MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK. ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING

2026 PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

COUNCIL MEMBERS

John Oakes (President) Joseph A. Consolmagno (Vice President) Todd S. Cenci David C. Espinar Lindsay Flinn Joseph Janosik Kim Kamenicky Viola Garis Jim Jenkins

Municipal Manager: Kristen Denne Assistant Manager: Jhad Burns

Mayor: Jack T. Allen

Solicitor: Robert L. McTiernan, Esquire

DATE: Monday, November 10, 2025 TIME: 6:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Municipality of Bethel Park

5100 West Library Avenue

Bethel Park, Pennsylvania 15102

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
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         (Commencing at approximately 6:00 p.m.)
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: So, I'd like to
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     call to order the Public Budget Hearing in
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     Municipal Council Chambers, November 10, 2025.
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               Roll call, please.
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               MS. DENNE: Mr. Consolmagno?
               MR. CONSOLMAGNO: Present.
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               MS. DENNE: Ms. Kamenicky?
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               MS. KAMENICKY: Here.
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               MS. DENNE: Mr. Oakes?
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: Here.
               MS. DENNE: Mr. Cenci called in with
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14
     an excused absence.
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               Mr. Janosik reported with an excused
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     absence.
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               Mr. Jenkins?
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               MR. JENKINS: Here.
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               MS. DENNE: Mr. Espinar had called in
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     with an excused absence.
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               Ms. Garis?
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               MS. GARIS: Here.
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               MS. DENNE: Ms. Flinn?
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               MS. FLINN: Here.
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: Six members
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1
     present.
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               I'd now like to stand for the Pledge
     of Allegiance.
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               (Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance
     was recited.)
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: We now would like
     to turn to the presentation part of the
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     meeting, and Ms. Denne, she'll give us her
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     2026 Budget Presentation.
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               MS. DENNE: Mr. Oakes, Council,
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     members of the public, thank you for being
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     here. I think this is probably one of the
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     biggest crowds we've ever had.
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: We had one last
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     year. We had one.
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               MR. JENKINS: That's right, one
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     person.
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               MS. DENNE: So, it's a unique feeling
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     for me, you know, putting up the temperature
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     here a little bit.
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               So, going through, again, we have the
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     2026 Budget Presentation this evening. And,
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     again, I have to just -- bear with me a little
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bit here.

This evening, I'll go over the Budget Overview, an Overview of the General Fund, the Sewage Fund, Capital Projects, and then summarize it at the end.

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So, the Introduction, you know, basically says: The Municipality is committed to providing a level of service and amenities to the residents of Bethel Park while maintaining accountability through fiscal responsibility.

Due to continued increases in healthcare cost, general liability insurance and costs for commodities and construction materials, the Municipality is proposing an increase of .6 mills, which would take us to 3.7 millions for general purposes while maintaining .34 mills for the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company.

That .34 mills was done by referendum in 2013. So, it is now forever more, unless it would be repealed by the taxpayers.

Forever more that .34 is there for the Fire Department.

It's also being proposed to increase the Municipal portion of Earned Income Tax

from 1 percent to 1.25 percent on any compensation earned after 2026. One of the things that, you know, all the Municipalities are really struggling with right now.

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You know, this is a high impact community, and we have 24-hour services. So, you know, when everybody's going -- you know, turning down for the night, Public Works still gets called out, the Police still get calls, the Fire Department still gets called out.

So, there's no sleepy-time here, so to speak. And we want to keep it that way.

We want to make sure we remain a full-service community.

Specifically this year, something that we really struggled with was increases in healthcare cost, general liability insurance.

Amazingly, our Workman's Comp went down, but it didn't make up for what we lost in healthcare increases and general liability increases.

We did go out to bid on both the general liability and healthcare products.

We were able to obtain lower rates with a better plan on the healthcare. Unfortunately,

we were seeing some of our sections of our general liability had increased almost 50 percent due to -- (indiscernible).

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So, on to the Budget Overview. So, as you see, we are almost 70 million dollars. The majority of that all going between General Operating Funds of about 38 million, Sewage Fund a little over 21 million.

We have almost 7 million going out to Capital Projects. Liquid Fuels is budget moneys that we receive from the State of Pennsylvania, and that is based on how many miles of road you have. That, primarily, we use for snow removal. So, a lot of -- you know, that 1 million goes towards that. And then the Fire Department Fund brings in roughly 1.8 million.

So, General Fund. It's always interesting to see. So, on the right, I always like to show, if you're looking to the right, that's to your right, this basically represents a dollar. And this shows how every one dollar that comes into the Municipality gets split up.

So, Infer-Fund Transfers, which is

basically our Capital Fund is 18 cents; Public
Works, 14 cents; Community Amenities, 7 cents;
Insurance, 2 cents; Debt Services, 3 cents.

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Which I'm really proud of our Debt Service. We have very, very low Debt Service in Bethel.

Administration, 8 cents; Community Service is 7; Sanitation, 11 cents.

Something to point out, though, most communities charge an additional fee for their sanitation. So, in addition to their taxes, they then get billed quarterly for an additional bill for refuse. We include it within our taxes. So, really, the residents do make out with that.

Public Safety is 30 cents. That is not unusual. Some Municipalities, they go as high as 50 cents. 50 percent of their budget goes to Public Safety.

So, while we do have a very robust Public Safety between the Police Department and the Fire Department, we are still well under what the normal average is.

What's also very interesting is, it's also something you want to consider, and

Council had discussed a lot this year, between Enabling Taxes, which is mainly your Earned Income Tax, and Real Estate Taxes and how to fairly distribute that, the majority of our tax base does come from what we call Enabling Tax, which is the EIT tax. That's almost 19 million dollars. We only receive roughly 9.5 million dollars in Real Estate Tax.

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And a lot of the talk around that is if, you know, people are hard on times, paychecks are low, you know, they're not going to be hit as hard. Where, you know, it's going more towards the Real Estate Tax.

And if you look at that, it really shows how the spread is. The majority of it is coming from people that are working, has jobs, and are paying into the system.

The rest are pretty, you know, small areas, otherwise. Licenses and Permits, Fines, Interests. Grants this year, we have almost a million coming in.

Typically, every year for the last five years, we've been at about \$500,000 a year in grant writing. There was the year in 2022/2023, they obviously had the re- -- the

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1
     -- oh, my gosh -- COVID -- COVID funds.
               PRESIDENT OAKES: ARPA funds.
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               MS. DENNE: Yes, the ARPA funds.
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               So, they had the COVID funds.
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     that broke it up. But for grants that are
     actually getting written and put out by staff,
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     we're averaging about $500,000 a year.
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               Okay. We're looking at Expenses by
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     Category. It shouldn't really be too much of
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     a surprise. The biggest thing here is going
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     to Salary and Wages. You know, being a
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     full-time Municipality, you have to have a
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     full-time staff to be able to fund that. So,
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     a good portion of that is Salary and Wages.
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               Employee Benefits is close to
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     4 million. And you're looking at Pensions,
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     Healthcare, Workers' Comp, Social Security,
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     Unemployment Insurance, all of the above.
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               General expenses is roughly
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     5 million. Utilities on all of our buildings,
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     5 million dollars. Again, our lowest costs
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     are our General Liability Insurance and our
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     Debt Service.
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               So, Personnel-wise, we are actually
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     down two positions. We are roughly at
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     114 and a half. We do have some part-timers
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     that we bring in for special events, summer,
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     things to that effect. But we have remained
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     pretty much in the same ballpark as far as
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     numbers every year.
               So, next, moving on to the Sewage
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     Fund, which is Mr. Oakes' favorite, and he'll
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     probably tried to take this off of me.
               PRESIDENT OAKES: Since he's not here
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10
     to pat me down.
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               MS. DENNE: Yeah, I know. Can we get
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     him on speakerphone?
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               MR. JENKINS: He'll be here till
14
     midnight.
               MS. DENNE: Sewage Fund, which, you
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MS. DENNE: Sewage Fund, which, you know, I also kind of like it. What is very interesting about the Sewage Fund, roughly 15 to 16 million dollars in funds. People don't realize how much of that, we have about a third of our system that goes to ALCOSAN. And ALCOSAN can pretty much charge us anything they want.

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So, the other two-thirds is controlled by the sewer plant that we actually own and operate with South Park.

So, 41 percent of that budget is just processing wastewater. There's very little that is spent. As far as the Administration is .1 percent, and the collection of fees is 1.2 percent. So there is very little staff time going into this. This is all hard, what I would call, boots on the ground.

2.3

Environmental and Pump Station, that is 27 percent. So, you know, you're looking at 68 percent that this particular fund is just in the hardware of working this plant.

Debt Service in high there, 21

percent, and it's probably not ever going

lower. There are tons of DEP mandates that

come down with wastewater. And they are not

holding back. They're continuing to come.

And that's never going to stop. So, you know,

that's the basis of our Sewer Fund.

So, what everybody loves, Capital Projects. Where we are, basically, and where most Municipalities are, our operating, we are able to cover our operating. It is becoming more and more difficult to fund Capital.

So you're able to, you know, pinch as many pennies as you can, cut as much as you

1 can to keep what is in the General Fund operating. Capital is really where everybody starts to hurt. 3

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So, the things that are going through this year. We have roughly 7 million dollars in capital coming out. Most of that, I will tell you, is, you know, 3 and a half million of that is stormwater, infrastructure, and roads.

We also have some building and ground items for dividers at the Community Center, and HVACs, surveys for the school properties that we are looking to obtain from the School District. They're looking at upgrades in technology for the Police Department with drones and dash cams, upgrades also to the Communications Center.

We have a ton of traffic light work that we are having done. Those of this -well, 90 percent of it is going to be funded with Green Light-Go grants.

That -- they are saying every -- and I've heard it every year for the last ten years that that fund was going to dry up, didn't have as much money. Every year it's

1 | still there.

2.3

But we went all in this year. We have new traffic light systems coming in at Bethel Church and Fort Couch; Hamilton and Baptist; Route 88 and Kings School.

So, we also have a new recreation software that we're going to be using in the Parks and Rec Department. Some upgrades to the cable station. And we have lawn equipment, a new work truck for Public Works, and three police vehicles, one of which was paid for with a grant.

So, more important for me, I'm a stickler on Fund Balance. I get really, really terrified with less than three months of savings in the bank. Because my whole career, everybody told me, you know, it's never going to be Chicken Little, the sky is falling. Government's always going to work, everything's going to be fine.

And then we had COVID. And taxes quit coming in. People were getting laid off work. Those days came. I was really lucky I was somewhere that we had a good Fund Balance. Fund Balance is the safety net you absolutely

have to have. The benchmark that I always aim for is three months.

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And think of it just like your own house, if you lost your job tomorrow, how many months of savings do you need to get through to get to another job? And, you know, three months is like my minimum where I don't panic.

We are starting to build reserves up again. You know, we are up roughly \$900,000 from last year.

Sewage Fund, they are starting to spend that down because there's been a lot of capital improvements that are coming.

Fire Department, they've been building that up again to start billing for new equipment. I forget the exact cost.

Lisa, I'm going to have to pick
you're brain. Is it 1.2 million for a tower?

MS. LAPAGLIA: Around there.

MS. DENNE: Yeah, so a new tower truck for the Fire Department is 1.2 million dollars. So, that equipment does not come cheap.

So, you know, overall, I'm very happy

to see that all of these funds are making use of keeping reserve funds because it's so crucially, you know -- we have not seen it. We're very lucky. We are very -- not very reliant on state funds or federal funds. But, you know, there are schools that are, and they are really sweating how they're getting through these shutdowns.

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So, I always like to do a comparison of just how we are with other communities within the South Hills. So, even with the proposed tax increase that we're looking at, it's still -- you know, the median house -- assuming a house is, you know, \$150,000, that median house is going to pay \$620 a year for taxes.

You know, we, you know, try to -- so, if you even that out, if you took it by every person in every household, you know, that would roughly -- and I'm talking working-age people -- that's roughly \$300 person a year for services.

When you look at Upper St. Clair and Mt. Lebanon, now, Mt. Lebanon is still higher than us. But St. Clair, even though their tax

- is lower than ours, their properties are assessed higher.
- So, the same house that you can 3 4 have in Bethel Park and the same house in 5 St. Clair, it may be 150,000 in Bethel Park, it's 300,000 in St. Clair. It's just the way 6 7 that it goes. And sometimes that's good, sometimes that's bad. But it does work 8 9 against us that we don't get as much money for 10 the dollar that they do.
- Going through the rest of them. I mean, Mt. Lebanon's 4.5. 12.158 is Castle

 Shannon. 5.42 for Whitehall.
 - Sorry, Mr. McTiernan.

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- 8.03 for Baldwin Borough. South
 Park, 3.06.
 - A lot of my colleagues in South Park, wonderful people, but they don't provide nearly the services or the amenities that we do. And, you know, that's where that extra mill of tax comes in.
 - Earned Income. So, we -- you know, with the proposed increase that we're looking at, keep in mind this is with the school EIT in there also. So, in our case Bethel Park

would only be 1.25 percent, and then .5 of that goes to the School District.

2.3

- So, again, not to minimize anything coming out of anybody's pocket cuts, but you're looking at the difference of what you bring in in St. Clair, Mt. -- well, we're actually doing pretty well on that.
 - It's -- it's still St. Clair, they're up in that 151 range. And our average is 104.

 Mt. Lebanon, their average is 120.
 - You know, those numbers make a big difference. And, again, when it's 19 percent of your budget is dependent on the RDIT, you know, definitely. But I still feel that that holds a very competitive community.
 - I don't feel that increasing these rates at this level is going to make somebody not move here, especially when we look at everything we have.
 - So, in closing, you know, tonight is proposed to be the final adoption, increased to the Municipal millage rate of .6, .25 for the Earned Income rate.
 - You know, we are still having this out for inspection for anybody that's

- 1 interested.
- 2 And I apologize, John.
- 3 PRESIDENT OAKES: Yeah, I have one.
- 4 MS. DENNE: Oh, you have it?
- 5 PRESIDENT OAKES: Yeah.
- MS. DENNE: Okay.
- 7 President OAKES: Okay. So --
- 8 Are you good?
- 9 MS. DENNE: Yeah.
- 10 | PRESIDENT OAKES: So, first, I'd like
- 11 | to thank everyone; Ms. Denne, Ms. Lapaglia,
- 12 everyone that had -- the Finance Committee,
- 13 | Council, all the department heads, there was a
- 14 | lot of time spent going through this. Three
- or four meetings a week for four weeks, then
- 16 | Council, a few days with Council. We had some
- 17 | Public Meetings here before that were
- 18 | well-attended and got to explain a good bit
- 19 about what was going on.
- So, thank you, everyone, for your
- 21 time with that. Because there's a lot of
- 22 diligence that goes into that.
- The next purpose of this meeting --
- 24 | this Public Budget Meeting is to receive input
- 25 from the residents on the proposed 2026 Budget

- 1 for all funds and related tax ordinances.
- No. 1 would be 11-10-25A, our Wage
- 3 and Salary Ordinance.
- No. 2, 11-10-25B, 2026 Fiscal Year
- 5 Budget.
- No. 3, 11-10-25C, our Earned Income
- 7 Tax Collection Ordinance.
- 8 And last, No. 4, 11-10-25D, the 2026
- 9 Real Estate Rate Ordinance.
- 10 If anybody would like to speak, we
- 11 would first have the proponents; people in
- 12 favor of this.
- I'd ask that you please state your
- 14 name and address for the record, and you have
- 15 three minutes to speak.
- 16 (No response.)
- 17 PRESIDENT OAKES: Hearing none, I'd
- 18 like to turn now to opponents or people
- 19 against any of the proposed ordinances, if you
- 20 | could come up and speak. Again, state your
- 21 | name and address for record.
- 22 (No response.)
- PRESIDENT OAKES: Okay. Hearing
- 24 | none, I'd like to have a motion to adjourn.
- MR. JENKINS: I'll make a motion to

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1
     adjourn.
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               MS. KAMENICKY: Second.
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: All in favor?
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               MR. CONSOLMAGNO: Aye.
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               MS. KAMENICKY: Aye.
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: Aye.
7
               MR. JENKINS: Aye.
               MS. GARIS: Aye.
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               MS. FLINN: Aye.
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               PRESIDENT OAKES: Motion's adjourned.
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     Thank you. Good night. And thank you,
12
     everyone.
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               (Whereupon, the hearing was concluded
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     at 6:24 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

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5 I hereby certify that the transcript of the proceedings and evidence contained 6 7 herein are a true and accurate transcription 8 of my stenographic notes taken by me at the 9 Bethel Park Council Budget Hearing, taken on 10 November 10, 2025, and that the transcription 11 was reduced to printing under my direction, and 12 that this is a true and correct transcript of

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DATE 12/2/25

the same.

Kim Simms Strnisa
Cert Cinnon Strnisa, Notary Public Reporter
Washington County

commission expires April 21, 2029

Commission number 1162174

Member, Pennsylvania Association of Notaries

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