Town Hall Meeting Summary
Republican Candidate for Governor: Stacy Garrity
Willow Valley Communities, Lancaster County
October 15, 2026

OPENING REMARKS

Stacy Garrity opened with her concerns about Pennsylvania's economic and fiscal condition. She argued that the Commonwealth is losing residents, experiencing higher-than-average inflation, and imposing a substantial tax burden on families.

Her opening remarks emphasized several priorities:

- Address Pennsylvania's reported $5 billion structural budget deficit.
- Reduce the tax burden on families and businesses.
- Expand the use of Pennsylvania's natural resources, particularly energy.
- Encourage investment, job creation, and economic growth.
- Retain young people and attract new residents.
- Build on Pennsylvania's industrial history and economic potential.

Garrity expressed confidence that Pennsylvania's best days are ahead, provided the state changes its current direction.

Senator Scott Martin welcomed Garrity to Willow Valley Communities, praised her recent debate performance, and explained that the questions had been submitted by residents.

QUESTIONS TO THE CANDIDATE

Senator Martin presented six major questions covering taxes, healthcare, state finances, infrastructure, senior services, and executive leadership.

Question 1: Eliminating the Inheritance Tax

How would Garrity eliminate Pennsylvania's inheritance tax while maintaining stable state revenues? What transition plan would protect the state budget while helping families preserve assets for future generations?

Response summarized:

- Garrity characterized the inheritance tax as an unfair tax on wealth that has already been taxed.
- She highlighted its impact on families transferring property, farms, and small businesses to their heirs.
- She acknowledged that eliminating the tax immediately would be difficult given the state's structural budget deficit.
- She proposed a three-year transition toward elimination.
- She argued that expanding Pennsylvania's energy production could generate additional revenue and create well-paying jobs to help offset the lost tax revenue.

Question 2: Healthcare Spending and Accountability

How would Garrity reduce waste in state-administered healthcare programs while ensuring that hospitals, medical facilities, and specialized healthcare workforces remain adequately funded and stable?

Response summarized:

- Garrity emphasized eliminating waste and fraud rather than indiscriminately cutting healthcare spending.
- She cited concerns about alleged fraud in Medicaid and called for greater accountability.
- She supported modest work, volunteer, education, or training requirements for certain public assistance recipients.
- She stressed the importance of ensuring that public funds reach the people they are intended to help, including seniors, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and caregivers.
- She supported workforce development initiatives to prepare students for high-demand careers and encourage young people to remain in Pennsylvania.

Question 3: Protecting the State's Rainy Day Fund

Why should Pennsylvania preserve its Rainy Day Fund, and how would doing so protect the state's credit rating and residents from tax increases during an economic downturn?

Response summarized:

- Garrity argued that the Rainy Day Fund should be reserved for emergencies and economic downturns, not used to cover recurring budget shortfalls.
- She maintained that recurring expenses should be supported by recurring revenue.
- She said preserving the fund helps prevent tax increases during difficult economic periods.
- She credited the state's reserves with contributing to an improved credit rating, which can reduce borrowing costs.
- She emphasized reviewing government accounts for unused funds, correcting payment errors, and improving efficiency before seeking additional taxpayer money.
- She cited her office's pre-audit procedures as a way to identify errors and achieve savings.

Question 4: AI Data Centers and Local Communities

How would Garrity encourage major economic investment in Pennsylvania while protecting local communities, farmland, property values, water resources, and residents' quality of life from the effects of large-scale AI data centers?

Response summarized:

- Garrity said she was not opposed to data centers but believed communities needed stronger protections and time to update zoning regulations.
- She described her call for a temporary statewide pause on large-scale data center construction as a way to give local governments time to prepare.
- She proposed that data centers provide their own energy and water resources, including appropriate water-recycling systems.
- She favored locating facilities on existing industrial properties, brownfield sites, and other previously developed land rather than on productive farmland or near residential communities.
- She supported community benefit agreements through which companies could contribute to local schools, roads, property tax relief, and other negotiated priorities.
- She argued that local governments should retain control over zoning decisions, with state assistance available when needed.

Question 5: Supporting Seniors and Continuing Care Retirement Communities

How would Garrity's administration support continuing care retirement communities, help them manage costs, and ensure they can meet the needs of an aging population?

Response summarized:

- Garrity argued that more state resources should benefit seniors who have contributed to Pennsylvania throughout their lives.
- She proposed directing additional revenue from the resolution of legal and regulatory questions surrounding skill games toward senior programs.
- She suggested using potential additional funding to expand property tax and rent relief.
- She also proposed direct financial assistance to eligible seniors who wish to remain in their homes or move into a retirement community.
- She emphasized keeping promises that revenue from gambling-related programs would support senior services.

Question 6: Executive Continuity and a Full Four-Year Term

Given questions about Governor Josh Shapiro's future political ambitions, would Garrity commit to serving a full four-year term as governor and focusing on Pennsylvania rather than pursuing national office?

Response summarized:

- Garrity stated that her ambition was to serve Pennsylvania and that she had no desire to pursue another office.
- She criticized Shapiro for what she described as insufficient attention to Pennsylvania's needs.
- She argued that effective leadership requires bringing stakeholders together, working across political divisions, and resolving difficult issues.
- She emphasized the importance of leadership in addressing fiscal challenges, education policy, public safety, and other state priorities.
- She maintained that Pennsylvania needs consistent leadership focused on its residents and economic future.

CLOSING REMARKS

Garrity reflected on her 2020 campaign for state treasurer, describing how she visited counties, local fairs, fire halls, and smaller communities despite being considered an underdog. She credited direct engagement with voters as an important part of her success.

In her closing appeal, she emphasized:

- **Fiscal responsibility: Addressing the state's budget challenges and improving government accountability.**
- **Economic growth: Making better use of Pennsylvania's natural resources and attracting investment.**
- **Family and community priorities: Supporting farmers, small businesses, rural communities, and families seeking opportunities for their children.**
- **Leadership and transparency: Bringing stakeholders together and focusing on results.**
- **Pennsylvania's future: Restoring the state's economic strength and encouraging younger generations to live, work, and raise families there.**

Senator Martin thanked Garrity for visiting Willow Valley and encouraged residents to participate in the upcoming election, emphasizing the importance of voting and encouraging family members, friends, and neighbors to do the same.

Audio recorded during the town meeting and transcript summarized by AI.