

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING
August 26, 2025

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on August 26, 2025, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Rick Lombardo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and adjourned at 9:23 PM.

Council President Rick Lombardo, Council Vice President Christine Dise, Council Member Kelly Dudash, Council Member Yrisol Garcia, Council Member Troy Goodman, and Council Member Michael Kindlick. Council Member Thomas Baer and Mayor Ryan Maurer were absent. Staff and professional members present were Solicitor Thomas Klonis, Chief of Police Ray Serafin, Deputy Chief of Police Justin Johnson, representative from Systems Design Engineering, Steven Moyer, Codes Administrator Arthur Kelly, and Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens. Several community members were also in attendance, including Anthony DiSarro (Lower Alsace Township resident) and James and Mary Laverty.

Attendance Roll Call

The meeting was called to order, and a roll call was conducted. Six members were present, establishing a quorum. Thomas Baer and Ryan Maurer were absent.

Public Comment

Mr. Anthony DiSarro, Lower Alsace Township resident and Antietam School District Employee – Mr. DiSarro spoke about his use of an e-bike for commuting. He explained that he recently learned from a Central Berks officer that Mt. Penn has an ordinance banning all e-bikes, specifically any unlicensed motorized objects. Mr. DiSarro stated that he follows all state laws, wears a helmet, stops at stop signs, signals for turns, and uses a class 2 pedal-assist bike. He argued that responsible e-bike use benefits the Borough by reducing environmental impact, improving visibility, reducing potential harm to pedestrians, and not using parking spaces.

James Laverty, 2433 Endlich Avenue – Mr. Laverty shared that he did not support the use of e-bikes and described an incident where an e-bike rider collided with his car, resulting in damage to his vehicle. He expressed concern about young riders disregarding traffic rules, particularly on Endlich Avenue and 25th Street, stating they are a menace and someone could be hurt or killed.

Chief Serafin addressed the e-bike concerns, explaining that the law is unclear on e-bikes versus scooters. He stated that until the state clarifies these issues, he plans to direct officers to allow e-bikes and scooters as long as they conform to all roadway laws, including stopping at stop signs, signals, and helmet use. The Chief noted it would be difficult to enforce a ban on e-bikes because it's hard to determine whether a bike is being assisted by a motor or actually being pedaled. He mentioned that District Attorney Adams is planning to discuss this with members of the state legislature to develop more definitive regulations.

Deputy Chief Johnson added that they're focusing on enforcing behavior rather than the vehicles themselves, noting that reckless riding is the primary concern. He explained that

while Mt. Penn's 2004 ordinance technically bans all motorized two-wheeled vehicles, enforcement would focus on dangerous operation rather than simply using an e-bike.

Mr. Lombardo shared that the fire department has responded to three incidents involving e-bikes or scooters this year, including one that caused an accident.

The consensus of the discussion was to support the Chief of Police's position that the department would focus on inappropriate driving or riding behaviors, rather than enforce an all-out ban.

Consider Pay Application for Allan Myers Project

Mr. Ahrens presented two pay applications for the Allan Myers project. The first application was for Contract A (Endlich Avenue) in the amount of \$46,680.98 for completed concrete work by Doug Lamb Construction. The second application was for Contract B (Multi-Streets project) in the amount of \$46,608.93, also for concrete work. The engineer had reviewed and approved both applications.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to approve the Allan Myers Pay Application for Contract A in the amount of \$46,680.98. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to approve the Allan Myers Pay Application for Contract B in the amount of \$46,608.93. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider Pay Application for Friedensburg Road Stormwater Project

Mr. Ahrens presented a pay application for the Stream Bank repairs and restoration, as well as pipe restoration at the Friedensburg and Brook Streets project, where a cavity and sinkhole had formed. The pay application for Summit Valley Outdoor Solutions was for \$55,768.72.

Mr. Ahrens explained that he had spoken with Charlie Paris of PennDOT regarding reimbursement from the liquid fuels fund to the general fund. PennDOT is reviewing the documents and will provide written confirmation. He noted a provision in the liquid fuels code that allows for "drainage on road" to be considered for funding. The payment would initially be made from the general fund until PennDOT's determination on Liquid Fuels eligibility.

Kelly Dudash made a motion to approve the Summit Valley Outdoor Solutions Pay Application in the amount of \$55,768.72. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Borough Engineer Representative Steven Moyer also reported that the school district had received a certificate of use and occupancy for the 201 North 25th Street building, excluding the north side administrative suite and building entrance and egress. The fire company is aware that the building will be partially occupied while construction activities continue. The school district is prioritizing opening the corridor and restoring the building entrance.

The Engineer also announced that Matt Davenport, the current building code official, is no longer employed by SDE. Ryan Wessner will take his place for inspection requests and as the building code official.

Adopt Ordinance on Updating the MP3 COG Agreement

The solicitor presented a draft of the ordinance, which would rescind Ordinance 870 (withdrawing from the Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership) and amend the Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership Council of Government to modify board membership and make additional clarifications.

Council members discussed concerns about the financial commitment, noting the agreement involves a 10-year term with a financial obligation of \$2,000 per year. Even if the borough withdraws with 12 months' notice, they would still be responsible for their dues for the entire term.

Council expressed uncertainty about whether rejoining would reset the 10-year term or if they would be subject to the original term's timeline. Mr. Ahrens offered to seek clarification on this question.

Mr. Kindlick emphasized the importance of borough engagement with the COG as due diligence, particularly for economic development opportunities connecting Mt. Penn and Perkiomen Avenue.

The council decided to table the ordinance until next month to get clarification on the term length and start date.

Adopt Ordinance 906 Restricting Parking on Laurel Avenue

Mr. Klonis presented Ordinance 906, which amends Chapter 15, Part 4 of the code by establishing an additional no-parking zone. Parking would be restricted anytime on the west side of Laurel Avenue, beginning at the intersection of Cameron Street and continuing until the intersection of Summit Avenue.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to adopt Ordinance 906, Restricting Parking on Laurel Avenue. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Solicitor noted that with the tabling of the previous ordinance, this would now be designated as Ordinance 906.

Consider Revisions to Transient Retailer Ordinance

Mr. Klonis presented a draft amendment to the transient retailer permit ordinance that would modify the length of time for which a license can be issued, with the change stating that permits shall not exceed 90 days.

The Solicitor recommended revising the language to make it more straightforward, suggesting the format of stating what the current language says and then what it will be amended to say.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to advertise an Ordinance revising the Transient Retailer Ordinance. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Accept the Resignation of Thomas Staron from the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority

Christine Dise made a motion to accept Thomas Staron's resignation from the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discuss Appointment of Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority Board Member

Mr. Lombardo recommended appointing a current council member to fill the vacancy on the Municipal Authority and suggested Mr. Goodman. The consensus was to make the appointment prior to the next meeting on September 10, 2025.

Yrisol Garcia made a motion to appoint Troy Goodman via Resolution No. 10-25 to the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider the Borough Hall Lease with Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority

Mr. Lombardo and Mr. Ahrens discussed the lease agreement between the Borough and the Municipal Authority. They recommended refining the agreement to extend the notice period for non-renewal from 30 days to 90 days at the end of the lease term (January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028). Council Member Kelly Dudash noted this change would benefit both parties by providing more time to find another tenant or to relocate.

Mr. Lombardo clarified that there was no desire or interest to have the Authority vacate the office, and the lease formalization was to document existing arrangements rather than indicate any change in the relationship.

Christine Dise made a motion to approve the Borough Hall lease with the change to a 90-day notice period with the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discuss the 2025 Road Project Updates

Mr. Ahrens reported that Allan Myers had communicated verbally but not in writing about starting road work on September 8th. There was no indication of any change to that date either.

Mr. Ahrens also shared that the school district's traffic engineer would be conducting second observations beginning September 15th, which could coincide with the road work. The Borough Manager is coordinating a call with all parties to negotiate another date or an observation pattern that would not be affected by the roadwork. These observations would determine whether to keep or remove the temporary permit parking.

Discussion of Community Sanitation Concerns

The Council continued the discussion from the previous meeting regarding community sanitation concerns. Mr. Ahrens noted that Vistaprint could produce postcards at a reasonable cost, with the total price including postage being approximately \$1,200 for 1,500 mail pieces. The postcards would include information about trash collection rules in both English and Spanish.

Council discussed the challenges of fitting all necessary information on a postcard and suggested using a QR code that residents could scan for more detailed information.

There was discussion about targeting specific properties known to be problematic, per J.P. Mascaro, rather than sending the notices to all residents. Mr. Ahrens noted that very few particular complaints were received about non-compliance with trash collection rules, as J.P. Mascaro was likely only reporting egregious violations vs. non-compliance.

Discussion of Grant Project Prioritization

Mr. Ahrens presented a grant project priority concept, focusing on the LSA Category 4 grant that is exclusive to four counties, including Berks County. He suggested prioritizing renovations to the Lower Alsace Ambulance Association facility (approximately \$200,000) and a Borough Hall basement renovation, including bathroom renovations.

Mr. Ahrens explained that infrastructure projects would be better suited for the statewide and PA Small Water and Sewer grants. He noted that approximately \$400,000 in infrastructure money can still be used next year if amendments are approved.

Chief Serafin expressed interest in applying for funds to upgrade the police department building, specifically mentioning lighting and flooring issues. Mr. Ahrens agreed to prioritize this over the basement renovation since the police space is actively used. He offered to help facilitate obtaining quotes for the work to include in the grant application.

The Borough Manager also mentioned the Green Light Go program for traffic signals, which could fund battery backup systems and generator connections for traffic lights and upgrades to school flashing lights.

Discussion of Municipal Merger

Mr. Lombardo reported that a meeting with Lower Alsace would be held on September 23rd at 7:00 PM to discuss the municipal merger. The meeting would focus on abstract issues in a merger and preparing questions for when representatives from the Department of Community and Economic Development become involved in the process.

Approve Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2025

Christine Dise made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for August 19, 2025. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Payment Requests for Doug Lamb Construction Concrete Work at Borough Hall

Mr. Ahrens presented payment requests for Doug Lamb Construction for concrete work at Borough Hall. The first request was for \$7,462 for the ADA ramp at the front of the building, and the second was for \$6,938 for the ADA ramp at the back of the building. The payments would come from the general fund for facilities.

Kelly Dudash made a motion to approve both quotes for facilities improvements to Borough Hall, totaling \$14,400.00. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Central Berks Regional Commission

Chief Serafin reported that on Friday, they conducted a DUI checkpoint at 24th and Perkiomen, resulting in six DUI arrests. He mentioned an incident involving a group of motorcycles and scooters that tried to provoke the police but were unsuccessful, with five or six individuals being charged. He also noted that 47 traffic violations were issued during the checkpoint.

Deputy Chief Johnson, attending his first council meeting in his new role, was introduced and welcomed by the council.

Codes Administrator

Mr. Kelly reported that 85 code enforcement cases were open in August, with 59 closed and 26 still open. He mentioned one inspection and provided updates on specific properties: the Dollar Tree parking lot owner is scheduling line painting; an auto garage on Perkiomen Avenue has cut bushes that obstructed the sidewalk and moved cars away from the right of way. A citation for 100 North 27th Street has finally been processed, with a court date set for October.

Mr. Kelly reported that property owners are not taking the rental inspection process seriously, leading to stricter enforcement of notice violations. He also noted ongoing issues with covered vehicles, vehicles out of inspection on streets, and cars parked on lawns in the 2600-2700 block of Woodvale Avenue.

Executive Session

Following the regular meeting, the council went into an executive session to discuss personnel matters, real estate acquisition, and strategy in connection with potential litigation. The meeting was recessed at 8:36 PM and resumed at 9:22 PM.

Adjournment

Christine Dise made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 PM.