

MOUNT PENN BOROUGH MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

FEBRUARY 11, 2026

The regular meeting of the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority was held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the John A. Becker Municipal Building, 200 North 25th Street, Reading, PA 19606.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Joe Boyle.

The following Board members were also present:

Kelly Dudash, Treasurer
Alfred Worrall, Assistant Treasurer

Also present were the following:
Christeena Hauck, Office Manager
Mark Merolla, Solicitor
Matt Hauck, Superintendent
Steven Riley, Engineer

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION-

None.

Al Worrall motioned, seconded by Joe Boyle, to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2026, meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER- Kelly Dudash

Following discussion, motioned by Kelly Dudash, seconded by Al Worrall to approve the January Treasurer's Report. The motion carried unanimously.

ENGINEER- Steve Riley

Laurel Avenue Water Main Project Update and Draft EWO

Steve Riley provided an update on the Laurel Avenue Water Main Project. Contracts were signed at the last Authority meeting and sent back to Barrasso Excavation with a notice to proceed. Submittals were received, reviewed, and were to be returned to Barrasso. Mr. Riley reported that he and Matt Hauck further discussed the option of a temporary water system and had directed Barrasso to proceed with it, describing it as the most straightforward approach. He noted that locating the existing lines had been very difficult and that leaving the old, abandoned line in place would create ongoing problems. A tracer line would be added to the new water main. The temporary water system represented a \$9,000 adder, which Mr. Riley characterized as money well spent, and noted the contractor was still well under the original project budget. Construction is targeted to begin after April 1st, as requested by the Borough to ensure work occurs after snow plowing season.

Regarding the Engineering Work Order (EWO) for engineering services during construction and construction observation, Mr. Riley explained he maintains a running log of all water main projects completed for the Authority — this being the seventh — and used that data to prepare the proposal scope and associated cost. He noted he had bumped up the services-during-construction figure slightly above past projects due to the additional complexity of the temporary line setup. Construction observation would be on an as-needed, part-time basis, consistent with past projects. Mr. Riley noted that since the Spook Lane Tank project would be in construction concurrently, the same construction observer could split time between both projects. He emphasized the proposal is time-and-expense based, so any unused amount would not be charged.

Motion to accept the Engineering Work Order for Laurel Avenue as proposed moved by Kelly Dudash, seconded by Al Worrall. The motion carried unanimously.

Oley Turnpike Road Water Main Update and Draft EWO

Steve Riley reported that the permit for the creek crossing had been received and that additional design work had proceeded. Plans were provided to Matt Hauck that evening for his review. Steve Riley noted ongoing coordination with Sunoco Pipeline, as a high-pressure gas pipeline must be crossed as part of the project. He explained that Sunoco has stringent requirements for utility crossings related to spacing and depth. Sunoco had offered to come to the site to provide a definitive depth reading, but current snow cover was preventing access to the crossing location.

The EWO presented covered the remaining design work and bidding phase, including full plans, specifications, and contract documents. Steve Riley noted these figures were aimed slightly higher than past projects given the complexity of the creek crossing, Sunoco pipeline crossing, and associated permitting requirements, including coordination with the Berks County Conservation District.

Motion to accept the Engineering Work Order for Oley Turnpike Road as proposed, moved by Kelly Dudash, seconded by Al Worrall. The motion carried unanimously.

WATER SYSTEM –Matthew Hauck

Joe Boyle acknowledged on behalf of the Authority that the water system had experienced four main breaks within the last week and a half, with the expectation that additional breaks may be pending. He specifically thanked Matt for coming in on a Friday evening to assist on a repair in Saint Lawrence.

The monthly maintenance report was reviewed.

Matt Hauck reviewed the multiple main breaks. He also reported multiple service calls following the recent warm-up as previously frozen lines began to thaw and fail. Two calls came in from the Rite Aid location at the Mt. Penn Valley Shopping Center — one the previous week involving the domestic line, and one the prior evening involving the fire service line. Matt noted that the interior of the Rite Aid building had sustained significant water damage and indicated he had directed staff to continue listening for additional leaks in neighboring vacant buildings.

Matt also reported a chlorine issue involving a failed ejector at Sylvan Dell. He explained that the fire hydrant installed at the shop the prior year had proven essential: rather than deploying trash pumps and putting the whole system on a boil water notice — an 8 to 10 hour event — staff were able to isolate the distribution system, pump the clear well out through the hydrant, stabilize the chlorine, and resume operations. However, the problem recurred three times, turning it into an extended overnight event.

Brief discussion acknowledged a newer staff member, Sebastian Unger, who had successfully located two leaks — one at a residence and one at the post office — and received recognition from the Board for picking up the skill quickly.

Matt presented quotes for the purchase of a Kubota mini-excavator and an aluminum trailer. He explained that the excavator price remained the same from prior discussions, with the only addition being a 24-inch straight-edge bucket for blacktop cutting, estimated at approximately \$1,800. Matt noted that this additional bucket was not yet priced into the formal quote and could either be added as an amendment or purchased separately.

Three quotes were obtained for the trailer. The preferred option was a 22-foot aluminum trailer available from a company in Blue Ball, listed a 2025 model at \$17,770 plus approximately \$375 in fees, with one unit currently in stock. If that unit sold before purchase, the fallback option was a 2026 model from a dealer in Lansdale at \$19,071. Matt noted that driving to Chambersburg for the only other comparable quote would not justify the travel cost.

The Board discussed the value of the excavator, with members noting that the Authority currently rents equipment from M&A, and that owning their own machine would reduce costs significantly — with an estimated payback period of four to five years. Matt acknowledged that without a CDL among staff, the machine size was chosen to remain towable while still allowing for expanded capability on smaller service line and restoration work. He noted there would still be jobs where outside contractors are used, but this would increase in-house efficiency.

Motion to approve the purchase of the Kubota excavator, not to exceed \$121,000, motioned by Kelly Dudash, seconded by Al Worrall. Approved unanimously.

Motion to approve the purchase of the aluminum trailer, not to exceed \$20,000, motioned by Kelly Dudash, seconded by Al Worrall. Approved unanimously.

Matt noted that he would need an authorized signature from a Board member to proceed with the purchases.

Matt presented three items related to the ongoing SCADA project, as outlined in his written description provided to the Board.

Item 1 — Expansion Module (\$29,700): Matt explained that this expansion module had been inadvertently omitted from Keystone's original scope. It is required to provide the additional output capacity needed to control the two new VFDs being installed at Sylvan Dell, which will electronically regulate pump output. Without this module, this portion of the SCADA project cannot move forward. The Board agreed this item was necessary to proceed.

Item 2 — VFD for Well 14 (\$26,100): Matt explained that Well 14 is the well that had previously nearly run dry. A VFD on Well 14 would allow the Authority to dial back flow if needed in the future and, more importantly, would allow staff to begin tightening the chlorine residual curve at the pump station. He explained that currently, as the clear well level fluctuates with pump cycling, the chlorine feed remains constant, resulting in an uneven chlorine residual — visible as a wave pattern in the SCADA system. Because Well 14 is on-site and would be hardwired, there would be no communication lag, enabling real-time flow control. Matt acknowledged it was not immediately critical but noted that delaying to next year would not result in cost savings, as the price was expected to remain the same. Mr. Riley concurred on the functional value of the VFD.

Item 3 — Cellular Communications for Wells 12 and 13 (\$4,860): Matt explained that Wells 12 and 13 are approximately one mile from the shop and flow meter, and that there is currently a five-minute communication lag through the SCADA network, which routes through the Highland Tank hub. Because water takes three to four minutes to travel from those wells to Sylvan Dell, the lag makes it impossible to use the VFDs at those wells for automated flow control in response to real-time meter data. Cellular communications would reduce that lag to a near instant response. However, Matt and Mr. Riley both indicated that the VFDs at Wells 12 and 13 would still be set to a fixed, manually-determined speed rather than flow controlled, and that the primary purpose of those VFDs is to bring pumping rates within the Authority's 500 gallons-per-minute permit limit (currently over-pumped at approximately 750 GPM). Both Matt and Steve

Riley recommended holding off on Item 3, allowing Keystone to first clean up the existing communications, get the full SCADA system operational, and revisit cellular communications only if issues persist.

The Board approved Items 1 and 2 and agreed to defer action on Item 3.

Motion to approve the SCADA expansion module (Item 1) for \$29,700. Motioned by: Kelly
Seconded by: Al Worrall Approved unanimously.

Motion to approve the VFD for Well 14 (Item 2) for \$26,100. Moved by: Kelly Dudash
Seconded by: Al Worrall Approved unanimously.

SOLICITOR- Mark Merolla

Mark Merolla reported that the AVRCC lease had effectively been approved at the prior month's meeting; this item was placed on the agenda for formal confirmation. The lease had already been signed by AVRCC.

Motion to approve and authorize execution of the AVRCC lease, motioned by Joe Boyle, seconded by Kelly Dudash. The motion carried unanimously.

Mark Merolla also reported on several pending rule changes he intended to bring forward at the next Authority meeting. He indicated he would consult with Matt Hauck before bringing formal rule changes to the next meeting.

Mark Merolla noted that the License and Maintenance Agreement with Lower Alsace Township and AVRCC had not yet been finalized, as it was currently at Lower Alsace Township for approval. The Board voted to authorize the solicitor to execute the agreement once received.

Motion to approve the License and Maintenance Agreement with Lower Alsace Township and AVRCC and authorize execution. Motioned by Joe Boyle, seconded by Kelly Dudash. The motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS OFFICE- Christeena Hauck

Christeena Hauck reminded Board members of the Municipal Officials Dinner scheduled for Wednesday, March 4th

660 late notices were mailed out, which was slightly higher than normal.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION- Joe Boyle

Lake Update (LA Twp. Grant) - Phase 2

Joe Boyle reported that the Lake Phase 2 project had received a grant award of \$144,413, leaving a gap of approximately \$23,000. The award was noted to still allow for the spillway correction and stormwater BMP implementation. He had contacted the Lower Alsace Township supervisors, Theo, Todd, and Anne, to ask whether Lower Alsace Township would cover the shortfall, and that the Township was discussing and voting on that question at their meeting the same evening. He expressed confidence that the Township would address it.

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Sec. 219 (\$7 million)

Joe Boyle reported that Hunter Ahrens had reached out to Congresswoman Chrissy Houlihan's office regarding the Water Resources Development Act, Section 219, under which Berks County is to receive \$7,000,000 for stormwater corrections and water infrastructure improvements. He explained that to participate, the Authority would need to identify four potential rain garden locations within the community and a new outfall from the spillway into Antietam Creek, at no cost to the Authority beyond identification. Discussion indicated that Berks County Nature had also raised the need to correct the lake outfall into Antietam Creek and had expressed willingness to write a grant application for it.

Joe Boyle noted that the funds would not flow directly to the Authority through federal senators but rather would be allocated to Berks County, which would then distribute them to participating entities. Approximately twelve organizations were represented at the informational meeting, including the Berks County Conservation District.

Joe Boyle also reported that Flyway was preparing to begin Phase 2 work, with an earliest start of May due to existing frozen conditions. He indicated he planned to contact the turtle rescue person(?) to allow two weeks in April for any turtle survey in the wetland area before work begins. It was noted that Flyway would partially lower the lake level to complete the work.

Joe Boyle also reported a waterfowl management meeting scheduled for March 4th at 3:30 PM at the lake with Brad Hoffman from USDA and Larry Lloyd, to address the significant goose and duck population and its impact on water quality

BOROUGH OF MT. PENN-

Mark Merolla reported on his research into the proposed Mt. Penn conveyance-leaseback. The central issue identified was the PENNVEST loan of approximately \$3,000,000 that was taken out for the Spook Lane Tank project, which encumbers the Authority's assets. The solicitor indicated he had spoken with a representative at PENNVEST who stated she had never encountered a transaction of this type in her career. While the solicitor acknowledged the transfer was not impossible, he indicated it would likely involve significant costs or complexity. He noted that paying off the loan outright was not a practical option. The PENNVEST representative suggested that a more natural window for the transaction would be around April of next year, after the loan disbursement.

Mark Merolla suggested checking with Borough Manager Hunter Ahrens to understand the urgency and whether it made sense to wait until the timing aligned more favorably with the PENNVEST loan structure, potentially allowing the loan to be more easily assigned to the Borough. Board members noted that Hunter had expressed a desire to have something announced by June and had been pushing for a faster timeline. It was agreed that Ms. Dudash would contact Hunter to discuss the PENNVEST constraint and timeline and Mark Merolla would follow up with Hunter.

ANTIETAM VALLEY MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY (AVMA)-

No Report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

Discussion arose regarding an informal information request related to the leaseback due diligence process (referenced as potentially a Right-to-Know request) that had been submitted, with a requested response deadline of March 15th. Joe Boyle indicated he had spoken with Hunter Ahrens by phone and advised him that the March 15th deadline was not achievable. Hunter had indicated flexibility on the deadline and offered to assist with whatever was needed.

Joe Boyle raised a concern that fulfilling the request would require involvement from the engineer, solicitor, and auditor for work that Christeena and Matt could not perform themselves that would result in professional fees. The question before the Board was who would bear those costs, as it was suggested that the Borough might be willing to contribute toward the professional fees for gathering information. However, it was noted that this had not yet been formally discussed with Borough council. Board members agreed that it would be preferable to have all conversations in writing going forward to ensure everyone remained on the same page. The item was effectively tabled pending further communication with Hunter.

Mark Merolla raised a separate matter regarding a shared service connection situation on Friedensburg Road, where a single water line runs from a curb stop at the street, up through a staircase on private property, and serves three or four separate properties — each with their own curb stop within the property. The question of who bears responsibility for maintaining and repairing that shared line segment was discussed. He also indicated that while the Authority would typically be responsible up to the curb stop, the situation here is ambiguous given the unusual configuration. Matt Hauck noted a similar situation exists on Walters Avenue.

The Board agreed the most prudent first step was to hire a surveyor and conduct a title search to determine property boundaries and ownership along the line route.

Motion to authorize hiring McCarthy to conduct a survey and to authorize a title search for the affected properties, not to exceed \$600. Motioned by Al Worrall, seconded by Kelly Dudash. The motion carried unanimously.

Mark Merolla also briefly raised the matter of the PA American water sales agreement, specifically the termination provision. He suggested that rather than a 90-day termination notice, the agreement could be structured as a three-year term with non-automatic renewal, potentially with one year's notice required to exit. Board members noted that PA American could effectively stop purchasing water at any time regardless of a termination clause, as there is no minimum purchase requirement. It was also noted that even if PA American builds its own water production facility (a project estimated to be at least five years out), maintaining the agreement would be logical as an emergency interconnection. The Board agreed to table the termination discussion and directed Mr. Merolla to communicate the general concept to PA American.

NEW BUSINESS-

Motion to accept Board member Josh Nowotarski's resignation with regret. Motioned by Al Worrall, seconded by Joe Boyle. The motion carried unanimously. Discussion continued regarding a potential new candidate.

The motion was made by Al Worrall, seconded by Joe Boyle, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. All were in favor.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 11, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christeena Hauck
Christeena Hauck
Business Office Manager