The fourth joint public meeting of the Adams Township Board of Supervisors and the Mars Borough Council was held on July 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Adams Township Municipal Building.

Present at the meeting from Mars Borough Council were Mike Fleming, William Lambert, Brad Price, John McWilliams, Mayor Hartung and Mars Borough Solicitor Chris Reese. Present Adams Township Supervisors were Darryl Brandon, Ronald Shemela, and Russell Ford.

Adams Township Supervisor, Chairman, Russell Ford opened the meeting at 6:08 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mike Tylka, Township Manager, introduced the Mars Borough Council and the Adams Township Supervisors.

Russell Ford, Adams Township Chairman, presented an overview of the progress of the merger with a slideshow. Russ explained why the name Mars Township was chosen to keep the second-class township status. He also said that the spaceship will stay in Mars Borough.

Mike Fleming, Mars Council President, welcomed everyone and stated that he hopes to answer everyone's questions and expressed his willingness to merge with Adams Township.

Mike Tylka confirmed that the Merger Question will be on our ballot on November 3, 2026.

Russ Ford commented that both Mars Borough and Adams Township are doing everything they can to communicate with the residents to get the word out so that they can be informed when they go to the polls on November 3. Both communities have information on their respective websites and the Mars Area Public Library website.

Russ Ford read through recent questions that have been submitted to Adams Township about the merger and provided responses.

Public Comment

Richard Birch, Adams Township, commented that he hopes that Mars Borough roads will be a priority after the merger. He also asked what businesses will be attracted to Grand Avenue. Russ Ford said it is a desirable area, and we must ask ourselves do we want big retail in our small town.

Brett Schultz, Adams Township, asked about the structure of the water authorities. Russ Ford said that they will not be combined but can't speak for future Boards.

Stacey Nelson, Mars Borough, thanked all of Adams Township residents for supporting the Mars Borough events and businesses. She also asked what the long-term vision was for the main street. Mike Fleming said he would like to see it stay as a small-town atmosphere. Stacey asked what the supervisors and council feel is the biggest risk by merging. Russ Ford answered that probably the biggest risk is financial.

Stacey Palmer stated that there was a special election on August 18th for State Representative.

Marty McKinney, Adams Township, commended the supervisors and council for the great job they are doing with the merger.

Sandy Wizer commented that the Bank Building on Grand Avenue is the cornerstone of Mars Borough. She is asking that the exterior not be changed. Russ Ford said that the building will be torn down.

Talo Capuzzi, Adams Area Fire District Chief, said that building the new Fire Station was the best decision even with the connection to the former station.

Dawn Merhaut, Adams Township, asked who else looked at the financials of the merger besides the supervisors and council. Russ Ford answered that it was only done by the supervisors and council.

Krista Kuhl, Adams Township, asked how the merger will affect Code Enforcement. Russ stated that the Code Departments will be merged. Marty McKinney stated that the Code Department will follow the Municipal Planning Code (MPC) and the International Residential Code (IRC) for Mars Township.

Pat Hensel, Mars Borough, would like to see another grocery store on Grand Avenue. Mike Fleming said that they tried very hard to find a grocery store, but the building is not sustainable to that type of business.

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

