

**Pennington Borough Council
Special Meeting – May13, 2024**

Mayor Davy called the Special Meeting of the Borough Council to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was held via Zoom. Borough Clerk Betty Sterling called the roll with Council Members Angarone, Chandler, Gnatt, Marciante, Stern and Valenza in attendance.

Also present were Borough Clerk Betty Sterling, Borough Attorney Walter Bliss, Borough Administrator GP Caminiti, Police Chief Doug Pinell, and other Officers in the Pennington Police Department.

Mayor Davy announced that notice of this meeting has been given to the Hopewell Valley News, Trenton Times and was posted on the door at Borough Hall and on the Borough web-site according to the regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act.

Mayor Davy made a brief statement to explain the purpose of this Special Meeting. Mayor Davy stated that this meeting is to address a rumor that has been circulating regarding elimination of the Pennington Police Department in favor of a shared Police Department with Hopewell Township. Mayor Davy stated he wants to make clear that this is just a rumor and there are no plans or proposals being considered for any change to our Police Department. Mayor Davy stated that as Mayor and he believes the Council fully support the local control and oversight of our own local professional Police Department that is dedicated to serving the needs of our community. Mayor Davy stated that having our own Police Department with Officers who know our streets, families and businesses is incredibly important for a small town like ours. Mayor Davy stated that our Officers understand the unique character of our community. Mayor Davy stated regionalizing our sharing services may seem attractive from a budgetary standpoint however we risk losing the personal connections, accountability and community focused policing that our residents rightly expect and deserve. Mayor Davy stated that studies have shown that effective local law enforcement is key to maintaining public safety and quality of life in small towns. Mayor Davy stated that our Police Officers dedicate their lives every day to protect us and they deserve our full support and confidence, not rumors and uncertainty about their future. Mayor Davy stated that as Mayor he is committed to ensure that they have the resources and local control to continue doing difficult but vital work to serve and protect our community. Mayor Davy stated that once and for all he would like to put the troubling rumors to rest, the Police Department is here to stay under local leadership and they have his full backing. Mayor Davy stated that the Police Department makes our town proud and it is important to retain this essential service for the safety of our local citizens. Mayor Davy stated that Borough Council has a Resolution before them tonight to affirm support of the continued existence of the Police Department.

Open to the Public

Mayor Davy read the following statement.

The meeting is now open to the public for comments. In an effort to provide everyone interested an opportunity to address his or her comments to the Governing Body, a public comment time limit has been instituted for each speaker. **Please raise your hand and when the Borough Administrator acknowledges you state your name and address for the record. Please limit comments to the Governing Body to a maximum of 2 minutes.**

Many residents were in attendance to voice their support of continuation of the Pennington Police Department and to share stories reflecting their positive interaction with the Pennington Police Officers. No one spoke in opposition to continuation of the Pennington Police Department.

Council Members Chandler and Valenza also expressed their support of the Police Department and encouraged residents to reach out when rumors such as this start.

Mayor Davy asked for Council's consideration of the following Resolution.

**BOROUGH OF PENNINGTON
RESOLUTION 2024-5.13**

**RESOLUTION AFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR THE PENNINGTON
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

WHEREAS, Borough Council seeks to dispel rumors assisted by social media asserting falsely that Pennington Borough is considering the dissolution of its Police Department in favor of sharing police services with another municipality;

WHEREAS, in fact there is no such action contemplated and the purpose of this Resolution is to make that fact clear, on the public record;

WHEREAS, false rumors of this kind undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of our Police Department, of which we are proud;

WHEREAS, Borough Council seeks to maintain the accessibility, responsiveness, community connection and innumerable other aspects of high quality service that the Pennington Police Department provides our residents;

WHEREAS, Borough Council also understands the importance of local control of police services and the critical need for accountability;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by Borough Council of the Borough of Pennington, that Borough Council hereby affirms its full support and gratitude for the Pennington Borough Police Department with assurance to our residents that it will continue to serve with pride the Pennington Community.

RECORD OF COUNCIL VOTE ON PASSAGE

COUNCILMAN	AYE	NAY	N.V.	A.B.	COUNCILMAN	AYE	NAY	N.V.	A.B.
Angarone	X				Marciante	X			
Chandler	S				Stern	X			
Gnatt	X				Valenza	M			

Council Member Valenza made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-5.14, second by Council Member Chandler with all members present voting in favor.

Public Comment

Mayor Davy read the following statement.

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Laura Warren stated that at the February meeting she brought up a concern regarding sidewalks throughout town. Ms. Warren stated that Mrs. Chandler indicated that sidewalks would be addressed. Mrs. Chandler stated that there has been a staffing issue and it has not been forgotten and as soon as we have the staff to address sidewalks it will be taken care of. Ms. Warren volunteered to prepare a list as she is out walking.

Chloe Kopkash thanked Mayor and Council for holding this meeting and dispelling the rumor as it was getting bad particularly on social media.

Kathleen Mahle also thanked Mayor and Council for supporting the Police Department and for holding this meeting.

At 7:28 PM with no further business to address, Council Member Valenza made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Council Member Angarone.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Sterling
 Borough Clerk