

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH  
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING  
July 29, 2025

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Business Meeting on July 29, 2025, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Rick Lombardo called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and adjourned at 10:09 PM.

Council President Rick Lombardo, Council Member Christine Dise, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Kelly Dudash, Council Member Yrisol Garcia, Council Member Michael Kindlick, and Mayor Ryan Maurer were in attendance. Council Vice President Roger Stief was absent. Staff and Professional Members present were Borough Solicitor Zachary Morey, Borough Engineer Ty Leinneweber, Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens, and Chief of Police Ray Serafin. Several community members were also in attendance, including Matthew Stairiker, Phil Salamone, and Fran Kelly.

**Attendance Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order, and a roll call was conducted. All members were present, establishing a quorum.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

Hunter Ahrens introduced Alex Roman, the newest code enforcement officer. Mr. Ahrens mentioned that Alex has been assisting Arthur and doing a great job. Council welcomed Alex to the team.

**Presentation by Lower Alsace Ambulance on Operations in 2025**

Phil Salamone, Director of Operations for Lower Alsace Ambulance (LA EMS), and Matt Stairiker, President of Lower Alsace Ambulance, presented on their operations. They noted that both also work full-time for the County of Berks in emergency management.

Mr. Salamone provided the following information:

- They've been the primary ambulance provider for Lower Alsace, Mt. Penn, St. Lawrence, and about a third of Alsace Township since 1989
- They currently have 30 staff members
- They provide 24/7 advanced life support service and have added a second ambulance during daytime hours
- They're on track for approximately 2,000 incidents this year, having already responded to 1,300 calls in the first half of 2025
- Their operation costs approximately \$2,000 per day to run one ambulance 24/7, emphasizing this is the "cost of readiness"

- Insurance reimbursement rates haven't been updated since 1997, and they don't get reimbursed for medications or equipment used
- Mt. Penn call volume has remained relatively consistent compared to last year
- Approximately 29% of their call volume consists of covering other entities, predominantly the City of Reading and Exeter Township
- Their financial strategy includes investing in equipment replacement and facility maintenance

Mr. Salamone also discussed:

- Federal and state budget impacts on their operations
- A scholarship program they've established for students interested in EMS careers
- Mutual aid challenges with county dispatch practices
- Current grant applications for equipment, including an ambulance replacement through the LSA grant via Lower Alsace Township
- St. Lawrence Borough's sponsorship of electrical upgrades for their station
- Future projects are estimated between \$60,000-\$100,000 for equipment replacement

During questioning, they explained:

- All their ambulances are capable of providing advanced life support services.
- Equipment costs are substantial (stretchers cost \$40,000-\$60,000, ambulances cost around \$250,000)
- They're collecting about 45% of what insurance companies pay out, compared to a state average of 30%
- They face challenges with "professional patients" who sometimes misuse the system
- They're legally required to provide service regardless of ability to pay

Council members acknowledged the ambulance service's value to the community, especially their quick response times compared to other providers.

### **Accept the Resignation of Roger Stief from Borough Council**

*Thomas Baer made a motion to accept Roger Stief's resignation from Borough Council. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Elect a Council Vice President**

Council President Rick Lombardo recommended Council Member Christine Dise for the Vice President position. Mrs. Dise indicated she would accept the position if there were no objections.

*Richard Lombardo made a motion to elect Council Member Christine Dise as Council Vice President. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Consider Resolution No. 05-25 Supporting Our Community Authorities**

Mr. Ahrens explained that this resolution came about when the council sent merger letters to the authorities notifying them that the borough is seriously engaging in conversations about a municipal merger. The resolution makes clear that privatization was not an agenda topic, objective, or something that the council would support.

*Thomas Baer made a motion to approve Resolution No. 05-25 Supporting Our Community Authorities. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Consider Change Orders for Road Project**

Township Engineer Ty presented several change orders for council consideration:

Change Order #1 for Contract A (Endlich Avenue):

- Purpose: To install a new ductile box and C-type inlet on Inlet Avenue at a 3-street intersection.
- Amount: \$7,200.00
- Total contract price would increase from \$417,476 to \$424,676

*Michael Kindlick made a motion to approve Change Order #1 for Contract A in the amount of \$7,200. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Change Order #2 for Contract A (Endlich Avenue):

- Purpose: Repairs to curb and sidewalk in Friedensburg and installation of a handicap ramp.
- Amount: \$15,619.80
- The contract price would increase from \$424,676.00 to \$440,295.80

Councilmember Kindlick questioned if this would exceed the grant funding, but Ty confirmed there was still money available in the grant of \$653,516.00.

*Yrisol Garcia made a motion to approve Change Order #2 for Contract A in the amount of \$15,619.80. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Change Order #3 for Contract A (Endlich Avenue):

- Purpose: To provide a second hauling cost/dump site because the original site only accepts 100 loads, while the project requires 470 loads.
- Amount: \$11,875.00
- The contract price would increase from \$440,295.80 to \$452,170.80

Mrs. Dise raised concerns about the contractor potentially underbidding and then forcing change orders, viewing this as a significant oversight. Ty Leinneweber explained that the contractor wanted to mill all roads at once and then return for paving, which would have

essentially shut down the borough for two weeks. Mr. Ahrens added that the contractor's aggressive pricing is connected to their strategy of trying to do everything at once rather than in stages.

*Thomas Baer made a motion to approve Change Order #3 for Contract A in the amount of \$11,875.00. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-2 with Council Members Baer, Dudash, Garcia, and Lombardo voting in favor; Council Members Dise and Kindlick voting against.*

Change Order #1 for Contract B (2025 Annual Road Project):

- A time extension to push Summit Avenue and Laurel Avenue construction to 2026.
- Escalation cost of \$22,000.00 to be paid by the Water Authority.
- The contract price would increase from \$459,642.00 to \$481,642.00

*Yrisol Garcia made a motion to approve Change Order #1 for Contract B in the amount of \$22,000.00. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Change Order #2 for Contract B (2025 Annual Road Project):

- Purpose: To secure a second dump site for 180 loads for Contract B roads.
- Amount: \$11,250.00
- The contract price would increase from \$481,642.00 to \$492,892.00

*Thomas Baer made a motion to approve Change Order #2 for Contract B in the amount of \$11,250.00. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-2 with Council Members Baer, Dudash, Garcia, and Lombardo voting in favor; Council Members Dise and Kindlick voting against.*

Change Order #3 for Contract B (2025 Annual Road Project):

- Purpose: Adding two additional roads (Brighton Road and North 25th Street) to the contract.
- Amount: \$121,344.50

Mr. Leineweber pointed out that the contractor's unit pricing was 65% more than the original contract bid pricing. After discussing the significant increase in cost and concerns about exceeding normal change order percentages (approximately 18% versus a typical 10% limit), the Council decided to reject this change order.

*Michael Kindlick made a motion to reject Change Order #3 for Contract B in the amount of \$121,344.50. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Change Order #4 for Contract B (2025 Annual Road Project):

- Purpose: To pave approximately 50 feet of a private alleyway that drains onto Cameron Street, causing stone washing and water issues.
- Amount: \$14,248.00
- The contract price would increase from \$492,892.00 to \$492,892.00

Since this involved a non-dedicated alley, the Council discussed obtaining property owner approval and concerns about setting precedent for other private alleys.

*Christine Dise made a motion to approve Change Order #4 for Contract B in the amount of \$14,248, conditional upon obtaining property owner approval. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*This Change Order is now considered Change Order #3 for Contract B  
(2025 Annual Road Project)*

Change Order #1 for Brooke Street (Emergency Stormwater Repairs):

- A time extension to July 31, 2025
- Materials for connecting the new pipe to existing pipe required 3-4 weeks to obtain
- No increase to contract price

*Michael Kindlick made a motion to approve the time extension for Brooke Street to July 31, 2025. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Change Order #2 for Brooke Street (Emergency Stormwater Repairs):

- Amount: \$55,768.72
- The contract price would increase from \$31,416.50 to \$87,185.22
- Purpose: To extend the new HDPE pipe from the channel up to the inlet on Friedensburg Road after discovering the existing pipe was falling apart

*Yrisol Garcia made a motion to approve Change Order #2 for Brooke Street in the amount of \$55,768.72. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Consider Quotes for Road Repairs on the 1st Block of N. 25th Street**

The Council discussed declaring an emergency for the first block of North 25th Street to address severe road damage caused by recent storms. This would allow the borough to proceed with repairs outside the normal bidding threshold.

*Kelly Dudash made a motion to approve Resolution No. 09-25 of 2025 declaring an emergency for the street restoration project located on the first block of North 25th Street. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Consider Brooke Street Stormwater Repairs and Additional Costs**

This was covered in the discussion of Change Order #2 for Brook Street above, where Council approved \$55,768.72 for extending the new HDPE pipe.

### **Consider Payment Applications for Current Projects**

Ty presented several payment applications for council consideration:

Payment Application #1 for Contract A (Endlich Avenue):

- Payable to Allen Myers LP for \$48,960.45
- For curb and sidewalk work already completed
- Will leave a balance of \$368,515.55 with retainage of \$5,440.05 being held

*Micheal Kindlick made a motion approve Payment Application #1 for Contract A to Allen Myers LP in the amount of \$48,960.45. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Payment Application #1 for Contract B (2025 Road Project):

- Payable to Allen Myers LP for \$48,393.90
- Also for curb and sidewalk work

*Michaeli Kindlick made a motion to approve Payment Application #1 for Contract B to Allen Myers LP in the amount of \$48,393.90. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Payment Application for Summit Valley Outdoor Solutions:

- Amount: \$31,416.50
- For the original contract amount for emergency Brook Street repairs
- Does not include the change order work previously approved

*Yrisol Garcia made a motion to approve a Payment Application for Summit Valley Outdoor Solutions in the amount of \$31,416.50. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Discuss and Consider Road Projects for 2025 and 2026**

Mr. Ahrens and Mr. Leinneweber discussed Resolutions Nos. 07-25 and 08-25, which would approve additional roadwork using remaining grant funds. These amendments would position the borough to utilize approximately \$377,299.50 remaining in the grants for future road projects.

Roads for consideration in 2026 include:

- Laurel Avenue and Summit Avenue (already in the contract, to be done in 2026)
- 400 Block of Brighton
- 300 Block of North 25th Street

- Leinbach Lane between Howard Boulevard and North 23rd
- 2200 Block of Highland
- South 20th between Fairview and Highland
- South 25th between Grandview and Fairview

Mr. Leinneweber noted that the more expensive sections would be the 2200 block of Highland and South 25th Street between Grandview and Fairview, and that some roads might only need mill and overlay rather than total rebuilding.

*Motion to adopt Resolution #7 of 2025 approving a grant amendment for additional road work in the amount of \$232,860.98 was made by Councilmember Kinlick, seconded by Councilmember Lombardo, and passed unanimously.*

*Motion to adopt Resolution #8 of 2025 approving a grant amendment for additional road work in the amount of \$144,438.52 was made by Councilmember Lombardo, seconded by Councilmember Dice, and passed unanimously.*

### **Discussion of Laurel Avenue Parking Concerns from Residents**

Fran Kelly, a resident at 230 Laurel Avenue, addressed the Council regarding parking issues. He explained that "no parking" signs along Cameron Street and up Laurel Avenue to Summit Avenue were installed by a former Road Foreman, Frank Cameron, without an ordinance. Recently, tenants at 212 Laurel Avenue have been parking on the street where the signs are posted.

Mr. Kelly shared that he had discussed this with Ray Serafin, Mr. Okonski, the Mt. Penn Fire Company, the Lower Alsace Fire Company, and the Sewer Authority, all of whom have concerns about parking on that side of the street. He requested that the Council draft an ordinance to legitimize the existing no-parking restrictions.

The Council agreed to have Mr. Okonski measure the area and provide the information to the solicitor so that an ordinance can be drafted.

*Thomas Baer made a motion to approve the advertisement of a no-parking ordinance for Laurel Avenue. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Discussion of Email Service Provider Change**

Mr. Ahrens explained that Solve IT can provide email hosting cheaper than GoDaddy, with initial upfront costs of approximately \$1,053.65. The annual savings would be \$228.72 per year, with the borough recouping costs over approximately 4.5 years. He noted that users would receive more services, including larger inboxes and improved malware protection.

*Christine Dise made a motion to approve changing email service providers from GoDaddy to Solve IT. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Discussion of In-House Zoning Services**

Mr. Ahrens presented a proposal to bring zoning services in-house, leveraging existing staff from the Central Berks Codes department for zoning work. Kaylyn Stief and Mr. Ahrens would continue their current duties. The benefit would be cost savings in high permit activity years and breaking even in common years. The proposal includes \$8,000.00 in compensation for Arthur and Alex to do this additional work, as well as \$2,000.00 in other items for training and supplies, which will likely be absorbed by the existing budget.

Council members expressed support for the concept but wanted to ensure Lower Alsace Township would be on board, as they share these services. Mr. Maurer noted that Lower Alsace had expressed concerns with their current code services, which may factor into the discussion.

Mr. Ahrens emphasized that bringing services in-house would better address rental and blight issues by giving staff more of the tools they need to succeed in responding to concerns. Multiple council members noted instances where having in-house code staff could lead to more responsive service.

*Kelly Dudash made a motion to authorize the Borough Manager to draft a letter to Lower Alsace Township regarding bringing zoning services in-house. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Discussion of Permit Parking Ordinance Amendments**

Council tabled discussion of Ordinance #906 regarding handicap parking spots in permit zones. Zachary Morey explained that while the ordinance could require permits for handicap spots, the Police Chief cannot legally issue citations to individuals with valid handicap placards or plates who park in those spots without a permit. This creates enforcement challenges, particularly in situations where residents suspect others are using handicap placards to circumvent permit restrictions.

The matter was tabled until the August meeting, when the Council hopes to receive a final report from the school district traffic engineer on the overall effect of the permit parking program.

### **Discussion of Handicap Parking Spots Updates**

This was discussed as part of the permit parking ordinance item above and tabled for the August meeting.



### **Discussion of Updates to Mount Penn Preserve COG**

Mr. Maurer explained that he has a scheduling conflict on Wednesdays, preventing him from continuing to serve on the COG. He noted that the borough should have two representatives, as per the bylaws. The next COG meeting isn't until September, so the Council will have time to find a replacement after appointing a new council member.

Mr. Ahrens mentioned that the COG has a proposed ordinance to amend its bylaws regarding quorum and who can serve on the COG. The Council agreed to have the solicitor review this before taking action.

*Kelly Dudash made a motion to approve conditional advertising of the COG agreement modifications pending solicitor review. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Discussion of Merger Process**

Mr. Ahrens presented a prepared agenda for a meeting on September 23, 2025, with Lower Alsace Township regarding the municipal merger. This meeting would allow elected officials from both municipalities to discuss the merger with public comment at the end of the meeting.

The agenda includes discussing opportunities, risks, forms of government, representation, municipal names, and major topics such as police, codes, and trash collection. Mr. Ahrens explained that Supervisor Theodossiou emphasized that elected officials haven't had the opportunity to thoroughly discuss this in a focused setting. The Council agreed to proceed with the September 23rd meeting.

### **Discussion of Garage Lease with AVMA**

Mr. Morey reviewed the lease agreement with AVMA and recommended two minor revisions: changing "affair" to "normal" in paragraph 7d and replacing a semicolon with a period in paragraph f. He noted that AVMA had already removed a problematic provision that would have restricted the borough from changing its articles of incorporation without AVMA's permission.

*Michael Kindlick made a motion to execute the lease agreement with AVMA with the two recommended revisions. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Discussion of Borough Hall Lease with MPBMA**

Mr. Morey explained that he had reviewed the draft lease but learned that the MPBMA solicitor would not recommend approval in its current form. The council agreed to table this item until they receive feedback from their solicitor.

### **Discussion of Business Privilege Tax**

Mr. Maurer raised concerns about the Borough's Business Privilege Tax (BPT), stating that both Berks EIT and Mt. Penn Borough have not done a good job of educating the public about this tax, resulting in high delinquencies. He noted that, unlike most tax jurisdictions, there is no first-time penalty abatement for those who didn't understand their obligations.

Mr. Maurer suggested considering a different service provider for collections and advocated for more education and outreach, particularly in the rental property information packets. He expressed concern that enforcement has become punitive rather than focused on compliance.

Councilmember Garcia suggested that business owners should be aware of their tax obligations. Ryan agreed but emphasized that the borough has a responsibility to inform businesses of their obligations.

No formal action was taken, but Mr. Ahrens agreed to add information about the BPT to rental property packets.

### **Discussion of Mt. Penn Fire Company Architect Selection for Grant Project**

This item was tabled as the Fire Chief was still working to finalize the proposal with the architectural group.

### **Publicize Request for Appointee to Borough Council**

The Council discussed the need to advertise for applicants to fill Roger Stief's vacant council seat.

*Christine Dise made a motion to advertise for applicants to fill the vacant council seat. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The Council agreed to schedule interviews at 6:00 PM on August 19, 2025, before the regular meeting, with all eligible applicants being interviewed.

### **Approve Appointments of a Bid Opening Committee**

Mr. Ahrens proposed creating a bid opening committee consisting of himself and one additional designee (typically the professional related to the bid) to open bids before meetings. This would allow bid tabulations to be prepared in advance of council meetings.

After discussion, the Council decided to designate the appropriate committee for each bid as needed rather than create a standing committee.

**Approve Audit for CY 2022 Conducted by Herbein + Co.**

*Thomas Baer made a motion to approve the audit for CY 2022 conducted by Herbein + Co. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Approve Resolution No. 06-25 Appointing Members of the Joint Planning Task Force**

The resolution would appoint Thomas Baer, Francis Kelly, Charles Miller, Hunter Ahrens, and Arthur Kelly to the Joint Planning Task Force. The task force will review the codes book section by section, with meetings scheduled periodically beginning in September, alternating between borough locations.

*Michael Kindlick made a motion to approve Resolution No. 06-25 appointing members of the Joint Planning Task Force. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Approve Resolution No. 07-25 Approving a Grant Amendment for Additional Road Work**

This was approved earlier in the meeting during the discussion of road projects.

**Approve Resolution No. 08-25 Approving a Grant Amendment for Additional Road Work**

This was also approved earlier in the meeting during the discussion of road projects.

**Approve Meeting Minutes for May 7, 2025****Approve Meeting Minutes for June 26, 2025****Approve the Treasurer's Report for June 2025****Approve the Treasurer's Report for July 2025**

Mrs. Dise noted a correction needed in the June minutes on page 5, which incorrectly listed her as being on the codes committee.

*Michael Kindlick made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for May 7, 2025, June 26, 2025 (with the amendment per Mrs. Dise), and the Treasurer's Reports for June and July 2025. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Reports****Central Berks Regional Commission**

Ryan reported that the next meeting is scheduled for August 7.

**Community Relations Liaison**

Christine reported that she is working on the newsletter and requested statements from council members by Friday, as she returns to school on August 11.

**Finance Committee**

Mr. Maurer discussed the potential need to borrow money to cover the approved change orders for road projects. He explained that they had explored options with the PA Infrastructure Bank but were unsure if stormwater projects would qualify. They also contacted M&T Bank and Fulton Bank, with M&T indicating interest rates in the 4% range.

However, the outstanding audits for 2023 and 2024 may complicate the borrowing process. Mr. Ahrens noted that borrowing could spread costs out over future years, potentially reducing the need for larger tax increases to maintain the fund balance.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Lombardo suggested that the Street Crew needs a trailer to improve job efficiency. He explained that a 14-foot trailer with metal sides would cost approximately \$1,400-\$1,500 and would prevent the crew from having to make multiple trips to job sites. Mr. Ahrens agreed to get quotes for a trailer.

### **Adjournment**

*Christine Dise made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 PM, after which the Council held an executive session on personnel matters.