

**Township of Maple Shade
Council Meeting Minutes
Regular Session
June 11, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Maple Shade Township Council was called to order on June 11, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by those present followed by a moment of silence in memory of Xavier Taylor and in honor of the Taylor family.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act was provided by notifying the Township Clerk on December 23, 2025, posting notice on the municipal website, and posting notice on the official Municipal Bulletin Board on December 23, 2025.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Councilman Chuck Kauffman

Councilwoman Sandy Nunes

Councilman Andrew Simonsick

Councilman John Zahradnick

Mayor Heather Talarico

Also Present:

Township Staff and Professionals

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Township Manager Danson reported one accidental animal bite during the previous month involving a household pet. Residents were reminded to take precautions during the summer months by staying hydrated during periods of extreme heat, checking on elderly neighbors and family members, and protecting themselves from mosquito and tick-borne illnesses through the use of repellents, protective clothing, and routine tick checks.

Public Portion – Board of Health

No public comments were offered.

Adjournment – Board of Health

Motion to close the public portion and adjourn the Board of Health meeting carried unanimously.

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PRESENTATIONS

Louis Bay II Future Municipal Leaders Scholarship Competition

Mayor Talarico recognized the Township's participants in the 2026 Louis Bay II Future Municipal Leaders Scholarship Competition. Certificates of recognition were presented to Olivia Debert, Allison Gershenbaum, Chloe Kinlock, Emily Harshall, and Max Carey. Council also recognized Olivia Debert for being selected as a State Semi-Finalist. It was noted that Maple Shade had seven student participants, the highest municipal participation in the State during the inaugural year of the program.

PSE&G Route 73 Substation Update

Representatives from PSE&G presented an update on the Route 73/Willow Road electrical substation expansion project. The presentation reviewed the purpose of the project, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission reliability requirements, construction timeline, enhanced landscaping, physical security improvements, and the anticipated June 2027 completion date. Representatives also discussed the future fencing and landscaping of the adjacent parcel and answered Council questions regarding station operations and staffing.

Woodard & Curran Annual Utility Report

Representatives from Woodard & Curran presented their annual operations report covering the Township's water and wastewater systems. The presentation included staffing updates, health and safety initiatives, regulatory compliance, community outreach efforts, value-added services, grant funding assistance, PFAS settlement funding, infrastructure improvements, and long-term capital needs. Significant discussion centered on replacement of the Kings Highway Water Treatment Plant, improvements to pump stations, lead service line replacement, and grant opportunities to offset future capital costs. Council thanked the representatives for their continued partnership and service to the Township.

PROCLAMATIONS

Proclamation – Retirement of Chief of Police Christopher J. Fletcher

Mayor Talarico presented a proclamation recognizing Chief Christopher J. Fletcher upon his retirement after more than thirty years of distinguished service to the Maple Shade Police Department. The proclamation highlighted his leadership, commitment to professionalism, accreditation efforts, officer wellness initiatives, community policing programs, and dedication to public safety. Chief Fletcher thanked the Mayor, Council, Township administration, Police Department personnel, residents, and his family for their support throughout his career.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Public Portion – Consent Agenda

A resident requested clarification regarding Resolution No. 2026-R-107 involving the transfer of a surplus Township vehicle to the Berlin Fire Company. Administration explained that the vehicle had been declared surplus, Berlin Fire Company agreed to purchase the vehicle through an intergovernmental transfer, and the Township would receive payment for the vehicle. No additional comments were received.

Resolutions No. 2026-R-96 through No. 2026-R-115

Motion to approve Resolutions No. 2026-R-96 through No. 2026-R-115 carried by roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST

The following expenditures were presented:

Current Fund: \$3,040,347.28

Utility Fund: \$373,018.43

Capital Fund: \$297,270.72

Utility Capital Fund: \$63,531.00

Trust Fund: \$602,506.68

Grant Fund: \$4,663.27

The Township Manager advised that the Current Fund included a Board of Education tax payment together with normal operational expenditures. Motion to approve the Bill List carried by roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the May 2026 Council Meeting Minutes carried by roll call vote.

PUBLIC PORTION

Independent Fire Company Lease Discussion

Nick DiNiglio, President of the Independent Fire Company (IFC), addressed Council regarding the existing lease agreement for the Maple Avenue firehouse. He asserted that the lease remains in effect under its automatic renewal provisions, expressed concern regarding the suspension of lease payments beginning in January 2026, and questioned the Township's request for financial information as part of the lease negotiation process. Mr. DiNiglio requested payment of outstanding rent, continuation of lease payments, and renewed negotiations toward a revised lease agreement.

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Township Manager and Council responded that the requested financial information was necessary to satisfy statutory requirements governing the expenditure of public funds and recommendations of the Township's auditors. Manager Danson advised that the Township had repeatedly requested the documentation and that future lease payments would remain contingent upon receipt and review of the requested information.

Extensive discussion followed regarding the lease agreement, statutory requirements, maintenance responsibilities, historical financial arrangements, volunteer fire service operations, and the organizational relationship between the Maple Shade Township Fire Department and the Independent Fire Company. Council members emphasized their desire to resolve the matter cooperatively through a transparent public process and requested additional legal review where appropriate. No formal action was taken.

Additional public comments were received from representatives of the Independent Fire Company and residents regarding the lease, future fire service operations, and the importance of continued cooperation between all parties. The public portion was thereafter closed.

STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL REPORTS

Council Comments

Members of Council expressed condolences to the families of longtime community volunteers Bob Sauselein and Michelle McComb Fox, recognizing their many years of service to Maple Shade. Council members also congratulated Gina and Renee on their recent election results, thanked organizers of the Cops and Bobbers fishing event, discussed future improvements to Steinhauer Pond, encouraged continued community support for Xavier Taylor and his family, and recognized the strong voter participation during the recent Primary Election.

Operations Report

The Township Manager reviewed the Maple Shade Board of Education's proposed 2026-2027 budget, including increases in medical and prescription insurance costs, contractual salary obligations, reductions in State aid, staffing reductions, and the estimated impact on the average homeowner. Council was also advised of upcoming recreation events, including the Independence Day Parade and Concerts in the Park series.

The Township Manager reported that Council approved multiple roadway and infrastructure projects, including improvements to North Terrace Avenue, North Coles Avenue Phase II, the Broadway/North Forklanding drainage project, and engineering services for Windsor Avenue Phase I. The Department of Public Works completed

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numerous maintenance activities, including the annual household cleanup event, Buttonwood Avenue improvements, stormwater maintenance, landscaping, and park maintenance.

Additional departmental reports included EMS activity, tax collection statistics, finance activities, award of the 2026 Clean Communities Grant, ongoing audit and grant administration work, and continued monitoring of capital projects. Administration also recommended rescheduling the August Council meeting to August 6th due to scheduling conflicts.

Police Department Report

The Police Department reported on a significant motor vehicle crash investigation involving an overturned vehicle following an alleged road rage incident, legislative updates concerning New Jersey's new electric bicycle law, recent community policing events including Cops and Bobbers and the Law Enforcement Torch Run, support provided during the Main Street Maple Shade Food Truck Festival, preparations for the Township's annual fireworks celebration, and monthly police activity statistics. Council commended the Police Department for its continued community engagement and proactive public safety efforts.

Engineer's Report

Township Engineer representatives provided updates regarding completion of the lime system improvements, North Terrace Avenue water main and roadway improvements, Jake's Place improvements, ongoing sanitary sewer punch list work, and other utility projects. Additional discussion occurred regarding capital planning, future Police Department equipment needs, EMS vehicle replacement planning, and infrastructure improvements at the Department of Public Works.

Capital Budget Discussion

Township Manager Danson and CFO Heaton continued its presentation of the proposed 2026 Capital Budget and requested Council direction regarding priorities for the upcoming capital ordinance. The Manager reviewed pending requests from the Police Department, EMS, Public Works, Recreation, and other departments, noting that available capital funding would require prioritization of projects.

Discussion centered on replacement of aging municipal infrastructure, including HVAC improvements at the Municipal Building, replacement of Department of Public Works fuel management equipment, roadway improvements, recreation facilities, and emergency service vehicles. Manager Danson advised that several projects had been

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identified in the Township's existing six-year capital program and requested guidance regarding which projects Council wished to advance during the current funding cycle.

Council discussed the request submitted by Maple Shade EMS for replacement ambulances. Members generally agreed that replacement of at least one ambulance should remain a priority while continuing to evaluate long-term funding needs in light of potential State legislation affecting emergency medical services.

Additional discussion occurred regarding replacement of the Fire Department command vehicle, continued Police Department vehicle replacement under the established fleet rotation program, and funding for improvements at the Woodlawn Recreation Complex, including stabilization of the sinkhole area, drainage improvements, sidewalks, benches, and other park amenities.

Council also discussed the importance of pursuing available grant opportunities to offset recreation and infrastructure costs whenever possible. The Manager advised that grant opportunities continued to be monitored for recreation, environmental, transportation, and public safety projects.

Councilman Simonsick emphasized the importance of long-range infrastructure planning, including stormwater management, mapping of underground infrastructure, roadway life-cycle planning, and prioritization of utility improvements before roadway resurfacing projects. Manager Danson responded that these planning efforts were already incorporated into the Township's capital improvement planning process through coordination with the Township's engineering consultants and utility professionals.

No formal action was taken during the capital budget discussion. Administration staff will continue refining the proposed capital program and present a draft capital ordinance for Council's consideration at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Redevelopment Area Designations

Township Manager Danson reviewed the statutory process for designating areas in need of redevelopment and rehabilitation. Following discussion, Council expressed support for directing the Joint Land Use Board to investigate potential redevelopment and rehabilitation areas, including the Route 73 corridor and the Main Street commercial district. Manager Danson was directed to prepare the appropriate resolution for future Council consideration.

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Business and Economic Development Commission

The Manager reviewed the current composition of the Business and Economic Development Commission (BEDC), noting existing vacancies and discussing potential amendments to the ordinance governing the Commission. Council discussed expanding membership, including consideration of a student representative, strengthening partnerships with Burlington County, the Maple Shade Business Association, and other economic development organizations, and aligning the Commission's efforts with future redevelopment and rehabilitation initiatives. Council expressed support for restructuring the Commission and recruiting new members to provide additional perspectives and assist with business recruitment and retention efforts.

Leaf Collection Program

Council discussed the Township's annual leaf collection program after the Manager presented estimated collection and disposal costs. Members reviewed the financial, environmental, and operational impacts of the program, while also recognizing the benefit provided to residents, particularly seniors and those unable to manage leaf disposal independently.

Discussion included opportunities to expand public education regarding mulching, composting, and other sustainable alternatives while continuing to evaluate future program modifications. Council generally agreed to continue the existing leaf collection program at this time and directed Manager Danson to enhance educational outreach concerning leaf management practices and available assistance programs for eligible residents.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned until the next Regular Council Meeting scheduled for July 9, 2026.