

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING
October 29, 2024

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on October 29, 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 9:52 PM.

Members in attendance were Council President Troy Goodman, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Yrisol Garcia, 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, and Borough Engineer Ty Leinneweber. Council Member Christine Dise and Council Member Rick Lombardo were absent.

Several community members were present, including Robert DeLong and other community members.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2025 Budget Presentation

Mr. Ahrens presented an updated 2025 Budget that included changes requested by the Borough Council at the October Workshop Meeting. Highlights included below:

1. Revised projections reduced the deficit from \$92,000 to \$50,000.
2. Increased revenue from interest income due to favorable rates.
3. Tax revenue growth linked to new residential developments.
4. Removed a part-time administrative position to cut costs.
5. Proposed tax increases:
 - a. Mount Penn Fire Company: 0.5 mill increase (~\$40,000 revenue).
 - b. Lower Alsace Ambulance: 0.25 mill increase (~\$21,000 revenue).
6. Budget still allows \$88,000 unallocated for strategic planning services.

Intermunicipal Agreement with Alsace Township

Mr. Ahrens shared that Alsace Township had requested to codify the Borough and Township's equipment-sharing practices between municipalities for insurance and operational clarity.

Thomas Baer motioned to approve the Intermunicipal Agreement with Alsace Township. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

ADA Ramp Construction

Mr. Leinneweber shared that three change orders and a second pay application must be considered for the ADA Ramp Construction project with Lamb Construction. These were each reviewed and recommended for approval by the Borough Engineer. The change orders were related to ADA compliance and sidewalk slope corrections.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve the 4th Change Order Application for the ADA Ramp Construction Contract with Lamb Construction totaling \$4,158.00. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve the 5th Change Order Application for the ADA Ramp Construction Contract with Lamb Construction totaling \$475.00. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Yrisol Garcia motioned to approve the 6th Change Order Application for the ADA Ramp Construction Contract with Lamb Construction totaling \$10,887.50. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve the 2nd Payment Application for the ADA Ramp Construction Contract with Lamb Construction totaling \$79,164.35. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Leinneweber shared concerns that were brought to the Borough's attention when Lamb Construction removed concrete around ADA Ramps but was not replaced when the new ramps were installed. The Council's direction was to push the contractor to replace any removed concrete.

Municipal Garage Project

Mr. Ahrens shared that the bid project would need to be designed by Systems Design Engineering to complete a bid package in 2025. Mr. Ahrens asked the Borough Council to authorize Systems Design Engineering to prepare a bid specifications for the work.

Thomas Baer motioned to approve Systems Design Engineering developing bid specifications for the Municipal Garage Project. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Prioritization of Grants in 2025

The Borough shared that it had been the recipient of \$800,000.00 in a state grant to improve certain streets in the Borough. Borough Council determined that the project would be combined with the Endlich Avenue grant, totaling \$1.4 million for bidding in early February of 2025.

High-Yield Savings Accounts

Mr. Ahrens shared that the Finance Committee was recommending that staff make changes to existing accounts to increase our Savings Rate to 3.75% at First National Bank. The Finance Committee would also explore moving to PLGIT to realize improved savings rates moving forward while maintaining checking accounts with the Borough.

Road Improvement Letter to Dengler Street

Borough Council agreed to send a letter to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation requesting improvements to Dengler Street, where deterioration occurred.

Michael Kindlick motioned to send a letter to PennDOT requesting improvement to Dengler Street. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Burn Ban Ordinance Discussion

Mr. Stief requested clarification on the applicable burn ban ordinances and if there was any burning permitted. Mr. Klonis and Mr. Ahrens shared that that Ordinance had limitations on burning, but burning

was still permitted under certain restrictions. Some discussion occurred on amending the ordinance to ban burning outright, but the Council took no action.

The Council also discussed the responsibility for enforcement of the Ordinance; the Police and Fire Marshall can enforce the Ordinance. The Mayor also shared that he would formalize a proclamation declaring a burn ban for the Borough until further notice.

Response Time from Borough Personnel

Mrs. Dise requested an agenda discussion regarding response times from Borough Staff. The discussion centered on finding ways to communicate with residents proactively and in a timely way.

Mrs. Dise also requested that there should be communications from the office when street closures occur. She asked what the office could do to communicate that information to residents affected proactively. Mr. Ahrens shared that the office could be more proactive and shared that he would look at sending letters to all residents along streets where road work was occurring in the new year.

Discussion of Permit Parking Program

Mr. Stief sought clarity about the enforcement of the permit parking program, including how long a permit takes to be returned and what constituted a valid display of a parking permit. Mr. Ahrens shared that the office is enforcing the return of permits, and it had one case where that occurred, and it took about a month for the resident to return the permit. Chief Serafin responded that it was the ability to see the permit on the vehicle, and they accepted the front or back window. Mr. Stief also asked how enforcement was taking place for parents parking near bus stops in the parking area. Chief Serafin responded that "standing" vehicles cannot be ticketed. Chief Serafin explained that standing is when someone occupies a vehicle while parked or idling.

Discussion was also had about granting Council Members access to the visitor pass system so that applications submitted over the weekend could be approved during the weekend instead of waiting for staff to come in on Monday. Mr. Ahrens responded that it could be done.

Approvals

Thomas Baer motioned to approve Ordinance No. 896 updating the Uniform Construction Code. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve Ordinance No. 897 amending the Permit Parking Program. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve Ordinance No. 898 adopting restrictions for Motorized Devices and ATVs. Roger Stief seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve Resolution No. 50-24 updating the Employee Handbook. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Thomas Baer motioned to approve a Grant Support Letter for the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Ms. Garcia suggested that Election Day could be a work-from-home day instead of a full day off to compensate all staff for the time off.

Yrisol Garcia motioned to close the office and have staff work from home on General Election Day, November 5, 2024. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to 6-1, with Mss. Dise and Garcia, Messrs. Baer, Goodman, and Kindlick voted in the affirmative, and Mr. Stief voted in the negative.

Yrisol Garcia motioned to approve the October 2024 Financial Statements. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve the Minutes for September 26, 2024. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Executive Session on Public Safety and Personnel Matters

The Council held an Executive Session during the meeting to discuss Public Safety and Personnel Matters. The Borough Council was in Executive Session from 8:37 PM until 9:50 PM.

Other Business

Mr. Klonis shared that the Borough Council met in the Executive Session and shared their desire to support Mr. Ahrens with additional help with Right-to-Know requests. They also said they would appoint Troy Goodman as Assistant Right to Know Officer.

Michael Kindlick motioned to approve Resolution 51-24 appointing Troy Goodman as Assistant Right to Know Officer. 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 9:52 PM. Michael Kindlick 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