

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING
October 29, 2025

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on October 29, 2025, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council Vice President Christine Dise called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Council Vice President Christine Dise, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Kelly Dudash, Council Member Yrisol Garcia, Council Member Troy Goodman, Council Member Michael Kindlick, and Mayor Ryan Maurer were present. Council Member Kelly Dudash arrived at 7:03 PM. Council President Richard Lombardo was absent. Staff and professional members present were Solicitor Thomas Klonis, Chief of Police Ray Serafin, Deputy Chief of Police Justin Johnson, Borough Engineer Ty Leinneweber, Codes Administrator Arthur Kelly, and Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens. Several community members were also in attendance, including Jose Caba.

Attendance Roll Call

The meeting was called to order, and a roll call was conducted. Six members were present, establishing a quorum. Mr. Lombardo was absent.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at the opening of the meeting; public comment by Jose Caba of 2427 Fairview Avenue.

Presentation of the CY 2026 Borough Budget Draft

Borough Manager presented the 2026 draft budget, which followed the Government Finance Officers Association standards. The budget presentation document focuses on four key components: policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communication tool.

The Borough Manager detailed the fund balance trends, noting a slight decline from 2024 to 2025 primarily due to projects and timing of grant funding. He highlighted that grant funds came in at the beginning of 2025 for projects that started and ended in 2024.

The manager identified deficits in the general fund and solid waste fund as concerns to address. He showed that the decrease from 2025 to 2026 was primarily in the capital fund, related to the new road crew project. The current projected General Fund deficit is approximately \$72,086, which was slightly higher than previously projected due to assessment appeals and the addition of \$400 for No Nonsense Neutering costs.

A breakdown of expenses showed public safety as the largest portion at 55% of operational expenses when grant funding was excluded. The public safety portion was further broken down showing the police department comprising three-quarters of those expenses.

The manager discussed two key problems to resolve:

- The solid waste fund deficit of approximately \$20,000, based on current fees and the number of dwelling units.
- The general fund deficit of about \$72,000, largely driven by increases in police department expenses (\$95,489), regional codes expenses (\$15,779), and borough staff expenses (\$59,108) of which 51% came from health insurance cost increases.

The manager proposed potential solutions including:

- For the solid waste fund: increasing the fee to \$488.98 per household to cover expenses and build a fund balance
- For the general fund: a 1 mill tax increase, reducing expenses, and considering a Tax Revenue Anticipation Note (TRAN) as a short-term solution

After extensive discussion about the financial sustainability of the borough, the challenges of increasing taxes on residents, and exploring other revenue options, Council took the following actions:

Troy Goodman made a motion to include a 1 mill tax increase in the 2026 budget draft. Seconded by Michael Kindlick. Motion passed 5-1. Voting in the affirmative were Baer, Dise, Dudash, Goodman, and Kindlick; Ms. Garcia was opposed.

Troy Goodman made a motion to increase the solid waste fee to \$490 for 2026. Seconded by Michael Kindlick. Motion passed unanimously.

The Borough Manager shared that he would update the draft budget with these changes for review at the November meeting, with final budget approval scheduled for December 16th, 2025.

Consider Pay Applications for Road Improvement Projects

The Borough Engineer explained he had received revised pay applications from Allan Myers around 11:30 that day and had not had sufficient time to review them properly. He noted concerns about milling charges that appeared to exceed the unit price.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to table the pay application until the next meeting. Seconded by Yrisol Garcia. Motion passed unanimously.

The Borough Engineer presented two other invoices:

- An invoice from M&A Excavating for \$7,834 for pipe repair, associated with change order number 6 to decrease Allen Myers' contract by the same amount.
- An invoice for \$14,980 for pipe repair on Brook Street between Carsonia and North 25th Street. This was for a pre-existing issue discovered during construction, not damage caused by Alan Myers.

Both invoices would be paid from grant monies.

Troy Goodman made a motion to authorize the Change Order No. 6 for Allan Myers and make payment for the corresponding invoice of \$7,834 from M&A Excavating for project related pipe repairs. Seconded by Michael Kindlick. Motion passed unanimously.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to authorize payment of \$14,980 to M&A Excavating for project related pipe repairs. Seconded by Troy Goodman. Motion passed unanimously.

Engineers Report

Mr. Leineweber reported that UGI has started work and is making good progress. He shared that the paving and milling work is tentatively scheduled for November 10th, with completion expected around November 21st. He confirmed that curbing issues were being addressed, with some sections removed and cold patch to be placed on top.

Public Comment

Jose Caba, 2427 Fairview Avenue – Mr. Caba inquired about a portion of undedicated street behind his home adjacent to Pennwyn Terrace where his neighbor was parking. He wanted to know if he could purchase that area in order to park there. After discussion about the issue, Mr. Klonis advised them that the other property owners could not impede his access to his property by parking on in the area that created access this rear property, however he could not use it to park either.

Mr. Klonis commented that he could explore parking in the rear on his property that is accessed by that area. He also added that if there were issues with the neighboring property owners parking there, Mr. Caba would have to consult with an attorney in order to explore legal action to preserve the access to the property from that area.

Consider Animal Control Contracts for 2026

The Borough Manager requested authorization to sign the animal control contract with Safety Net Sanctuary for 2026. He also discussed plans to prepare a contract with No Nonsense Neutering for cat neutering services, as directed by Council at the previous meeting.

The Solicitor expressed concerns about the indemnification language in the Safety Net Sanctuary contract, noting it required the borough to indemnify them for any potential liability. He explained that while he didn't like this language, the cost savings compared to ARL were substantial, making it a practical choice despite the contractual concerns.

Council directed the Borough Manager to have the Solicitor review both contracts, with the No Nonsense Neutering contract to be presented at the November meeting.

Consider Lease Agreement with MPBMA for Borough Hall

Mr. Ahrens presented the final draft of the lease agreement with the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority, noting the only change was extending the notice period from 30 to 90 days if the borough seeks to end the lease agreement at the end of the term, which lasts from 2026 – 2028.

Troy Goodman moved to Lease Agreement with Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority for 2026 – 2028 for the Borough Hall. Michael Kindlick seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Consider Updating Alarm Ordinance (No. 668)

The Solicitor reviewed the alarm ordinance and made minor changes to ensure it would work for fire alarms.

Michael Kindlick moved to approve advertisement of an amended Alarm Ordinance. Troy Goodman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Consider Appointments to Economic Development Task Force

The Borough Manager presented two candidates for the Economic Development Task Force: Patrick McDevitt and Maria Miguel. He noted they were still trying to fill the other three positions but recommended getting these two individuals started as soon as possible.

During discussion, several council members expressed interest in potentially serving on the task force if additional community members could not be found.

Thomas Baer made a motion to appoint Patrick McDevitt and Maria McGough to the Economic Development Task Force. Seconded by Micheal Kindlick. Motion passed unanimously.

Discuss Delinquent Collections of Trash & Recycling Fees

The Solicitor reported on his consultation with NPR regarding the collection of trash and recycling fees. Berks County confirmed that the current method of collection is appropriate, as the municipal tax claim statute permits collection of municipal fees through tax sales.

The Solicitor noted two issues that needed to be addressed:

- The tax collector is not bonded for collecting trash fees, only for taxes
- The tax collector should be formally appointed as the collector for the solid waste fee

The Solicitor recommended obtaining additional bonding for the tax collector and appointing him specifically as the collector for the solid waste fee by resolution at the beginning of the year.

Approvals

Michael Kindlick moved to approve the meeting minutes for September 30, 2025. Thomas Baer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Kelly Dudash moved to approve the meeting minutes for October 21, 2025. Michael Kindlick seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Michael Kindlick moved to approve the October 2025 Treasurer Report. Kelly Dudash seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Fire Company

A fire was reported at 500 in Carsonia, at the Binkley property. The resident was taken to the hospital but returned later. It was noted with concern that there were no smoke detectors in the house.

Borough Manager

Mr. Ahrens reported that the staff and Council had decided not to pursue a health insurance change for non-union employees. He requested a brief executive session to discuss potentially hiring a regular part-time streets employee. He also noted that updates to the employee handbook would be needed before year-end to reflect changes in the labor contract, which had been approved by the Union last week and needed to be approved by Council in November.

Police Department

Deputy Chief Johnson reported on upcoming community policing opportunities, including:

- Participation in the Antietam Valley Community Partnership trunk-or-treat event
- Assisting with Halloween parades on Friday
- Preparing 200 treat bags for a classroom trick-or-treat event
- The annual "Shop with a Cop" event scheduled for December 16th

A council member noted they had several hundred dollars from the street fair in 2023 that could be donated to the police department's "Shop with a Cop" program to help an additional family, with further discussion planned for the next meeting.

It was also reported that the PennDOT bypass project has been escalated due to receiving federal funds. This project will significantly impact the borough with detours that could potentially double the traffic on Perkiomen Avenue, which currently handles more than 20,000 cars per day.

Codes Administrator

Mr. Kelly shared that during October 2025, the Mount Penn Borough Codes Department issued 76 warnings and notices of violation, conducted 3 inspections, and filed 7 citations. Notable enforcement actions included a warning letter for unauthorized mobile mechanic operations on Woodvale Avenue and a pending investigation of a tent erected behind 2600 Perkiomen Avenue. Seasonal property maintenance concerns have shifted from tall grass to debris accumulation. Inspector Alex Roman continues to lead community compliance efforts, leveraging bilingual outreach. Preparations are underway for the 2026 Rental Inspection Program, which will promote proactive inspections and collaboration among landlords, tenants, and the Codes Department.

Borough Mayor

Mr. Maurer asked for guidance on whether Borough Council would like him to hold the Holiday Lights Contest again this year. The Council agreed that the program would be beneficial for the community.

Troy Goodman made a motion to allocate \$275.00 for prizes for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places of the Holiday Lights Contest to be judged by the Mayor. Seconded by Christine Dise. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Michael Kindlick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Executive Session

Following the regular meeting, the council went into an executive session to discuss personnel matters.

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