

**RIDGWAY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Ridgway Moose Lodge**  
**237 N. Broad Street, Ridgway, PA 15853**  
**April 20, 2026**

The Ridgway Borough Council meeting was called to order by Steve Caggese at 6:00 p.m. at the Ridgway Moose Lodge.

PRESENT: Council members – Steve Caggese, Abbi Peters, Brent Kemmer, Zack Pontious, Lauren Stark, Steve Lawrie

CALL-IN: Chris Matheson

Also in attendance were Borough Manager Mike Handley, Mayor Ray Imhof, Police Chief Ken Hinton, Fire Chief Jeff Yeager, and Recording Secretary Cari Amacher.

Councilman Kemmer made a motion to approve the regular council meeting minutes as scheduled on March 16, 2026. Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

**Public Comment**

None

**Finance Department**

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to pay the bills. Councilman Pontious seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

**Mayor**

Mayor Imhof mentions coffee with the mayor this Saturday at 9 am at the Creative Cup. He also spoke about two proclamations issued for National Library Week and the National Day of Prayer.

Mayor Imhof shared that seventh graders from the globalization elective class at the high school sent letters suggesting improvements for the borough, which he plans to address. He commended the educators for encouraging the kids to learn about local government.

**Police Department**

Chief Hinton provides an update on police department activities, including attending a tenant meeting at the Dickinson apartments regarding the alarm calls. The Ridgway Police Department is implementing a new bar check program in the borough. He mentions the purchase of new Kevlar vests and the graduation of new officer Erica Swanson. Chief Hinton reports part-time officer Frank McDonough has accepted a full-time position with Penn State Main Campus Police.

Chief Hinton discusses dealing with the potential arrival this summer of the Rainbow People Gathering along with the challenges and plans for managing the gathering. There will be a meeting to finalize details.

**Fire Department**

Report in packet. Fire Chief Yeager raises concerns about the routing of emergency calls and the possibility for a specialized box alarm for the 911 center to address the burnt food calls from this property. Chief Hinton explains the current policy and protocol for burnt food at the Dickinson Apartments, which is when the alarm goes off in the room, the door should remain closed to not trigger the main alarm. Tenants are to open a window and/or turn on a fan and call the non-emergency line as well as the on-call maintenance number. Mayor Imhof, Chief Yeager, Chief Hinton and council discuss the current protocol and the need for a letter from the council to the housing authority to enforce stricter policies. Chief Hinton discussed the follow-up from the magistrates to start writing citations if burnt food does convey as false alarms.

**Environmental Manager**

None

**Correspondence/Petitions**

Handley provided updates on the correspondence received. The National Day of Prayer will be observed on May 7, 2026, the Ridgway Volunteer Fire Department Board of Directors requests the Borough to approach Ridgway Township and Spring Creek Township to seek funding support for the new mini pump for the Ridgway Volunteer Fire Department, Elk County Blizzard Fest request to host the event in 2027, Chamber of Commerce request to allow indoor warehouse events at the Ridgway Mills as well as commitment to act as rental agent supporting the Rotary/LEC proposed project as presented, and the Ridgway Downtown Decorating Committee request to keep the red, white and blue lights on until dawn.

Council briefly discussed the request for the Ridgway Downtown Decorating Committee to keep the lights on from 8pm-12am until further discussion.

**Borough Manager**

Handley mentioned spring cleanup continues this week until 7pm on Friday. All Ridgway Borough and Spring Creek Township residents can participate. Handley stated that Spring Creek Township intends to contribute \$500.00 towards the successful program.

Handley spoke about the Borough's loss control workman's compensation safety action plan program which reimburses the Borough through a pooled trust. Our dedication to great employee safety practices and following the recommendations of our loss control consultant are the key factors in the success of this program. This year's reimbursement was \$58,470.51. The Borough uses these reimbursed funds to purchase and improve safety within the Borough for the police department, the public works, and other departments.

Handley announced that Deborah Pontzer, president of Grow Rural PA, worked with Representative Mike Armanini to secure \$40,000 to construct a boat launch in Ridgway. The boat launch will be located on Ridgway Borough property at the Ridgway Riverfront. This will be the first boat launch open to the public in Ridgway. This is also the first step in implementing our Master Site Plan and in developing the Ridgway Riverfront.

**Committee Reports****Planning, Grants, and Recreation (April 1, 2026)**

Councilwoman Peters discussed the proposal for managing and developing the warehouse space at the Mills property, emphasizing the need to balance temporary use with long-term development. The committee agreed to grant a temporary permit for the Blizzard Fest event in 2026 and 2027 due to the Blizzard Fest prior investments. Outside of this, no other use requests for this facility will be considered at this time. They also approved the relocation of the boat access launch to improve accessibility and discussed the creation of the Ridgway-Johnsonburg FORGE stakeholder committee for community engagement and collaboration. Additionally, the committee reviewed the master site plan, focusing on public access and phased development, and celebrated the progress on the mountain bike trail project.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve using the temporary use for Blizzard Fest in the Mills warehouse for February 26 - 28, 2027 as well as the use of two dumpsters, barricades, 10 picnic tables, and the portion of the building to be free of equipment two weeks prior to the event. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the recommendation for the new location of the boat access launch. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the request for the Christmas in July outdoor event, contingent on the proceeds being donated to the Shop with a Cop Program. Councilwoman Stark seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

Councilwoman Peters stated the committee does not recommend approving the use of the warehouse for the Ecumenical Church event which correlates with the committee's recommendation to no longer approve indoor facility use requests at this time.

### **Old Business**

#### **Ridgway Rotary/LEC (Project Proposal)**

Nate Steis presents the phase one plan for the downtown revitalization project, including groundwork, artwork, furnishings and estimated costs. The project aims to create a safe and attractive space for community gatherings and events, with low maintenance costs. Steis outlines the funding sources and the need for a phased approach to ensure the project's success. The council discusses the need for an MOU to clarify expectations and responsibilities for Phase I of the project.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to refer the Ridgway Rotary/LEC Phase I Agreement proposal to the Solicitor and Planning, Grants, and Recreation committee for final approval. Councilwoman Peters seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

**Ordinance 592- Chapter 6 Amendment (Nuisances)**

Fire Chief Jeff Yeager requested an Ordinance 592 – Chapter 6 amendment, which gives the police department the ability to impose penalties for nuisance fire alarms.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the advertisement of the amendment for the police department to impose fines for Ordinance 592 – Chapter 6. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

**New Business**

**Resolution 1-2026 (UCC Appeals Board)**

Handley discusses the UCC appeals board and the need to replace a member. This is a partnership with Ridgway Borough and township residents. The principle of this board is to be able to appeal building and construction codes. Robert Trumbull's term expires January 2029 and it's recommended Bill Kinkead take that seat.

The exiting members include:

James Delhunty - term expires January 2027

Bill Kinkead - term expires January 2029

Charles Steger - term expires January 2028

Ray Imhof - term expires January 2027

Paul Tettis - term expires January 2028

The alternates include:

Terry Hertzog - term expires January 2027

Jonathan Updyke - term expires January 2028

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to approve Resolution 1-2026 for the UCC Appeals Board members and alternate members. Councilwoman Peters seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

**Resolution 2-2026 (PA 811 Safe Digging Month)**

Handley and Councilman Kemmer speak of the importance of safe digging in the borough. The utility companies are requesting April to highlight PA 811 “Before You Dig” month.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the Resolution 2-2026 request for recognizing April as the PA 811 “Before You Dig” month. Councilman Pontious seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

**Resolution 3-2026 (DCNR C2P2 – Riverfront Redevelopment)**

Handley provided an update on the Phase I funding for the Riverfront Redevelopment project. The borough was able to secure \$100,000 for the project. This resolution would be for Phase II regarding the roundabout at the boat access launch. Handley mentioned a grant available to help fund this roundabout. Handley is requesting council approve a matching cost of approximately \$35,000 to secure another \$100,000 for Phase II. This funding was approved last year but was not needed due to securing other funding.

Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve Resolution 3-2026 to reallocate the needed match funding in the amount of approximately \$35,000 for Phase II of the Riverfront Redevelopment project. Councilwoman Peters seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

**Public Comment**

Jacob Leithner raises concerns about the use of e-bikes in OB Grant Park, highlighting the risks to children and the need for signage and an ordinance.

**Council Discussion**

The council had a lengthy discussion regarding the need for signage and an ordinance to prohibit e-bikes and other motorized vehicles in parks and on Main Street. Handley suggests preparing an ordinance for the May council meeting and advertising it for community input.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to pursue signage for the business district on Main Street.

Councilwoman Peters seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

Councilwoman Stark made a motion for Borough Manager Handley and Police Chief Hinton to draft an Ordinance regarding the use of E-bikes and bicycles in the borough of Ridgway. Councilwoman Pontious seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Stark: Aye

After there was no further discussion, President Steve Caggese adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m. before going into executive session.