



# City of Johnstown

Meeting: Common Council, Business Meeting  
 Date: Monday, April 20, 2026  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.  
 Location: Council Chambers, City Hall  
 Presiding Officer: Amy Praught, Mayor

Meetings are broadcast using Facebook Live. The public is able to view the meeting from the official City of Johnstown Facebook page: [City of Johnstown, New York](#)

The proceedings of meetings are taped for the benefit of the City Clerk; the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings; therefore, the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript.

## *Business Meeting Minutes - Draft*

- **CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- **ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL-** (record of officials in attendance)

		PRESENT	ABSENT / EXCUSED	LATE
Amy Praught	Mayor	X		
Scott Jeffers	Council Member-at-Large		Excused	
Bradley Hayner	Council Member Ward 1	X		
Vincent McCallum	Council Member Ward 2	X		
Eric Parker	Council Member Ward 3	X		
Max Spritzer	Council Member Ward 4	X		
Sue Conine	City Treasurer	X		
Michael M. Albanese	City Attorney	X		
Carrie M. Allen	City Clerk	X		
Larry O'Regan	Fire Chief	X		
David F. Gilbo	Chief of Police	X		
Christopher J. Vose	City Engineer	X		
Diedrie M. Roemer	Director, Senior Citizens Program	X		

- **PUBLIC COMMENT** - *Persons wishing to address the Council regarding city business are permitted to speak for three (3) minutes. A council member will monitor Facebook during the session and read comments to the Council. There is no exchange of dialogue during this portion of the meeting. Profane language, obscene conduct, or disruptive comments are not acceptable and will not be allowed. Comments containing profane language, obscene material, threats, harassment, personal attacks, unproven allegations of criminal conduct, defamatory statements, or content involving minors, as well as comments unrelated to City business, will not be permitted and may be removed.*

1. Jacob Gladhorn of 14 S. Chase Street - spoke regarding parking concerns on South Chase Street and Frasier Avenue, stating that vehicles parking on both sides of the street create safety concerns. He requested consideration of limiting parking to one side of the street.
2. Chris Brozek of 1 Abel Drive - stated this was his first time attending a Council meeting and asked procedural questions regarding public comment and discussion opportunities. He was advised that public comment is typically provided at the beginning of meetings and that additional discussions may occur with department heads or City officials after meetings as needed. Mr. Brozek stated he was attending to listen to agenda discussions, particularly public hearings. Mayor Praught advised that he can speak during the Public Hearing portion of the meeting regarding specific concerns he had in relation to those topics.

- **PRESENTATION**

Colliers Engineering & Design, on behalf of Nexamp, provided a presentation regarding Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and a proposed preliminary project within the City of Johnstown. Handouts were distributed and are attached hereto and made part of the meeting minutes.

Company Overview:

- Nexamp was founded in 2007 by two military veterans following their service in the Middle East.
- The company focuses on renewable energy development and is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, with additional offices in Chicago, Illinois.
- Nexamp currently manages:
  - Over 350 projects nationwide
  - Approximately 1.1 gigawatts of energy under management
  - Approximately 800 megawatts under construction

- The company provides full-cycle project services including development, design, community solar, storage, asset management, operations, and decommissioning.
- Nexamp maintains a strong presence in the Northeast, Midwest, Southern California, Texas, Georgia, and Hawaii.
- Colliers Engineering & Design provides engineering, surveying, natural resource, and logistical support for Nexamp projects in New York State.

Overview of Battery Energy Storage Systems - The presenter provided an overview of battery storage technology, explaining that:

- Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are typically housed in large container-style enclosures similar in size and appearance to shipping containers.
- These systems store electrical energy during periods of lower demand and lower cost (typically nighttime hours).
- Stored energy is discharged during peak demand periods (generally late afternoon and evening), helping to:
  - Reduce peak electrical demand
  - Improve grid resiliency
  - Stabilize electrical supply
  - Potentially reduce long-term energy costs

The presenter noted that the proposed system would be a standalone storage facility, directly connected to an electrical substation rather than paired with a solar facility. Additional benefits discussed included:

- Supporting aging electrical infrastructure
- Improving system reliability
- Assisting with demand fluctuations caused by increased energy usage
- Supporting renewable and conventional power sources

System Components and Safety Features - The presenter described the physical components and safety systems associated with BESS facilities, including:

- Modular battery units enclosed in environmentally rated and fire-rated containers
- Underground electrical conduits connecting units to transformers and utility infrastructure
- Integrated safety features including:
  - Thermal management systems (HVAC or liquid cooling)
  - Fire alarms and detection systems
  - Emergency stop controls
  - Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems
  - Continuous remote monitoring

The presenter noted that commonly used battery systems, including Tesla Megapack units, meet or exceed national safety standards including:

- UL 9540 and UL 9540A
- NFPA 855 Fire Safety Standards

Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness - The presenter addressed community concerns regarding fire safety and explained:

- Early battery-related fires in New York State led to extensive safety studies conducted by fire agencies and safety organizations.
- Findings indicated that earlier incidents were typically related to installation errors or chemical composition issues.
- Soil testing conducted following prior incidents showed no harmful chemical contamination at toxic levels.
- Airborne smoke hazards during battery fires are comparable to those of traditional structure fires.
- Continuous 24/7 system monitoring
- Automated shutdown capability
- Integrated fire detection systems
- Ventilation and gas suppression features
- Collaboration with local emergency services
- Nexamp provides fire department training through professional emergency response safety specialists. Training services are provided at **no cost** to local municipalities.
- Standard fire equipment is typically sufficient for response.
- Fire suppression strategies emphasize controlled isolation rather than excessive water use.
- Battery fires typically burn for approximately six to eight hours when properly managed.
- Nexamp maintains emergency response capability within approximately four hours of project locations.
- Nexamp has reported no battery fire incidents at its facilities to date.

Proposed Grove Street Project — The presenter provided preliminary information regarding a potential Battery Energy Storage System project proposed at the end of Grove Street.

- The proposed location is within a Public Use zoning district, where utility uses are currently permitted.
- The site is located adjacent to an electrical substation.
- The nearest residence is approximately 200 feet from the proposed system, exceeding recommended 100-foot buffer distances.
- Estimated project disturbance area is approximately 6,200 square feet.
- The total site size was estimated to be approximately one to one and one-half acres, pending confirmation.
- No wetlands or wetland buffers would be impacted.
- A negative jurisdictional determination was received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- A 25-foot offset from nearby water features would be maintained.
- No endangered species habitats were identified and no historically significant resources were identified.
- Existing natural vegetation would provide visual screening from public view.

Project Lifecycle and Decommissioning

- The anticipated operational life of the system is approximately 25 years. At the end of the lifecycle:
  - All equipment would be removed.
  - Battery components would be recycled.
  - Concrete pads would be removed.
  - Soil and vegetation would be restored.
- Municipalities often require financial assurance (such as escrow or bonding) to ensure completion of decommissioning.

Noise Considerations

- Systems produce sound comparable to a household refrigerator, or vacuum cleaner depending on operational levels. Noise studies can be conducted to measure decibel levels at property lines. Mitigation measures can be implemented to meet municipal noise standards.

Estimated System Capacity

- A typical 5-megawatt system can supply sufficient power to approximately 32 homes for one month per full charge cycle. Additional calculations specific to the proposed system size would be provided at a later date.

Training and Emergency Response Coordination

- Emergency response training is provided through professional emergency safety groups. Training is offered at no cost to municipalities. Local fire departments receive instruction on equipment operation and emergency response procedures. Annual or periodic training sessions can be arranged as needed.

Reference Materials Provided - The presenter recommended that Council review the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Battery Energy Storage System Guidebook, which provides model local laws and regulatory guidance for municipalities considering battery storage installations.

• **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

<p>1. <a href="#">Traffic Violations Bureau – Civil Enforcement</a></p> <p>Speakers: None Discussion: None</p>	<p>Opened: 6:25 pm Closed: 6:26 pm</p>
<p>2. <a href="#">Temporary Moratorium – Battery Storage</a></p> <p>Speakers: Christopher Brozek addressed Council, asking whether the moratorium would allow time for full investigation of risks associated with battery storage facilities.</p> <p>The Mayor explained that the purpose of the one-year moratorium is to allow the City to research battery storage technology, associated risks, and appropriate safety mitigation strategies. The Mayor stated that battery storage development is being discussed in many municipalities and that the City is taking proactive steps to understand the issue before permitting such facilities.</p> <p>Council members noted that no formal applications for battery storage facilities had yet been submitted and that public safety considerations are the primary motivation for the moratorium.</p> <p>Clarification was also provided that a company has purchased property at the end of Grove Street off Pleasant Avenue, but no formal Planning Board application has been submitted.</p>	<p>Opened: 6:26 pm Closed: 6:29 pm</p>

<p>3. <a href="#">Planning Board Cost Recovery Policy</a></p> <p>Speakers: None Discussion: None</p>	<p>Opened: 6:29 pm Closed: 6:29 pm</p>
<p>4. <a href="#">Keeping of Chickens</a></p> <p>Speakers: Christopher Brozek addressed the Council requesting clarification regarding prior chicken ordinances. It was explained that an older ordinance had existed historically but was not included when zoning and general codes were updated. Therefore, a new ordinance is required to formally regulate the keeping of chickens.</p> <p>The resident expressed support for the ordinance, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He and his spouse have researched keeping chickens.</li> <li>• He supports allowing hens with proper regulations.</li> <li>• Concerns such as rooster noise and number limitations were acknowledged.</li> </ul> <p>City officials clarified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roosters are not permitted within the City.</li> <li>• Requirements regarding coop placement and property setbacks are outlined in the ordinance.</li> <li>• The ordinance would be adopted by Council vote rather than citywide referendum.</li> </ul>	<p>Opened: 6:29 pm Closed: 6:32 pm</p>

• **PROCLAMATIONS**

<p>1. <a href="#">Go Purple for Kids in Care Day</a></p>
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• **APPROVE MINUTES**

<p>1. <a href="#">Business Meeting – March 16, 2026</a></p>					
<p><i>Action Taken</i></p>					
Motion:	Council Member	Hayner	Ayes:	4	Absent: 1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Spritzer	Noes:	0	Abstain: 0

<p>2. <a href="#">Business Meeting – March 27, 2026</a></p>					
<p><i>Action Taken</i></p>					
Motion:	Council Member	Hayner	Ayes:	4	Absent: 1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Spritzer	Noes:	0	Abstain: 0

• **APPROVE CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS**

<p><i>Action Taken</i></p>					
Motion:	Council Member	Parker	Ayes:	4	Absent: 1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain: 0

• **REPORTS FROM CITY DEPARTMENTS** - Reports are attached and made part of the meeting minutes.

<p><b><u>Fire / Codes</u></b></p> <p>Chief O'Regan introduced the part-time Blight Officer, Ryan. The Blight Officer provided an overview of his activities, stating that work began with ward inspections with current efforts to complete Ward 3 inspections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus areas include garbage accumulation, vehicle violations, missing house numbers and property maintenance concerns</li> <li>• The goal is to improve overall neighborhood appearance and encourage community pride.</li> </ul> <p>Council discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents are generally responding positively to notices.</li> <li>• Standard remediation timelines are typically 30 days, though flexibility is being offered to residents needing additional time.</li> <li>• Trash that poses health hazards must be addressed within 10 days.</li> <li>• Junk vehicle enforcement timelines follow New York State requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Council members expressed appreciation for the positive impact already observed.</p>
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### **Fire / Police**

Fire officials addressed public concerns regarding denial of a fireworks permit. Key points included:

- The submitted application lacked sufficient detail regarding Traffic control, Safety planning and Crowd management
- The proposed location has historically created safety concerns due to large crowd sizes, emergency access limitations and prior reported injuries and property damage

Officials clarified:

- The fireworks event is not a City-sponsored event, but rather organized by a private nonprofit group.
- Alternative locations have been suggested.
- Public safety concerns ultimately led to denial of the permit.
- safety concerns over multiple years and emphasized the need to prevent potential serious incidents.

Councilmember McCallum who serves on the Board of the Johnstown Area Community Center noted that discussions are underway to explore alternative locations and event formats in the future.

### **Police**

Chief Gilbo - Residents were reminded that parking is prohibited on terraces and sidewalks. Violations will be enforced.

Additional announcements included:

- A new Police Captain will assume duties at the end of April.
- New patrol vehicles are now fully operational.

Officials acknowledged public concerns about speeding motorcycles. It was explained that high-speed pursuits are generally avoided due to public safety risks. There are alternative enforcement technologies are being implemented to address violations without dangerous chases.

### **Treasurer's Office**

Tax payments are due at the end of the month. Those who did not receive a bill should contact City Hall to request a replacement to avoid late fees.

### **Public Works**

The City announced development of a new parking lot at the former DPW garage site behind City Hall. Key details:

- Approximately 50 parking spaces are planned.
- Materials from demolished structures are being reused to reduce costs.
- Additional parking is expected to improve downtown access and winter parking capacity.
- Tree removal associated with the project will be offset by replacement plantings in the Main Street Park. Most particularly a memorial tree planted in honor of past Animal Control Officer Bill Wock.

- **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISONS** – Reports and/or Minutes are attached and made part of the meeting minutes.

**Joint Sewer Board** - Councilman Parker reported that the Joint Sewer Board meeting minutes from March 11th are available online.

A Special Meeting held March 30th resulted in the authorization to appoint a new Administrative Aide for the sewer plant, with the employee beginning work on the date of this meeting. The Sewer Board will hold a public meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday to discuss proposed sewer rates scheduled to take effect May 1, and members of the public are encouraged to attend.

City Engineer provided the following report for the Joint Sewer Board:

- The Sewer Board experienced a power failure on March 16, caused by failure of National Grid equipment in the high yard area. The plant temporarily lost power, requiring emergency response measures. A contractor was brought on-site to replace damaged components, and operations were restored within several days.
- An insurance claim has been filed to cover machinery damage and diesel fuel costs associated with the use of the emergency generator.
- During the emergency response, a non-compliant event occurred when a required wastewater sample was missed due to response activities. This was reported to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Additional updates included:

- DEC representatives conducted the annual SPDES compliance inspection, and overall results were satisfactory with no major issues identified.
- The plant continues preparing for anticipated changes to SPDES limits, including monitoring requirements related to PFAS and related substances.

- Adirondack Leather, Inc. received a consent order related to an unauthorized discharge into a private manhole on Walmart Distribution property. This incident resulted in discoloration of wastewater and required corrective action.
- Minor accounting corrections were made to Abstract No. 3, adjusting approximately \$608 related to a Medicare reimbursement entry.
- Preliminary work has begun on evaluating digester capacity expansion, with site feasibility still in early stages.
- Staff will participate in an upcoming DEC cybersecurity compliance webinar.
- The UV system is scheduled to return to operation.

**Planning Board** - City Engineer reported on the Planning Board meeting held April 7th, noting the following actions:

- Site plan approvals were granted for Curtain Call Café and Equity Group
- An application involving property located at the corner of Mason Street and North Perry Street requesting a six-foot fence that did not meet zoning requirements was denied and referred to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for variance consideration.
- The Board reviewed a proposal for an event venue at the former Immaculate Conception Church property on Cayadutta Street.
- A proposed three-unit residential conversion at 14 West Main Street will proceed to public hearing and will also be referred to the Fulton County Planning Board for review.
- The Planning Board received correspondence from NYSDOT regarding a previously identified potential endangered species related to the FAGE expansion project. The notice was received after the comment period, and no additional action was required.
- It was noted that the Zoning Board previously granted limited relief regarding fencing at the Perry Street property, allowing six-foot fencing along Perry Street and approximately twelve feet of fencing along Mason Street

**Assessor** - Councilman Spitzer reported the following:

- The Assessor’s Office has completed work on the 2026 Tentative Assessment Roll.
- Fulton County will process and print the finalized roll.
- The Tentative Roll will be filed in the City Clerk’s Office on or before May 1, 2026.
- The roll will be available for public inspection during regular business hours and online via the City of Johnstown website and Fulton County website
- Grievance Day is scheduled for: May 26, 2026 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Second Floor Courtroom, City Hall
- Residents may obtain additional information by contacting the Assessor’s Office at (518) 736-4015.

**Tourism** - Councilman McCallum presented the Tourism Committee report for April 2026, noting:

**Memorial Day Parade Planning**

- The parade route will proceed along Main Street, concluding at City Park.
- The committee determined that altering the route would create unnecessary complexity during the inaugural year.
- Participation forms have been distributed to the public, with 11 confirmed entries to date.
- Outreach efforts continue, including invitations to prior participants and marching bands.
- Registration information is available via the City website and social media platforms.

**Upcoming Events**

- Citywide Earth Day Cleanup: April 22 and April 25
- Johnson Hall Event — “Turned Upside Down: The Confiscation and Occupation”: May 16–17

Committee members are contacting local businesses to encourage:

- Participation in community events
- Display of the Fulton County 250th Anniversary logo
- Offering promotions or special programming during designated weeks

It was additionally reported that 11 additional Hometown Heroes banners were received and will be unveiled, and applications continue to be accepted.

• **RESOLUTIONS, ORDINANCES, LOCAL LAWS**

Local Law #1 Civil Enforcement of Parking Violations  
*Action Taken*

Motion:	Council Member	Hayner	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Parker	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
Local Law #2	Temporary Moratorium; Battery Storage					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	McCallum	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
Ordinance #2	Keeping of Chickens					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Parker	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Spritzer	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
Ordinance #3	Planning Board Cost Recovery Policy					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Spritzer	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
39.	Stipulation and Order on Consent					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Parker	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
40.	Rescind Ordinance #4, 2016 & Ordinance #2, 2017 – Streets where Parking is Limited					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Hayner	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	McCallum	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
41..	Advertise for Public Hearing – Streets where Parking is Limited					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	McCallum	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
42.	Authorize donation to School District					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Parker	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	McCallum	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
43.	Rescind Resolution #37, 2026; FMLA					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Spritzer	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Parker	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
Discussion:	Fulton County actually manages our self-insured plan to keep our costs low.					
44.	Agreement Senior Center for 2026 - <i>Tabled</i>					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Parker	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
Discussion:	Resolution Tabled - Attorney did not review Agreement prior to meeting					
45.	National Grid – Seasonal Decorations					
<u>Action Taken</u>						
Motion:	Council Member	Hayner	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Parker	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0
46.	Update Employee Handbook – retiree health benefits					

Action Taken

Motion:	Council Member	McCallum	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

47. Update Employee Handbook – policies

Action Taken

Motion:	Council Member	Parker	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

48. Advertise for Public Hearing – Amend Ordinance; Garbage Collection and Property Maintenance

Action Taken

Motion:	Council Member	Spritzer	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

Discussion: Vose stated that before we finalize this Ordinance we need to decide on how we want to proceed; whether we're going to look at updating trucks to armed trucks or outsourcing garbage collection. He doesn't think it's fair to tell residents they have to go out and buy a can and then change the way we pick garbage.

Residents and property owners should review the proposed materials, changes will expand the City's ability to address garbage violations more effectively rather than relying solely on tagging violations. The revised procedures will allow the City to remediate issues directly.

Concerns were raised regarding garbage being placed curbside several days prior to scheduled pickup, particularly along Main Street, creating odor and sanitation issues during warmer weather. Residents were reminded that garbage should be placed at the curb no earlier than the evening before scheduled pickup.

Property owners were further advised that they are responsible for garbage placed in front of their properties. If violations occur, fees will be assessed to the property owner, who may then address with their tenants.

49. Advertise for Public Hearing – Adopt Schedule of Fees

Action Taken

Motion:	Council Member	Parker	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	Hayner	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

• **WATER GRIEVANCES** – only if necessary

Recent water meter reviews identified over 100 accounts w/ continuous water usage. Residents receiving high bills are encouraged to contact the Water Dept. immediately and inspect plumbing fixtures for potential leaks: unused toilets, sinks, and fixtures. Failure to address issues may result in increased water bills, charges are based on recorded meter usage. The City can't rectify an issue if we don't know about it. The City Engineer will order dye tablets to assist residents in identifying toilet leaks.

• **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Earth Day Clean-up: April 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>
2. Burn Ban: March 16<sup>th</sup> – May 14<sup>th</sup>
3. City wide garage sale; May 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>
4. Citywide clean up; May 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>
5. Johnson Hall Historic Site reenactments – May 16<sup>th</sup> beginning @ 9:30am on Main Street
6. Memorial Day Parade: Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 6:30pm
7. Business Meeting – May 18<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 pm

• **ADJOURN**

Time: 7:26 pm

Motion:	Council Member	Hayner	Ayes:	4	Absent:	1 (Jeffers)
Seconded:	Council Member	McCallum	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Allen, City Clerk