



# Jenkintown Matters Policy Platform

Adopted January 27, 2025

## **Preamble & Guiding Principles**

We the members of Jenkintown Matters are citizens concerned by the growing degree of discord in our community, by our government's lack of transparency, and by the lack of professionalism and civility too often displayed by those who represent us. We seek to ensure that Jenkintown remains a family-friendly, cohesive, inclusive, fiscally responsible, and viable community for generations to come. We seek to improve a Borough government that has failed for too long to effectively and honestly represent our community, which will abide by the following principles:

- We recognize that our town benefits from its community enhancing attributes such as its small size, its fine schools, and its easy access to transit. We take pride in its diverse housing stock, its walkable town center, and traditional, timeless character.
- While we welcome progress that advances the Borough's quality of life, we also expect a voice in managing that progress.
- We expect professionalism and efficiency in our government, but this shall not come at the expense of transparency and responsiveness to our inquiries.
- We expect that any major commitment taken by our government is assumed only after timely and ordered public input well in advance of any final vote. Further we expect our government make use of the latest technology as practical and allowable beyond what is strictly required for public notification, consideration, and participation.
- We expect that our leaders and council members present themselves with civility and deference as fitting of a public servant in the discussion of public matters in any public forum, electronic or otherwise.

- We recognize that ours is an unusually small town with an unusually large number of council representatives, and because of this, we expect them to make an effort to actively reach out to their respective wards for input.
- We expect our representatives to not only enact our ordinances, but to enforce them consistently and fairly.
- We expect our public servants and representatives to conduct the affairs of our community with the highest standards of integrity, fiscal responsibility, and professionalism consistent with our desire to see Jenkintown remain true to its sense of community and inclusiveness.

## **Policy Platform**

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### **Government**

Residents of and business owners in Jenkintown expect an open and responsive government. Council will declare its intention to not only abide by the letter of the Sunshine Act, but also its spirit.

Jenkintown Borough government should convey its intentions to the community in a timely fashion, through all available media channels beyond those required by law, while providing ample opportunity for input and feedback beyond what is strictly required by statute.

Executive sessions will be kept to a minimum, shall conform with the rules outlined in the Sunshine Act, and will provide summaries of what was discussed as allowed by law.

Council will amend Jenkintown's charter to decrease the size of council to the eight-seat minimum provided by statute. The twelve-member council has proven unwieldy, unnecessary, and an impediment to the borough's progress.

Council committee chairs will be required to take state-provided training relevant to their committee missions.

All contractor and consultant invoices will be attached to Council meeting agendas.

## Public Safety

There is nothing in the budget with a higher priority than police and fire protection.

Police and fire services are core functions of local government. Jenkintown's police and fire departments preserve the peace and security of the community because they protect the lives and property of every resident and business.

Council will commit to retaining and supporting a viable, independent borough-based police and fire departments.

Council will provide what is necessary and reasonable to attract and retain competent and dedicated personnel while providing them with the resources to effectively perform their duties.

Council will retain a qualified labor attorney to negotiate contracts in good faith with the Jenkintown Police Benevolent Association, from the non-negotiable position that Jenkintown always had and always will deploy an independent department.

Council will direct the manager to hold all first-responders under its employ to the highest standards and will not tolerate unprofessional behavior.

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## Finances

Recognizing that the Borough has entered into a period of financial crisis, Council will freeze spending levels until a satisfactory resolution is found.

All proposals relating to financial decisions made by Council will be first explained in a manner that the general public and layman can understand it.

Property tax increases of 2% or more will be subject to a local public referendum.

Council will direct the finance manager to employ the accrual accounting method in the management of its budget.

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## Personnel & Vendors

Council will seek new borough management who already brings to the position all necessary certifications and commensurate experience.

Council will not renew its current contract with current police management and will immediately begin the search for a replacement more befitting the Borough's culture and its desire to retain its independence.

Council will terminate its relationship with Kilkenny Law due to the potential conflict of interest of a solicitor that is also the county sheriff.

Council will direct the borough manager to renegotiate all vendor contracts not put out to bid within the previous two years.

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## Development & Infrastructure

Understanding that Jenkintown Borough must do everything it can to restore the viability of its business district, and recognizing that PennDOT's imposition of a four-lane thoroughfare through our center will forever make that goal unattainable, the Council will work with the PennDOT and the Governor's office to remediate the impact traffic has made upon the district's pedestrian safety. The current four-lane configuration is literally killing this town, and unless this is achieved, Jenkintown will forever be hamstrung by the effects of the traffic on pedestrian safety. The Borough will sustain this effort until a satisfactory resolution is reached.

Council will direct the manager to seek a privately funded non-profit partner for the maintenance of Moretti Park.

Council will direct the borough manager to put the Jenkintown's sewer system out to bid, and once accepted, Council will designate all proceeds to debt reduction.

Council will sell all Borough properties as is practical.

Council will direct the manager to end the practice of wholesale sidewalk inspection and budget sidewalk reconstruction as part of any block-encompassing repaving projects.

*Adopted by unanimous resolution, January 27, 2025*