LEBANON BOROUGH COMMON COUNCIL
Wednesday, August 19, 2026 7:30 pm

MINUTES

THE VERBATIM RECORDING THE COUNCIL MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE BOROUGH WEBSITE WWW.LEBANONBORO.COM

The Regular Meeting of the Lebanon Borough Common Council was called to order by Mayor Pittinger at 7:30 pm. The meeting was held in person and virtually.

The meeting was convened in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act of 1975; notice was sent to three local newspapers and posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Pittinger.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Please join me in a moment of silence for all
US service members and First Responders who have given their lives for our country.

On behalf of a grateful nation, they are truly heroes.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Pittinger, Council President Baldinger Councilman Berger, Councilman, Burton, Councilwoman Porcello, Councilman Valliere and Councilwoman Durange
Absent:

Also, Present: Administrator/Clerk Karen M Romano RMC,
Borough Attorney Joesph Novak Esq.

RESOLUTION #105-2026:
Councilman Valliere made a motion to approve Resolution 105-2026 the Consent Agenda. With a second by Councilwoman Durange.

BOROUGH OF LEBANON
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION #105-2026
CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are routine by the Governing Body of Lebanon Borough and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion of these matters. If discussion is desired that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separately.

1. Animal Control
2. Fire Dept Report

Introduction and adoption: August 19, 2026
Ayes: Durange, Baldinger, Berger, Burton, Porcello, and Valliere
Nays:
Absent:

LEBANON BOROUGH COUNCIL

_____
Marlene G. Baldinger,
Borough Council President

ATTEST:

_____
Karen Romano, RMC
Borough Administrator/ Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I, Karen M. Romano, Borough Clerk hereby certify that this resolution was duly adopted by the Borough of Lebanon Council at a meeting duly held on the 19 th day of August 2026; that this Resolution has not been amended or repealed; and that it remains in full force and effect as of the date I have subscribed my signature.

Date: August 19, 2026

_____
Karen M. Romano, RMC
Borough Administrator/ Clerk

The Motion was passed by the following vote:
YES: Councilwoman Durange, Council President Baldinger Councilman Berger, Councilman Burton, Councilwoman Porcello, and Councilman Valliere
NO:
Abstain:
Absent:

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION #1: August 19, 2026, meeting recording is available in the clerk's office and on the website.

Councilwoman Baldinger made a motion to open the public session. Councilman Valliere seconded the motion with the unanimous approval of Council the floor was opened.

NJSP Trooper De Lorenzia presented the July 2026 activity report to the Council detailing investigations, operation reports, and motor vehicle accidents, and addressed a public question regarding a specific accident on Brunswick Avenue.

The council was informed that there were 7 investigation reports, 12 operation reports (including medicals, fires, and vehicles), and 14 motor vehicle accidents in July, with most accidents occurring on major roads (22 or 78) and three on back roads.

Councilman Valliere inquired about an accident on Brunswick Avenue; Trooper De Lorenzia explained that details could not be shared publicly but reassured there was no further concern and directed interested parties to file an open public records request for more information.

Councilman Valliere made a motion to close the public session. Councilwoman Baldinger seconded the motion with the unanimous approval of Council the floor was closed.

The Motion was passed by the following vote:
YES: Councilwoman Durange, Council President Baldinger Councilman Berger, Councilman Burton, Councilwoman Porcello, and Councilman Valliere
NO:
Abstain:
Absent:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Councilman Burton made a motion to approve the July 15, 2026, Regular seconded by Councilman Valliere.

The Motion was passed by the following vote:
YES: Councilwoman Durange, Council President Baldinger, Councilman Berger, Councilman Burton, Councilwoman Porcello, and Councilman Valliere
NO:
Abstain:
Absent:

RESOLUTION #106-2026:
Councilman Burton made a motion to approve Resolution #106-2026. With a second by Councilman Berger.

BOROUGH OF LEBANON

COUNTY OF HUNTERDON

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION #106-2026

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Borough of Lebanon, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that the CFO is hereby authorized to make the following payment for redemption of tax sale a certificate.

Block	Lot	Qual	Cert #	Name/Address	Amount
	2	7	18-00001	Euro Credit Assets	$43,382.04
				PO BOX 131	
				Lakewood, NJ 08701-131	

Introduced and adopted: August 19, 2026

Ayes: Durange, Baldinger, Berger, Burton, Porcello, Valliere
Nays:
Absent:

LEBANON BOROUGH COUNCIL

_____
Marlene G. Baldinger,
Borough Council President

ATTEST:

_____
Karen Romano
Borough Clerk

I certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the Resolution adopted by the Borough Council at a meeting held on August 19, 2026.

_____
Karen Romano
Borough Administrator/ Clerk

The Motion was passed by the following vote:
YES: Councilwoman Durange, Council President Baldinger, Councilman Berger, Councilman Burton, Councilwoman Porcello, and Councilman Valliere
NO:
Abstain:
Absent:

RESOLUTION #107-2026:
Councilman Burton made a motion to approve Resolution #107-2026. With a second by Councilman Berger.

BOROUGH OF LEBANON
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION #107-2026

A RESOLUTION URGING THE NEW JERSEY STATE LEGISLATURE AND GOVERNOR TO REPEAL THE GAS TAX ESCALATOR AND RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY TO FUEL TAX INCREASES

WHEREAS, the residents of the State of New Jersey and the Borough of Lebanon are burdened by one of the highest overall tax structures in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the State of New Jersey enacted legislation restructuring the Transportation Trust Fund and implementing an automatic adjustment mechanism commonly referred to as the "gas tax escalator"; and

WHEREAS, the gas tax escalator permits periodic increases in the motor fuels tax without a direct vote of the New Jersey State Legislature; and

WHEREAS, such automatic increases lack transparency and reduce accountability to taxpayers, who bear the financial burden without corresponding legislative oversight; and

WHEREAS, increases in the motor fuels tax raise the cost of commuting, goods, and services, and place additional financial strain on working families, seniors, and businesses; and

WHEREAS, these increased costs also impact municipal operations, including transportation, public works, and service delivery, thereby placing further pressure on local budgets and, ultimately, property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the **New Jersey Property Taxpayers Coalition** has called for the repeal of the gas tax escalator as part of a broader effort to restore fiscal responsibility and taxpayer protections; and

WHEREAS, local governments have a responsibility to advocate for policies that protect their residents from unnecessary and unaccountable tax increases;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Borough of Lebanon, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that it hereby urges the New Jersey State Legislature and the Governor to:

1. Repeal the gas tax escalator; and
2. Require that any future increases in the motor fuels tax be subject to a direct vote of the Legislature; and
3. Restore transparency and accountability in the taxation process affecting New Jersey residents;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the Governor of the State of New Jersey, the Senate President, the Speaker of the General Assembly, the members of the New Jersey Legislature representing this district, and all municipalities within Hunterdon County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be made available to the public and shared with other municipalities as part of a coordinated effort to advocate for meaningful tax reform.

Introduction and adopted: August 19, 2026

Ayes: Durange, Baldinger, Berger, Burton, Porcello, Valliere
Nays: 0
Absent:

LEBANON BOROUGH COUNCIL

_____
Marlene G. Baldinger, Council President

ATTEST:

_____
Karen M. Romano
Borough Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I, Karen M. Romano Lebanon Borough Clerk hereby certify that this resolution was duly adopted by the Borough of Lebanon Council at a meeting duly held on August 19, 2026 at 7:30 pm that this resolution has not been amended or repealed; and that it remains in full force and effect as of the date I have subscribed my signature.

Date: August 19, 2026

_____
Karen M. Romano
Borough Administrator/Clerk

The Motion was passed by the following vote:
YES: Councilwoman Durange, Council President Baldinger, Councilman Berger, Councilman Burton, Councilwoman Porcello, and Councilman Valliere
NO:
Abstain:
Absent:

APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURES: Councilman Berger made a motion to approve the Bill list for August2026. Councilman Berger seconded the motion.

The Motion was passed by the following vote:
YES: Councilwoman Durange, Councilman Berger, Councilman Burton, Councilwoman Porcello, and Councilman Valliere
NO:
Abstain:
Absent: Council President Baldinger,

DISCUSSION:

Administrator Romano discussed ongoing issues with truck traffic and speeding on Cherry Street and Main Street, plans to deploy cameras for monitoring, and the challenges of enforcing weight and commercial vehicle restrictions.

Residents and council members raised concerns about speeding and traffic, particularly in the Commons and on Cherry Street, prompting plans to move speed signs and collect data for further analysis.

Administrator Romano suggested using a large camera, previously used during park construction, to monitor truck and vehicle traffic on Main Street and Cherry Street, with plans to notify affected homeowners and businesses about the temporary surveillance.

Administrator Romano reported that installing directional signs to reroute truck traffic would require DOT permits, which are costly and often denied, and that alternative solutions such as tonnage limits and improved signage are being considered.

The council discussed the difficulty of enforcing weight limits due to lack of equipment and the practical limitations of local and state police, noting that violations are typically only investigated after accidents.

The council decided to first collect video evidence to identify the sources of truck traffic, share findings with relevant businesses (such as Instel Steel), and consider further actions such as warnings or fines if non-compliance persists.

Administrator Romano, Mr. Voorhees, Shade Tree Chairman , Joe Hauck and other council members discussed a longstanding dispute over five trees on Brunswick Avenue affecting cemetery maintenance, with plans to engage engineers to verify property boundaries before proceeding.

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION: The August 19, 2026 meeting recording is available in the clerk's office and on the website.

Councilwoman Baldinger made a motion to open the public session. Councilman Valliere seconded the motion with the unanimous approval of Council the floor was opened.

Glen Chandler expressed concern about a council member voting on long-term issues, when they are moving. He suggested that only those with ongoing community ties should participate in such decisions

There being no further public comment Councilman Burton made a motion to close the public session. Councilman Valliere seconded the motion with the unanimous approval of Council the floor was closed.

Councilwoman Durange announced that this was her last meeting due to moving. She confirmed her house was under contract and stated this was her final meeting, thanking the council and community for the opportunity to serve. Council excepted Councilwoman Durange's resignation.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Recreation: Councilwoman Porcello reported:
Bingo was Successful
Centennial Bingo was successful
Music in the Park September 12th
Centennial Gala December 4th tickets on sale for $45 at Boro Hall
Centennial Time Capsule to be filled by the end of the year.
Recreation committee is talking about starting a book club.

Lisa Saharic was commended for her role in organizing the Centennial Bingo event, ensuring its success during a period when another council member was unavailable.

Infrastructure: Councilman Burton reported Picnic tables were delivered and installed in the park, and camera equipment was set up to enhance security and support streaming of council meetings.

Wi-Fi installation is pending completion of external connections and acquisition of additional hardware and access points, with coordination needed with the service provider.

Lebanon Borough School: Councilwoman Baldinger discussed the North Hunterdon school district's grant-funded study on regionalization, its potential impact on local schools and taxes, and concerns about cost distribution among municipalities.

The North Hunterdon school district received a $175,000 state grant to study the feasibility of regionalizing K-8 and high school districts under one administrative umbrella.

Council members expressed skepticism about potential cost savings, noting that previous analyses showed some districts benefit at the expense of others, and emphasized the need to protect the borough's interests in any regionalization plan.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Councilwoman Baldinger inquired of the Tax Levy Increases and County Tax Impact**.** Administrator Romano, CFO Bill Colantano and other council members discussed the two-year tax levy comparison, explaining the significant increase in county taxes, the role of equalization factors, and the impact on residents' tax bills.

Mr. Colantano explained the tax levy comparison handout, highlighting that the primary increase in 2026 taxes was due to the county of Hunterdon, which rose by approximately 19% because of the equalization factor applied after a single high-value property sale.

The council discussed how the county uses recent property sales to adjust assessments, sometimes leading to disproportionate increases if few sales occur, as was the case with condos assessed at $280,000 but selling for $450,000.

It was noted that the borough's rateables decreased slightly from $269 million to $267 million, primarily due to commercial property appeals, which are assessed based on income rather than property value.

Residents questioned why the county portion of their tax bills increased more than the municipal portion; Mr. Colantano clarified that while the county percentage rose from 16% to 18%, the dollar increase was significant due to the overall tax base adjustment.

The council discussed the frequency of property revaluations, noting that Lebanon Borough had not been revalued in about 20 years, and that revaluations are typically triggered by time or significant discrepancies between assessed and market values.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT TO THE GOVERNING BODY

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT TO THE GOVERNING BODY
August 19, 2026

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

- 4 picnic tables delivered
- Working on closing documents for KDP
- Working on closing documents for MRC
- Working on closing documents for Rubber Cycle
- Camera Equipment for the Park has been installed
- Streaming equipment has been installed

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

- Streaming equipment has been installed

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Crossing guard Statewide training in September
- Additional Speed signs discussed via email. Waiting for proposal.

- Public Safety Committee is researching a non- intrusive portable speed sign

REGISTRAR

- Quarterly Reports Filed

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- Inlets inspected
- Working on State requirement check list

TAX RE-EVALUATION

- Waiting for State to approve Tax Maps.

REQUEST

- **Mayor Pittinger has requested going out for all professionals**

TREES ON BRUNSWICK AVE

- The Caretaker, Mr. Vorhees from the cemetery on Brunswick Ave would like 5 trees taken down.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION/SHADE TREE COMMITTEE
Shade Tree Committee Meeting: No meeting
Environmental Commission Meeting: No meeting

RECREATION COMMITTEE
Meeting: July 22, 2026

BINGO
Centennial Bingo was held on Friday, August 14th at 7:00PM. Everyone had a wonderful time.

MUSIC IN THE PARK
Music in the park will be on Saturday, September 12th from 2:00 to 7:00PM. The first hour Clinton Music Studio will be playing from 2:30 to 3:30PM followed by Reel to Real County Band playing from 4:00 to 7:00PM.

Sunken Silo will be selling beverages
Lebanon Fire Department will be selling food

CENTENNIAL GALA
Friday, December 4th from 6:30 to 11:00PM at the Polish American Citizen's Club Whitehouse Station, NJ.
Light cocktail hour, buffet dinner, dessert, cash bar.
High in the Mid 80's band will be playing from 7:30 to 10:30PM.

YARD SALE
The committee has agreed to have another yard sale on Saturday, October 10th.
Rain date will be Sunday October 11th.

WELCOME BAGS:
New Residents: Welcome Bags delivered to 7 Lee Court, 105 Main Street, 11 Cindy Court, 603 Clark Road, 2 Daniel Court and 9 Chestnut Place

SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB
Meeting: No meeting in July
Summary:

ADJOURN:

Councilman Berger moved, and Councilman Burton seconded a motion to adjourn, there being no further business to come before Council. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm by unanimous vote.

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Karen M. Romano,
Administrator/Clerk

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