

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL VOTING MEETING
February 27, 2024

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Special Meeting on February 27, 2024, at Borough Hall located at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council Vice President Roger Stief called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Members in attendance were Mayor Ryan Maurer, Council Vice President Roger Stief, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Christine Dise, Council Member Yrisol 'Iris' Garcia, Council Member Michael Kindlick, and Council Member Richard Lombardo. Staff and Professional Members present were Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens, Solicitor Thomas Klonis, and Engineer Ty Leinneweber. Council President Troy Goodman was absent.

Others present included Roberta Banks, Clark Bussey, Caitrin Pinkavich, Brian Reeves, Ann Sellers, Marina McGough, Lorraine Storms, Susan Arnold, Holly Rigg, Tianna Schaeffer, Heidi Rochlin, Corinne Hauk, Patrick McDevitt, Ryan Kehl, Rachel Constein, Geneia Esterly, Amy Johnson, Aristides Otero, and several other members of the public.

Public Comment

Mr. Stief read a brief statement sharing the expectation that decorum is maintained when residents raise concerns or comment during public comment.

Mr. Klonis announced that the Borough Council met in Executive Session prior to the start of the meeting, which addressed Personnel Issues that would be discussed during the meeting.

Brian Reeves, Lower Alsace Township Resident – Mr. Reeves requested an explanation of the correspondence between the attorneys of the School District, the Borough, and the Zoning Hearing Board that was made public. Mr. Reeves asked for clarification of how the letter was made available to the public. Mr. Stief responded that the Council addressed the matter.

Geneia Esterly, 816 Brighton Avenue – Ms. Esterly commented that the Council's response regarding the attorney's letter being shared with members of the public appears unethical. Ms. Esterly asked for clarification on the letters of support for the School District's Zoning Hearing Board applications and whether those letters would be made public. Mr. Klonis shared that the Borough was meeting with the School District's representatives shortly and would be a public document as an exhibit in the Zoning Hearing Board. Ms. Esterly and Mr. Klonis commented about the propriety of sharing the attorney's letter with members of the public. Mr. Klonis emphasized that there was nothing illegal in its dissemination, but it was not helpful in the relationship between the School District and the Borough.

Engineering Report

Mr. Leinneweber shared that the School District's building permit applications for the renovations at the Mt. Penn Primary Center had been received and the review by Systems Design Engineering had begun. Mr. Maurer asked when the Borough would get additional information about the grants it had applied for, especially for the road work. Mr. Leinneweber responded that they expected a response in the June or July of 2024.

Minutes or Treasurer's Report

Mr. Ahrens reported that the drafts of recent minutes have not yet been completed.

Rick Lombardo made a motion to table the January 29, 2024, February 19, 2024, and February 20, 2019, Minutes. Christine Dise seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Ahrens shared that visual revisions were made to the Treasurer's Report in order to make them more accessible and that the Council could share any feedback on different formats for ease of access, but the report was completed and included a transaction list detailing the bills since the last meeting.

Rick Lombardo made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report for January 2024. Christine Dise seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Thomas Baer made a motion to accept the Bills Report for January 31 – February 27, 2024. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Liaison Reports

Mr. Lombardo thanked the community for their participation in the annual Fastnacht sale.

Mr. Maurer shared that the Police Commission would be meeting on March 7, 2024, at 6:30 PM at Borough Hall.

Committee Reports

Mr. Stief reported that the Hometown Hero Banners had been ordered and would be received shortly.

Mr. Lombardo shared that a new meeting to discuss a shared Municipal Garage with the Borough of St. Lawrence. Mr. Ahrens shared that there appeared to be different expectations for the sharing of the municipal garage between Mt. Penn and St. Lawrence. Mr. Ahrens stated further that St. Lawrence appeared to have concerns related to specific details of a potential lease agreement.

Mr. Ahrens shared those communications between the Boroughs had been shared for the Council's review, and ongoing discussion would be appropriate.

Mrs. Dise commented that the Solid Waste Committee received far fewer complaints about missed collections.

Mr. Stief shared that the updated job description for the Borough Secretary's position was ready for approval.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to approve the Job Description for the position of Borough Secretary. Christine Dise seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to hire Elva Luz for the position of Borough Secretary at a rate of \$25.00 per hour effective March 1, 2024. Richard Lombardo seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Lombardo shared that the Codes Committee would be scheduling an upcoming meeting to discuss commercial rentals. Mr. Ahrens shared that additional work has taken place on the Rental Registration Program, and the staff was transitioning to the enforcement stage of the program.

Mrs. Dise shared that the Public Relations Committee would begin sharing information more on the website as opposed to social media and would not be sharing non-pressing matters in the Facebook groups versus the Borough's Facebook Page.

Mr. Ahrens shared that staff had considered redirecting grant funds to repair ADA Curbs and Walkways toward the area around the Mt. Penn Primary Center to support the School District's increased use of the building.

Richard Lombardo made a motion to direct the Engineer and Borough Staff to price the renovations to the ADA Curbs and Sidewalks around the Mt. Penn Primary Center. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Other Reports

Mr. Klonis shared that he, the Borough Manager, and members of the Borough Council would be meeting with the School District to review the draft support letters that the Borough was seeking to consider, which would support the Antietam School District's application for Special Exception.

Mr. Ahrens shared that the 2022 Financial Transactions had been caught up, and the books were ready for audit at the availability of the outside auditor. Mr. Ahrens also shared that he would supplement his verbal report with a written report.

Old Business

The Council agreed to table the discussion about the Support Letters for the Mount Penn Primary Center and the Mount Penn Elementary Center pending the discussions with the Antietam School District for their feedback.

Yrisol Garcia made a motion to table consideration of support letters for the Antietam School District. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Stief shared that the newsletter would be coming out in early April of 2024.

New Business

Mr. Kindlick shared that the Council had interviewed members of the public regarding open positions for the Zoning Hearing Board and Planning Commission for which the Council wanted to make appointments that evening.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to appoint Ryan Kehl as the voting member of the Zoning Hearing Board under Resolution 34-24. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to appoint Tianna Schaeffer as the first alternate member of the Zoning Hearing Board under Resolution 35-24. Christine Dise seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to appoint Clark Bussey as the second alternate member of the Zoning Hearing Board under Resolution 36-24. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to appoint Robert DeLong as a Member of the Planning Commission under Resolution 37-24. Christine Dise seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to appoint Patrick McDevitt as a Member of the Planning Commission under Resolution 38-24. Richard Lombardo seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Maurer shared that he could administer the oaths of office and would need appointees to bring an affidavit of residency and to take the oath of office.

Members of the Council shared their desire to see all members of the community have the information shared at meetings available to them, and livestreaming the meetings could help with that. Mr. Goodman suggested a trial run be undertaken.

Corinne Hauk, 212 Haag Road – Ms. Hauk shared her thanks for the live meetings being streamed for the public.

Mr. Stief commented that the Borough's websites needed to be consolidated. Mr. Ahrens recommended that the .net website be turned off, and the .com website is the Borough's primary website. The council indicated their desire to see the website run properly and updated. They suggested including a high school student, interns, and the Borough Secretary so that the Borough Manager would not be solely responsible for its maintenance.

Mr. Ahrens introduced the concept of selecting strategic priorities for the Council that the staff would seek to pursue and implement to benefit the community. Especially through grant applications that are systematic for those strategic priorities. The council identified a desire to look at community beautification and recycling program improvements.

Mr. Ahrens explained the benefit of a Borough Council retreat where the Manager's annual goals would be discussed, and the Council could engage in virtual training and team-building efforts.

Adjournment

Rick Lombardo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 PM. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hunter L. Ahrens".

Hunter L. Ahrens
Borough Manager