

Open letter to Wyomissing Borough Council

Residents need access before decisions are made

October 11, 2026

Dear President Gajewski and Members of Council:

Transparency is measured by what residents can see, when they can see it, and whether they can still influence a decision. **Wyomissing continues to fall short of that standard.**

On October 4, I asked all seven Council members for complete meeting packets, prompt draft minutes and access to meeting materials. President Gajewski's response described staffing constraints and the work involved in my Right-to-Know requests. She limited her reply to me, the two vice presidents and the manager, explaining that she wanted to avoid deliberation by email. These questions deserve deliberation at a public Council meeting, with all seven members accountable for the outcome. ^[1]

1. Make evening access a Borough policy

Finance discussed evening meetings in April. Yet Planning met at 3:30 p.m. on October 5, and zoning hearings were held at 2 and 3 p.m. on October 7. Attendance by some residents does not resolve the exclusion of others who are working. ^[2, 3]

Evening budget sessions are welcome; some earlier budget meetings were held during the workday. That improvement should extend across public business. Scheduling access can be addressed without taking a position on any pending development application.

Action requested: Put a general evening-meeting policy on Council's public agenda for a **recorded vote**. Work with the boards and commissions within their respective authority to make 6 p.m. or later the standard, with publicly explained exceptions. If a general policy has already been adopted, publish its text, vote and effective date.

2. Give residents the documents before they are asked to comment

At the October 5 Planning meeting, another resident questioned why members had received a sketch before the public had an opportunity to review it. A presentation first seen in the meeting room gives residents little chance to examine assumptions, costs or alternatives. Meaningful participation requires preparation. ^[3]

The website-posting policy still displayed online broadly excludes Zoning Hearing Board and Civil Service materials beyond agendas. Council's April vote to publish final zoning decisions was a useful step. The public also needs access to the releasable documents underlying those proceedings. ^[4]

Action requested: Publish complete public packets, including presentations, plans, reports and financial assumptions, with a target of at least 72 hours before meetings. Identify later additions and publish materials introduced during meetings within two business days. Explain any lawful withholding specifically, allow additional review time before consequential decisions when substantial material arrives late, and revise the posting policy to include public materials from every board and commission.

3. Clear the July minutes backlog and publish drafts promptly

The July committee records expose a gap in the August transition. July's Council agenda still provided for approval of committee reports. August introduced the consent agenda but listed only Council's own minutes for approval. July committee reports also do not appear as approval items on the September or October Council agendas. ^[5]

I could not locate minutes for July 15 Refuse and Recycling, July 20 Infrastructure, or July 27 Fire and Police in the Borough's published meeting records. A change in agenda format or the absence of another committee meeting must not leave the public waiting indefinitely.

The October Council packet already includes draft September Council minutes, and the posting policy permits draft minutes. Once minutes have been prepared, residents should be able to read them. Formal approval can follow, with corrections incorporated and the approved version clearly identified. Publishing drafts also allows residents to point out errors or omissions before approval. ^[4, 6]

Action requested: Prepare minutes promptly after each meeting and publish them as soon as they are prepared, clearly marked DRAFT. Do not wait for approval, another meeting, or the next Council packet. Publish all prepared July minutes now; identify any still unprepared, set completion dates and explain the approval route. Provide a clear way for residents to submit corrections for consideration.

4. Make participation and recording practical

Council's January vote expanding public comment was welcome. But at the September 16 meeting, I reported that residents had already left before the later comment period. Residents need a practical opportunity to raise nonagenda concerns without waiting through most of a meeting. ^[7]

The Borough reports that no video was recorded for the October 7 zoning hearings because of equipment problems. Residents' access should not depend on my ability to attend with a camera. ^[8]

The published recording rule allows a camera to be removed if its operator leaves the room. A resident should be able to take a brief restroom break while a safely positioned camera continues recording the public meeting. ^[9]

Action requested: Allow nonagenda comments near the beginning while retaining later comment opportunities. Publish the current, consolidated rules. Establish recording checks, backups and prompt notice of failures, with links to available alternative records. Amend the recording policy to permit brief absences without requiring a safely positioned camera to be removed.

5. Address workload through cooperation and publication

Historical records help residents understand how earlier decisions contributed to today's financial pressures. Requests remain legitimate whether their findings are convenient for the previous Council, the present Council, or neither. Publishing frequently requested records can reduce repeated requests and improve access for everyone.

Eden Ratliff's October 11 reply offers a constructive example. He accepted my proposal to start with the 2019 Council packets and five missing 2020 meetings, said staff would begin with 2019 and 2020, and expressed the goal of posting full packets from 2010 onward. I welcome that cooperation. ^[10]

The Abrams response illustrates the remaining access problem. The Borough supplied correspondence, but refused copies of submitted plans on asserted copyright grounds and offered business-hours inspection. Residents need to examine what is being proposed while their participation can still matter. ^[11]

Action requested: Set a timetable for the historical packets, publish them in manageable batches and report progress. Make frequently requested records available proactively. Explain the specific restriction on copying the Abrams plans and pursue lawful broader access, including permission from the rights holder where needed.

6. Preserve financial evidence before authorizing disposal

The October 13 consent agenda proposes resolutions 2026-28 and 2026-29 covering accounts receivable and payable files and ledgers retained longer than seven years. The October 9 staff briefing expressly connects retaining old records with the workload of responding to historical RTK requests. That rationale is deeply concerning when residents are trying to understand earlier financial decisions. ^[12]

Pennsylvania's municipal retention schedule permits eligible disposal; it does not require destruction when a retention period expires. Council should assess the continuing public value of these records before authorizing their disposal. ^[13]

I offer to scan an agreed batch at no cost to the Borough, using a written inventory and documented chain of custody. I would check the scans against the originals, provide legible, indexed files and return the original documents. The Borough would retain ownership and control. Any later disposal would require separate authorization and documentation after preservation requirements have been addressed.

Action requested: Remove resolutions 2026-28 and 2026-29 from the October 13 consent agenda and defer disposal. First publish an inventory, identify usable copies that would survive, review preservation obligations and evaluate digitization, including my offer to help at no cost to the Borough.

7. Adopt a plan residents can hold Council to

The management proposal included providing information and maintaining informative relations with the community. September's management report identified ongoing work and future deadlines. Residents need to know what has been completed, what remains and when they will see the results. ^[14]

Residents need documents early enough to question proposals, meeting times that allow attendance, and records that remain accessible afterward. Those are concrete standards Council can vote on and deliver. I am ready to help. All seven members share responsibility for making them happen.

Action requested: Place these requests on a public agenda and adopt an implementation timetable within 30 days, naming the person responsible for each task. Address the proposed record disposal on October 13, before any authorization is given. Report progress publicly and explain any missed deadline, the constraint and the remedy.

Adrian Jadic

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Sources and verification notes

Read with the numbered references in the letter. Availability findings are current to October 11, 2026. Publication targets are proposals for Council to adopt.

1. October 4 letter and October 5 Council president's reply

Original letter sent to all seven Council members. The reply copied the manager, Jen Reimer and Rick Weinhoffer and explained the reduced recipient list as avoiding potential deliberation. The linked PDF provides a formatted transcription of the official correspondence.

[Original October 4 letter \(PDF\)](#) | [October 5 reply \(correspondence PDF, p.1\)](#)

2. Meeting-time discussion and historical budget times

April 14 Council packet, PDF p.162: April 9 Finance minutes, discussion only. November 4, 2024 Finance budget meeting was scheduled at 8 a.m.; December 15, 2025 special Council budget agenda at 1 p.m. The review did not locate adoption of a general evening policy; that is a bounded finding.

[April packet, p.162](#) | [November 2024 calendar](#) | [December 2025 agenda](#)

3. October 5 Planning Commission

The meeting was scheduled for 3:30 p.m. The supplied recording captions at 1:06:04-1:06:31 describe a resident's concern about the sketch and advance preparation; 21:15-21:52 discusses online availability. Paraphrased without identifying the speaker; automatic captions were not independently audio-verified in this review. The retained packet lacks the State Hill site drawings.

[Recording at 1:06:04](#)

4. Website-posting policy and subsequent Council action

Published policy, amended February 13, 2024: paragraph 4 permits DRAFT minutes in packets; paragraph 6 excludes Zoning Hearing Board and Civil Service documents beyond agendas. April 14 Council minutes, p.6, record a unanimous vote to post final zoning decisions. The older policy text should be reconciled with later action.

[Published posting policy](#) | [April 14 Council minutes, p.6](#)

5. July committee minutes and the August transition

July 14 agenda lists committee-report approvals; August 11 consent item 7(a) lists only July Council minutes. September 16 and October 13 agendas likewise omit July committee-report approvals. On October 11, no minutes links were located in the actual public Agenda Center listings for July 15 Refuse and Recycling, July 20 Infrastructure, or July 27 Fire and Police; the checked later Council packets did not supply them. This does not establish whether drafts exist internally or were supplied to any requester. Council approval of a committee report is not assumed to be legally interchangeable with the committee's approval of its own minutes.

[July 14 Council agenda](#) | [August 11 amended Council agenda](#) | [September 16 amended Council agenda](#) | [July Refuse listings](#) | [July Infrastructure listings](#) | [July Fire and Police listings](#)

6. Draft minutes in the October 13 packet

PDF pp.7-12 contain September 16 draft Council minutes; pp.16-18 contain September 30 draft Council minutes. The letter requests prompt preparation and publication as soon as minutes are prepared, without awaiting approval, another meeting or the next Council packet. This is a proposed publication policy, not a claim about an existing statutory deadline.

[October packet, p.7](#)

7. Public comment: expansion and timing

January 13 minutes record the 7-0 vote adding a second comment period to every committee, commission, board and Council meeting. September 16 draft minutes p.5 record Adrian's timing objection; his statement that people had left appears around 1:34:18 in the supplied captions. That comment period was moved before the capital-budget discussion, rather than held at the absolute end. The policy linked online still carries an April 4, 2025 edition date.

[January 13 Council minutes, p.4](#) | [September draft minutes, packet p.11](#) | [Currently linked comment policy](#)

8. October 7 zoning-hearing recording failure

The Borough's video-postings page states that its 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. hearings had no video because of equipment issues. This does not establish that no audio, transcript or other record exists.

[Borough meeting-video postings](#)

9. Recording-equipment policy

Policy approved September 10, 2024, p.1, paragraph 3: operator must remain with the equipment; Borough reserves the right to move it outside if the operator leaves without it. The letter requests an amendment rather than alleging an adjudicated legal violation.

[Audio and video policy](#)

10. Historical Council packets: October 5-11 email exchange

Adrian proposed 2019 packets, including the December budget meeting, and missing January, July, August, September and October 2020 packets, with preliminary paper inspection if useful. Ratliff accepted the compromise on October 11, committed to starting with 2019/2020, and described a 2010-current website goal. No completion date or completed delivery is established by that reply. The linked PDF provides a formatted transcription of the official correspondence.

[October 5 proposal and October 11 reply \(PDF, p.2\)](#)

11. October 8 Abrams RTK response and supplied correspondence

Borough response dated October 8, 2026, p.2: plan reproduction refused on asserted copyright grounds; business-hours inspection offered with copying/images prohibited. The accompanying McCarthy correspondence, original pp.7-8, records July 27 transmission and acknowledgment of a plan package. The linked excerpt includes original pp.1, 7 and 8, with a cover identifying the source and a redacted professional cell number. The legality of the copying restriction is not resolved here.

[Complete Borough RTK response \(3-page PDF\)](#) | [Plan submission and receipt \(labeled PDF excerpt\)](#)

12. Pending financial-record disposition

October 13 agenda items 6(f)-(g); packet p.47 is Ratliff's October 9 briefing, pp.48-51 are unsigned DRAFT resolutions. They concern AR/AP files and ledgers older than seven years. They do not establish completed destruction or a blanket pre-2018 cutoff.

[October 13 agenda](#) | [Briefing and resolutions, packet p.47](#)

13. Pennsylvania Municipal Records Manual

Official manual amended March 2019, currently linked by PHMC: PDF p.3 says eligible disposal is not required; p.5 addresses authorization and electronic substitutes; p.6 addresses audits and litigation; p.39 lists seven-year AR/AP retention. Inventory, preservation review and a scanning pilot are requested safeguards, not a finding that the pending resolutions are unlawful.

[Official municipal retention manual](#)

14. Management scope and reported work

April 6 Stonehill Ratliff proposal in April 14 packet, pp.59-62, includes information, reporting and community relations. September 16 draft minutes p.4 summarize ongoing management work. Announced staffing and personnel-policy deadlines had not all elapsed as of October 11; the letter does not claim no work was completed.

[Management proposal, April packet p.59](#) | [September management report, October packet p.10](#)