A workshop meeting of the Richland Borough Council was held on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room at the Richland Borough Building. The President being in the chair and the Secretary being present.

President Bricker called the Richland Borough workshop Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Bricker completed roll call, Present were President Kelly Bricker, President Pro Tem Larry Hartman, Councilmembers Matthew Johnson, James Niethammer, Robert Rittle, Richard Strickler, Secretary Rebecca Schnoke, and Road Laborer/Water Technician Benjamin Becker. Also present, James Kinney from Becker Engineering. Absent was Vice President Mark Brubaker, Road Supervisor Dwight Belleman, and Mayor Owen Landes.

There were two (2) people present.

Taylor Smith – 23 N. Race Street – Present on behalf of the Neptune Fire Company, will be addressed under new business.

Will Lengner – 212 E. Main Street - Present on behalf of the Neptune Fire Company, will be addressed under new business.

Old Business:

Elevated Water Storage Tank

James Kinney advised bids to have been received and reviewed by Becker Engineering. James Kinney advised there were three bids received for the water spheroid tank design, and two bids received for the composite tank design. Mr. Kinney presented and reviewed the bid tabulations for the Elevated Water Storage Tank Project with Council. Council discussed in depth the bid results, financing matters,

A motion was made by Matthew Johnson, seconded by Larry Hartman to award, Elevated Water Storage Tank Alternate 2 (water spheroid design), Alternate 3 (piping work at control vault), and Alternate 4 (piping work at standpipe) to CB&I Storage Tank Solutions LLC (CBI) for a total price of $5,163,660.00 pending PennVEST financing approval; motion unanimously carried.

Becker Engineering will get started on cell tower communications now.

Playground/Park Project

Secretary Schnoke advised Chuck Strodoski from YSM Landscape Architects reached out to DCNR regarding possible funding for the sinkhole repair. Cheri Matter with DCNR responded there is potential for additional funding for the sinkhole repair and noted that the Borough’s total project costs were more than originally estimated and the Borough could possibly get additional funding towards project overages. Cheri Matter recommended the Borough submit a funding amendment request to DCNR. The request can be submitted for 80% of the sinkhole repair and project overages, the Borough would need to be able to show 20% matching funds for any additional funding potentially granted.

A motion was made by Matthew Johnson, seconded by Richard Strickler to approve to authorize the submission of a DCNR funding amendment request; motion unanimously carried.

New Business:

Neptune Fire Company – Will Lengner and Taylor Smith on behalf of the Neptune Fire Company addressed Council to consider a millage increase of the Richland Borough Fire Tax beginning in 2026 and provided a handout outlining the justification’s and supporting facts for an increase as well as the impacts of no fire tax increase. The 2026 fire tax increase is being requested to properly resource and equip the emergency fire and medical volunteers. Key points noted include:

The Fire Tax has not been increased since its implementation in 2016.

An increase of the Fire Tax is vital for the Neptune Fire Company’s financial wellbeing as the cost for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of professional fire equipment has increased substantially, for example in the last three years the cost of a firefighter’s coat has increased by almost 100% from $1,476 in 2022 to $2,685 in 2025.

ISO Ratings – lower ISO ratings generally equate to lower homeowners’ insurance premiums for residents. Neptune’s current ISO ratings were discussed to identify what areas could be improved through a tax increase in order to achieve a lower ISO rating. Engine pump & firehose testing is to be completed annually but is very costly and is consistently deferred to every other year due to insufficient funds. Hydrant testing annually and increased hydrant capacity.

Fire Company would like to purchase a gear extractor to facilitate proper fire gear decontamination of high levels of carcinogens to decrease exposure of responders.

Fire Company parking lot will require a complete replacement in the future, estimated cost of greater than $100,000.00.

Fire Company is planning on refurbishing the Utility vehicle by 2030.

Anticipated call volume is to exceed 300 calls this year.

Elm Street Development will increase Borough population and call volume.

Fire Company currently doing 28 fundraiser a year and are maxed out on fundraising abilities, as any additional fundraising would further decrease training time and ability with further negative impact on ISO rating.

New engine payments currently do not impact the operating budget.

Council asked several questions for clarification, and in length discussion occurred regarding this matter. Taylor Smith advised the Fire Company is not requesting a specific millage or amount for the increase but instead just opening dialog for discussion and requesting whatever assistance Council deems fit. Council thanked Will Lengner and Taylor Smith for taking the time to bring this to the attention of Council and advised going into budget preparation this matter will be considered.

New Street Conditions – Benjamin Becker advised since the farmer has started planting the crops up against the road along New Street there is a 10-12-inch-deep gully forming along the edge of the road as the result of erosion from the rainwater because there is no grass buffer to slow the water runoff. Immediate action is not needed but wanted to bring the issue to the attention of Council, to be considered and addressed because in time the edge of the road will breakdown and fail resulting very large expenses.

Benjamin Becker advised he Met with Jay from PennDOT regarding the condition of Poplar Street due to the overweight tractor trailer trucks using Poplar Street because of the 501 detour. Jay does not believe there is anything the State can do. Benjamin Becker and Dwight Belleman are communicating to other municipalities experiencing similar issues to see what actions they are taking or pursuing.

President Pro Tem Larry Hartman expressed continued concerns regarding speeding on Main Street. Secretary Schnoke advised she will have quotes for radar speed signs for the September meeting.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman to authorize Solicitor Andrew George to prepare & advertise the ordinance to adopt the Non-uniform Defined Contribution Pension Plan for Employees Hired after 1/1/2020; motion unanimously carried.

Matthew Johnson inquired if dogs are allowed in the park and if so, are there any plans for any doggy stations. President Bricker advised dogs are allowed in the park, but not on playground surface or pickleball courts and currently no doggy stations are planned.

President Bricker asked if there were any comments for the good of the Borough. With no additional matters presented, a motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Richard Strickler, to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Rebecca Schnoke,

Richland Borough Secretary