



Possible Municipal Merger Between Mars Borough and Adams Township

**Second Joint Public Informational Meeting
March 24, 2026**

Welcome / Introductions



MARS:

Council:

Mike Fleming, *President*

John McWilliams, *Vice President*

William Lambert

Eric Pomeroy

Bradford Price

Jim Garrity

Jana Snavely

Secretary/Treasurer:

Christine Clutter

Mayor:

Gregg Hartung

Solicitor:

Chris Reese

ADAMS:

Supervisors:

Russell Ford, *Chairman*

Ronald Shemela, *Vice Chairman*

Darryl Brandon

David Goodworth

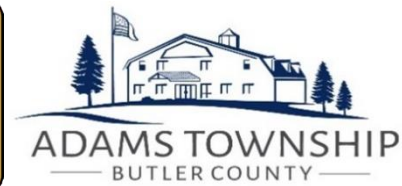
Ronald Nacey

Solicitors: Mike Gallagher

Sean Gallagher

Township Manager: Mike Tylka

Welcome / Introductions



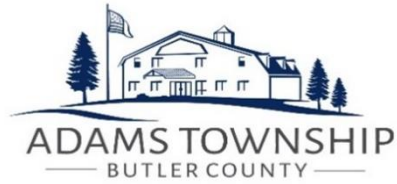
Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED):

Terri Cunkle

George Newsome



Agenda



1. Welcome / Introductions
2. DCED
3. Recap of last meeting
4. Next Steps / Timeframe Review
5. Public Questions & Comments
6. Closing

BOUNDARY CHANGE

Merger and Consolidation

November 2025



Overview

Boundary Change

Merger/Consolidation

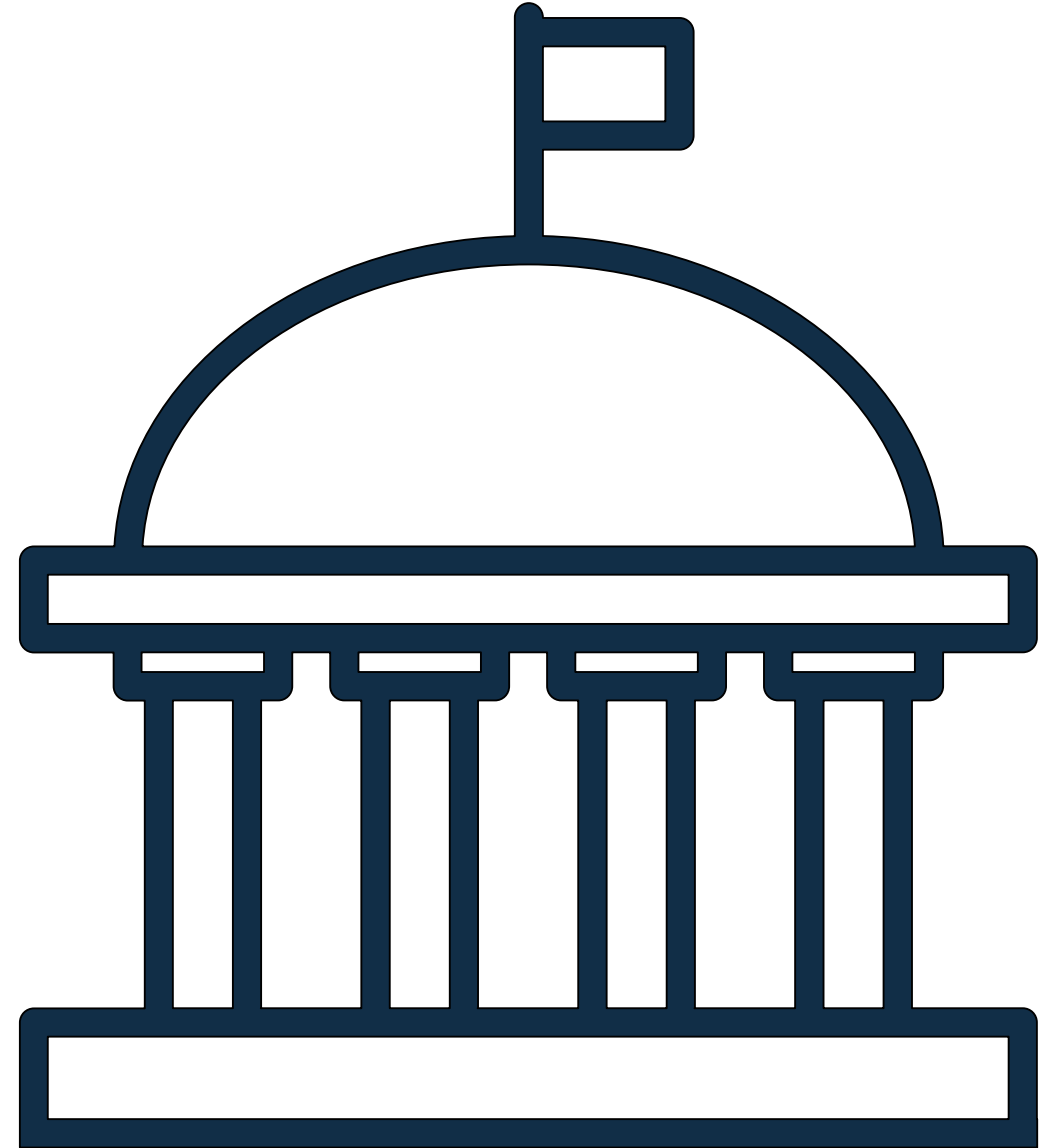
General Rule

Effectuation

Procedures

Boundary Change

Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 53, Part II. Creation, Territory, Alteration and Dissolution, Chapter 7. Alteration of Territory or Corporate Entity and Dissolution, Subchapter B, Municipal Boundary Changer Title 53 *Pa.C.S. 712*, allows any change in the municipal boundary between abutting municipalities other than merger or consolidation under Subchapter C, including any transfer of territory.



Annexation

- Annexation Referenda
 - Annexation is a type of boundary change whereby one municipality acquires a portion of another municipality that must be approved by a majority of voters of the affected municipalities in a referendum
 - Petition must contain at least 5% of registered voters in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality
 - Petition must be circulated, signed and filed with the election's office 13 weeks prior to the election



Municipal Consolidation and Merger Act

Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 53, Part II. Creation, Territory, Alteration and Dissolution, Chapter 7. Alteration of Territory or Corporate Entity and Dissolution, Subchapter C, Consolidation and Merger Title 53 *Pa.C.S. 731* allows for municipalities to consolidate and/or merge into one municipality.



MERGER VS CONSOLIDATION

Merger

- The combination of two or more municipalities which results in the termination of the existence of all but one of the municipalities to be merged with the surviving municipality absorbing and assuming jurisdiction over the municipalities which have been terminated

Consolidation

- The combination of two or more municipalities which results in the termination of the existence of each of the municipalities to be consolidated and the creation of a new municipality which assumes jurisdiction over all of the municipalities that have been terminated

General Rule

- Established by the Municipal Consolidation and Merger Act, *Title 53, Chapter 7, Subchapter C*
 - Two or more municipalities may consolidate or merge into a single municipality
 - Must be contiguous to at least one municipality involved in the merger or consolidation
 - Can be located in different counties
 - Commenced by one of the following:
 - Joint agreement of the governing bodies
 - Initiative of electors

Initiation by Joint Agreement

- Initiation by Joint Agreement *Title 53 Chapter 7 Sect. 734*
 - Governing Bodies by way of ordinance initiate a joint agreement that must include:
 - Names of municipalities
 - Name and territorial boundaries and class of the consolidated or merged municipality
 - The way the municipality will be governed
 - Municipal code and class
 - Home Rule Charter or Optional Plan of the current municipalities
 - Formation of a new Home Rule Charter or Optional Plan
 - Number and boundaries of wards or districts that may be created
 - Optional plan or study of home rule charter ballot question
 - Must pass in all municipalities
 - Study commission selected on same ballot if seeking home rule

Initiation by Joint Agreement Cont.

- Financial arrangements must include
 - Disposition of assets
 - Liquidation of existing indebtedness
 - Assumption of existing liabilities
 - Implementation of a uniform tax system
- Number of elected officials
- Transition plan and schedule for elected officers
- Common administration and enforcement of ordinances
- Agreement question must be filed with the county board of elections no more than 20 weeks and no less than 13 weeks prior to election
- Must pass by majority of the electors in each proposed municipality
- If the referendum fails, it can not be voted upon again for five years.

Initiative by Joint Agreement cont.

If referendum passes in all municipalities

- If referendum is successful municipal officials of proposed merger or consolidation transition according to the joint agreement

If referendum fails in one or more municipalities

- The same question can not be placed on a ballot for five years

Initiative by electors

- Voter Initiative by Petition With or Without Home Rule Charter *Title 53 Chapter 7 Sect. 735, 735.1*
 - Petition must contain at least 5% of registered voters in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality
 - Petition must be circulated, signed and filed with the election's office 13 weeks prior to the election

Initiative by electors cont.

- Petition without home rule initiative must include
 - Name of municipality
 - Names of proposed consolidated/merged municipalities
 - Name of consolidated/merged municipality
 - Type and Class of consolidated/merged municipality
 - Consolidated/merged municipality will continue to be governed by Home Rule or Optional Plan previously adopted
 - If merging into third class optional city, will continue to operate under the optional charter
 - Number of wards or districts, if any

Initiative by electors cont.

- Petition with home rule initiative must include
 - Name of municipality
 - Names of proposed consolidated/merged municipalities
 - Estimated cost of study commission
 - Number of persons to compose study commission 7,9 or 11
 - Commission of seven, nine or eleven members shall be elected at the same election
 - If referendum passes the elected commission studies merger/consolidation/home rule and decides if the initiative moves forward, a second referendum question is then placed on the ballot within the statutory time frame (not less than 60 days from filing of commission's report with county) asking if the merger/consolidation shall be approved to be governed under a home rule charter.

Initiative by Electors cont.

If referendum passes in all municipalities

- If referendum is successful municipal officials of proposed merger or consolidation have one year from certification of vote to create a joint agreement and four years to completely transition

If referendum fails in one or more municipalities

- The same question can not be placed on a ballot for five years

Effectuation/Procedures

- **Effectuation**
 - Municipalities shall continue to govern until the date set forth in the transition plan
 - Full implementation within four years of voter certification
 - Integration of elected official term
- **Procedures**
 - A new ordinance book shall be used once consolidation becomes effective
 - Ordinance codification must take place no later than two years after merger or consolidation takes place
 - The merged or consolidated municipality obtains all real estate, agreements, contracts, debts and liabilities of the individual municipalities

Recent Successes & Failures

Favorable:

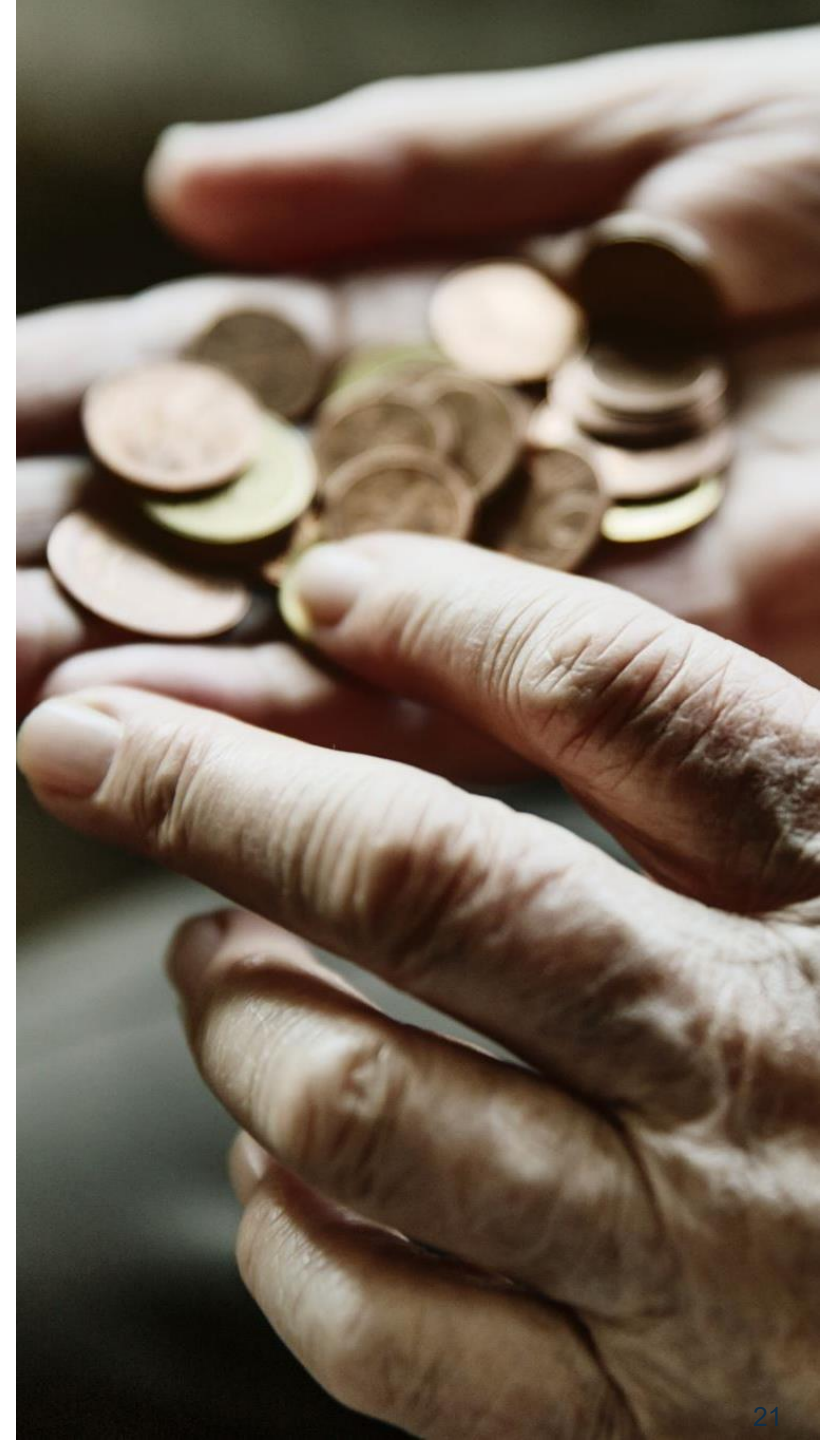
- 2021 Wheatland Borough merged into Hermitage City, Mercer County
- 2022 Sandy Township consolidated with the City of Dubois, Clearfield County
- 2022 South New Castle Borough merged into Shenango Township, Lawrence County
- 2023 Callimont Borough merged into Larimer Township, Somerset County
- 2023 East Keating township merged into Noyes Township, Clinton County

Rejected:

- 2023 Wallacetown Borough proposed merger into Boggs Township, Clearfield County
 - *Passed in the township, lost in the borough by 9 votes*
- 2024 Barnett Township proposed merger into Eldred Township, Jefferson County
 - *Lost in both by 2 votes*

DCED Funding Source

- Grant applicable upon successful referendum
 - Remaining municipality is applicant
 - Covers professional service fees related to merger e.g., legal fees (acquired after successful referendum), codification, zoning, studies.
- Does not cover infrastructure, branding, equipment, etc.

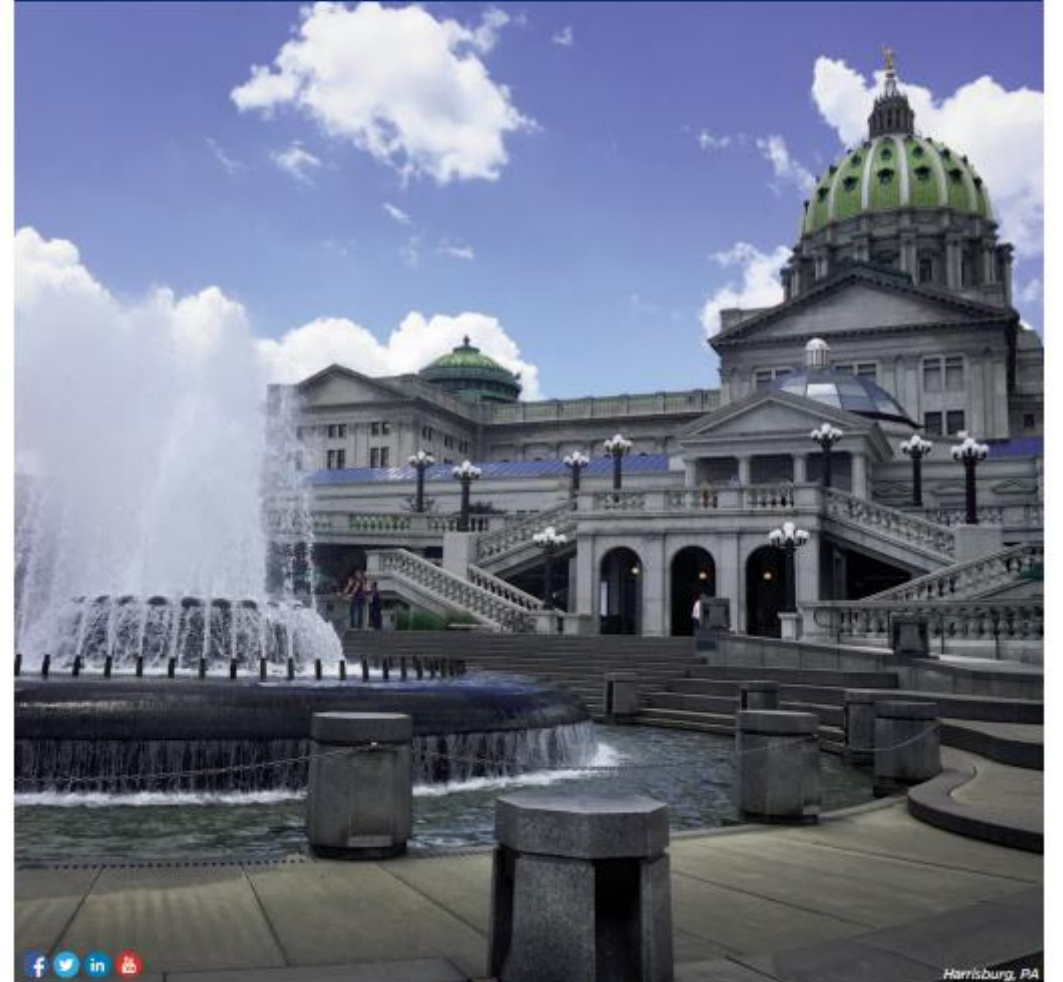


Resource

<https://dced.pa.gov/download/Boundary%20Change%20Procedures/?wpdmdl=57477>

BOUNDARY CHANGE PROCEDURES

Seventh Edition | May 2014





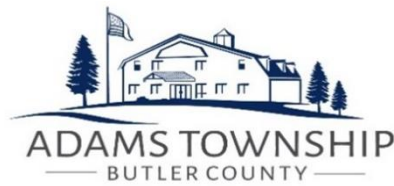
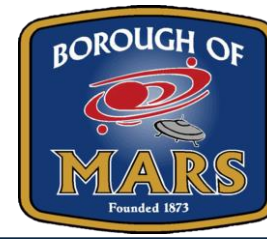
Pennsylvania

**Department of Community
& Economic Development**

dced.pa.gov

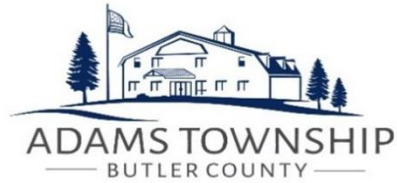
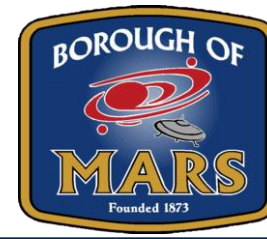


Recap of Last Meeting



1. Purpose / Definition Discussed
2. Process / Timeline Outlined
3. “Why’s” Presented
4. Answers to Common Questions Delivered
5. Public Questions & Comment Period Held

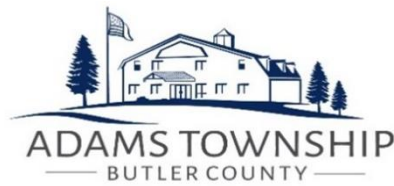
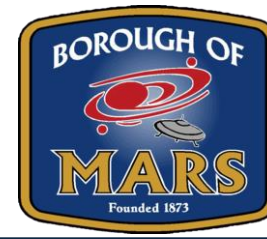
Recap of Last Meeting



- **Summary of Benefits to Mars:**

- ✓ Lower taxes
- ✓ 24/7 police coverage
- ✓ Further full-time staffing in Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Codes & Zoning, and Administration
- ✓ Expanded resources for infrastructure
- ✓ Library remains in Downtown Mars
- ✓ Joint planning and expanded grant opportunities
- ✓ Further access to Adams Park facilities

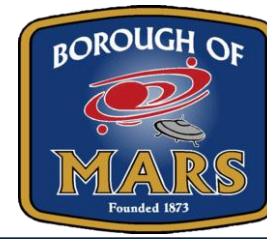
Recap of Last Meeting



• **Summary of Benefits to Adams:**

- ✓ Expanded staffing in Police, Public Works, and Administration
- ✓ Public Works and Police equipment and trucks
- ✓ Additional three parks and recreation facilities
- ✓ Ownership of several buildings and properties
- ✓ Water plant and related infrastructure
- ✓ Consolidation of Mars' 35% ownership of the Breakneck Sewer Authority
- ✓ Expanded resources for infrastructure
- ✓ Joint planning and expanded grant opportunities
- ✓ Downtown core

Process / Timeline – 2026



- Both passed resolution to explore merger (*January 5th*)
- Initial public meetings (*Jan. 22nd & Tonight*)
- Future possible public meetings (*Through October*)
- Agreement formation (*February - June*)
- Elected officials in both municipalities vote on agreement and to set the merger question on the ballot (*June - July*)
- Public votes on the question in the November General Election (*November 3rd*)

Must pass in both to move forward

Process / Timeline – 2026



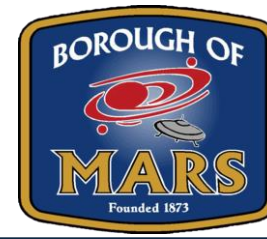
- Possible Ballot Question:

Shall the Borough of Mars, a Pennsylvania municipality organized under the Borough Code, be merged into the Township of Adams, a Pennsylvania Township of the Second Class, and with the Township being renamed **Mars** Township, a Pennsylvania Township of the Second Class, effective **January 1, 2028**?

Yes _____

No _____

Public Questions & Comments

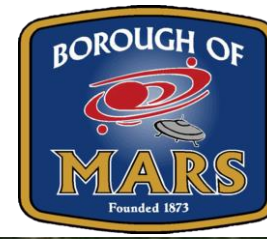


Visit the Merger Page of <https://adamstwp.org/> for:

- ✓ More Information
- ✓ A Place to Submit Thoughts (Questions & Comments)
 - ✓ Presentations
 - ✓ Future Updates

APPENDIX

Purpose / Definition



- Elected officials have voted to explore a possible municipal merger
- Discussion started as part of planning for the future of the library we share

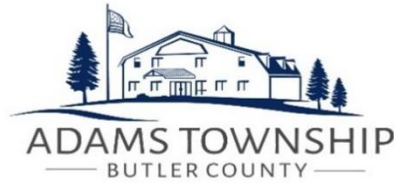
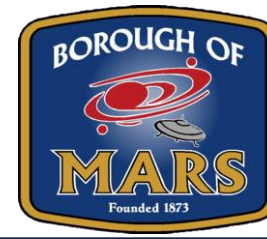


Process / Timeline – 2027



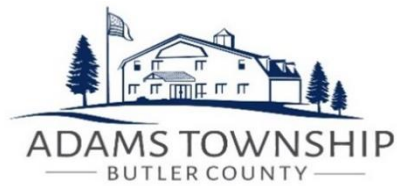
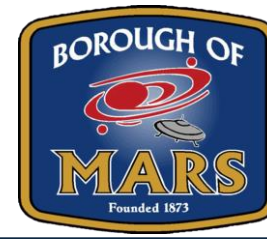
- If the public votes in favor of the merger in both municipalities:
 - ✓ 2027 would be spent preparing the merger and combining departments and resources
 - ✓ Analyze for further efficiencies and long-term planning
- Current thinking is that the merged government would take effect on January 1, 2028 (*this as official start*)

Why?



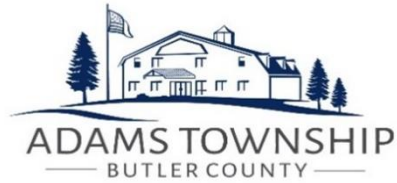
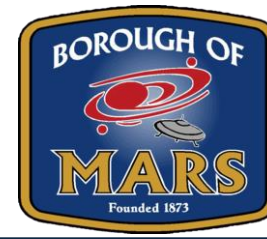
- Move to 24/7 local police coverage for Mars, additional officers for Adams
- Expanded staffing in Public Works, Administration, Zoning, and Code Enforcement for both municipalities
- Lower administrative costs
- Greater purchasing power

Why?



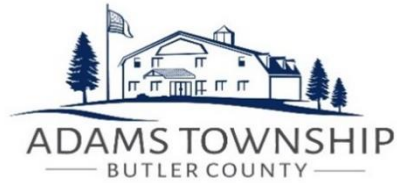
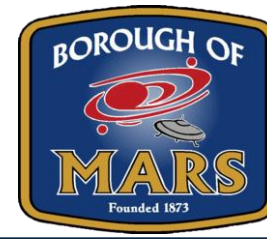
- Full time Parks, Recreation, and Event staff for Mars, ability to grow this role for Adams
- Further access to each others' parks and facilities
- Combined comprehensive planning
- Access to larger grants

Why?



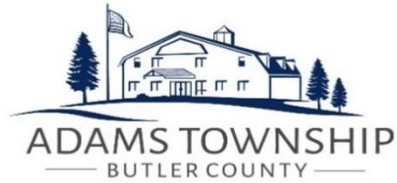
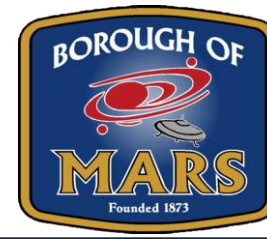
- Access to further resources for Downtown Mars, Adams gains a Downtown
- Library remains in Downtown Mars
- Already work together on sewer, library, EMS, and fire and this furthers those partnerships

Why?



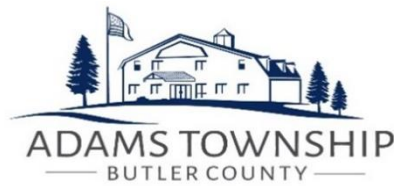
- Expanded tax base for Adams, Mars local taxes are aligned with that of Adams'
- Further infrastructure resources (*example: water*) and investment in Mars' roadways, Adams' residents travel through currently and will benefit from upgrades
- Ensure public interests of both will remain aligned as one community into the future

Answers to Common Questions



- **No changes to or involvement in this process:**
 - ✓ Post Office
 - ✓ Mailing Addresses
 - ✓ EMS
 - ✓ Fire
 - ✓ School District
 - ✓ Valencia Borough
 - ✓ Callery Borough

Answers to Common Questions



- **Staff:** All full-time Mars staff will be given the option to transition into a post-merger role and all Adams staff remain
 - ✓ Cost savings by sharing public resources (*not needing as many consultants, hiring out, etc.*)
- **Cost:** Commonwealth Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) encourages this action and we are eligible for grant funds to cover considerable portions of it

Answers to Common Questions



- **Name:** New name can be considered on the ballot with the merger question
- **Taxes:** Anticipation is that Mars residents are assigned Adams local taxes and rates
 - ❖ Current Municipal Millage Rate:
 - **Adams 3.75**
 - **Mars 25.33**
- **Debt:** No debt currently for either

Answers to Common Questions



		Mars Summary 2026 Budget	
		REVENUE	
TAXES			
Property Tax		192,196.18	
Earned Income Tax		185,000.00	
Real Estate Transfer Tax		16,000.00	
Local Service Tax		5,700.00	
Fire, EMS, & Library Taxes		30,013.13	
LICENSES & PERMITS		21,400.00	
FINES		3,800.00	
INTEREST, RENTS & ROYALTIES		41,046.00	
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES		770,160.00	
CHARGES FOR SERVICES (DEPT. EARNINGS)		753,140.00	
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES		49,232.94	
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES		100,086.00	
			EXPENSES
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			317,540.80
PUBLIC SAFETY			452,088.97
PUBLIC WORKS - HIGHWAYS/ROADS/STREETS			304,272.40
PUBLIC WORKS - OTHER SERVICES (INCLUDING WATER)			972,869.30
RECREATION			94,549.00
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			0.00
INTERFUND OPERATING EXPENSES			0.00
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES			0.00
TOTAL		2,167,774.25	2,141,320.48
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)			26,453.77

Answers to Common Questions



	Mars Summary 2026 Budget		With Estimated Efficiencies & Tax Changes	
	REVENUE		REVENUE	
TAXES				
Property Tax	192,196.18		32,156.95	
Earned Income Tax	185,000.00		185,000.00	
Real Estate Transfer Tax	16,000.00		16,000.00	
Local Service Tax	5,700.00		5,700.00	
Fire, EMS, & Library Taxes	30,013.13		0.00	
LICENSES & PERMITS	21,400.00		21,400.00	
FINES	3,800.00		3,800.00	
INTEREST, RENTS & ROYALTIES	41,046.00		41,046.00	
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES	770,160.00		770,160.00	
CHARGES FOR SERVICES (DEPT. EARNINGS)	753,140.00		753,100.00	
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	49,232.94		49,232.94	
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	100,086.00		20,086.00	
		EXPENSES		EXPENSES
GENERAL GOVERNMENT		317,540.80		188,188.98
PUBLIC SAFETY		452,088.97		369,086.62
PUBLIC WORKS - HIGHWAYS/ROADS/STREETS		304,272.40		333,173.70
PUBLIC WORKS - OTHER SERVICES (INCLUDING WATER)		972,869.30		787,185.13
RECREATION		94,549.00		94,549.00
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT		0.00		0.00
INTERFUND OPERATING EXPENSES		0.00		0.00
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES		0.00		0.00
TOTAL	2,167,774.25	2,141,320.48	1,897,681.89	1,772,183.43
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)		26,453.77		125,498.46

Answers to Common Questions



	Mars Summary 2026 Budget		With Estimated Efficiencies & Tax Changes		Differences	
	REVENUE		REVENUE		REVENUE	
TAXES						
Property Tax	192,196.18		32,156.95		(160,196.18)	
Earned Income Tax	185,000.00		185,000.00		0.00	
Real Estate Transfer Tax	16,000.00		16,000.00		0.00	
Local Service Tax	5,700.00		5,700.00		0.00	
Fire, EMS, & Library Taxes	30,013.13		0.00		(30,013.13)	
LICENSES & PERMITS	21,400.00		21,400.00		0.00	
FINES	3,800.00		3,800.00		0.00	
INTEREST, RENTS & ROYALTIES	41,046.00		41,046.00		0.00	
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES	770,160.00		770,160.00		0.00	
CHARGES FOR SERVICES (DEPT. EARNINGS)	753,140.00		753,100.00		(40.00)	
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	49,232.94		49,232.94		0.00	
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	100,086.00		20,086.00		(80,000.00)	
		EXPENSES		EXPENSES		EXPENSES
GENERAL GOVERNMENT		317,540.80		188,188.98		(129,351.82)
PUBLIC SAFETY		452,088.97		369,086.62		(83,002.35)
PUBLIC WORKS - HIGHWAYS/ROADS/STREETS		304,272.40		333,173.70		28,901.30
PUBLIC WORKS - OTHER SERVICES (INCLUDING WATER)		972,869.30		787,185.13		(185,684.17)
RECREATION		94,549.00		94,549.00		0.00
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT		0.00		0.00		0.00
INTERFUND OPERATING EXPENSES		0.00		0.00		0.00
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES		0.00		0.00		0.00
TOTAL	2,167,774.25	2,141,320.48	1,897,681.89	1,772,183.43	Reduced Revenue:	Reduced Expenses:
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)		26,453.77		125,498.46	(270,092.36)	(369,137.05)