately \$420 raised through plant sponsorship donations

He noted that the project will enhance the aesthetic appeal of the park while also providing educational and ecological benefits.

Playground Safety – Tube Slide Area:

Mr. Haley reported a safety concern identified at the playground, specifically at the base of the tube slide. Details included:

- Ongoing erosion has exposed underlying limestone material beneath the slide
- This condition was flagged by the Borough’s insurance carrier as a potential liability risk
- A preliminary quote of approximately \$2,100 was obtained for removal of the exposed stone

He further explained that:

- Additional work would be required to restore the area, including placement of topsoil and reseeded
- The long-term effectiveness of this approach is uncertain due to continued erosion potential

Several alternative solutions are being considered, including:

- Installation of steps or structural supports
- Modification or removal of the slide feature
- Evaluating drainage improvements to address underlying erosion causes

It was acknowledged that the tube slide is a popular feature within the park, and any changes should carefully balance safety concerns with maintaining recreational value.

Additional Recreation Updates:

- Mini golf reimbursement funds have now been received following previous administrative delays
- The annual Spring Cleanup is scheduled for May 16, with approximately 30 volunteers expected to participate, including a group from LCBC Church
- Coordination is ongoing with Public Works staff regarding mulch placement, landscaping, and general park maintenance activities

Mr. Haley noted that overall park conditions remain good, with continued focus on maintenance, safety, and incremental improvements to Borough recreational facilities.

FIRE SAFETY / POLICE DEPARTMENT – MS. SPRINGER

Ms. Springer requested an Executive Session to discuss SRO negotiations and fire service.

Mr. Moyer reported progress on regional fire coordination, including development of a steering committee and potential engagement of a consultant to help keep us on track.

- North Cornwall Township will be drafting a resolution asking each municipality to officially appoint two representatives to a steering committee.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT – MR. URBAN

Manager Peiffer gave Mr. Urban’s report in his absence. He reported that:

- Expenses are within approximately 1% of budget
- Revenues exceed projections due to transfer tax collections

Financial performance remains stable with no significant concerns.

BOROUGH MANAGER / BOROUGH AUTHORITY – MANAGER PEIFFER

Borough Manager Peiffer provided updates regarding multiple Borough and Authority projects.

Stormwater Management Project

Manager Peiffer reported on the South Christian Street phase of the project that:

- Tree removal required for the project has been completed
- Work on the Bower and Brickley properties is wrapping up
- Certain inlet structures will require additional adjustments and risers
- Work will continue onto Center Street and Derry Road following completion of current phase

Cleona Square Mall Sale

Council was informed that Cleona Square Mall sold on March 1, 2026 for \$9,040,295. The Borough received approximately \$46,257 in real estate transfer tax revenue from the transaction. Manager Peiffer also noted:

- A new property management company has been retained
- Borough concerns regarding property maintenance and litter were promptly addressed
- Repairs to a damaged stop sign were completed quickly after notification

Manager Peiffer recommended that Council consider transferring half of the unexpected transfer tax revenue into the Highway Fund.

Utility Contracts

The Borough entered into:

- A three-year electricity supply contract with Constellation Energy at approximately 8.4 cents per kilowatt hour
- A 30-month natural gas agreement with Snyder Brothers at approximately \$6.77 per decatherm

January 2026 Snowstorm

Council was informed that no reimbursement funding will be provided by the County, or PEMA related to the January 25, 2026 snowstorm emergency declaration.

Memorial Tree and Plaque Discussion

Council discussed replacement of a memorial holly tree and installation of a memorial plaque honoring Richard D. Fields.

Council directed Manager Peiffer to:

- Obtain pricing for a replacement tree
- Continue discussions with Mrs. Fields
- Revisit the issue at the June meeting before proceeding

School District Community Breakfast

Manager Peiffer shared information regarding an upcoming A-C School District community partnership breakfast scheduled for May 26. He is attending and if anyone else is interested, let him know by May 22, which is the RSVP deadline.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT – MS. GALLO

Solicitor Gallo requested an Executive Session for potential litigation. The Solicitor's report was submitted.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Margaret Bowman – 340 East Chestnut Street

Margarete Bowman requested an update regarding code enforcement issues at 330 East Chestnut Street. Discussion included:

- Grass and weed violations
- Vehicle issues
- Trash and debris concerns
- Pool maintenance issues
- Ongoing notice of violation procedures
- Future enforcement actions if compliance deadlines are not met

Ms. Bowman also expressed concerns regarding:

- Parking and visibility issues involving commercial vehicles
- Snow removal access concerns
- Safety concerns involving sidewalk visibility and traffic conditions

Mayor Zechman reported that he continues working with nearby businesses in an effort to identify alternate parking arrangements to alleviate neighborhood impacts.

NEW BUSINESS

Agenda Amendment

Motion: Ms. Springer made a motion to amend the agenda to add the approval of the Solid Waste Ordinance #336. Seconded by Mr. Minnich. Motion carried unanimously.

Workers Compensation – Fire Company

Council discussed workers' compensation billing issues associated with the Annville-Cleona Fire Company merger.

Discussion included:

- The Borough has not been billed dating back to 2023. When asked, Annville's response is always "we're working on it." The solicitors from both municipalities have gotten it moving but we reportedly will own between \$23-\$26k.
- Questions regarding allocation formulas and municipal responsibility
- Potential costs associated with the proposed Fire Administrator position
- Future communication with Annville Township regarding billing and authorization issues

Council directed the Boro Manager to gather more information before any payment decisions are made. Council further directed Manager Peiffer to reach out to Annville's Manager and let them know that we not planning to pay worker's compensation for any new positions.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

250 Lebanon County Donation Request

Council reviewed the donation request from Lebanon County's 250th Anniversary Committee. After discussion, Council declined to proceed with a sponsorship or donation.

Approve final payment of Liberty & Union Alley paving project.

Motion: Mr. Minnich made a motion to pay the balance of \$3,869.15 for the risers of the manholes. Seconded by Mr. Haley. Motion carried unanimously.

Solid Waste Ordinance #336

Motion: Mr. Minnich made a motion to adopt the Solid Waste Ordinance #336. Second: Ms. Springer. Motion carried unanimously.

Zoning Ordinance Update

Motion: Mr. Moyer made a motion to forward the ordinance to the Planning Commission & County Planning concurrently. Seconded by Mr. Minnich. Motion carried unanimously.

Lebanon County Cable Consortium – Comcast Franchise Renewal

Solicitor Gallo updated the Borough regional cable consortium for Comcast franchise renewal negotiations.

Council was informed that:

- An audit process has begun to verify franchise fee payments
- Negotiations are expected to continue for approximately six months

145 Dairy Road Update

Solicitor Gallo provided an update regarding ongoing litigation involving 145 Dairy Road.

Council was informed that:

- The property owner has re-engaged legal counsel
- Formal responses have been filed
- A case management conference is expected to be scheduled
- The matter continues to move through the legal process

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Motion: Ms. Springer made a motion to approve payment of the bills. Seconded by Mr. Haley. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 8:43 pm.