

August 18, 2026 Business Meeting

Meeting minutes

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for the Monthly Business Meeting on August 18, 2026, at Mount Penn Borough Hall, 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Rick Lombardo called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Council President Rick Lombardo, Council Vice President Christine Dise, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Kelly Dudash, Council Member Troy Goodman, Council Member Michael Kindlick, and Council Member David Korinchock were present. Mayor Ryan Maurer was absent. Staff and professionals present included Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens. Several members of the public were present including William McGuire, Cheryl Ann McGuire, Tom Crosier, Kim Crosier, Curt Hill, and several other members of the public.

Meeting Opening

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. All present were asked to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance, which was led by Mr. Lombardo.

Antietam Valley Municipal Authority (AVMA) Board Member Interviews

Council conducted interviews for four candidates seeking appointment to the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority (AVMA) Board. Each candidate was asked to confirm eligibility requirements and respond to a standard set of eight questions covering their background, opposition to the sale of the sewer system, organizational change management, staff morale, board decision-making in the absence of a traditional daily manager, and handling of unauthorized board member directives to staff.

Candidate 1 – Mr. Brian Sands: Mr. Sands confirmed eligibility, noting 52 years of residency in the area. He described extensive involvement with AVMA dating to 2000, including infiltration inspections and grease trap inspections for local restaurants. He holds a master plumber license and has been in the trade since 1959. Mr. Sands stated his opposition to any sale of the system and committed to voting against such a proposal. He emphasized communication and majority-based decision-making as his approach to organizational matters.

Candidate 2 – Mr. Brian Horner: Mr. Horner¹ confirmed eligibility and described nearly 38 years in law enforcement, including service as a detective, police chief for Northern Berks Regional and Laureldale Borough, and current employment as a police officer with the Boyertown Area School District. He stated that, without hearing more information, he

¹ [Public Comment began during a break between interviews, but is included below to reflect the grouping of the interviews together in the minutes]

would not commit at this time to a position on the sale of the system. He emphasized communication, teamwork, and community accountability throughout his responses, noting his approach to intra-board conflict would be to serve as a mediator.

Candidate 3 – Mr. Thomas Canonico: Mr. Canonico confirmed eligibility and described 25 years of business ownership as a master plumber, with backflow certification. His primary motivation for seeking appointment was concern about the potential privatization of the water system, citing the situation in Exeter Township as a cautionary example. He stated his opposition to any sale of the system and committed to voting against such a proposal.

Candidate 4 – Ms. Julie Kleiman-Baer: Ms. Kleiman-Baer confirmed eligibility as a resident of Mt. Penn Borough. She described 35 years of experience at Fulton Financial Corporation, rising to Vice President of Consumer Operations, with prior service at Great Valley Savings Association. She also noted extensive community service including service on the Antietam School Board, Mt. Penn Rotary, Leadership Berks, and various volunteer organizations. Ms. Kleiman-Baer stated her opposition to any sale and committed to voting against such a proposal. She asked clarifying questions regarding board subcommittees, meeting frequency, and emergency operational protocols.

Public Comment

Tom Crosier, 231 Seidel Street – Mr. Crosier commented that he saw discussion about the Borough selling the Water system on Facebook. He asked if the Borough was planning to sell the Authority. Mr. Lombardo responded that the Borough was not considering selling and was working on the Conveyance-Leaseback to create prohibitions on a sale so that it could not be sold. Mr. Lombardo shared details about the upcoming expenses, especially the emergency radios, and use the lease revenue to support these costs.

Mr. Crosier asked how to better share this information with the public. The Council responded that the information was shared at several public meetings and was featured on the water bill.

Unidentified Resident – The resident asked how this would support the Borough with financial assistance. Mr. Lombardo emphasized that the proposed leaseback arrangement is not a sale and cited similar arrangements in other Berks County municipalities, including Hamburg, Kutztown, Leesport, Shillington, and Reading. Mr. Lombardo and Mr. Ahrens responded to questions from members of the public, providing a detailed explanation of the three-part plan under consideration: (1) the Borough exercising its statutory right to take back the water system from the authority and lease it back, generating a revenue stream estimated at \$295,300 annually to offset emergency services costs, particularly police services, Mr. Ahrens acknowledged that rates would increase, estimating an average increase of approximately \$7.00 per quarter for ratepayers.; (2) a 50-year no-sale covenant

embedded in the lease agreement, supplemented by a Borough Code provision requiring a public referendum before any sale could occur; and (3) integration of authority staff into a Borough public works department to create long-term operational synergies.

Unidentified Resident – The resident asked whether the Borough was in active litigation. Mr. Ahrens responded about active litigation with the Borough of St. Lawrence over a 4-acre parcel hosting a water tower, and a separate action seeking court direction for the authority to transfer the system to the Borough.

Unidentified Resident – The resident asked whether the changes the Borough was seeking would jeopardize any active loans or grants that the Authority currently holds. Mr. Ahrens responded that it was possible these activities jeopardized the grants or loans. Mr. Ahrens commented on the status of Penn Vest loans, noting that the Borough is actively working to have those loans transferred rather than called, and that the subsidized interest rate of 1.75% versus an estimated open-market rate of approximately 4% represents a significant cost difference the Borough is working to protect. He shared that the Borough was actively working to have the loans and existing grant transferred to the Borough.

Cheryl Ann McGuire, 617 Byram Street – Ms. McGuire asked several questions, including the how the term of the lease would affect these issues. Mr. Ahrens responded that there were several factors at play with the no-sale covenant. He shared some of the challenges the Authority has shared about Act 47 and its ability to change contracts; he commented that the entire effort was meant to avoid that trajectory all together by securing additional revenue and creating the prohibitions on sale through the lease and Borough Code. Mr. Lombardo shared that financial struggle is also why the Borough is considering a merger with Lower Alsace and these protections against a sale would help prevent concerns about a potential sale, which he commented contributed to the defeat of the last merger vote.

Cheryl Ann McGuire, 617 Byram Street – Ms. McGuire asked about how the rates would be set so that rates would not be dramatically increased after the first installment of the new costs under the lease. Mr. Ahrens explained the methodological standard that PFM recommends and current state regulations require to limit the increases to be sustainable for the Authority and supports an appropriate return on equity to the Borough. Mr. Ahrens commented that after considering the total defensible figure of \$478K, the Borough believed that was not necessary and deferred to a beginning fee of \$295.3K.

Executive Session on Personnel Matters

The Borough Council entered an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 7:02 PM and returned at 7:28 PM.

Discuss and Consider Appointment of AVMA Board Member

Motion by Christine Dise, seconded by Michael Kindlick, to approve Resolution 28-26 to appoint Julia Kleiman-Baer to AVMA. Motion carried unanimously.

Discuss Borough Garage Construction

Mr. Lombardo shared that this would be tabled until September's meetings.

Discuss Shingle Replacement Permit Practice

Mr. Ahrens reported that the historical practice has been to not require a permit for shingle-only roof replacements, while any work involving sheeting or structural elements does require a permit. Staff research revealed an existing ordinance requiring permits for re-shingling projects exceeding 25% of the roof area. The Code Administrator and Borough Plumbing Inspector were noted to favor enforcing the permit requirement at that threshold.

Council discussed the practical and financial implications for residents, noting that a full UCC building permit would impose significant costs. The consensus direction was for the Borough Manager to develop a separate, simplified roof permit outside of the UCC framework, administered by codes staff, requiring contractors to provide proof of insurance. This approach was viewed as a means of protecting residents by ensuring licensed and insured contractors perform the work, without creating a burdensome fee structure. The Borough Manager was directed to prepare a draft ordinance accordingly.

Discuss Budget Process Outline

Mr. Ahrens reported that the budget process for the upcoming fiscal year would follow the same general timeline as the prior year. A budget projection through the summer would be distributed to Council by the first Friday in September. A Finance Committee meeting is being scheduled prior to the workshop meeting.

Mr. Ahrens noted that the current budget being prepared covers Borough operations only and does not integrate the water authority financials, given the complexity and the pending status of the reorganization. He further noted that if a new authority is constituted, a separate budget consistent with the Municipal Authorities Act would likely need to be adopted by December 31st.

Approvals

Approve Minutes for July 28, 2026

Motion by Michael Kindlick, seconded by Thomas Baer, to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2026 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Sustain and Approve Electrical Brokerage Contract

Mr. Ahrens reported that the electrical brokerage contract had been signed in advance of this meeting in order to lock in current market rates. The contract fixes electricity costs for

the next five years, with projected savings of approximately \$12,000 over that period compared to anticipated market rate increases. The contract was secured through a vendor endorsed by the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB).

Motion by Christine Dise, seconded by Michael Kindlick, to sustain and approve the electrical brokerage contract. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Resolution Appointing Building Code Official (BCO)

Mr. Ahrens reported that SDE hired a new Building Code Official (BCO), Mr. Sean Naftzinger, who previously served at Limerick Township. A staff meeting was held with Mr. Naftzinger, Borough inspectors, and administrative staff to address outstanding concerns with SDE's service. The resolution appointing Mr. Naftzinger was identified as Resolution 29-26.

Motion by Michael Kindlick, seconded by Thomas Baer, to approve Resolution 29-26 appointing Sean Naftzinger as Building Code Official. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Fire Company

Mr. Lombardo reported that the fire company building extension is progressing, with the roof recently completed. Completion is anticipated by September. The Mt. Penn Fire Company pig roast is scheduled for Saturday, September 26th, to be held at the station and will include the Fire Company, ambulance, police, and Borough Council.

Central Berks Regional PD

Mr. Goodman advised that the police department will need to hire additional personnel in the near term due to anticipated staffing changes.

Public Works Committee

Mr. Lombardo reported that paving work on Laurel and Summit Streets commenced the previous day. Stonework was underway, with base paving anticipated later in the week, subject to weather. It was noted that certain portions of the roadbed encountered solid rock, which was addressed appropriately in the field, and that the project contractor was cooperative and responsive.

Merger Committee

Mr. Lombardo noted that merger committee analysis completed over the summer is ready for review. Dates for a committee meeting with the neighboring municipality are to be coordinated and confirmed.

Borough Manager

Mr. Ahrens noted that three ordinances are included in Council's packet for consideration at the next meeting. The Borough Association's salary survey for Pennsylvania boroughs for 2026 was also distributed for Council's reference. Mr. Ahrens confirmed that the TRAN has been fully paid off, with a payoff confirmation letter included in Council's binder.

Other Business

No other business was discussed.

Adjournment

Motion by Michael Kindlick, seconded by David Korinchock, to adjourn that meeting at 8:10 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lombardo announced the Council would adjourn to an Executive Session after the meeting at 8:10 PM to discuss active litigation matters.

Submitted by:

Hunter L. Ahrens
Hunter L. Ahrens (Sep 30, 2026 16:42:54 EDT)

Hunter L. Ahrens, MPA, SHRM-SCP
Borough Manager

January 2026 Reorganization Meeting - Meeting Minutes

Final Audit Report

2026-09-30

Created:	2026-09-30
By:	Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA9bjHGqVTfatLuUM-p1flgVCmdOnb-ADL

"January 2026 Reorganization Meeting - Meeting Minutes" History

-  Document created by Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
2026-09-30 - 8:35:32 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com) for signature
2026-09-30 - 8:35:36 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
2026-09-30 - 8:42:34 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
Signature Date: 2026-09-30 - 8:42:54 PM GMT - Time Source: server - Signature Appearance Selected: TYPE
-  Agreement completed.
2026-09-30 - 8:42:54 PM GMT