

Bentleyville Borough Special Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Bentleyville Municipal Complex
900 Main Street
Suite 101
Bentleyville, PA 15314

The meeting was called to order by Council President **Joseph Pigeon III**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Interim Secretary **Kim Sacco** conducted the roll call.

Joseph Patress, Kara Shaw Dearth, Kim Sacco, Joe Pigeon, Adrian Gordon, Kathy Rakosky, Dennis Makel, and Danielle Ott were present. Timothy Miller and John Hackinson were absent.

Council President Pigeon opened the floor for public comment.

Former Mayor Tim Jansante addressed concerns about transparency, including the decision-making process for retaining or replacing the borough secretary, access to the mayor's office, and budget allocations. He suggested continuing to set aside \$5,000 monthly from the general fund into an interest-bearing account and questioned cuts to police and street budgets.

Part time patrolman **Peter Jaskiewicz**, inquired about budget increases for police chief salary, street department wages, and fire department funding, expressing support for more police coverage and fire department support but questioning how to fund it without significant tax increases

Sheryl Gordon raised concerns about excluding council members from decisions, budget changes, revenue estimates (e.g., lowering EIT from \$285,000 to \$260,000), court fines, and a 38% increase in fire department contributions. She emphasized that the borough should aim to break even, not profit, and questioned expense increases like health benefits and auditing fees.

Mayor, Adrian Gordon, expressed embarrassment over recent council actions, emphasizing the need for transparency. He questioned the termination of the borough secretary, compliance with the Sunshine Act, changes to meeting agendas, lock changes in the building, and unauthorized access to the secretary's office. He committed to ensuring borough business follows legal protocols.

Tom Brown made additional comments which included questions about council motions, blinds being shut in the building, and adherence to rules on council presidents making motions.

Residents discussed the Civic Center purchase, potential revenue from rentals, playground grants, accessibility for disabled individuals, volunteer involvement, and recreation board revival.

The council discussed the proposed 2026 budget in detail, led by Kim Sacco, Joe Pigeon and solicitor Dennis Makel. Key points of this included:

- Historical deficits: \$111,000 in 2025, \$36,000 in 2024, \$161,000 in 2023, and a \$21,000 surplus in 2022.
- Payroll discrepancies: W-2 forms not matching payroll summaries for several employees.
- Proposed adjustments: Overestimating expenses and underestimating revenues a conservative approach. Increases to police chief salary (from \$73,000–\$75,000 to \$80,000), fire department contribution (from \$22,000 to \$30,000), and other departments.
- Revenue sources: Earned Income Tax (EIT) budgeted at \$260,000 (down from \$285,000 actual in 2025 but up from prior budgets); fines, rents, state aid, and liquid fuels.
- Expenses: Increases in health benefits (from \$14,000 to \$21,800), legal services (\$20,000), auditing fees (from \$6,000 to \$13,000), and animal control (\$3,600).
- Civic Center: Recent occupancy permit obtained; potential rentals for events; \$125,000 purchase price.
- Playground project: the borough received an LSA grant in the amount of \$167,683. The plan is to combine that with a previously received \$75,000 Redevelopment grant plus \$14,000 from a 1 mill tax increase if needed. Council is hoping to upgrade both playground areas at Richardson Park plus repair and extend the walking path as the funds allow. There will be an informational meeting with a representative from Park and Play Structures on Wednesdays, January 14th. The meeting will be open for community input.
- Police and fire services: Need for more officers and potential paid firefighters; budget increases will support emergency services.

Solicitor Makel outlined the process of reopening the budget and adopting the tax rate increase: Advertise the budget and ordinance; Mayor has veto rights under Borough Code Section 3301.3-1, requiring 5 votes to override.

New Business

- **Motion by Kiim Sacco**, seconded by **Kathy Rakosky** to advertise the reopened 2026 budget with a 1 mill tax increase, an ordinance to increase millage by 1 mill, and make it available for public inspection for consideration on January 26, 2026. The motion includes a condition that the budget author meet with the mayor to review details.

- Roll call vote with Joe Patress, Kara Shaw-Dearth, Kim Sacco, Joe Pigeon and Kathy Rakosky all voting yes. The motion carried.

Motion to adjourn was made by Kim Sacco, seconded by Kara Shaw-Dearth and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly G. Sacco

Interim Secretary Treasurer