

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
May 8, 2025

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Special Meeting on May 8, 2025, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Rick Lombardo called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Council President Rick Lombardo, Council Vice President Roger Stief, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Christine Dise, Council Member Kelly Dudash, Council Member Yrisol Garcia, and Council Member Michael Kindlick were in attendance. Mayor Ryan Maurer arrived at 6:45 PM during the Executive Session. Staff and Professional Members present were Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens.

Attendance Roll Call

The meeting was called to order, and a roll call was conducted. All Council members were present, and the Mayor was absent, establishing a quorum.

Public Comment

No public comments were presented.

Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters

The Council went into an executive session to discuss personnel matters. The meeting was recessed at 6:31 PM. The Council exited the Executive session and resumed the meeting at 7:16 PM.

Accept Resignation of Borough Employee

Richard Lombardo moved to accept Elva Lopez's resignation as Borough Secretary effective May 5, 2025. Christine Dise seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discuss and Consider Employment Action for Potential Borough Employee(s)

Council discussed posting the position of Borough Secretary. Hunter Ahrens would be responsible for creating the job posting. There was discussion regarding the compensation rate, with Mr. Ahrens confirming it would be posted at the same rate as the previous secretary. Council members agreed this was appropriate and competitive.

Yrisol Garcia made a motion to advertise for the Borough Secretary position at a rate of \$25.00 per hour and other benefit. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Council also discussed swearing in Kelly Dudash as an appointed member of the Borough Council. This item was not on the original agenda, so a motion was made to amend the agenda to include this action.

Roger Stief made a motion to amend the agenda to include swearing in Kelly Dudash. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kelly Dudash was then sworn in as a Council Member by Mayor Ryan Maurer, taking the oath of office.

Discuss and Consider Supplementary Compensation for Current Employees

Council discussed supplementary compensation for two employees who would be taking on additional responsibilities. David Okonski would receive \$300 per week, retroactive to March 31, 2025, and continuing until May 27, 2025, at which time it would be revisited. Hunter Ahrens would receive \$500 per week (excluding his vacation week) and would not be included in his retirement contributions. This would continue through May 27, 2025, at which time it would be revisited.

Yrisol Garcia made a motion to approve supplementary compensation for David Okonski at \$300 per week, retroactive to March 31, 2025, and continuing until May 27, 2025. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Yrisol Garcia made a motion to approve supplementary compensation for Hunter Ahrens at \$500 per week, excluding his vacation week, until May 27, 2025. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discuss Cancelling May 20, 2025, Meeting

The council discussed cancelling the May 20, 2025, meeting as it falls on primary election day. It was noted that the council normally does not meet on election days. There was discussion about possibly needing to add a workshop in June rather than rescheduling the May 20 meeting. The next regular meeting would be May 27, 2025.

Mr. Ahrens noted that negotiations were scheduled for May 29, 2025, with Mr. Kindlick, Mr. Baer, and Mr. Lombardo representing the negotiations committee.

Yrisol Garcia made a motion to cancel the May 20, 2025, Borough Council meeting. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Several topics were discussed under Other Business:

Committee Structure

The Council discussed the current committee structure. Mr. Stief and Mr. Lombardo suggested that solid waste management should be its own committee rather than being part of Public Works, especially considering potential grants for recycling bins.

There was also discussion about the pension committee, which had previously been rolled into the Personnel Committee. After the discussion, it was agreed that pension oversight should be moved to the Finance Committee instead. Mr. Ahrens noted he would ensure this was reflected in the minutes.

It was also mentioned that Kelly Dudash had been added to the Finance and Personnel committees.

Pension Audit

Mr. Ahrens provided a detailed update on a recent pension audit. He explained that Mt. Penn Borough has two pension plans:

- A defined benefit plan (traditional pension) with Dave as the only active employee and several retirees or former employees with vested benefits.
- A defined contribution plan that was started in 2018.

The audit identified several issues, including:

- The 2022 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) was not paid.
- Allocation of funds was not done properly.
- An underestimation of eligible employees' pay, which would result in the state providing approximately \$15,000 to help correct the situation.
- They need to address funds for employees who have not fully vested.

Mr. Ahrens explained that the most significant issues were with the defined contribution plan. He noted problems with record-keeping, including missing W-2 statements for 2022.

Bonding for Borough Secretary

Discussion turned to whether the new Borough Secretary should be bonded. Mr. Ahrens explained that the insurance company's policy makes municipalities pay more for separate bonds if the law requires bonding for certain positions. He suggested either changing the position title to "Borough Clerk" to avoid the bonding requirement (as the position would still be covered under the borough's insurance) or keeping the title and obtaining a bond.

After discussion, the Council agreed to keep the position title of Borough Secretary and obtain a bond, estimated to cost \$1,100-\$1,200 for a \$250,000 bond. They also agreed to conduct a financial background check on candidates.

Adjournment

Richard Lombardo moved to adjourn the meeting, which Michael Kindlick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:33 PM.