



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

Special Meeting

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Cynthia Mota, Natalie Santos, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Candida Affa, Santo Napoli, Jeremy Binder, and Cristian Pungo

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE (To be Voted On):

15-8168

Bill 1

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, confirming that the budget submitted by the Mayor to the City Clerk on January 1, 2026, being the same budget as submitted by the Mayor to City Council on October 16, 2025 is the 2026 Budget adopted by City Council.

Sponsors: Administration, Affa and Napoli

Attachments: [Bill 1_2026 Budget Adoption.doc](#)

[BudgetBills.pdf](#)

[Ordinance #16185 along with Bills 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, and 90.pdf](#)

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that they are going to get started stating Council's Solicitor, Ms. Montero will give them the lay of the land, where we are and what this means and entitles and asked her to take it away.

Attorney Maria Montero thanked Mr. Napoli and stated that Allentown City Council is here this evening to vote on Bill 1. That is the budget that was presented by the mayor.

Mr. Santo Napoli thanked Attorney Montero. He asked Mr. Hanlon if he can read the Bill, please.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that Bill 1 is an Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, confirming that the budget submitted by the Mayor to the City Clerk on January 1, 2026, being the same budget as submitted by the Mayor to City Council on October 16, 2025 is the 2026 Budget adopted by City Council.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that they will take comments from the dais. He stated go ahead, Ms. Gerlach.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that Bill 1 should include all of the items that are listed. All of amended items that we previously voted on which on included in Bill 2. In addition to that, it would be the reduction in the trash fee, the \$50.

Ms. Natalie Santos Seconded that Motion.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that we have a first and a second on the amendment so we will speak to the amendment. He asked Mr. Hanlon to remind him if Council votes on the amendment first or comments from the dais.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated comments from the dais.

Mr. Santo Napoli asked if there were any comments from the dais regarding the amendment by Ms. Gerlach and seconded by Santos.

Mr. Michael Hanlon spoke. (inaudible) Microphone off.

Mr. Santo Napoli thanked Mr. Hanlon.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that she is kind of confused because in Bill 2, she knows that they are concentrated on Bill 1, but in Bill 2, she believes it said pretty much the same thing, so. She asked if Mr. Hanlon can explain Bill 1.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated go ahead Ms. Gerlach.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that the reason she choose to make the amendment now is because as they know when you have a Bill in front of you, you make the amendment on that Bill. She stated to Dr. Mota you have been elected for a long time. Ms. Affa has been elected for a while stating that she can't recall a time when she has been elected where she ever voted on a Bill, passed or failed and then retroactively then added stuff to that Bill that has already passed. She stated that it is just off.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that it is fair enough. She stated to Ms. Gerlach that you are doing this to make sure.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that they always legislatively do it. She stated yeah, that's it.

Mr. Michael Hanlon (inaudible) mic off. He stated that the amendments that

Ms. Gerlach is referring to does not include the reduction in the tax increase. He stated in that Bill 1 is still contains for the record the 3.96 percent tax increase.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated repeat that again, Mr. Hanlon.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that Ms. Gerlach's amendments do not include the 3.96 percent ta reduction. He stated that is still clearly in Bill 1 as presented.

Ms. Candida Affa stated then we do vote on Bill 1 also.

Mr. Cristian Pungo stated that he believes Councilperson Gerlach's opinion is that the Motion is that the amendments be included as part of Bill 1, essentially doing both votes simultaneously with the inclusion of the garbage fee, with the change to the garbage fee.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated sort of, but procedurally, they will vote on the amendment that would pass or fail and then they would have to go back and Mr. Hanlon would say, ok, Bill 1 as amended.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated correct.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated so then potentially if you wanted these amended items to be in a Bill that includes a tax increase so essentially the compromised thing and if you want that, you would vote yes on the amendments and then yes on Bill 1, but if you don't want to raise taxes, you would eventually end up voting no on Bill 1. She stated that you can vote yes on the amendments and vote no against Bill 1.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that Bill 1 does not include the garbage fee.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated unless it gets amended.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that Bill 1 includes the garbage fee as presented by the mayor. He stated that Ms. Gerlach is proposing an amendment to reduce the \$140 increase by \$50 in the amendment.

Mr. Santo Napoli asked if there were any questions from the dais.

Mr. Cristian Pungo stated that he guess for clarification sake the amendments to reduce the garbage and waste fee would be essentially picking up the previous amendment, essentially from December that offset that reduction with the borrowing from the Solid Waste Fund, correct?

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated yes, to her understanding.

Ms. Candida Affa stated if she is voting to say yes for Bill 1, she can also vote yes for the amendments in Bill 2, correct?

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated yeah, because they are part and first off they will vote on all the amendments that are listed in Bill 2.

Ms. Candida Affa stated then we will go to Bill 1.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated yeah, then we will go to Bill 1.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that the way they had it previously, just for full transparency, our legal department recommended to do it in the cadence that would and what they did with Bill 1 and Bill 2. Package them together stated maybe they can try it and hope it doesn't affect any outcomes, but the plan was to vote Bill 1 and Bill 2 and finish off. He asked if there were any other questions or comments.

Mr. Jeremy Binder stated with the trash reduction, his concern for the grand scheme of it is, this is ultimately still charging everyone the same amount. Effectively, they are charging more because we are putting interest on top of this. He looked at maybe potentially reducing what the interest fee would be potentially allocating that for that specific thing and asked is now the time to even bring that and asked is that a friendly amendment thing or is that sort of thing that it is simply this is what is what they just passed it. This way they just pass it and it comes up again. He asked what is the process.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that they can and stated that Ms. Patel is here from the administration. He stated that Council can ask her about some options. He stated that she is here and see if there are any options they can work on tonight. He stated that they can do it on the spot, but it is something.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she is open to a friendly amendment.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that it is definitely worth a conversation and having an open ended conversation. He stated that they will start and asked them to hold their thought, please. He asked Ms. Patel if there is any information that she can give Council regarding Mr. Binder's question.

Ms. Bina Patel stated good evening Councilpersons and stated excellent question. She stated that would be General Fund lending the \$2 million and stated that they are reducing the garbage fees per unit at \$50 and the shortfall will be \$2 million. She stated approximately \$2 million that the General Fund will lend to the Solid Waste Fund. It will be borrowing for five

years at a three percent interest rate. She stated that three percent came up because TD Bank is correctly on our balances and providing us with three percent interest. The reason for including interest is to keep the value of money in the General Fund. She stated that if they are lending the money to another fund, they need to keep the General Fund whole and assessing the interest would keep that value of the money. She stated that they have done this in the past with other funds. They have lent money to the AO Fund in 2024. That was \$817,000 with an interest charge as well. They have done unknown to the Golf Fund with a similar concept. She stated to answer your question, if you use that interest money for something else and you are depleting the value in the General Fund. She stated that she would discourage them from using the interest money for another source.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated ok, thank you.

Mr. Jeremy Binder asked if he could ask another question.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated sure.

Mr. Jeremy Binder stated with respect to the process. He stated that he concern comes in and he fully supports trying to figure out how to round this out so it is not much of an impact this year, but his overall concern is ending up costing every resident more money in the long run. In giving what he has been learning in the past two weeks in this process and stated that he is very, very concerned about the increase in costs over and over again. He stated that his question again procedurally, if that is on and maybe he is not supporting the trash right now then all the amendments are gone at that point if you are voting no and it gets reintroduced again. He asked is that how it works or is it per.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that they can ask Ms. Gerlach to amend it, if she chooses to or they can vote and they can come back and do the second round. He stated that he is open to either option to get them to the finish line.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that so if she is hearing him right, she would prefer which essentially be everything that is listed and all the amendments that are listed in Bill 2 so do not add on the trash fee reduction.

Mr. Jeremy Binder stated that yeah, he thinks he prefers that at this time.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she will change her amendment to that.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated so we have an amended amendment and they

have a first and a second. He asked if there were any other questions or comments behind the dais and/or from our Solicitor or any comments. He stated that they will now take comments from the public on the amendment that Ms. Gerlach proposed in front of us that is on the table. He stated that they will call for a vote on the amendment.

A motion was made by Ce-Ce Gerlach, seconded by Natalie Santos, that Bill 1 should include all of the items that are listed and all of the amended items that Council previously voted on which are included in Bill 2 and in addition to that it will be the reduction of the trash fee, the \$50.

Yes: 7 - Cynthia Mota, Natalie Santos, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Candida Affa, Santo Napoli, Jeremy Binder, and Cristian Pungo

Enactment No: 16185

Mr. Santo Napoli stated so now we are back to Bill 1 as amended by Ms. Gerlach and he will take questions and/or comments from the dais on Bill 1.

Mr. Michael Hanlon asked Ms. Gerlach if she would like to reintroduce her amendment.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated sorry.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated he was saying or anticipating her reintroducing her \$50 amendment.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated um, not at this time, but if someone else wants to because it seems like a point of negotiation.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated go ahead.

Mr. Jeremy Binder stated that he has a comment and will try to be brief, but it is a little long so stating thank you, president Napoli. He stated that it is unfortunate that they are in this position today. They are here because the administration and City Council failed to fulfill a core obligation for the residents of Allentown which is to pass a balanced budget. Over the past week in preparation for today's meeting, he read through the budget narrative, met with both Solicitors, the Controller, the Finance Director, several Councilmembers and around 30 residents throughout Allentown. In 2019, after another challenging budget season, Allentown voters overwhelmingly passed a Referendum that gives the City Council more authority in this budget process. He stated as he understands it, the purpose of this Referendum was to remove the ability for a default budget to automatically go into effect. Unfortunately, it did not include guidance on what would happen if no agreement was reached stating from a governance perspective, Bill 1 is effectively a lose, lose scenario. Voting

yes on this Bill violates the will of the voters. Addressing the desires to have two bodies work together to create a budget. Voting no on this Bill places us in direct violation of the state of Pennsylvania requirements for a balanced budget to be completed by December 31st. He stated as such, voting no on this Bill would be a violation of state law and the Oath that many of them took just last week. He stated for that reason, he will be voting yes. However, at the next City Council meeting on January 21st, he will be presenting a Resolution that is focused on two key questions that need to be clearly defined moving forward. First, what happens procedurally in this situation. If the situation occurs again and second, what are the consequences if a budget is not reached. The goal of this is to establish clear expectations so that everyone involved in the budget process: City Council, the administration, and the public understands the steps that need to be taken and the implications if an agreement is not reached. He stated that in closing, he ran for this opportunity to be on Council, when he ran for this opportunity he did so because with the understanding of voters across the city who are frustrated with the lack of cooperation and compromise between the administration and City Council. He stated that they are dealing with a 2025 issue right now. It is 2026. He stated that he would encourage both his colleagues and the administration to begin anew. He stated that they have the opportunity to do great things, but need to work together and eager to get past this setback and get started by addressing the many important issues that voters spoke to him about in the past year. Thank you.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated thank you, well said. He asked if there were any questions and/or comments from colleagues. He stated that they will take any questions or comments from the public regarding Bill 1. He stated on, we will call for a vote.

A motion was made by Ce-Ce Gerlach, seconded by Natalie Santos, that Bill 1 should include all of the items that are listed and all of the amended items that Council previously voted on which are included in Bill 2 with the exception of pulling out the garbage fee reduction.

Yes: 7 - Cynthia Mota, Natalie Santos, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Candida Affa, Santo Napoli, Jeremy Binder, and Cristian Pungo

Enactment No: 16185

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that Mr. president we have four yeas and three nays. It passes.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that we will move to Bill 2.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he is thinking Council already included.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that there is no need for Bill 2.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he was not sure if they still had to ratify anything, but you are saying that it is all included.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that is what he is saying, yup.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated ok.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he is deferring to.

Mr. Santo Napoli asked Ms. Montero are they good.

Attorney Maria Montero stated yes. Everything that was listed in Bill 2 was amended through Councilperson Gerlach.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated ok, just making sure we are on point stating at this point, we are adjourning, right? He stated that this adjourns the meeting. Thank you everyone.

Yes: 4 - Candida Affa, Santo Napoli, Jeremy Binder, and Cristian Pungo

No: 3 - Cynthia Mota, Natalie Santos, and Ce-Ce Gerlach

Enactment No: 16185

15-8172

Bill 2

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending the General Fund, Rental Licensing Fund, Building Code Fund, and Grant Fund pursuant to City of Allentown Home Rule Charter §808 and City of Allentown Administrative Code §5-16 as follows:

Sponsors: Gerlach and Santos

Attachments: [Bill 2 Amendments](#)

Previous Bills: Not for Action

15-8040

Bill 84

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing the General Fund, Administrative Order Fund, Risk Management Fund, Debt Service Fund, Equipment Fund, and Golf Fund Budgets for 2026.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No. 84 -2026 BUDGET AND TAX RATE.docx](#)

15-8041

Bill 85

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing and adopting the Building Code Fund Budget for 2026 for Community and Economic Development per Chapter 270 of City code for Building Fees.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No 85 . - 2026 BUILDING CODE FUND.doc](#)

[15-8042](#) Bill 86

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, adopting the Liquid Fuels Fund Budget for 2026.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No.86 - 2026 LIQUID FUELS.doc](#)

[15-8043](#) Bill 87

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing and adopting the Rental Unit Licensing Fund Budget for 2026 and amending Article 1759 – Landlord and Rental Fee by maintaining the Residential Rental Fees.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No.87 -2026 RENTAL UNIT FUND.doc](#)

[15-8044](#) Bill 88

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing and adopting the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Budget for 2026 and amending Article 1131, Municipal Waste Storage, Collection and Disposal by increasing the Solid Waste Fee at Seven Hundred Forty (\$740) Dollars.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No. 88- 2026- SOLID WASTE FUND AND FEE.doc](#)

[15-8045](#) Bill 89

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing and adopting the Stormwater Fund Budget for 2026 and amending Article 393.15 – Stormwater Utility Fee by maintaining the Stormwater Utility Fee at Twenty (\$20) Dollars per Five Hundred (500) square feet of impervious surface.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No.89- 2026 STORMWATER FUND AND FEE.doc](#)

[15-8046](#) Bill 90

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, adopting the Trexler Fund Budget for 2026.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No.90 - 2026 TREXLER FUND.doc](#)

ADJOURNED: 7:17 PM