

REGULAR MEETING
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
DECEMBER 29, 2025

Mayor Chegwidden called the Meeting to Order.

Mayor Chegwidden read the Open Public Meeting Statement.

Roll Call

Mayor Chegwidden to request Roll Call:

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

Flag Salute

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

Volunteer Appreciation

Councilman Binkoski presented Resolution R-168-25 “Honoring Qualified Members of the Wharton Fire Department.”

A motion was made by Councilman Binkoski and seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to adopt R-168-25.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 5 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 1 ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED

Mayor Chegwidden presented Fire Chief Doug Ploth with the Volunteer Appreciation checks and wished all the members a Happy New Year.

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.

William Rogers, 2 Oak Ln.: – He stated he had prepared a question and statement on the tabled Ordinance No. 20-25. He was advised to save them, should the Ordinance be considered in the future.

No one else wishing to be heard, Mayor Chegwidden closed the meeting to the public.

Resolution

Councilman Yeager introduced R-169-25, “Resolution Authorizing the Appointment of a Police Officer.”

A motion was made by Councilman Yeager and seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to adopt R-169-25.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 5 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 1 ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED

Ordinance

Councilman Yeager presented O-19-25, “An Ordinance Amending Chapter 330, Section 20 H1 of the Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton, County of Morris, State of New Jersey” on second reading, by title only.

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

Mayor Chegwiddden closed the meeting to the public.

A motion was made by Councilman Yeager and seconded by Councilman Binkoski to adopt O-19-25 on second and final reading.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 5 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 1 ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED

Ordinance Tabled

Ordinance No. 20-25, "An Ordinance Amending Chapter 165, Article XV, Section 103 of the Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton, County of Morris, State of New Jersey"

A motion was made by Councilman Binkoski and seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to lay O-20-25 on the table.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 5 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 1 ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED

Consent Agenda

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
Approval of Minutes: 10/27/25, 11/17/25, 12/8/25
R-170-25: Municipal Alliance Application FY2027
R-171-25: Tax Sale Redemption TSC 25-00008 Pro Cap 8 FBO
R-172-25: Grant Application NJDOT Local Freight Impact Fund
R-173-25: CCKK - Escrow Reimbursement
R-174-25: Nouvelle - Escrow Reimbursement
R-175-25: Animal Pound-Shelter Shared Services Jefferson
R-176-25: Refund for Street Opening Escrows
R-177-25: Budget Transfers
R-178-25: Payout Resolution- Lupia
R-179-25: Authorize Agreement JCP&L
A motion was made by Councilman Binkoski and seconded by Councilman Yeager to approve all items listed on the Consent Agenda.
ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 5 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 1 ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence

- Wharton Mall v. Wharton Tax Appeal Settlement Memo

Mayor Chegwiddden explained that the Borough is legally required to cover the full \$25,000 tax appeal settlement and must maintain a reserve for such matters. Regarding PILOT programs, he noted that while the school district is not legally required to contribute to this settlement, its proportional share would have been \$17,500 if it were responsible. By law, the school district does not share responsibility for these unplanned expenses.

- Morris County Planning Board Minutes
- Letter from NJ DOT re: Morris Canal Tow Path Preservation Grant

Council Reports

Councilman Binkoski: Police negotiations are proceeding positively. Discussions are underway with the CFO and department heads to evaluate requirements for the upcoming budget. He thanked Councilman Norton and Councilwoman Vasquez for their years of service and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Jones: She wished everyone a Happy New Year. She attended the Library Board meeting and is happy to report the programs are very well attended. There were 146 children that attended the gingerbread house building. She also thanked the Mayor, Council and all those who have helped her as she's finishing up her 2nd year on the Council.

She especially wanted to thank the Mayor and Council for the \$15,000 PILOT allocation used for library roof and window repairs; future PILOT funds will support sanding and staining some of the Library walls, the Pine Street parking lot, and local fields. She thanked the Fire Department for the Santa tour and praised all Borough departments for their work during the four months of sinkhole repairs and recent fires. She welcomed new members Jennifer Hobbs and Marisa Gonzalez and thanked outgoing members Vasquez and Norton for their invaluable assistance.

Councilwoman Vasquez: She reflected on her journey from Ecuador to the Council in 2020. She wished the new Council members well and hoped that as they join the Council and see how things operate, they can allow the political walls to come down. She advised them not to listen to the outside noise; as we do not need two teams, but rather one united team for our community.

She thanked the Mayor, Council, and the residents for giving her the opportunity to be here, to learn, and to provide a better quality of life for herself and her family.

She also acknowledged Councilman Norton for his many years of service to the town and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Wickenheisser: She thanked Councilman Norton and Councilwoman Vasquez for their dedicated service to Wharton, and particularly recognized Councilman Norton for his years of commitment to our youth sports programs and Councilwoman Vasquez for the grace and diligence she brought to her role.

She noted that despite a challenging year marked by sinkholes, fires, and the loss of community members, including someone who worked with us, our staff and volunteers worked seamlessly as a team.

She also welcomed the new Councilwomen and looks forward to working together to fulfill their shared responsibility to our residents.

Councilman Yeager: He thanked Councilman Norton and Councilwoman Vasquez for their service, and welcomed our new Council members. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mayor Chegwidden's Report

The Mayor presented rocking chairs in honor of Councilwoman Vasquez's and Councilman Norton's service to the town.

In Councilman Norton's absence, the Mayor acknowledged his extensive involvement and many contributions to the community. He also shared a memory of meeting Councilwoman Vasquez while she was working; recognizing her work ethic, he encouraged her to run for Council. He noted that he admires how she sought out information to learn the role and has since become an excellent Councilwoman.

He welcomed our new Council members, Jennifer Hobbs and Marisa Gonzalez.

We have received a \$1.27 million grant to repair the walls at the Canal. We continue to work on making the Canal a premier destination and an enjoyable space for all residents. He is currently working with our CFO on projects for the upcoming year.

Reflecting on the past year, the Mayor acknowledged the challenges we faced, including the four-month sinkhole repair, community fires, and anonymous letters attacking our Administrator.

Finally, the Mayor attended the RVRSA meeting, thanked the DPW for their hard work in cleaning our roads, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

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 Chegwiddden opened the meeting to the public.

Scott Hutchins, DPW Director: He thanked the Police Department’s efforts to get cars off the roads before the storm.

William Rogers, 2 Oak Ln.: He joked that he was one of the two candidates defeated when Councilmembers Norton and Vasquez ran, and thanked them for doing all of the work he would have had to do if he had won. He thanked them for their service.

Carlos Lazo, 2A Curtis St.: He explained that he is having difficulty coming out of his driveway due to the parking situation on his street. He asked if the town could put up a no parking sign to alleviate the problem. He was advised to meeting with Chief Young after the meeting to see what could be done.

Mr. McGreevy, 1 Curtis St.: He also wanted to highlight the parking problem on Curtis Street and was advised to meet with Chief Young after the meeting.

Scott Hutchins, DPW Director: He reminded everyone there is no parking at all on the streets during a snowstorm.

Jennifer Hobbs, 40 Fern Ave.: She had a traffic concern on Kossuth Avenue near the Port Oram apartments. In the area where parking is permitted on only one side of the street, the road is narrowed to a single lane, allowing only one vehicle to pass at a time. She thanked Councilman Norton and Councilwoman Vasquez for their time and service to the town. She asked a question about PILOT money and it was clarified that these funds are not included in the general budget. Instead, they are held in a fund balance designated for specific projects. The Mayor explained this is similar to managing a credit card: funds must be set aside to pay the balance to ensure we can meet our financial obligations.

Mayor Chegwiddden closed the meeting to the public.

Closed Session

Councilman Binkoski introduced R-180-25 to close the meeting to the public for discussion upon Personnel.

A motion was made by Councilman Binkoski and seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to approve R-180-25.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 5	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 1	ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED			

A motion was made by Councilman Binkoski and seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to return to open session.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 5	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 1	ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED			

Adjournment

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