

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING
November 26, 2024

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on November 26, 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 9:45 PM.

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

Several community members were present, including Lower Alsace Township Supervisor John Theodossiou, and resident Erin Boston.

Public Comment

Erin Boston, 2329 Perkiomen Avenue: Ms. Boston spoke and shared her concerns with the permit parking program precluding her from parking on the block behind her home on Grant Street or being able to park on N. 24th Street. Ms. Boston requested the Council to allow her to be granted a permit on N. 24th Street.

The Council discussed the matter and concluded that further action was not appropriate at this time.

2025 Budget Presentation

Mr. Ahrens presented the 2025 Budget and summarized changes from the prior meetings. Mr. Ahrens detailed the request for the three separate tax millage increases for the General Millage of 0.50 mills, Fire Tax Millage of 0.50 mills, and EMS Tax Millage of 0.25 mills.

Center and Glenn Street Signs

The Council discussed addressing challenges with property owners who parked in a way that prevented the waste collection vehicles from passing by, but the temporary signs have not been effective. The conclusion was that to prevent street blocking, the council would post an ordinance restricting parking to only one side of the street. The Council directed the Solicitor to draft an Ordinance to that effect.

ADA Ramp Construction

Mr. Leinneweber shared that the project was nearing completion and expected to conclude on November 27, 2024. That included 37 completed ramps and seven ramps where concrete flares were replaced.

Roger Stief motioned to approve Payment Application #3 for \$50,736.75 to Doug Lamb Construction. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Additional discussion occurred on specific ramps on N. 25th Street and Filbert Avenue. No further action was taken.

Engineer's Updates

Mr. Leinneweber shared that additional work had taken place on the joint bid for the road projects in 2025, and core samples and surveys were being conducted to complete a full bid package. He also shared that additional planning was being completed to finalize the building plans for the new municipal building.

Mr. Stief asked questions about the certificate of occupancy provided to the Antietam School District for the High School, which were discussed. There was also a discussion about the ongoing traffic study process with the Antietam School District.

Borough Goals for 2025

Mr. Ahrens shared that draft goals were included in the Borough's budget package and thought it would be helpful to set goals to pursue in 2025 based on the STMP report. Mr. Ahrens requested approval to draft a Police Study peer-review request, which required Lower Alsace Township's support.

Thomas Baer motioned to approve drafting the Peer Review Request Letter of Intent. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Formation of Ad-Hoc Committee to Discuss Municipal Merger

Mayor Maurer requested clarification on whether the Council was investigating home rule or a merger. Mr. Goodman responded that home rule and merger would be both and asked if there were objections to the committee's formation; none were shared. Mr. Goodman requested volunteers for the Committee; Mr. Baer, Mr. Maurer, and Mr. Kindlick volunteered and were appointed to the Committee.

2025 Budget Discussion and Merger Conversation

Mr. Ahrens and Mr. Serafin shared that there was a \$30,000.00 budget reduction for the Central Berks Regional Police Department, which resulted in a decreased request of \$15,000.00 for the Borough of Mount Penn.

The council discussed several budget items and voted to consider the Police Budget, Preliminary Budget, and tax Ordinances. Mr. Stief requested that the final budget for the EMS fund be separated into a separate resolution.

Thomas Baer motioned to approve the 2025 Central Berks Regional Police Department appropriations and Preliminary Borough budget request. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to 3-2, with Messrs. Baer, Goodman, and Kindlick voting in the affirmative and Mrs. Dise and Mr. Stief voting in the negative.

Mr. Maurer and Mr. Goodman commented that Mount Penn's low assessed value and tax base meant that to provide the services the residents expected, the Borough would need to have a high tax rate to pay for them. Mr. Goodman commented that Home Rule and Merger were viable alternatives to the increases the Council is concerned with. Mr. Stief commented that he was under the impression that Lower Alsace was skeptical of a merger, but it now seemed they were willing to look at it.

Mr. Theodossiou, Lower Alsace Township Supervisor, commented that he did not believe anyone was opposed and that he was willing to investigate. However, he felt that the parties did not need to start all

over but instead should use the prior documents to get started faster and review what was done last time. Mr. Theodossiou emphasized the necessity for financial sense to be clearly understood before any decisions in merger discussions.

Additional discussion was had about the possibility of additional shared services, including a public works department and a cooperative health care agency, and the two fire companies were also discussed.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve the 2025 Real Estate Property tax rates. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to 3-2, with Messrs. Baer, Goodman, and Kindlick voting in the affirmative and Mrs. Dise and Mr. Stief voting in the negative.

Opening PLGIT Accounts

Mr. Ahrens requested authorization to have the Borough join the Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust (PLGIT).

Roger Stief motioned to approve joining PLGIT by Resolution No. 52-24. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

2025 Meeting Schedule

The Council agreed to maintain the same schedule as 2024, with workshop meetings occurring monthly and business meetings only in June, July, August, and December.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve and advertise the 2025 Meeting Schedule. Christine Dise seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Approvals

Roger Stief motioned to accept the Strategic Management Planning program study conducted by the Pennsylvania Economy League. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Roger Stief motioned to approve Ordinance No. 899 approving Handicap Parking Spots. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve Ordinance No. 900 restricting parking on Philmay Terrace. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Thomas Baer motioned to approve Resolution No. 52-24 authorizing joining PLGIT. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Christine Dise motioned to approve Resolution No. 53-24 authorizing Mount Penn Fire Company to apply for an LSA Grant. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Roger Stief motioned to approve Resolution No. 54-24 authorizing the Borough to apply for a STMP Grant. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Roger Stief motioned to approve a contract with Safety Net Sanctuary for Animal Control Services. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Thomas Baer motioned to approve the November 2024 Treasurer's Report. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Christine Dise motioned to conditionally approve the Minutes for October 29, 2024, pending revisions to an agenda topic she requested to be discussed. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Other Business

Mr. Maurer requested that any Council Members who requested information from the Police Commission share that with him; he shared that his goal was to ensure that communication in the future met the Council's standards.

Mr. Stief shared that the community Santa tour occurred on December 20th, 2024.

Mr. Stief requested an update on the intersection at Endlich Avenue and the walkway safety concerns. Discussion ensued, and the Transportation Engineer will provide an update at the December 17th meeting.

Mr. Kelly shared an update on the department's attempt to hire another code inspector.

Mr. Maurer initiated a discussion about a Christmas Lights display contest in the Borough with prizes; the Council agreed to a small budget for the program.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve a not to-exceed the amount of \$150.00 for the Christmas Lights contest. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Adjournment

Roger Stief made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM. Christine Dise 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