May 26, 2026 Business Meeting

Meeting minutes

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for the Monthly Business Meeting on May 26, 2026, at Mount Penn Borough Hall, 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Rick Lombardo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and adjourned at 9:09 PM.

Council President Rick Lombardo, Council Vice President Christine Dise, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Troy Goodman, Council Member Michael Kindlick, Council Member David Korinchock, and Mayor Ryan Maurer were present. Council Member Kelly Dudash was absent. Staff and professionals present included Solicitor Zachary Morey, Esq., Borough Engineer Ty Leinneweber, P.E., Chief of Police Justin Johnson, Codes Administrator Arthur Kelly, Jr., Borough Intern Alexander Darlington, and Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens.

Several members of the public were present including Tuan Duong.

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.

Presentation on Economic Development Progrees

Alexander Darlington delivered a presentation on an economic development plan for Mt. Penn Borough, which was moved on the agenda to accommodate his attendance. Mr. Darlington outlined five strategic priorities: leveraging the Neversink Mountain, Mt. Penn Mountain, and Carsonia Avenue corridor to develop an adventure economy; allowing flexible zoning for mixed-use development; growing small business development to increase business privilege tax revenue; utilizing state programs such as LERTA, Keystone Opportunity Zones, and Tax Increment Financing; and strengthening code enforcement through a "fix it up, pay it up, give it up" approach.

Mr. Darlington also noted that Mt. Penn contains four distinct community identities — Lower Pennside, East Reading, Mt. Neversink, and an urban core along Perkiomen Avenue — which must be considered in building a shared borough identity. Council discussed potential qualifying areas for Keystone Opportunity Zones and a previously identified large parcel stretching from Herk Yeoman to Fairview Avenue as a possible seed project.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Discussion of Berks County Radio Upgrades

Mt. Penn Fire Chief provided an update on the Berks County-wide radio replacement program. Berks County is financing a bond to purchase replacement radios and offering participating municipalities a projected discount of 35–55% off the unit price, with repayment structured over seven annual installments. The current radios will no longer be supported after December 31, 2027, meaning future replacements outside the county program would be purchased at full price. The Chief estimated per-unit costs in the range of $5,000–$7,000 before discount. The Borough, as the host municipality for the fire company, would bear the majority of the cost, though contracted municipalities — Alsace Township and St. Lawrence Borough — may be approached to contribute. The possibility of applying for a county-level LSA gaming grant to offset the first year's cost was raised. Council was advised the final radio count and pricing remain pending the county's bulk procurement process.

The Chief also introduced a proposed volunteer firefighter tax incentive program for consideration in the 2027 budget year. The proposal would provide a tiered rebate of up to $3,500 per year on property and earned income taxes for qualifying volunteer firefighters meeting a minimum 75% activity threshold. The program would be reciprocal with Lower Alsace Township. The Chief emphasized this was a proactive retention measure, noting that the borough currently has only a small number of qualifying firefighters, and that the cost of a paid fire service would far exceed the cost of the incentive program.

Engineers Report

Borough Engineer Mr. Leinneweber reported that water main installation on Laurel and Summit Avenues had been completed and temporary paving is in place. Final paving is recommended for August to allow adequate trench settlement time. Scheduling coordination with Allan Myers remains ongoing.

Regarding liquidated damages related to Allan Myers' delayed performance, Mr. Leinneweber identified approximately 57 days of non-performance, of which 45 days involved the contractor removing equipment entirely from the site. Council directed the Borough Manager and Engineer to attempt to negotiate with Allan Myers to extend work at current contract pricing to include resurfacing the affected section of Ochre Street, in exchange for a reduction or release of liquidated damages. If the contractor declines, the matter would proceed to arbitration as provided under the contract. Council noted that any waiver of the full ordinance restoration requirement on the 2400 block of Endlich Avenue, where the Authority has agreed to perform half-road repairs, required a formal vote.

Motion by Thomas Baer, seconded by Troy Goodman, to waive the full-width restoration requirement on the 2400 block of Endlich Avenue, permitting Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority to repair only half of the roadway while maintaining a two-year warranty obligation. Motion carried unanimously.

Discuss and Consider Traffic Calming Options

Mr. Leinneweber presented a traffic analysis conducted on Endlich Avenue during school hours. The data showed average speeds of 21–23 mph, with maximum speeds during school hours ranging from 37 to 45 mph. Based on this analysis, Mr. Leinneweber recommended the installation of speed cushions to address excessive speeds without significantly impacting drivers traveling at or near the posted limit. Council agreed with the recommendation. It was noted that proper pavement markings and signage would accompany the installation, and that a formal ordinance would be required prior to installation. Total project cost, inclusive of all materials and labor, was estimated to be below the bid threshold. Council approved moving forward.

Motion by Christine Dise, seconded by Michael Kindlick, to authorize the installation of speed cushions on Aetna Avenue, not to exceed the three-quotes bid threshold in total expenditure. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Updates on Conveyance of MPBMA

Mr. Ahrens provided an update on the conveyance of the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority (MPBMA). The next steps outlined include directing the Authority to pass a certificate of dissolution at their June 10th meeting and to approve a personnel reimbursement agreement, which would allow authority employees to be transitioned to borough employment while still being compensated through collected water rates during the interim period. Mr. Ahrens noted that the State's manual on Authorities affirms the borough's right to act without the authority board's approval on this matter.

Mr. Ahrens also reported that a bargaining session with the union to negotiate a memorandum of understanding for transitioning water operators is scheduled for the following Thursday. The primary outstanding issue is satisfaction of the Authority's existing PENNVEST loan tied to the Spook Lane tank construction project, though it is anticipated the project may be completed within the current year, rendering this a non-issue, as any conveyance would occur after the project's completion.

Council was also briefed on the outcome of the most recent Authority board meeting, at which Authority board member Mr. Boyle made a motion to hire special counsel and read a statement characterizing the borough's actions as unlawful. Following an executive session, the board clarified the vote was only to retain an attorney for legal guidance, not to file an injunction, though Mr. Boyle indicated a preference for the latter. Mr. Ahrens noted that the borough's special counsel advised that the strongest posture is to press forward and pursue court action if the Authority fails to comply with the ordinance. Council expressed frustration with the conduct of the authority board members and noted the matter would be discussed further in executive session following adjournment.

Discussion of Fleet Tracking Devices

Mr. Ahrens presented quotes for vehicle tracking devices for borough, code enforcement, and authority vehicles. A comparison of Zuby and FirstNet systems was reviewed; Zuby was identified as the more cost-effective option upfront, with the total first-year contract value estimated at $2,931 for approximately 11 units. Council discussed implementation timing and agreed that a July 1st start date was appropriate, providing time to install units, notify employees, and bargain appropriate contract language with union-represented staff. The tracking policy will be incorporated into employee acknowledgment forms.

Motion by Troy Goodman, seconded by Thomas Baer, to authorize the purchase and installation of fleet tracking devices through Zuby, not to exceed $2,931 for the initial contract period, with an implementation date of July 1st. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of Fleet Tracking Devices

Mr. Ahrens presented a proposed external bank transfer policy to streamline payment to Central Berks Regional Police Department. The policy would allow the borough to transfer funds electronically via an external bank transfer rather than by check, reducing processing time. Transfers would be manually initiated and would include validation procedures and documentation on both sides for audit purposes. The transaction fee was estimated to be $0.50 per transfer with First National Bank. The policy would apply solely to payments to Central Berks PD.

Motion by Troy Goodman, seconded by Michael Kindlick, to approve the External Bank Transfer Policy for Central Berks PD as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approvals

Approve Communications to MPBMA on Conveyance Requirements

Motion by Michael Kindlick, seconded by Christine Dise, to approve the communications to the MPBMA regarding conveyance requirements, including the certificate of dissolution and the personnel reimbursement agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Resolution Appointing Borough Manager to BCCPC

Motion by Michael Kindlick, seconded by Christine Dise, to approve Resolution No. 23-26 appointing the Borough Manager as the borough's representative to the Berks County Tax Collection Committee (BCCPC). Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Resolution Appointing Borough Manager to TCC

Motion by Thomas Baer, seconded by Michael Kindlick, to approve Resolution No. 24-26 appointing the Borough Manager as the borough's representative to the Berks Earned Income Tax Bureau's Tax Collection Committee (TCC). Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Ordinance Updating MP3 Bylaws

Motion by David Korinchock, seconded by Thomas Baer, to approve Ordinance No. 911 adopting revised bylaws for the Mount Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3). Motion carried unanimously.

Approve May 2026 Treasurers Report

Motion by David Korinchock, seconded by Christine Dise, to approve the May 2026 Treasurer's Report. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Minutes for April 22, 2026

Mr. Ahrens indicated the minutes had not yet been completed. The item was tabled.

Approve May 2026 Treasurers Report

Mr. Ahrens indicated the minutes had not yet been completed. The item was tabled.

Reports

Codes Administrator

The Code Administrator reported 36 open cases, 4 inspections conducted, 1 citation issued, and 1 citation withdrawn for compliance. Twelve zoning improvement notices were issued. A building permit was issued for deck work following identification of unpermitted construction. Four additional properties with unpermitted work were identified.

A hearing was held regarding a light intrusion complaint on the 2600 block of Glen Terrace, with a 30-day compliance period ordered. An ongoing concern on the 1900 block of Fairview involving dogs running loose at a rental property is being addressed jointly with the police department. The property owner has been advised to seek legal counsel regarding lease enforcement.

Chief of Police

Chief Johnson reported on a robbery that occurred on the 2100 block of Fairview Avenue in which a group of juveniles from Reading attacked and robbed a resident outside his vehicle at approximately 10:30 PM. All juveniles were identified and charged. One juvenile is to be detained at Abraxas Academy, which the Chief noted is an uncommon outcome in the current juvenile justice environment.

Borough Manager

Mr. Ahrens noted that his paternity leave could begin at any time and is expected to last approximately seven to ten calendar days. He expressed gratitude for council's flexibility and confirmed internal preparations are in place. The 2025 audit is scheduled to begin the following week.

Mr. Ahrens also reported that Mascaro has offered a one-year contract extension at a 2.24% increase. He described the offer as favorable given current fuel prices and recommended acceptance. A potential longer-term opportunity to joint-bid recycling services with Lower Alsace Township was also noted. Mascaro representatives are scheduled to appear at the June council meeting.

Merger Committee

Mr. Ahrens noted that the Borough Manager's intern, Mr. Darlington, would be asked to coordinate scheduling for a meeting between the Council President and the EMS Chief to advance intermunicipal merger discussions.

Public Works Committee

Mr. Lombardo noted that street sweeping was completed successfully and commended Officer Kreimendahl for his leadership and coordination during the operation.

Other Business

Mr. Salamone, Director of Operations for Lower Alsace EMS, shared that he was requesting $30,000.00 to support the radio purchases for the organization consistent with the earlier discussions during the meeting.

Adjournment

Motion by Michael Kindlick, seconded by Troy Goodman, to adjourn that meeting at 9:09 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by:

Hunter L. Ahrens
Hunter L. Ahrens (Jul 24, 2026 11:33:32 EDT)

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

January 2026 Reorganization Meeting - Meeting Minutes

Final Audit Report 2026-07-24

Created:	2026-07-24
By:	Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAKI6ABrGm0qQKtXLA3JGnBiXn396312lo

"January 2026 Reorganization Meeting - Meeting Minutes" History

Document created by Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
2026-07-24 - 3:32:03 PM GMT

Document emailed to Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com) for signature
2026-07-24 - 3:32:07 PM GMT

Email viewed by Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
2026-07-24 - 3:33:19 PM GMT

Document e-signed by Hunter L. Ahrens (manager@mtpennborough.com)
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