

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
June 25, 2024

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on June 25, 2024, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Troy Goodman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Members in attendance were Council President Troy Goodman, Council Vice President Rick Lombardo, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Christine Dise, Council Member Michael Kindlick, and Council Member Roger Stief. Mayor Ryan Maurer was absent. Staff and Professional Members present were Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens, Solicitor Tom Klonis, Chief of Police Raymond Serafin, and Engineer Ty Leinneweber.

Kevin Sidella, Charles McHugh, Amanda Stief, Roberta Banks, and several other community members were also present.

Public Comment

Charles McHugh, 2533 Cumberland Avenue – Mr. McHugh commended the council on the construction work at the corner of Glen Terrace and Center Street. However, he pointed out the messy condition of the berms between the sidewalk and the street and emphasized the importance of maintaining these areas to prevent them from becoming eyesores. He acknowledged the hard work of the road crew, especially Mark Stufflet and David Okonski, who have been diligent in their duties.

Agreement with Hera Registry for Ordinance Enforcement

The council discussed the agreement's benefits, including improved enforcement of vacant and mortgage foreclosure property ordinances. Kevin Sidella from Hera Registry expressed enthusiasm about working with the borough and highlighted their capabilities. Mr. Ahrens noted the potential positive impact on community upkeep and property values.

Richard Lombardo motioned to authorize the Borough Manager to sign an agreement with Hera Registry for Ordinance Enforcement services. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Discussion of Traffic Engineers Review Letter

Hunter Ahrens summarized the traffic study, highlighting deficiencies such as the lack of specific recommendations for traffic improvement and the incomplete submission of required exhibits. The council is awaiting further details from the traffic engineer on addressing these gaps. Roger Stief pointed out that the study lacked actionable steps, and it was agreed that a more detailed follow-up was necessary. The Council emphasized the need for concrete measures to address traffic issues around the school district.

Discussion of Hourly Rates for Systems Design Engineering

This item was briefly discussed, and there was a consensus to table it for a future meeting. The council noted the importance of having clear and fair rates for engineering work, but more information was needed to make an informed decision. Troy Goodman suggested gathering more data on rates and practices in similar municipalities. The item was tabled for further discussion.

Permit Parking Ordinance Discussion Draft

Roger Stief provided an update on the permit parking ordinance, highlighting changes made to reduce costs, including the number of signs and poles required. He detailed the pricing adjustments and proposed adding penalty clauses and dumpster regulations. Hunter Ahrens emphasized the need for clear and enforceable rules to ensure compliance.

Suggested penalties ranged from \$75 to \$300 for violations, emphasizing ensuring that the fines were sufficient to deter infractions without being overly punitive. Roger Stief recommended a structured penalty phase to provide consistency in enforcement.

Proposed amendments to include provisions for dumpster permits within the ordinance to prevent parking violations. This would help manage space and ensure that dumpsters do not unnecessarily obstruct parking areas. The council raised concerns about the potential for misuse of temporary permits and suggested additional safeguards.

Richard Lombardo motioned to advertise the Draft Ordinance for consideration at the Council's July meeting. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Authorization to Purchase Signs and Poles for Permit Parking

The revised cost estimates for the permit parking program, including signs, poles, stickers, and hangers, were presented, showing a significant reduction to \$12,405.90. The council discussed the logistics and implementation timeline. Roger Stief provided detailed calculations and highlighted the importance of fiscal responsibility while ensuring the program's effectiveness.

Richard Lombardo moved to authorize the Staff to procure signs, poles, and other materials for the Permit Parking Program, not exceeding \$15,000.00. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Authorization to Purchase a Laptop for the Tax Collector

The need for a new laptop was discussed, emphasizing the current equipment's outdated and slow performance, hindering tax collection activities. Hunter Ahrens noted the importance of having reliable technology to ensure efficient operations. Troy Goodman confirmed that funds were available for the purchase.

Richard Lombardo moved to authorize staff to use a laptop for the Tax Collector, not exceeding \$2,500.00. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Engineer's Report

The survey work has begun for Endlich Avenue, and the team is currently on-site, progressing with base plans for road repair. Hunter Ahrens noted that this project is critical for improving local infrastructure and is expected to enhance road safety and accessibility. The grant contract was received with a completion deadline of June 30, 2027. The survey and base plan preparations are underway to meet this deadline.

Lamb Construction, specializing in ADA ramps, was the lowest bidder for the 2024 ADA Ramp Bid. They are in the process of returning bonds and finalizing documents. The council emphasized the importance of compliance with ADA standards to ensure accessibility for all residents. Ty Leinneweber mentioned that the company has a strong track record in similar regional projects.

Discussion of Attempted Auto Thefts in the Borough

Concerns were raised regarding recent attempted thefts. The council discussed measures to enhance security, including increasing police patrols and community awareness initiatives. Suggestions include implementing a neighborhood watch program and proposals to improve street lighting in vulnerable areas.

STMP Grant Update

Mr. Goodman provided a brief update on the progress of the STMP Grant and highlighted its significance in supporting long-term development goals. The project aims to address critical infrastructure needs and enhance residents' quality of life.

Regular Approvals

Richard Lombardo moved to adopt the Minutes for May 28, 2024. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Richard Lombardo moved to accept the Financial Report for June 2024. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Adjournment

Richard Lombardo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Submitted,

Hunter L. Ahrens
Borough Manager

These meeting minutes were developed with the assistance of Otter.ai and ChatGPT 4.0