

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MAYOR AND COUNCIL**  
**JUNE 16, 2025**

Mayor Chegwidden called the Meeting to Order.

Mayor Chegwidden read the Open Public Meeting Statement.

**Roll Call**

Mayor Chegwidden requested Roll Call:

- Council President Norton - Present
- Councilman Binkoski - Present
- Councilwoman Jones - Present
- Councilwoman Vasquez - Present
- Councilwoman Wickenheisser - Present
- Councilman Yeager – Present

Also in attendance were Administrator Joseph Kovalcik Jr., Deputy Borough Clerk Cheryl Muzzillo, Attorney Roman Hirniak, Redevelopment Attorney Matthew Jessup, and Mine Hill Mayor Sam Morris.

**Flag Salute**

Mayor Chegwidden led those present in the Salute to the American Flag.

**Open to the Public**

In accordance with Local Ordinance O-18-03, “Persons making public comment at the first public portion shall be limited to five (5) minutes. During the second public portion the presiding officer shall have the discretion to terminate any repetitive, irrelevant or excessive public comment in the interest of permitting all members of the public time to speak on any governmental issue and completing the public business within a reasonable period of time.”

Mayor Chegwidden opened the meeting to the public.

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**Swearing In of Police Officers**

Mayor Chegwidden, Councilman Yeager, and Chief Young administered the Oath of Office to Officer Michael Mendez, Officer Evan Costello, Officer Gilbert Barberan, and Officer Joashua Martinez. Chief Young read short biographies of each new Officer.

Mayor Sam Morris from Mine Hill was also there to welcome the new officers. Congratulations and well wishes were offered by all in attendance.

**Resolution**

Councilman Yeager introduced R-93-25, “Resolution Authorizing the Appointment of a Part Time Class II Police Officer.”

A motion was made by Councilman Yeager and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to adopt R-93-25.

<b>ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSENT: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAIN: 0</b>
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>			

**Resolution**

Councilman Yeager introduced R-94-25, “Resolution Authorizing the Appointment of a Part Time Class II Police Officer.”

A motion was made by Councilman Yeager and was seconded by Councilwoman Jones to adopt R-94-25.

<b>ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6      NAY: 0      ABSENT: 0      ABSTAIN: 0</b>
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>

**Ordinance**

Councilman Binkoski presented O-9-25, “An Ordinance of the Borough of Wharton, in the County of Morris, New Jersey Approving an Application for a Long Term Tax Exemption and Authorizing the Execution of a Financial Agreement with Wharton Developments A (Urban Renewal) LP” on second reading, by title only.

Mayor Chegwidden opened the meeting to the public for questions or comments on this Ordinance only.

**Paul Breda, 6 Potter Lane:** Mr. Breda asked for a copy of the Agreement on file and Mr. Kovalcik offered to email it to him. Mr. Breda then asked about the duration of the agreement the estimated value of the project once the units were done. Mr. Jessup, Redevelopment Attorney, explained the property and improvement will be subject to a PILOT tax exemption so there is no assessed value for the property. The property will pay a PILOT based on the percentage of gross revenues. It was further explained that if the project was conventionally taxed, developers would not undertake the project and it would remain a vacant property. Over the 30-year term of the PILOT the Borough is conservatively gaining approximately \$20 million in new additive tax revenue that does not exist today. At the end of the 30-year term it will be put back on the tax roll.

Mr. Jessup also explained school taxpayers and municipal taxpayers are the same people. Currently, the Board of Education sets a budget and already receives 100% of what it requests from the taxpayers. Those are exactly the same taxpayers that will receive the influx of \$20 million in PILOT revenue into the municipal budget, where it will be used for all taxpayers.

It was also noted the property will include 28 affordable housing units toward our state mandated obligation, of which, seven will be for veteran housing.

**Barbara Tarchak, 26174 Westview:** Ms. Tarchak asked who the PILOT money will be dispersed to. Mr. Kovalcik noted 5% goes to the county and 95% goes to the Borough. He further explained that while some municipalities use the money to offset their taxes, we use it for capital purchases. We do not put it in our budget because we don’t want to become reliant on it and then have a problem when the PILOT term ends. There is a lot of forethought to what is done. We’ve built a capital budget projection that takes the PILOT revenues and staggers it in for general use of the public. For example, part of the revenue to help build the park at Orchard Mines comes from PILOTs, as well as the parking on Pine Street and other necessary one-time projects down the road.

Ms. Tarchak thanked the Mayor and Council for their efforts to make Wharton a better place.

**Mark Baldwin, 39 Columbia Street:** Mr. Baldwin inquired about the owner of Wharton Development A LP. He was told Talisker Corp., based in Canada, purchased the property approximately 4 years ago and the Planning Board approved this redevelopment project approximately 2.5 years ago. It was clarified that this Ordinance is to decide approval of the PILOT agreement, not the redevelopment project.

Mayor Chegwiddden closed the meeting to the public.

A motion was made by Councilman Binkoski and was seconded by Councilman Yeager to adopt O-9-25 on second and final reading.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 0	ABSTAIN: 0
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>			

Ordinance

Councilman Yeager introduced O-10-25, “An Ordinance Adding Chapter 315, Article IV, Section 34 of the Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton, County of Morris, State of New Jersey” on first reading, by title only.

A motion was made by Councilman Yeager and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to adopt O-10-25 on first reading.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 0	ABSTAIN: 0
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>			

Mayor Chegwiddden set the date of July 14, 2025 for second and final reading.

Ordinance

Councilman Yeager introduced O-11-25, “An Ordinance Amending Chapter 315, Article II, Section 8 of the Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton, County of Morris, State of New Jersey” on first reading, by title only.

A motion was made by Councilman Yeager and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to adopt O-11-25 on first reading.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 0	ABSTAIN: 0
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>			

Mayor Chegwiddden set the date of July 14, 2025 for second and final reading.

Resolution- Continued from Previous Meeting

Councilwoman Vasquez introduced R-86-25, “Resolution of the Borough of Wharton, In the County of Morris, New Jersey, Authorizing the Execution of a License Agreement for Borough Use of a Portion of Property Commonly Known as Wharton Commerce Center.”

A motion was made by Councilwoman Vasquez and was seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to adopt R-86-25.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 0	ABSTAIN: 0
<b>MOTION CARRIED</b>			

Discussion

- Proposed new Ordinance

It was explained the proposed new Ordinance is to encourage owners to fill vacant properties or storefronts to revitalize downtown, and Wharton as a whole. Fees would be charged if the properties remain vacant.

The Council agreed to review the regulations and proposed fee structure and discuss at another meeting.

Consent Agenda

Councilman Binkoski pulled R-104-25 from the Consent Agenda. It will be revisited at the July 14, 2025 meeting.

The following items are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Mayor and Council and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a council member or citizen so requests, in which case, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in a normal sequence on the agenda.

**Approval of Bills: Approve all bills referred to the Finance Committee**

R-95-25: Tax Overpayment Refund Block 1605- Lot 4.01  
R-96-25: Tax Overpayment Refund Block 1805- Lot 100.01  
R-97-25: Liquor License Renewals  
R-98-25: Stone Wall Preservation Grant  
R-99-25: Morris Canal Tow Path Grant Application  
R-100-25: Chapter 159 – Clean Communities  
R-101-25: Award Bid - Orchard Mine Phase I  
R-102-25: Payout Resolution - Miller  
R-103-25: Authorizing Application to the Local Finance Board for Issuance of Non-Recourse Redevelopment Area Bonds  
~~R-104-25: Approving Extinguishment of Easement and Receipt of New Easement~~  
R-105-25: Authorizing Preliminary Studies & Negotiations  
R-106-25: Renewal of Cooperative Pricing System  
R-107-25: Endorsement of Housing Development & Fair Share Plan

**Approve Recreation Facility Application- Wharton Soccer Club**

A motion was made by Council President Norton and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to approve all items listed on the Consent Agenda – except for R-104-25 which was previously removed.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6      NAY: 0      ABSENT: 0      ABSTAIN: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Correspondence**

- None

**Council Reports**

**Council President Norton:** He attended the Memorial Day Parade & Program at the park as well as Wharton Pride Clean-Up Day.

**Councilman Binkoski:** He attended the Memorial Day celebration. He noted Memorial Park is a nice place to have the ceremony and it was a great turnout. He also thanked Mr. Kovalcik for his help to the Finance Committee on a number of things they are working on.

**Councilwoman Jones:** She attended the Memorial Day celebration and it was an honor to witness the number of people in attendance. She also attended the Library Board meeting where they passed the budget. Wharton Pride Clean-Up Day was a great experience as well.

**Councilwoman Vasquez:** She attended the Memorial Day ceremony which was a very emotional experience. She met with our Zoning Official to exchange ideas for solutions to a few issues we are having in town. We currently have 22 cases in court. She thanked him for his work on these matters. She also thanked the residents for their patience during the sinkhole repair process as well as the DPW and Police Departments for all their hard work.

**Councilwoman Wickenheisser:** She congratulated all the officers who were sworn in. She noted how our police force has grown over the years and it's a great night to work together with Mine Hill and our shared services. She thanked Chief Young and everyone involved for their efforts during the sinkhole repairs. It didn't go unnoticed. She thanked the residents for their patience as well.

She and her husband attended a special program called TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) in Washington D.C., which is an organization assisting anyone who has lost a family member in the military. Volunteering to help out them out was an unforgettable experience.

She also thanked Mr. Jessup for explaining the PILOT and wanted to note it includes 7 veteran housing units, through the Bringing Veterans Home program, which assists the homeless veteran population

**Councilman Yeager:** He attended the Memorial Day Parade and thanked the American Legion for all they do for the town. He also attended Wharton Pride and thanked the Boy Scouts for volunteering. It's great to see everyone who comes back each year.

### **Mayor Chegwiddden's Report**

- He attended the Morris County Chamber Mayors' Panel meeting where housing and PILOTS were discussed and how municipalities are being overrun with legislation from Trenton.
- He also attended the Planning Board meeting where Costco has proposed 3-lanes exiting their parking lot to allow cars to make a right hand turn without sitting and waiting.
- He participated on a call with the Governor to plan for a possible NJ Transit strike.
- He and Mr. Hutchins attended a meeting with the Whippany River Coalition regarding river cleanup and de-snagging. They would like to start a group, with the surrounding towns, utilizing the same model for the Rockaway River. The Whippany River Coalition will present how their model works at the League of Municipalities Conference in November.
- He met with the DEP for the Fields at Orchard Mine project. The meeting went very well and the DEP is very happy with everything being done. Mr. Hutchins explained this is a restoration project to return the property to as close to its native condition as possible, and then develop a light recreational use park where people can sit, appreciate the pond and wildflowers, with quiet pathways and places to sit and read.
- He attended the Mayors Conference where the energy tax was discussed. S1408 was also discussed at the conference. This legislation proposes taking office & retail space and turning it into housing. S2347 and A4370 were discussed as well; these would allow residents to use accessory dwellings (such as garages) as housing.
- He was honored with the Arthur Ondish Excellent Leadership Award at the Mayor's Conference. He thanked the Council members, whose work helped make the award possible.
- He met with Chief Young and Mr. Kovalcik regarding installing cameras at all parks to deter vandalism.
- He attended the Memorial Day program, which was "a beautiful service and one of the nicest we've had".
- He enjoyed participating at Wharton Pride Cleanup Day and thanked all who came out to help.
- He attended a Zoom Town Hall meeting with the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Connie Sanchez. Dr. Sanchez is looking for a new curriculum and training, as our test scores have been below state proficiency standards for the last several years. Dr. Sanchez also promised to address complaints that outside organizations are using the turf field, while it is not available for locals when they want to use it.
- He spoke to the business owners from Main Street who are very thankful for the enforcement of 2-hour parking, as it has really helped lift their businesses.
- He attended a legislative meeting in Princeton.

- Regarding a question that was asked about redevelopment and student enrollment, there are currently 45 Choice Students enrolled in Wharton and there are 14 open spots. He noted there is no requirement to have Choice Students, and those spots could be used if enrollment numbers were to go up, which is not anticipated. Enrollment is reported to be 783 on the website.
- He noted cherry and maple trees would be planted along Chegwidden Way.
- The Pine Street parking lot is moving along. The survey, geo-investigation and borings have been done.
- Picnic tables will be added to 262 W. Dewey Ave., adjacent to the bandstand at Betty Poyer Field.
- Baker Ave Phase I is anticipated to start at the end of the school year. Mr. Hutchins confirmed there is one more crosswalk that will be repaired with new brick.
- He thanked the Council for approving the grant applications for the Tow Path and the Stone Wall preservation at the canal. So many people have commented on the beauty of that area and what we have done with it.
- A grant was submitted for the Columbia Street Park overhaul.
- The Lead Pipe remediation project is moving forward.
- We've submitted a grant application for dredging Washington Pond.
- He attended an RVRSA meeting and asked Mr. Hirniak to give an update on the status of the litigation with Jersey City MUA.

### Open to the Public

In accordance with Local Ordinance O-18-03, "The presiding officer shall have the discretion to terminate any repetitive, irrelevant or excessive public comment in the interest of permitting all members of the public time to speak on any governmental issue and completing the public business within a reasonable period of time."

Mayor Chegwidden opened the meeting to the public.

Barbara Tarchak, 26174 Westview: Ms. Tarchak asked if a new dog park is being considered. The mayor indicated that it is being considered but would not happen this year.

Paul Breda, 6 Potter Lane: Mr. Breda asked if projects such as Orchard Mine Park or the new parking lot would be built if there were no PILOT projects in Wharton. Mr. Jessup explained the projects most likely would not be built, as the town would have to apply for grants, which is a very competitive process; and tax revenues would not be able to cover the full costs of these projects. He then asked about the subject matter to be discussed in closed session and was told the discussion would be upon contracts, as referenced in the Resolution.

Scott Hutchins, DPW Director: Mr. Hutchins noted that some communities in Morris County are suffering as a result of poor planning for their affordable housing obligations. He lauded the Mayor and Council for being ahead of it. He then shared the story of a working farm in southern New Jersey where eminent domain is being used to make way for affordable housing units.

Staci Gasser, 68 Baker Ave: Ms. Gasser asked about affordable housing in Wharton. Mayor Chegwidden and Mr. Hirniak explained the NJ Department of Community Affairs sets the number of units the municipality is obligated to provide and the rates charged for those units.

Mayor Chegwidden closed the meeting to the public.

### Closed Session - Contracts

Council President Norton introduced R-108-25 to close the meeting to the public for discussion upon Contracts.

A motion was made by Council President Norton and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to approve R-108-25.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6    NAY: 0    ABSENT: 0    ABSTAIN: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**A motion was made by Council President Norton and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to return to open session.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6    NAY: 0    ABSENT: 0    ABSTAIN: 0**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Adjournment**

**A motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Binkoski and was seconded by Councilman Yeager.**

**June 16, 2025**

**BOROUGH OF WHARTON**

**ATTEST:**

**\_\_\_\_\_  
WILLIAM J. CHEGWIDDEN,  
MAYOR**

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Cheryl Muzzillo,  
Deputy Borough Clerk**