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We're All About It

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SHENANDOAH

Water authority sale OK'd

Public Utility Commission's approval ends yearslong process for Aqua Pennsylvania

BY HYUN SOO LEE
STAFF WRITER

SHENANDOAH — The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission on Thursday approved the sale of the borough's water authority to Aqua Pennsylvania Inc.

At its monthly meeting, the PUC unanimously approved a motion to authorize the sale of water authority assets to Aqua Pennsylvania, a

private water company.

The decision concludes a yearslong process that began in November 2020, when the Shenandoah Borough Council approved the sale of the Municipal Authority of the Borough of Shenandoah to Aqua for about \$12 million.

After paying MABS' outstanding debt of \$5.5 million, the borough would receive the net bal-

ance of \$6.5 million.

Since 2020, the proposed sale has rankled many MABS customers, including Donna M. Gawrylik, who filed a protest in January.

Gawrylik, who was chairperson of the MABS board from 2015 to 2020, argued that it is not in the public interest to sell the water rights

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LINDSEY SHUEY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Municipal Authority of the Borough of Shenandoah Water Department office is off Raven Run Road in Shenandoah. The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission on Thursday approved the sale of the borough's water authority to Aqua Pennsylvania Inc.

POTTSVILLE



DAVID MCKEOWN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

John Matulevich looks over his steel-framed bike Thursday at his gym, Ruthless Performance Fitness & Mobility Studio, in Pottsville. He will be riding the bike in the 36th Ben to the Shore Bike Tour later this month.

PLEASURE AND PURPOSE

Fitness center owner to ride in bicycle fundraiser from Philadelphia to Atlantic City

BY RON DEVLIN
STAFF WRITER

POTTSVILLE — In the past, John Matulevich did the Ben to the Shore Bike Tour from Philadelphia to Atlantic City at a brisk but not competitive pace.

This year, the owner of Ruthless Performance Fitness & Mobility Studio is approaching the 65-mile ride with ruthless determination.

"I'm hoping to finish in the top 25," said Matulevich, 29, whose fitness center is in the 2200 block of West Market Street.

That's 25th out of an estimated 2,500 entrants in the fundraiser for Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation — an ambitious undertaking, to say the least.

A trim 170 pounds, Matulevich hits the roads around 7 a.m. daily for training runs around Saint Clair and Pottsville.

In spare moments at his gym, he works out on an Assault bike and a Concept2 rowing machine.

"I put a huge emphasis on stress training," said



Matulevich uses a rowing machine as he trains for the bike ride. He hopes to finish in the top 25.

Matulevich, an assistant swim coach at Pottsville Area High School.

He swam competitively when he was a student at Pottsville Area High School, and for a short time when he was a student at

Bloomsburg University.

In 2010, when he was a junior, Matulevich won four gold medals for Pottsville in the Schuylkill League Swimming Championships

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PITTSBURGH SYNAGOGUE SHOOTING

Gunman found eligible for death penalty

Jury reaches verdict in 2 hours

BY PETER SMITH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH — The gunman who killed 11 people at a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018 is eligible for the death penalty, a federal jury announced Thursday, setting the stage for further evidence and testimony on whether he should be sentenced to death or life in prison.

The government is seeking capital punishment for Robert Bowers, who raged against Jewish people online before storming the Tree of Life synagogue with an AR-15 rifle and other weapons in the nation's deadliest antisemitic attack.

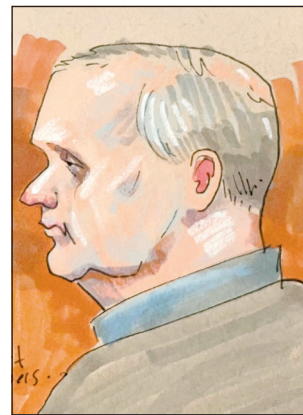
The jury agreed with prosecutors that Bowers — who spent six months planning the attack and has since expressed regret that he didn't kill more people — had formed the requisite legal intent to kill.

Bowers' lawyers argued that his ability to form intent was impaired by mental illness and a delusional belief that he could stop a genocide of white people by killing Jews who help immigrants.

Jurors reached the verdict after less than two hours of deliberation. As it was read, Bowers showed little reaction in keeping with his demeanor throughout the trial. In the courtroom gallery, survivors and victims' relatives heeded the judge's request to keep their emotions in check.

Testimony is now expected to shift to the impact of Bowers' crimes on survivors and the victims' loved ones.

"It has been nearly five years since 11 people were tak-



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A courtroom sketch of Robert Bowers, the gunman in the 2018 synagogue massacre.

en from us. They were beloved and valued family members, friends and neighbors. They cannot speak for themselves, and so their family members will speak for them," Maggie Feinstein, director of 10.27 Healing Partnership, a program helping survivors of the rampage and others who were impacted, said in a statement after the verdict.

Jeffrey Finkelstein, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, said his organization doesn't have a position on the death penalty, and that survivors and victims' relatives disagree about whether it should be applied. But he dismissed the defense claim that Bowers' action resulted from a diseased mind.

"This was an act of antisemitism, not an issue of mental illness," said Finkelstein, whose organization coordinates efforts by Jewish organizations and

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Over-the-counter birth control pill gets FDA approval

BY MATTHEW PERRONE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators on Thursday approved the nation's first over-the-counter birth control pill in a landmark decision that will soon allow American women and girls to obtain contraceptive medication as easily as they buy aspirin and eyedrops.

The Food and Drug Administration cleared once-a-day Opill to be sold without a pre-

scription, making it the first such medication to be moved out from behind the pharmacy counter. The manufacturer, Ireland-based Perrigo, won't start shipping the pill until early next year, and there will be no age restrictions on sales.

Hormone-based pills have long been the most common form of birth control in the U.S., used by tens of millions of women since the 1960s. Until now, all of them

required a prescription. Medical societies and women's health groups have pushed for wider access for decades, noting that an estimated 45% of the 6 million annual pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended. Teens and girls, women of color and those with low incomes report greater hurdles in getting prescriptions and picking them up.

The challenges can include paying for a doctor's visit, get-

ting time off from work and finding child care.

"This is really a transformation in access to contraceptive care," said Kelly Blanchard, president of Ibis Reproductive Health, a nonprofit group that supported the approval. "Hopefully this will help people overcome those barriers that exist now."

Perrigo says Opill could be an important new option for

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

An illustration provided by Perrigo depicts proposed packaging for the company's birth control medication Opill. On Thursday, U.S. officials approved it as the first over-the-counter birth control pill.



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GOOD MORNING
Donald Snyder, Minersville
Our valued subscriber