

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH  
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING  
January 28, 2025

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on January 28, 2025, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Troy Goodman called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and adjourned at 9:05 PM.

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

Keith Hitchcock and several community members were present.

### **Meeting Opening and Pledge to the Flag**

Troy Goodman led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

### **Attendance Roll Call**

Mr. Ahrens conducted a roll call. All members were present except for one absent member. A quorum was established.

### **Public Comment**

Keith Hitchcock – 2715 Hollywood Avenue: Mr. Hitchcock addressed the council regarding parking issues on Hollywood Court. He explained that he has lived there for about five years and the street is too narrow for cars to park on both sides. Hitchcock described an ongoing issue with his neighbor across the street at 2715 Hollywood Court, who has been leaving their car parked in front of Hitchcock's house for extended periods. He expressed frustration with this situation and presented copies of ordinances from several neighboring municipalities that prohibit leaving cars parked on the street for more than 72 hours. Hitchcock requested that the council consider adopting a similar ordinance.

In response, Rick Lombardo mentioned that in some areas of Reading, cars must be moved for street cleaning, but this is not required on every street. Tom Klonis noted that enforcement of such an ordinance would fall to the police department, which could be challenging. Chief Seraphin suggested that permit parking might be a more feasible solution than a 72-hour limit. The council agreed to consider the issue further.

### **Holiday Lights Competition Winners**

This item was skipped. Troy Goodman mentioned that winners would be notified by mail and would have to come in to claim their prize money within 30 days.

*Roger Stief made a motion to set a 30-day deadline for winners to claim their prizes. Rick Lombardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Consider Payment Application No. 5 for ADA Ramps**

The Borough Engineer reported that Doug Lamb Construction, Inc. submitted their final pay application (number 5) for \$13,047.61, representing the 5% retainment held during construction. The total amount of work completed was \$260,952.25. After this payment, there will be no remaining amount owed to the contractor.

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to authorize payment of \$13,047.61 to Doug Lamb Construction Inc. for pay application number 5. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Consider Certificate of Substantial Completion for ADA Ramps**

The engineer stated that all closeout documents, including affidavits, liens, and waivers, have been received. The certificate of substantial completion needs to be signed by the board.

Some council members expressed concerns about the slipperiness of the new ramps, especially in icy conditions. The solicitor clarified that the question is whether the work was completed according to specifications, not about the design itself. The Borough Engineer commented that this was a design change they could make in future construction.

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to authorize signing the certificate of substantial completion. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The engineer noted that by signing this document, the one-year warranty period for the project will run from November 13, 2024, through November 12, 2025.

### **Consider Committee Restructure**

The council reviewed and discussed the proposed committee restructure. Some adjustments were made based on member's preferences. The final structure was approved with the understanding that an updated list reflecting the changes discussed would be signed and shared with the Council.

### **Consideration of Software Letter to Neighboring Agencies**

Hunter Ahrens mentioned that he had drafted a letter but was not satisfied with how it sounded. He explained that the letter's purpose was to see if other agencies would formally partner with the borough, contingent on receiving a grant from the state. The council agreed to approve the concept of sending a letter with Ahrens to revise and tailor the content before sending and returning to Council with the revised version.

### **Creation of Assistant Treasurer Position**

*Michael Kindlick made a motion to create the assistant treasurer position with a stipend of \$60 per year (\$5 per month). Rick Lombardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Appoint Tom Baer to Assistant Treasurer Position**

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to appoint Troy Goodman as assistant treasurer. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Extension of Antietam Valley Municipal Authority Charter**

Hunter Ahrens explained that AVMA's current charter extends through 2032, but they are requesting a 50-year extension to satisfy requirements for a loan from M&T Bank. The council discussed the proposal and agreed to move forward with the process.

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to advertise an ordinance to extend the AVMA charter for 50 years. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Engineer Updates**

#### **Road Bid for Summer 25' – Publish Target February 17, 2025**

The engineer reported on core-boring results for roads planned for repair, including Inlet, Brook Street, Oak Terrace, Cameron Street, Laurel Avenue, Summit Avenue, and Hill Avenue. He expressed concerns about the weak paving specifications found in some areas and explained that he would need to reassess the scope of work based on these findings. The engineer stated he would work with Mr. Okonski to determine priorities and bring recommendations back to the council, likely at the February 18th workshop meeting. Council agreed to advertise the meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup> as a Business meeting.

#### **Updates on Municipal Garage Project**

The engineer reported that he and Mr. Ahrens met with Exeter Township's Planning Commission, which recommended preliminary final plan approval. The Board of Supervisors granted conditional preliminary plan approval. Next steps include getting ES approval, obtaining a letter from the planning commission, and resubmitting for signatures. Mr. Ahrens noted that drafting a lease with AVMA would be a priority moving forward.

### **Block Party**

This item was not discussed. Chief Serafin confirmed that the Police Department would participate in the Exeter Township-led National Night Out.

### **Discussion of Borough Website**

Mr. Stief raised concerns about outdated information on the borough website, particularly regarding zoning and planning commission members. The council agreed that keeping the website up-to-date should be a priority. Suggestions were made to potentially involve students from the school district as interns to help maintain the site.

### **Repeal of Per Capita Tax Ordinance**

The solicitor reported that he was only made aware of this item recently and would need more time to prepare the ordinance for repeal. He requested the original ordinance that established the per capita tax in Mount Penn. The council agreed to revisit this at the February 18th meeting.

### **Tax Collector Pay Ordinance**

The solicitor presented Ordinance Number 902, establishing the tax collector's compensation. The main points included a rate of \$25 per bill regardless of amount, with

the tax collector's compensation not to exceed \$32,000 for any calendar year for local tax collection.

*Thomas Baer made a motion to adopt Ordinance Number 902 establishing the tax collector's compensation. Rick Lombardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Center and Glenn Street Ordinance**

The solicitor presented Ordinance 903, amending Ordinance 653 to establish no parking zones on the east side of Centre Street and a portion of the south side of Glen Terrace.

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to adopt Ordinance 903. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The council also discussed notifying affected residents and the school district about the new parking restrictions.

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to send letters to affected residents and notify the school district about the new parking restrictions. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Designation of Codes Committee as Rental Property Appeals Committee**

Mr. Ahrens explained that Ordinance 863 for the rental registration program created an appeals committee, but one had not been formally designated. He suggested making the codes committee responsible for handling these appeals.

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to designate the codes committee as the rental property appeals committee. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Approve Advertisement of Charter Extension Ordinance for AVMA**

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

### **Approve December Treasurer's Report**

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to approve the December Treasurer's Report. Roger Stief seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Approve Minutes for December 17, 2024, Meeting**

*Roger Stief made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2024 meeting. Rick Lombardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **Reports**

### **Mt. Penn Volunteer Fire Company**

Rick Lombardo shared that the fire company banquet would be held on March 15th at the DoubleTree hotel. Council members were asked to RSVP by February 25th if they plan to attend.

### **Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority**

The council discussed an invoice received from the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority for fire hydrant flushing fees. The authority had previously waived this fee for 2024 but has now billed the borough for the full amount of \$5,400. The council debated whether this should be paid and how to respond.

*Rick Lombardo made a motion to send a letter to the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority stating that the borough does not believe it would be appropriate to pay the fee, citing their status as the originating municipality and charter holder for the authority. Roger Stief seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Antietam Valley Municipal Authority**

This item was not discussed.

#### **Mt. Penn Planning Commission**

Mr. Ahrens reported that a meeting would be scheduled soon to consider a minor subdivision and discuss comprehensive planning. He mentioned that the Faith Lutheran Church subdivision application would be reviewed.

#### **Borough Council President**

No report.

#### **Streets Committee**

No report.

#### **Park and Public Property Committee**

Mr. Ahrens reported on heating issues in the borough building. He explained that there were problems with the boiler and circulation system, which were being addressed. The council discussed potential solutions and ongoing maintenance needs.

#### **Solid Waste and Public Utilities Committee**

No report.

#### **Insurance and Pension Committee**

No report.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Christine raised a question about response times for public inquiries. The council discussed establishing a policy for staff to respond to public inquiries within 48 hours, even if only to acknowledge receipt of the concern.

#### **Central Berks Regional Commission**

Ryan Maurer announced that the next meeting would be on February 6th and invited council members to attend. He mentioned that he had received a copy of the bylaws and would be reviewing them to prepare a report for the council by the end of the quarter.

#### **ASD Liaison Committee**

No report.

#### **Merger Ad-Hoc Committee**

The council confirmed that the next merger committee meeting will be held on February 13th at 6:30 PM. There was a brief discussion about whether to stream the meeting online, but no motion was made to do so.

#### **Codes Committee**

Chief Serafin raised concerns about a car repair business on Perkiomen Avenue that appeared to be storing an excessive number of vehicles on their lot and on the street. The council discussed potential zoning violations and agreed to have the zoning officer investigate the situation.

*Richard Lombardo made a motion to have the zoning officer investigate the car repair business on Perkiomen Avenue for potential zoning violations. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Finance Committee**

No report.

#### **Community Relations Committee**

No report.

#### **Borough Mayor**

No report.

#### **Chief of Police**

Chief Serafin discussed the need for establishing snow emergency routes in the borough. The council agreed to have the public works committee work with the fire department to develop recommendations for snow emergency routes.

#### **Codes Administrator**

The report was provided by email.

#### **Solicitor**

No further report.

#### **Borough Engineer**

This item was covered earlier in the meeting.

#### **Borough Manager**

Hunter Ahrens brought up two additional items:

1. He suggested considering shifting more zoning and codes activities to Central Berks Codes to potentially save on costs for specialized investigations.
2. He reported receiving a letter from the Mount Penn Preserve partnership indicating that they may remove the borough from their organization due to lack of participation. Ahrens suggested reconsidering involvement with the organization as part of a broader economic development strategy for Perkiomen Avenue. The council agreed to have Ahrens attend the upcoming Mount Penn Preserve meeting to express the borough's interest in potentially remaining involved.

#### **Ordinance Updates Pending**

#### **Dumpster Permit Ordinance**

No report.

**Road Closure Ordinance**

No report.

**Street Access Ordinance**

No report.

**Noise Ordinance**

No report.

**Handicap Ordinances**

No report.

**Glenn and Center Streets Parking Restrictions**

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

**Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**Adjournment**

*Roger Stief made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*