

MINUTES
BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING
February 11, 2025
7:00 PM
MAYOR BARSA

COUNCILMAN ASCOLESE	COUNCILMAN BRIZZOLARA
COUNCILWOMAN DEBIASA	COUNCILMAN FOSCHINO
COUNCILWOMAN HAUSMANN	COUNCIL PRESIDENT KIM

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Norwood was held at Borough Hall on the above date.

Mayor Barsa called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and led those in attendance in a salute to the American Flag and asked for a moment of silence.

Mayor Barsa stated:

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, setting forth the time, date, place and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in the Record and Star Ledger, filing a copy in the Borough Clerk’s office, and posting on the bulletin board.”

ROLL CALL OF THE COUNCIL

Roll Call:	Mayor Barsa	Present
	Councilman Ascolese	Present
	Councilman Brizzolara	Present
	Councilwoman DeBiasa	Present
	Councilman Foschino	Present
	Councilwoman Hausmann	Present
	Council President Kim	Present

CORRESPONDENCE

Grant Report January 2026
Building Department January 2026
Fire Department Report January 2026
Police Department Report January 2026

Mayors Remarks

Good evening. Most of our residents have received preliminary value letters from Appraisal Systems. To help alleviate confusion and promote understanding of what it means for Norwood I will be holding a town hall meeting next Wednesday at 7pm to go over the process and next steps. If you received your letter now is the time to contact Appraisal Systems directly to schedule an appointment to meet with the inspectors.

We are going to begin our evening acknowledging the accomplishment of the Norwood Public School soccer team. This group of children won the first soccer championship for NPS since 2016. It was a thrilling game that went into overtime, and included penalty kicks, to beat undefeated Closter.

PRESENTATION

Norwood Public School Soccer Champions

Mayor Barsa welcomed the Norwood Public School soccer team and congratulated them on their championship win. Mayor Barsa and Councilman Foschino presented the team with certificates acknowledging their accomplishment.

Apptegy

Clay Rogers from Apptegy gave a presentation to the governing body regarding the new Borough website platform. Mr. Rogers showed an example of a municipal app so the governing body has an idea of what to expect. He went through the different functions that will be available on the app and how they benefit the residents. The app will automatically translate to the language setting of their phone. Mr. Rogers explained that the Borough can send out push notifications that will alert on all phones that have the app. Councilwoman Hausmann asked if there was a central calendar feature. Mr. Rogers said the app and website will both have a master calendar. Councilwoman DeBiasa asked if you could create a calendar to show field usage, or to create multiple calendars. Mr. Rogers said there can be multiple calendars integrated. Councilwoman DeBiasa asked if users can be tailored for specific permissions. Mr. Rogers said that is possible. Council President Kim asked if there are restrictions how much data can be uploaded. Mr. Rogers said there is no cap on data. Council President Kim also asked if there is a way to use AI to find things about Norwood that are online and bring them to our website. Mr. Rogers said there is an option to have an AI chatbot but it will only pull from the website, not the internet. Mayor Barsa asked if there was anything needed to move forward with setup and design. Mr. Rogers said nothing is needed at this time and the conversations are ongoing. Mr. Rogers showed the governing body the current mockup of the website. Mayor Barsa said he is very impressed about the app. Mr. Padovano said Norwood has always been green but the town and fields are slowly becoming blue and gold. Apptegy was asked to provide mockups in both green and blue and gold. He asked what the council feels about the color choices. Councilwoman

Hausmann said the navy blue looks very clean. Mr. Rodgers said Apptegy offers a website redesign every year at no additional cost.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

1. Ordinance 2026:01 – An Ordinance of The Borough of Norwood Amending Chapter 233-40.1 Of the Borough Code Entitled “Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning District” In Furtherance of The Borough’s Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

Public Hearing on Ordinance 2026:01 will be February 25, 2026

The mayor read the ordinance by title. Motion by Councilman Ascolese, second by Council President Kim, that Ordinance 2026:01 be introduced on first reading, with a public hearing on February 25, 2026.

There being six (6) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2026:01 was approved

2. Ordinance 2026:02 – An Ordinance of The Borough of Norwood Amending Chapter 233-40.1 Of the Borough Code Entitled “Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning District” In Furtherance of The Borough’s Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

Public Hearing on Ordinance 2026:02 will be February 25, 2026

The mayor read the ordinance by title. Motion by Councilman Brizzolara, second by Councilman Ascolese, that Ordinance 2026:02 be introduced on first reading, with a public hearing on February 25, 2026.

There being six (6) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2026:02 was approved

3. Ordinance 2026:03 – An Ordinance Repealing Chapter 233, Articles XI And XII Of The Code Of The Borough Of Norwood Entitled “Affordable Housing Requirements” And “Affordable Housing Development Fees And Trust Fund,” And Establishing A New Article XI Entitled “Affordable Housing Ordinance”, To Address The Requirements Of The Fair Housing Act (FHA) As Amended, And The Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC), As Amended, Regarding Compliance With The Borough’s Affordable Housing Obligations

Public Hearing on Ordinance 2026:03 will be February 25, 2026

Councilwoman DeBiasa asked who is in charge of checking that the tenant’s income are correct. Mayor Barsa said it falls under Mr. Brescia, and the Affordable Housing Board, to monitor the tenant’s income. Councilwoman DeBiasa also asked who is monitoring the 55 and older units at Daibes property. Mayor Barsa said that is the

responsibility of the landlord. Mr. Corriston said there is something in the resolution that they need to report to the Construction Official once a year that they are certifying the tenants fit the requirements.

The mayor read the ordinance by title. Motion by Councilman Brizzolara, second by Councilman Ascolese, that Ordinance 2026:03 be introduced on first reading, with a public hearing on February 25, 2026.

There being six (6) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2026:03 was approved

CONSENT AGENDA

Matters listed below are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion of the Council and one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests an item be removed.

Approval of the Following Minutes:

January 21, 2026 Mayor & Council Meeting
January 21, 2026 Mayor & Council Meeting Closed Session

Approval of the following Resolutions:

2026:55 Resolution to Approve the Mutual Aid Assistance Agreement Between the Norwood Fire Department and the Sparkill-Palisades Fire District
2026:56 Resolution Authorizing the Borough of Norwood Police Department to Participate in the Defense Logistics Agency, Law Enforcement Support Office 1033 Program to Enable the Police Department to Request and Acquire Excess Department of Defense Equipment
2026:57 Resolution Authorizing 2026 Appropriation Reserve Transfers
2026:58 Resolution Adopting an Affirmative Marketing Plan
2026:59 Resolution Adopting an Affordable Housing Spending Plan
2026:60 Payment of Vouchers
2026:61 Resolution Authorizing the Collector of Taxes to Refund Payment to The Listed Taxpayer Due to Duplicate Payment

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Foschino to approve the amended Consent Agenda and that December 10, 2025, and January 7, 2026, Mayor & Council Meeting minutes be approved for content and release. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hausmann

Councilwoman Hausmann said there is an AARP grant un to \$2500.00. We will not be able to do the community center bathrooms with this grant. She spoke with the grant writer to look into installing a wheelchair accessible door at the Police Department. The quote for the door, including installation, is \$70,000.00. She has asked the grant writer to look into other grants that can be used towards this project. Councilman Ascolese suggested installing one ADA door and framing around it for a less expensive options. Councilwoman Hausmann suggested using the open space grant to install a walking path in the woods across the street from Northwoods. We could not move forward with it until the budget is done because it is a matching grant. She also feels the Borough should not move forward with nonessential matching grants.

The Environmental Commission has paused all outdoor events and will continue them in the spring. The Commission would like to come to the March work session to discuss their goals for the upcoming year. Councilwoman Hausmann noted that the Planning Board member, who is also a member of the Environmental; Commission has not been to a meeting since 2024. The Environmental Commission would like to have a relationship with all Boards. There is a vacancy on the Commission and she would like the Mayor to appoint Mark Holbrook to the Commission. Mayor Barsa said he has spoken to residents who are interested and hopes to make a decision by the next meeting. Mayor Barsa said he will speak to the Commission member who has not appear at recent meetings. The Commission would like to invite the Recycling Coordinators to the Commission meeting to discuss community composting.

Council President Kim

Council President Kim said that NVOT earned the AP Honor Roll silver award. There is a project to add a modular building to Northern Valley Central. The turf field at NVOT is nearly done. There is one HIB violation at the high school. The debate team will be participating at a regional competition in March.

The library has had some issues with checks being fraudulently endorsed with the library accounts. They are looking into the issue and taking it seriously. They held a Lunar New Year celebration on February 8th. In January 22 new people visited the library.

The Greenway Project has lost their marketing/PR person. They are looking to possibly use a lobbyist in the DC area.

Councilman Ascolese

Councilman Ascolese said he attended the Seniors Club meeting and they have talked about improving the bus service. Norwood and Northvale are in discussions to have

a shared service. Councilman Ascolese said Mr. Padovano did a great job putting information together about the surrounding towns and how they use the senior van. Details of the Personnel meeting will be discussed in closed.

Chief Federici said that two officers have had accomplishments. Det. Palazzola has become an accredited traffic accident reconstructionist. There are only 61 in the state. Lt. Amatucci graduated from the States Police Chiefs Association Command and Leadership Academy. Also, at the start of the year officers responded to a call and that resulted in the arrest of individuals who were stealing mail out of the mailbox in front of the post office. The Detectives are working with US Postal Inspectors to see if they can link them to other crimes.

Councilwoman DeBiasa

Councilwoman DeBiasa said she attended both Board of Health meetings. They have started the 2026 inspections of the local businesses. They are working on their 2026 budget. They are discussing yoga in the park for 2026. They would also like to be involved in the 5K.

The Construction Office had 38 permits issued in December and 25 in January. Two CO's were issued in December and three in January.

Councilwoman DeBiasa said she attended a meeting with Mayor where they went over the reassessment numbers with the Tax Assessor.

Councilwoman Hausmann also attended a Finance Committee meeting, Personnel Committee meeting, and an affordable housing meeting.

Councilman Brizzolara said there is a problem with the bamboo ordinance. It makes people remove bamboo 10 ft off the property line and no one is grandfathered in. He feels this ordinance should be reviewed again. Mayor Barsa said he felt they were supposed to do remediation if it is on the property. Mr. Padovano said it will be listed for discussion on the work session agenda.

Councilman Brizzolara

Councilman Brizzolara said the Finance Committee met with the Administrator and CFO. This is going to be a tough year. A summary of the information has been shared with the governing body. The budget is starting at a tax increase of nearly 13%. There are many issues such as the debt and garbage contract which expires this year. The surplus might need to be used to help offset the budget. It would bring the budget down to a 9% increase. Councilman Ascolese said normally, in budget season, there are two meetings. The second meeting will be a budget meeting. Mr. Padovano said that last year there was a budget meeting at 5pm before the work session. Councilwoman DeBiasa suggested looking at the contracts to see if they can save

money. Councilman Brizzolara said he is concerned for people that have had their taxes increased because of the reassessment.

Councilman Foschino

The Recreation Committee is looking to expand the programs that are offered by having resident volunteers teach classes or give presentations to the community members. They are looking to include offerings for all age groups. Anyone who is interested in volunteering should email their proposal to the recreation secretary. They are also looking to see the interest in joining a flag football league. The league is for boys and girls from 1st through 8th grade. If any families are interested in joining flag football please email the recreation secretary and share your interest. Registration is open for the 2026 baseball, softball, and t-ball season. The link to register is on the borough website and facebook page or you can go directly to the baseball softball website. NVOT has submitted a field use request for the freshman team to use the Knickerbocker field as they have done in the past. NVSC has also submitted a request to use Trackside again for the spring season. The Committee has discussed what they would like to see the Recreation Improvement Grant used for. They have submitted a list of ideas which has been left for everyone on the dais.

Councilman Foschino said he attended the Fire Department meeting with Councilwoman DeBiasa. The Fire Department had an active month. The report was included in the agenda packet.

The DPW did a fantastic job with snow removal. Councilman Foschino thanked the Westphal and Plescia families for lending equipment to the Borough for snow remover. He was also able to donate equipment from his company. He will continue to work with Director Tracy to research shared services with other towns. He would like to schedule a Shared Service Committee meeting in the very near future.

The snow removal was an intensive process for two weeks. The DPW first went to the school to widen the streets, they also removed snow from Livingston, Kensington, Somerset, and Cobblestone Crossing.

The Norwood Public School had its Board of Education meeting last night. Tomorrow there will be a meeting from 6:30pm-8pm to discuss the referendum.

Mr. Tracy said the county has reimbursed the Borough about 8,500 for plowing the county roads.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Ascolese. All council members present approved the motion.

Mr. Jason Argenti, 380 Livingston Street, congratulated Councilwoman DeBiasa and Councilman Foschino on their recent election wins. He thanked the governing body for hiring the right people for the right jobs. He thanked the governing body for the snow removal and said the approach Director Tracy uses is better than surrounding towns. He specifically thanked Mayor Barsa, Mr. Padovano, and Director Tracy for clearing the snow from Norwood Gardens. He also said Chief Federici is doing a great job and is very well respected by the officers.

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann. All council members present approved the motion.

CLOSED SESSION

2026:62 Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Council to Proceed in
Closed Session – Matters of Employment

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to close the regular meeting and go to closed session. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilman Ascolese. All council members present approved the motion.

RETURN TO OPEN

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to return to open session of the regular meeting. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Foschino and seconded by Councilman Ascolese. All council members present approved the motion.

Councilman Foschino made a motion to approve advertising for the DPW Assistant Director position. The advertisement will include the candidate must have a CPWM certification and the salary range will be \$115,000 to \$135,000. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ascolese. On a roll call vote all members of the Council voted yes with the exception of Councilman Brizzolara who felt that this decision undermines the current leadership and could affect his self-esteem. He also feels it could affect his ability to lead and how he is viewed by the employees of the department. He would like to see a further financial analysis as well as there is a budget crisis. Councilman Foschino said this is only to approve the advertisement for the Assistant Director position and salary range.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was forwarded Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Council President Kim. All council members present approved the motion. Meeting was adjourned the meeting at 9:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Padovano
Borough Clerk