

PRE-MEETING BADEN BOROUGH COUNCIL July 8th, 2026

Council Vice President John Shelkons called the Pre-Meeting of Council to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Baden Municipal Building, 149 State Street, to conduct business of general purposes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Joe Bosh, Becky Gallagher, Dawn Singleton, John Shelkons, Tom Turney and Dave Trzcianka (arrived at 6:

NOT PRESENT: Shannon Reynolds

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Andy Gall, Manager Elaine Rakovan, Fire Chief/CEO Dennis Baker

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OTHER RECORDING DEVICES

AGENDA (Changes and/or Deletions)

VISITORS

Clarence Singleton from 524 Moore Avenue asked for an update on the chicken smell coming from 532 Moore Avenue. Code Enforcement Officer, Dennis Baker stated that this is a process and commented that this may be a neighborhood dispute because the neighbor is complaining about barking dogs when the neighbor claimed was coming from the Singleton property. Clarence Singleton stated that he has no dogs. Dennis Baker stated that he does not get involved in neighborhood disputes. He has not cited 532 Moore Avenue yet, but that would be the next step. Clarence Singleton stated that he can't even sit on his porch because the smell from the chickens is that bad from two barrels that the neighbor put in his yard for disposal of the chicken droppings.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Manager

1. **Ambridge Water Authority Contract**
The solicitor sent a letter to AWA notifying them of the contract renewal.
2. **2025 CCR (Water Quality Report)**
The engineer completed the CCR, emailed it to Sasha Montell and Joe Bosh who made sure it was posted to our website prior to the July 1st deadline.
3. **Train**
Besides Pinney Street bridge being a viewing location, the Hill Cemetery may also be a congested with people.
4. **Sisters of St. Joseph Fence**
The waterline project required the removal of a portion of the fence surrounding the property. Replacing the fence was in the contract, however public works would like to have a gate at the location so that if needed the borough will have easy access to the water line. Cost for a 12' double drive gate is \$4,690.
5. **No Parking Ordinance Update**
No update. Engineer is working on the update.

6. Baden Fire Department Lease

No update. Copy was emailed to council for review. This is a rough draft. Adding verbiage regarding all alteration/additions to the building must have the approval of council. Does council have any additions or changes.

7. Wall – Corner of Lincoln Avenue and Phillips Street

No update.

Elaine Rakovan stated that a copy of the engineer report for the Straube Avenue study has been handed out to all of council for review and discussion at the regular meeting.

Public Works (Rodney Keenan)

No Report (On Vacation)

Fire Chief (Dennis Baker)

Written Report as follows:

Monthly Activity & Operations Report

June 2026

Incident Activity

In June 2026, the Baden Fire Department responded to **16 incidents**. These calls represented a variety of emergency responses and operational demands throughout the Borough of Baden and surrounding mutual aid areas. The department averaged **six (6) firefighters per incident**, with staffing levels ranging from **16 firefighters responding to a structure fire to 1 medical personnel responding to a medical call**.

Of the 16 total incidents, the department **provided Automatic Aid (9) times, (6) of which were canceled, and received Automatic Aid (4) times for a total of 13 incidents utilizing the Automatic Mutual Aid System**, reinforcing the importance of regional cooperation and mutual support among neighboring agencies.

Call Type Breakdown

- **Fire Alarms:**2
- **Fires (Possible / Confirmed):** 5
- **Medical Responses:** 4
- **Rescue Incidents:** 2
- **Service / Other Type Calls:** 3
- **Dispatched / Canceled:** 10 out of the 16

Year-to-Date Incidents: 168

Personnel, Staffing & Response

A total of **257 man-hours** were logged during May. These hours include:

- Emergency incident responses
- Station staffing
- Training activities
- PR Events

Training & Job Performance Requirements

Members completed the **June Job Performance Requirement (JPR)**, which focused on **Pump Operation**. This training ensured continued familiarity and confidence with pump operations/water flow

Looking ahead, the **July JPR will focus on Engine 47 Operations / Equipment Review**, and members are encouraged to maintain momentum by ensuring these JPRs are completed and staffing the station when available.

Upcoming Trainings / Classes:

- 8/14 - 8/16 Elis Fire Training Weekend

Apparatus & Equipment Readiness

All **monthly truck checks** were completed in May. Additionally, all **monthly medical equipment inspections** were completed by a medical provider, ensuring compliance with readiness standards and operational reliability.

Our new QRS vehicle is in service and awaiting final EMS Certification Inspection by EMS West.

Annual vehicle inspections are in process, along with annual pump testing and aerial certification

Annual SCBA Bench Testing is scheduled for August.

Annual Rescue Tool Service is being scheduled.

Grants & Funding Updates

- Norfolk Southern Grant Application Submitted, for acquisition of Heart Monitor / Defibrillator. **(Awarded \$10,000 towards the purchase)**
- Applied for additional funding through Eire and State Farm to make up the funds still needed for the Defibrillator.
- ***OSFC State Grant in the amount of \$16,136.55. (has been Deposited)***
- ***Matzie / DCED Grant totaling \$50,000 was awarded to support the completion of projects around the fire station.***
- ***The AFG grant application has been submitted (Rescue truck Replacement)***
- ***There are no new updates on the Local Share Grant related to engine replacement.***

Station Project Updates

- The Initial phase of the addition has been completed, and both the final building and electrical inspections have been completed by MDIA.
- Patio Complete
Projects to follow the addition completion.
 - Office update
 - 5th Bay Organization, once the gym equipment is moved to the addition
 - Front shower room update
 - Replace remaining non-led lights throughout the station

Code Enforcement (Dennis Baker)

Written Report as follows:

2026 Inspection Program

- 22 Inspections Completed
- Several more are waiting to be scheduled.

General Violations / Complaints

- 11 code complaints received in June
- 4 of them have been mitigated, still working on the others, along with a few from prior months
- 3 Citations

Court & Appeals

- An **appeal has been filed** regarding a citation issued for the **Baden Theater**. The judge ordered a continuance because our solicitor was unavailable for the hearing on short notice. I asked the office staff to send the solicitor the new notice as soon as we receive it.

Condemned Properties

- 286 Berry Street, all information was sent to the property owner via email, and she claims they are going to make all corrections so they can move back in
- Lower Moore Ave Property, I am circling back around on this one, which has been condemned for some time, and I lost sight of it.

Code Enforcement Process

Code enforcement in Baden is based on laws that have already been adopted by the Borough. Specifically, enforcement is guided by the Borough of Baden Code of Ordinances and the 2018 International Property Maintenance Code. These codes establish minimum standards for safety and property maintenance. They are not based on personal opinions or individual preferences, and they apply equally to everyone.

Code issues generally come to my attention in two ways. One is through proactive code sweeps that I conduct throughout the borough. The other is through complaints that are submitted by residents. Regardless of how a concern is brought to my attention, I personally verify every complaint before any action is taken. If there is no legitimate code violation, no enforcement action occurs.

It's important to understand that just because someone may not like how a property looks, or feels it should be maintained differently, does not automatically mean it's a code violation. Code enforcement is based on what the law requires, not on personal standards or disagreements between neighbors.

When a legitimate issue is found, the notification process begins. That process includes two required steps. First, I attempt in-person contact whenever possible. Second, a written notification letter is sent. That letter is required to ensure due process and to clearly explain what the issue is and what needs to be addressed. During this process, I also verify the correct property owner to make sure notifications go to the appropriate person.

Property owners are given a reasonable amount of time to contact me and correct the issue. I try to be flexible and realistic, keeping in mind that many factors can affect how quickly a problem can be fixed. Weather, cost, the amount of work involved, or the need to hire a contractor can all impact timelines, and those factors are taken into consideration.

If a violation is completely ignored and there is no communication or effort to resolve the issue, the next step is issuing a citation. The purpose of issuing a citation is not to punish someone or collect fines, but to ensure that the issue is addressed. Historically, many cases are resolved once a property owner receives a summons and understands the seriousness of the matter.

If a citation is issued, a hearing is scheduled with the local magistrate. In many cases, property owners correct the issue before the hearing even takes place. When that happens, the magistrate will often issue a small fine or dismiss the case. In some situations, the case may be continued to allow the owner additional time to complete the repairs. **(If an individual pleads guilty and pays the fine up front, the process starts over on my end to try again to get the issue resolved, after a 30-day waiting period)**

Occasionally, a property owner may appeal a magistrate's decision, which moves the case to the county court level. While that does happen, it is less common.

Overall, my goal with code enforcement is not revenue generation. The goal is to correct unsafe or non-compliant conditions and help maintain a safe, livable community for everyone. Some issues are simple and can be corrected quickly, while others take more time, and each case is handled individually with fairness and consistency.

(President Dave Trzcianka arrived and took over the meeting at 6:16 PM)

Dennis Baker went over and answered questions about condemned and distressed properties.

Chief Baker asked about opening the borough building to the public for the farmer’s market. Discussion followed. Council agreed to opening the upper level doors for the event.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance (John Shelkons)

General Fund Balance	\$266,996	Expenses	\$258,937
Water Fund Balance	\$395,291	Expenses	\$14,773

Tom Turney had questions regarding the check listing. Elaine Rakovan explained that two of the checks were reimbursements to Michael Stuban for reimbursement of expenses regarding the America 250 Celebrations. The library allotment is a portion of the 2026 budgeted amount of \$25,000.

Public Safety (Becky Gallagher)

Big Boy Train

Becky Gallagher stated that the regional police chief has a plan for the July 11th arrival of the train. Route 65 cannot be shut down to one lane because that would be a liability issue. There will be 3 patrol cars on duty and Norfolk Southern requested 2 officers of overnight security duty. Pinney Street bridge will be closed to traffic.

Straube Avenue Incident

Officer Amanda Stitt has followed up with the family of the little boy who almost got hit by a speeding, out of control vehicle last month.

America 250

Final event was on June 20th. Becky Gallagher gave a wrap up of the event. Money raised from selling pieces of the pies that were a part of the pie contest was donated to the We Care Food Pantry. Becky thanked everyone who helped to make the event a success. There is approximately \$1,500 left from the grant money that is available for making a float for the Beaver County America 250 parade that will take place in Beaver on September 19th. July 20th is the meeting for volunteers who will be helping with the float.

Becky Gallagher stated that there is extra merchandise available from the June event and asked if it could be sold through the borough office.

Public Works / Municipal Authority (Dawn Singleton)

Dawn Singleton stated that the Baden American Legion asked if they could borrow seven of the borough barricades for their August 22nd event.

Dawn Singleton asked about painting the lines on Bauman Avenue. Dave Trzcianka stated that the lines will be done by the end of summer.

Technology / Legislation (Joe Bosh)

Joe Bosh stated that he is working with attorney Vince Restauri to update the street opening ordinance.

The water quality report is posted to the website.

The emergency response plan that the engineer was working on had a new section regarding cyber security, standards and plans. Bob Bickerton filled it out and he will work on updating our security matters to cover all the areas that were addressed in the emergency response plan.

Public Relations / Administration (Shannon Reynolds)

Not Present.

Building / Property / Code Enforcement (Tom Turney)

Tom Turney stated that he is only serving one 4-year term and it is his intent to have the fishing pier done within the four years. He would like to address Becky Gallaghers questions and issues this year so that the project may move forward. Tom gave an over of the available grant that will pay 85% of the cost as well as the requirements for the funding.

Tom asked for an update on West View Water (WVW). Elaine Rakovan stated that she was not at the work session and she did not hear anything from West View Water. She will contact WVW to see what the next step is in the process.

Tom stated that he read the contract for the waterline project. He questioned the section that addresses use of roadway and restoration of paved services.

MAYORS REPORT (Andy Gall)

Mayor Gall stated that he did a call from a resident complaining about a camper and boat that is parked on State Street.

There was also a complaint from a resident of North Avenue regarding speeding. The resident will be attending the Beaver Valley Regional Police meeting as well as Baden's council meeting to discuss this matter including speed signage.

The mayor and Becky Gallagher went up to Straube Avenue regarding the speeding complaint from last month. While there they saw a couple of cars drive straight through the stop signs.

There was a complaint about Center Street and one side parking. Elaine Rakovan stated that the engineer is reviewing the parking ordinance. It is more complicated because there needs to be consistency across the borough. No parking signs does not clarify if it is the entire street, between signs or from the sign to the corner.

Discussion took place regarding tracking and removal of handicap parking signs. Baden police was working on it, but once we regionalized it stopped. Mayor Gall will look into this matter.

Old Business Not on the Agenda, New Business or Unfinished Business

Elaine Rakovan addressed council in regards to cutting the project short and not do the last two streets. Discussion followed including complaints and quality of the contractor's work.

PRESIDENTS REPORT (Dave Trzcianka)

Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Tom Turney, second by Becky Gallagher, carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted for approval,

Elaine K. Rakovan
Borough Manager