

KITTANNING BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

February 2, 2026

Council Chambers

Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

PRESENT: Chris Schiano, Jordan Shuber, Bill Baum, Les Ruffaner, Wilbur Stitt, Jeffery Bowser, Kraig Walker, and Eric Hoffman.

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Essenwein, Betsy Hooks, Administrator, Chief Joe Riskosky, Scott Kirkwood, Code Enforcement Officer, Earl Kline, Fire Marshall, and Public Works Director Jim Mechling.

Jason Dailey of Dailey Operation Consulting spoke regarding Strategic Management Planning. The program assists with revenue enhancement, expense reduction, and economic development. He said the program would benefit the police department, code enforcement, public works department, and administration. He explained that he can assist the borough with receiving additional grant funding.

- **A motion was made to appoint Jeff Bowser, Eric Hoffman, Kraig Walker, and the Borough Administrator to the Committee to discuss the Strategic Management Plan and make suggestions to the Council President.**

Motion: Eric Hoffman Second: Bill Baum Opposed: None
Motion carried.

- **A motion was made allowing Jennifer Bellas to request a time extension for the LSA Kittanning Riverfront Stabilization Project.**

Motion: Les Ruffaner Second: Bill Baum Opposed: None
Motion carried.

- **A motion was made by Eric Hoffman and seconded by Bill Baum for the Council to enter into an executive session at 6:45 p.m.**

Council exited the executive session at 7:19 p.m. with no decisions being made.

- **A motion was made to approve the February 2, 2026, meeting's agenda.**

Motion: Eric Hoffman Second: Les Ruffaner Opposed: None
Motion carried.

- **A motion was made to approve the January 5, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes.**

Motion: Bill Baum Second: Eric Hoffman Opposed: None
Motion carried.

- A motion was made to approve the January 21, 2026, Council Special Meeting Minutes.**
 Motion: Jeff Bowser Second: Kraig Walker Opposed: None
 Motion carried.
- A motion was made to approve reports as submitted.**
 Motion: Bill Baum Second: Eric Hoffman Opposed: None
 Motion carried.
- A motion was made to approve Mid-County Transit Authority Resolution for the State Match.**
 Motion: Bill Baum Second: Eric Hoffman Opposed: None
 Motion carried.
- A motion was made to remove Andy Peters, Phil Brautigam, and Gerald Shuster from all bank accounts associated with Kittanning Borough at Nextier Bank and First National Bank.**
 Motion: Les Ruffaner Second: Jeff Bowser Opposed: None
 Motion carried.
- A motion was made to add as signers to all bank accounts associated with Kittanning Borough at Nextier Bank and First National Bank, Les Ruffaner and Eric Hoffman.**
 Motion: Jeff Bower Second: Bill Baum Opposed: None
 Motion carried.

Les Ruffaner let Council know that he spoke with Chris Ziegler regarding the Rails to Trails, they received a grant to repave the trail and replace signs, they will receive \$25,000.00 per year for 6 years.

Mayor Essenwein let everyone know what an excellent job Jim Mechling and the Street Department have done to remove the snow from the streets; sidewalks are still an issue and Council requested that the Code Enforcement Officer start enforcing the ordinance. The Mayor suggested that Jim let the Chief know when and where they will be plowing so that it can be posted for the public's knowledge. Mayor Essenwein said that he would like to create a Public Safety Committee for future clean-up efforts.

The mayor also mentioned that he has been receiving complaints on the speeding issue on Johnston Ave. He also let Council know that Officer Shawgo has resigned from the Kittanning Police Department. He would like to add a PR Officer for all public relations.

Buzz Kline spoke regarding the situation on Walnut and Water Streets, once a week they are called out for a smell of natural gas from old underground tanks, he requested an ordinance for the underground storage tanks to be removed at the owner's expense. He said we need a procedure in place for filling and sealing the tanks. He also wanted to remind residents, when shoveling snow, please remember to shovel around fire hydrants to make them accessible should there be an emergency.

A motion was made by Eric Hoffman and seconded by Bill Baum to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Betsy Hooks – Kittanning Borough Administrator, Secretary, and Treasurer