

November Business Meeting

Meeting minutes

The Mount Penn Borough Council met for a Workshop Meeting on November 25, 2025, at Borough Hall at 200 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606. Council President Rick Lombardo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Council President Rick Lombardo, Council Vice President Christine Dise, Council Member Thomas Baer, Council Member Kelly Dudash, Council Member Troy Goodman, and Council Member Michael Kindlick were present. Council Member Yrisol Garcia entered the meeting at 7:01 PM. Staff and professionals present included Solicitor Thomas Klonis, Esq., Chief of Police Ray Serafin, Deputy Chief of Police Justin Johnson, Codes Administrator Arthur Kelly, Engineer A. Ty Leinneweber, P.E., and Borough Manager Hunter L. Ahrens. Several community members were present, including David Lomnychuk, Fulton Bank Area Branch Manager Kevin Blackburn, and Lower Alsace Township Manager Don Pottiger.

Meeting Opening and Pledge to the Flag

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Attendance Roll Call

Mr. Ahrens noted that there was a quorum present, with all members present.

Public Comment

David Lomnychuk, 2325 Perkiomen Avenue – Mr. Lomnychuk introduced himself as the owner of Davids Cleaning Service (2325 Perkiomen Ave) and addressed Council regarding holiday festivities he was assisting in planning for the community. He explained that his business has decorated the 2300 Block of Perkiomen Avenue to bring joy to the community. He shared information about the upcoming horse and carriage rides scheduled for December 18th in partnership with Pennside Drive-In. The rides will cost \$24.99 with a \$5 discount for those who bring an unwrapped toy.

Dave described how local schools (Antietam School District, St. Catherine's, and Antietam Academy) are involved in creating luminary bags to line the pathway. He expressed his vision for expanding this into a larger community event next year, potentially coordinating with the tree lighting ceremony and encouraging more local business participation. He also mentioned wanting to decorate the viaduct that connects Reading to Mt. Penn with wreaths in the future.

Council shared their enthusiasm for the project and offered support that they could provide.

Fulton Bank Services Presentation

Kevin Blackburn, Financial Center Manager of Fulton Bank's Exeter office, presented banking services available to the Borough. He noted that Fulton Bank has been independently operating since the 1880s and remains committed to maintaining physical branches while other banks are closing locations.

Mr. Blackburn highlighted their workplace banking program, which offers benefits to Borough employees including top-tier checking accounts, mortgage rate discounts, and free health savings accounts. He expressed interest in reviewing the Borough's current banking relationship to potentially offer better services or rates.

CY 2026 Preliminary Budget Presentation

The Borough Manager presented the updated preliminary budget which now reflects a proposed millage increase from 1.0 mill to 1.25 mills, that covers expenses for police pensions. This would bring the total millage from 16.10 to 17.35. The total revenue across all funds amounts to \$4,073,652.83, with expenditures totaling \$4,410,806.32. The difference would be balanced using grant money from 2024.

Consider CY 2026 Preliminary Budgets

The Council discussed and voted to approve the 2026 preliminary budget as presented. Mr. Lombardo noted that he was opposed to a millage increase beyond 1.0 mill and would vote against the increase.

Thomas Baer made a motion to accept the 2026 Preliminary Budget. Troy Goodman seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-1: Baer, Dise, Dudash, Garcia, Goodman, and Kindlick voting in the affirmative; Lombardo opposed.

Mr. Ahrens shared the budget would be advertised by December 1st, 2025 with final approval scheduled for the December 16, 2025 meeting.

Discussion of Road Improvement Projects

Mr. Leinneweber shared that the road improvement project reached substantial completion with the paving of Endlich and Oak Terrace the previous day. Some concerns were raised about the quality of road cleanup, and the Borough has contacted Allan Myers to address outstanding issues. A final inspection of the completed work is planned for the following week.

Mr. Leinneweber reiterated that two roads, Summit and Laurel Avenues, have been postponed until spring 2026 after waterline installation is completed. The entire project is not expected to be fully complete until June or July 2026.

Discussion of Additional Revenue Decisions

The Borough Manager presented updates to the fee schedule, including increasing the fee for rental units greater than 5 units from \$105 to \$110 per unit. The deposit for yard signs will be increased from \$5 to \$10 to encourage their return. There was also discussion about potentially increasing the dumpster permit fee to \$75.

Discussion of TRAN Financing

The Borough is working with Public Financial Management (PFM) to secure a Tax Revenue Anticipation Note (TRAN) of approximately \$600,000. This financing is needed to pay for the road project while waiting for state grant reimbursements expected in January. First National Bank and Fulton Bank are being consulted for term sheets. PFM is providing their services as a courtesy, while Stephens and Lee will be handling the DCED filing for a fee.

Discussion of Updates to 2021 ICC Codes Family

The Borough Manager shared survey results from the public regarding the ICC code updates. Most feedback consisted of questions about what is involved in the update rather than objections to specific sections. One suggestion was to create a handbook on homeownership codes and permits. The accessibility code update is currently stayed by Commonwealth Court decision and will not be implemented at this time. A resolution to adopt the 2021 ICC codes will be presented at the December meeting for implementation January 1, 2026.

Discussion and Consideration of Donation of Block Party Excess Funds

The Council discussed donating \$500.00 from 2024 Block Party excess funds to the "Shop with a Cop" program, with the remaining \$53.00 to be used for candy for the fire company's community event.

Troy Goodman made a motion to donate \$500.00 to the Central Berks Regional Police Department's Shop with a Cop program; another \$53.00 would be donated for candy at the Neighborhood Santa Drive. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Anticipated Borough Council Vacancy

The Council discussed the upcoming vacancy that will be created in January when newly elected officials take office; Mr. Ahrens shared that Mr. Kindlick had one a Council seat at the election, different than he currently held. Mr. Kindlick commented that he planned to decline the seat and suggested that the Council appoint Kelly Dudash to the vacancy.

It was noted that Ms. Dudash had run for office and received votes but her name was not properly recognized on the ballot due to an issue with using her middle name (Marie). There was consensus that Council intends to appoint Ms. Kelly to fill the vacancy at the January reorganizational meeting.

Discussion and Consideration of 2026 Reorganization Meeting

The reorganization meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 5, 2026, at 7:00 PM, as required by Borough Code. Notices have been sent to Council members. Mr. Klonis noted he has a conflict with the Shillington Borough's reorganization meeting at the same time and shared that he would see if Attorney Zak Morey can attend in his place.

Discussion and Consideration of 2026 Meeting Schedule

The Borough Manager presented the proposed 2026 meeting schedule, maintaining the regular pattern of the last two Tuesdays of each month, with exceptions for holidays and the primary election in May. The December meeting was adjusted to Wednesday, December 16, 2026, to accommodate Mr. Klonis's schedule and avoid meeting too close to Christmas. Mr. Ahrens shared that the plan for the Summer Workshop meetings would be to cancel them if they are not necessary, which is less expensive than advertising for a new meeting.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to authorize advertising the 2026 meeting schedule. Kelly Dudash seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Lower Alsace & Mt. Penn Merger Updates

Mr. Ahrens shared that he, Don Pottiger, Lower Alsace Township Supervisors, and DCED staff met to discuss next steps in the merger exploration process. Plans are underway for a public meeting in mid to late January 2026, where DCED will present information. Both municipalities were requested to pass revised resolutions with the January meeting date, and will consider scheduling multiple potential dates in case of weather issues.

Consideration of Teamsters Agreement

The Teamsters agreement was presented with an amendment to the HRA language to comply with IRS regulations. The new language specifies that HRA contributions come solely from the employer rather than as a matching contribution.

Kelly Dudash made a motion to accept the Teamsters Collective Bargaining Agreement. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Professional Services Agreement for Financing Professionals

An engagement letter with PFM Financial Advisors was reviewed by the Solicitor, who noted ambiguous language regarding fees but indicated that the arrangement was understood to include only reimbursement for costs incurred.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to authorize execution of the engagement letter with PFM Financial Advisors. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Professional Services Agreement for Special Counsel

Mr. Klonis requested clarity on the work proposed for engagement with Obermeyer, Rebmann, Maxwell, and Hippel as special counsel. The Borough Council recessed the meeting to an executive session for personnel and real property acquisition matters beginning at 7:56 PM and resumed the meeting at 8:37 PM.

The Borough Council considered engaging Obermeyer, Rebmann, Maxwell, and Hippel as special counsel for matters related to further cooperation with the Mt. Penn Borough Municipal Authority. Their fee is \$350 per hour, with Phase 1 estimated to cost \$5,000-\$10,000, and the total project potentially costing \$40,000-\$50,000.

Michael Kindlick made a motion to engage the law firm of Obermeyer, Rebmann, Maxwell, and Hippel as special counsel. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Following the motion, Mr. Kindlick read a statement affirming the Borough's intention to work collaboratively with the Mt. Penn Water Authority to explore a conveyance and leaseback structure that would support the long-term sustainability of both entities while preserving the authority as an independent legal entity. The statement emphasized that any agreement would include a binding covenant prohibiting sale or transfer of water assets to any private or public entity, and that discussions would be public and transparent, with an expected public conversation being held at the December 10, 2025 Water Authority meeting.

Consideration of Statewide LSA Grant Application

The Council considered Resolution 14-25 requesting approval of a Statewide Local Share Account grant of up to \$1,000,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority for four regional public service projects.

Kelly Dudash made a motion to approve Resolution No. 14-25 approving the LSA Grant Application. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Safety Net Sanctuary Contract

The animal control services agreement with Safety Net Sanctuary was presented with revised indemnification language addressing the Solicitor's previous concerns.

Micheal Kindlick made a motion to enter into the service agreement with Safety Net Sanctuary. Thomas Baer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of No-Nonsense Neutering Contract

The Council considered a contract with No-Nonsense Neutering for the sterilization and vaccination of 10 feral/free-roaming cats at \$40 per cat for a total of \$400.

Troy Goodman made a motion to enter the No-Nonsense Neutering contract. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes for October 28, 2025 Meeting

Christine Dise made a motion to accept the minutes for October 28, 2025. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes for November 18, 2025 Meeting

Christine Dise made a motion to accept the minutes for the November 18, 2025 meeting. Michael Kindlick seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

November 2025 Treasurer's Report

Kelly Dudash made a motion to accept the November 2025 Treasurer's Report. Yrisol Garcia seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Fire Company

The Fire Company announced they will be holding a Santa event on December 19th.

Borough Council President

The Council President appointed Mr. Baer, Ms. Dudash, Mr. Goodman, and the Borough Manager to form the Authority Relations Committee to facilitate collaboration with the Municipal Authority.

Community Relations Liaison

Mrs. Dise discussed the house decorating contest, asking if they should proceed with their own program or coordinate with David's Cleaning Service's initiative. The consensus was to collaborate with David and his community program.

Codes Committee

The Codes Administrator reported 59 warning notices/violations with 36 closed and 21 open. Year-to-date yielded 845 citations for the Borough. Two court cases were heard, with one defendant failing to appear and being found guilty on all 10 citations. The administrator noted several instances of work being performed without permits and highlighted specific property complaint follow-ups, including an unauthorized tent removal, a complaint investigation regarding multiple families residing in one property, and a no-heat complaint that was resolved.

The Codes Administrator also reported on meetings regarding the development of a "three strike rule" and plans for the 2026 rental program implementation.

Chief of Police

Chief Serafin mentioned the upcoming Shop with a Cop event on December 16th and thanked the Block Party Foundation for their donation. The event will include 22 children who will receive approximately \$150 for shopping at Target.

Other Business

Council members wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

Adjournment

Rick Lombardo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 PM. Christine Dise seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.