

RIDGWAY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

Ridgway Municipal Building

108 Main Street, Ridgway, PA 15853

May 18, 2026

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

PRESENT: Steve Caggese, Abbi Peters, Brent Kemmer, Zack Pontious, Lauren Stark, Chris Matheson

ABSENT: Steve Lawrie

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 April 20, 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

PA Farm Bureau Regional Director Report

Michelle McMinn from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and Big Maple Family Farm, emphasizes the importance of supporting local farmers. She highlights the decline in the number of dairy farms in Elk County, now down to one, and the upcoming farm market opening on July 7 at the Ridgway Mills Campground. Michelle mentions the negative 17% change in the number of farms in Elk County from the 2022 census and the efforts of the Farm Bureau to get whole milk back in schools. She also discusses the Farm Talk series with Penn State Extension and the upcoming Ag Safety Day on September 19 at the Elk County Fairgrounds.

Michelle informs the council about the severe freeze affecting Eastern Pennsylvania, causing significant damage to apple and peach crops. She mentions the closure of a manufacturing plant in Erie, affecting 125 farmers, and the impact on grapevine prices due to surplus. Michelle discusses the closure of a peach processing plant in California and the importance of buying local to support farmers and mentions the Farm Market app that shows local farms.

Finance Department

Councilman Matheson made a motion to pay the bills. Councilman Kemmer 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 thanks emergency services for their work over the last month. He also mentions the Coffee with the Mayor last Saturday and the visit to Wilderness Trail, which was featured on the TV show "America's Best Restaurants."

Police Department

Chief Hinton provides a report on the Rainbow Gathering going to Warren County this year. He discusses installation of a speed sign on State Street and the positive feedback on the speed sign. Chief Hinton mentions attending a meeting with Cellebrite to potentially save money on cell phone dumps and the first annual chiefs meeting with St. Mary's and Johnsonburg chiefs.

Chief Hinton reports on the police department's activities, including the media blitz on e-bikes and bicycles in downtown Ridgway. He mentions the ARIDE training for officers to better handle drug-impaired driving and the upcoming enforcement of e-bike and bicycle laws. Chief discusses the need for community members to report issues immediately in parks and playgrounds to ensure effective law enforcement. He introduces the Paul Miller's Law, which will be enforced starting June 6, prohibiting the use of cell phones while driving.

Chief Hinton mentioned part-time officer Frank McDonough accepted a full-time position at Penn State University. Kyle Mertz will be hired as the new part-time officer.

Fire Department

Report is in the packet.

Frank Quattrone spoke about the Fireman's carnival and parade coming up the first week of August. He will start promoting the fireman's parade on social media for entries.

Environmental Manager

Josh Quttraone reports that Isaac Sidelinger and Harrison Snyder passed their water and wastewater exams and are now fully qualified operators. Both plants are running at 100%. He mentions the successful completion of the first day of a DEP inspection and the non-detection of PFAS in the water.

Correspondence/Petitions

Handley provided updates on the correspondence received, including a letter of resignation from the Ridgway UCC Board of Appeals. A letter regarding Berkheimer tax collection procedures. Handley discussed the process of filing an exemption which is the responsibility of the taxpayer. The exoneration application is on the Berkheimer website along with contact information. Meander More sent an updated letter regarding their event in July.

Borough Manager

Handley reports the Borough Street Paving Project started this week and, weather permitting, will take about a week to complete. Handley mentions the updated digitization of the zoning map. He also received approval from DCED for a one-year extension on wage reimbursement for the Code Enforcement Officer and Community Economic Development Coordinator. They will cover 25% of those two positions.

Committee Reports

None

Old Business

Handley spoke about the restructuring of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) Appeals Board. Ridgway Borough participated in a joint board with Ridgway Township that had five township members and two borough members, which was determined to be inequitable. Following township resignations and subsequent legal/administrative advice, the borough elected to establish its own UCC Appeals Board. The resolution proposes a five-member board with staggered terms: existing members Raymond Imhof (term expiring January 2027), Bill Kinkaid (January 2029), and Jonathan Updyke (January 2028), and new appointees Carl Marnatti (January 2029) and Logan McClain (January 2028). The board will hear appeals under the Uniform Construction Code (such as requests for variances or questions of code applicability) but will not handle zoning appeals.

Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve Resolution 4-2026 – UCC Appeals Board for Ridgway Borough. 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

Handley presents the requests from Meander More for the use of the Ridgway Mills space and campground for their event from July 23 to July 26, 2026. The requests include access to electric and water hookups, garbage collection, and the use of the campground exclusively for their event.

Councilwoman Peters suggests checking with Tim McClain to ensure no camping spaces are already reserved, and Handley agrees to contact Tim to discuss the costs and logistics.

Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve the event requests with the condition that Tim is consulted, and the costs are equitably distributed. 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

Handley updated council regarding Ordinance 592, Chapter 6 Amendment (Nuisance and Fire Department Calls) remains pending while the proper enforceable language is finalized. The Fire Chief, Police Chief, Mayor Imhof, and Manager Handley are currently working together to refine the terminology and structure of the ordinance to ensure it can be effectively enforced before it is brought back to council for formal consideration.

New Business

Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve the application for Resolution 5-2026 (County Aid Liquid Fuels-Roadway Maintenance) funding in the amount of \$7,500.00. 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

Handley presents Resolution 6-2026 for a recycling grant to purchase four solar-powered recycling containers, which would significantly reduce the borough's monthly costs. Ridgway Borough's recycling program has cut monthly costs from about \$2,000 to \$300–\$600 by using pull-behind recycling containers. Handley would like to apply for the DEP Section 902 - Recycling Grant to purchase the four solar-powered pull-behind containers. The grant would cover 90% of the \$91,235.80 project cost, with the borough contributing a 10% match of \$9,123.58.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve Resolution 6-2026 (DEP Section 902- Recycling Grant). 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

Handley explains Resolution 7-2026, requesting an application for a DCED Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program grant for the Borough's riverfront development project. This application parallels a DCNR grant submitted last month for the same project, but with different match requirements. The DCNR program requires a 50% local match, while the DCED grant, if awarded, would require only a 15% local match. The total project cost is \$70,089.25, making the borough's share under the DCED grant approximately \$10,513.39, with the remaining 85% to be covered by grant funds. He noted that the match would come from the \$35,000 previously authorized and subsequently reallocated by council, supported by more than \$100,000 in unanticipated contributions from community, local, and state partners.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the application for Resolution 7-2026 (DCED GTRP – Riverfront Development Grant) funding in the amount of \$10,513.39. 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

Handley discusses the ongoing process of drafting regulations for e-bikes and bicycles in downtown Ridgway. After lengthy discussion, council agrees to bring sample signage for the next meeting to discuss the best way to enforce the regulations.

Public Comment

Alicia Fritz proposes a ban on AI data centers due to their negative impacts on communities.

Tina Clancy addressed council regarding locations on Main Street where the red, white, and blue decorative lights for the 250th anniversary remain nonfunctional.

After no further discussion, President Steve Caggese adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.