

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
January 3, 2017
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CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Council was called to order by Council President Gay Dunne in the Bellefonte Borough Municipal Building.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Council remained standing for a moment of silence. It was requested that cell phones either be placed on vibrate or turned off.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Dunne, Hombosky, Johnson, Tosti-Vasey, Beigle, Brachbill, Brown, Clark, DeCusati

Members Excused:

Officials Present: Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager
Don Holderman, Assistant Borough Manager
Mayor Tom Wilson

Staff Present:

Guests: Emma Gosalvez, Lock Haven Express; Courtney Dickman

CONSENT AGENDA

(The following items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and will be acted upon by a single motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless members of Council request specific items to be removed for separate action.)

- Minutes - Approval of December 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Brachbill made a motion to approve the December 19, 2016, meeting minutes. Mr. Beigle seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous. Ms. Hombosky said on page four under Certificates of Appropriateness, the final paragraph it says she was paid with a car and she would like the name Anna Keichline listed there.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. DeCusati seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.

REGULAR AGENDA

COMMUNICATIONS

WRITTEN

- An email from Paul DeCusati giving his resignation to Council.
- An article from Fortune.com "Where to Start a Business: Small Towns vs. Big Cities". It is an article about interesting changes regarding business start-ups and young entrepreneurs moving to small towns.
- An email from R. Fleck, a Zion resident, interested in seeing a Liberty Swing in Talleyrand Park or somewhere close by. This was turned over to the Parks & Recreation Committee to find a spot and also research funding for it.
Ms. Tosti-Vasey said something came earlier regarding an ADA playground so possibly both of these could be put together. This could be added to the 2017 goals.
Ms. Hombosky would like to invite Liz Toukonen and a representative from the Rotary to the Parks meeting.
- A letter of interest from Courtney Dickman regarding the vacant Council position.
- A letter of interest from Michael Andriaccio regarding the vacant Council position.
- A letter requesting a 5K run race for the Ethel Beaver Fund. The race would be near Governor's Park and would go in to Spring Township.
Ms. Tosti-Vasey made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. This would raise funds for foster children. It provides prom gowns, etc., for foster children. A voice vote was unanimous.
- A letter from the Centre County Board of Commissioners informing that Bellefonte did not get funded for the Liquid Fuels project for 2017. These funds are not received every year.

ORAL

- None.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Brachbill reported the Fire Prevention Task Force meeting will be the third Thursday of January and will be followed by the Fire Executive Committee meeting.

MAYOR'S REPORT

- Mayor Wilson read a Proclamation for Dr. Paul F. DeCusati extending appreciation for his dedicated service. Mr. DeCusati is leaving Council because of time commitments.

Mr. Brachbill made a motion to accept Dr. Paul F. DeCusati's resignation to take place at the sounding of the gavel at the adjournment of this meeting. Ms. Hombosky seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.

- Mayor Wilson will be attending the Bike Sharing Webinar on January 12th.

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

ZONING/PLANNING

HARB

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

- None.

BUILDING AND PROPERTY – Mr. DeCusati reported the Building & Property Committee met before tonight's Council meeting and reviewed the bids for the two parking lots that need redone, Lots A and H. The Committee recommends that the bid of the ELA Group from State College be selected to do both parking lots. They have done projects in the area. The Committee chose the bid that had the best balance of quality and cost.

Mr. DeCusati made a motion to hire the ELA Group to do both parking lots. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.

- Mr. DeCusati reported that he has spoken to several residents on Thomas Street, and they are working on options to create parking behind their properties. He requested that the Police Department be diligent in keeping parking on the rest of the streets along there for anyone that wants it. The streets are public parking. Mr. Brachbill drove on Thomas Street over the weekend and noticed that it looks like they are renting parking spaces across the street.

FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE – No report.

PARK AND RECREATION – No report.

HUMAN RESOURCES – Ms. Tosti-Vasey reported the committee has been relatively busy over the past few weeks. They have had two or three meetings since the last Council meeting. Regarding the Police Contract, it theoretically ended January 1, 2017, but they are still in negotiations, and the Police Force is working under the old contract. The next meeting is not yet scheduled.

- The Committee had a meeting regarding some personnel issues and some planning about how to do some processes within the Personnel Department.

- They discussed the Diversity Resolution, which will be discussed later.

- Before this meeting two people were interviewed for the Public Works Streets Department Water Technician Specialist 1 & 2 position. That job will be offered to one of the two applicants in the near future.

SAFETY – Mr. Brachbill thanked the Streets Committee for taking care of the streets.

WATER/SANITATION – Mr. Beigle asked if the Human Resources Committee hired an Assistant Superintendent. They made an offer, and Dave Klinefelter began the job yesterday.

- There will be an Authority meeting Tuesday, January 4.

STREETS – Mr. Johnson met with Mr. Stewart and Mr. Holderman. Mr. Stewart secured a map of the Borough, and they will identify the unordained streets, after which the Streets Committee will meet and develop a recommendation of how the streets will be dealt with.

- On South Potter Street the Nuisance Code Person needs to check because there is some brush or a tree hanging down that would brush the mirrors of trucks.

- The street light is out at the intersection of West Curtin Street and Shugart Alley.

- The railroad crossing near Subway has not been repaired and is deteriorating more. Mr. Stewart reported there was an on-site meeting with SEDA-COG near Coleville and that was brought up at the meeting. They are aware of it and plan to redo the entire intersection at some point.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION – No report.

OLD BUSINESS

- Mr. Brachbill made a motion to approve Resolution 01032017-01 with the following changes: on the second paragraph the sentence will end after discrimination; the last paragraph the word “recommits” will be changed to “reaffirms.” Mr. Beigle seconded the motion. Ms. Tosti-Vasey would like to amend the motion to separate the two into two separate votes. Ms. Hombosky seconded the amendment. A hand vote was taken. The motion to vote in two separate votes failed.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey disagrees with removing the words after discrimination. One concern raised during the earlier work session was that the list is a problem for people

of different religious creeds. Religious creed is listed as the first item. The items listed – religious creed, race or color, ancestry, handicap or disability, gender, age, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin – either come from the state or federal anti-discrimination laws/resolutions and policies. She thinks when those words are added in to the resolution, Council is telling the community that they are welcoming everyone, including people of different faiths, etc. She feels it makes a much stronger statement than ending it after the word discrimination.

Mr. DeCusati understands she is trying to have a resolution that is good for the world and for something larger than the community of Bellefonte Borough. His statement he said is for people of faith that go to churches in this town, for example St. John's Catholic Church, St. John's Lutheran, Faith Church and large churches here. They are people of faith...Christian faith, and Jewish faith as well, will have issues with some of the categories that are put in because it is widening them to what is currently accepted in federal law. He does not believe, when talking to people in our town, that there are a large number of people of faith that would have an issue with that. His comment was to not make that an issue by taking out, as Mr. Brachbill suggested, the definitions that were put in and make it a more general statement.

Mr. Brachbill added in the first sentence where it says "inclusion" that means all. And the second statement says we welcome "all" people. It shouldn't matter what the religious creed or why it has to be called out or any of those have to be called out. When you call out some and not all you have segregated the resolution. That is why he is in favor of deleting the last part of the sentence. Mr. Clark agrees.

A roll call vote was taken. If you vote Yes you are in favor of the resolution with the changes: Dunne-no; Hombosky-no; Johnson-yes; Tosti-Vasey-no; Beigle-yes; Brachbill-yes; Brown-yes; Clark-yes; DeCusati-yes. The motion passed.

- Mr. Stewart provided a list of accomplishments for 2016 for Bellefonte Borough. The Waterfront project is monumental. It was many years in the planning and the construction took a long time.

CHLOMAR is a flood plain map revision, which was critical to seeing that property developed by a private developer.

Environmental issues were addressed. It was an industrial area for many, many years. A special process had to be done to achieve environmental clearances. When developers are talked to, those issues are addressed and the properties have been cleared.

A fundraiser project was done for memorial benches. There were more requests for benches than space available.

The Railroad Freight Building in the Waterfront Area was relocated to Talleyrand Park near the Train Station. There are some small ongoing projects associated with that.

The Dunlap pedestrian walkway was installed.

The Borough received \$2.7 in grant funds from the state. The Borough expects to sell the property and break even.

The Keystone Bellefonte Borough Incubator Program was started. In the next few months there will be a business start-up center in the Borough. Mrs. Dunne would like this to be put into the ongoing projects and considerations.

Mrs. Dunne would like to look at priorities for 2017.

Mr. Stewart reported on projects that are on the burner. One is the interest in looking at the fiscal stability. Bellefonte has a small tax base and a high percentage of non-taxable properties. They want to explore ways of addressing rising costs and a very level revenue stream through taxes. Bellefonte is a core community and the townships surround it. An idea is to possibly have a joint meeting with some of the other taxing bodies such as the County Government or School Board to see if there is a way to partner and save taxpayer funds. The idea is out there about a second County/Borough Town Hall Meeting. There was discussion about doing a theme, such as economic development and inviting state legislators to be part of that meeting.

There needs to be discussion about police services, including consolidation with neighboring township, Spring Township. This is the most expensive service that the Borough provides to our citizens. It is a critical service.

Council can encourage volunteerism in the community. Volunteers are desperately needed to make the civics work.

The RACP Funding is funding for commercial economic develop projects. The same funding was received to do the Waterfront Project. There is a second round of funding available. The Borough is considering putting in a request for funds to do a Phase II that would assist a private developer in the Waterfront project and possibly other projects in the community.

Mount Nittany Health is bringing upwards of 200 jobs to the old former Weis store building. Construction is underway. Some economic growth is anticipated from that.

There was discussion about a trolley service; improved bikeways, pathways, bus service, etc., to the downtown to help take advantage of the economic development.

Back on the first page, Mr. Brachbill wonders if it is possible to group some of the things differently. If one of the goals is fiscal stability, then you could put consolidating the police services or Mount Nittany Health under that to support that. If things can be grouped, it would shorten the list. Mount Nittany is not a project for the Borough, but will help the fiscal stability when it comes in.

Mrs. Dunne feels if things with common goals are put together it would make it more clear how much Council would want to support and what is involved in supporting it.

Ms. Hombosky likes the idea of specialized work sessions where you just focus on one thing.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey could see one on fiscal stability, one on street projects, one on grants, and then maybe joint meetings such as the County/Borough meeting or Town Hall meetings. Last year there was discussion on going back to PennDOT to try to do some road redevelopment on North Thomas Street to help further ameliorate those safety issues there. Have partnerships.

More considerations: managing the flow of traffic with the large busses coming into town. It works out now since the Waterfront isn't complete.

Some of the properties, the Waterfront Property, are expected to sell in 2017. The Armory property will be marketed. There will be a combined meeting in a couple weeks with the Bellefonte Industrial Authority to market at least a portion of the property.

Two major projects in Talleyrand Park are a walkway that goes from the Train Station to the bridge. The second project is the pergola that is currently there is made out of wood and needs replaced. It will be replaced with wrought iron. The bricks on the raceway will be repositioned for ADA accessibility. There is a mud sill project across Spring Creek to help reduce erosion in that area.

The County will be installing a raised crosswalk and a rain garden near the Courthouse Annex. The Borough would like to get a price on a similar project on the downhill side of High Street near the Courthouse. Mrs. Dunne suggested the Shade Tree Commission could become involved in the project. The first phase is getting the price and then exploring resources.

At the Musser Lane property, the Borough has been looking at a sustainability project. There is a grant round project coming up. There are some studies being done. The Borough would like to continue looking at options to develop the property and make it more of a recycling center for the residents.

There are tax credit programs at the state level for volunteer firefighters. The Borough would like to establish criteria locally to see who is eligible. They will work with the Fire Executive Committee. It will be a tool in the toolbox for attracting and retaining volunteer firefighters.

They are working on an improved sign theme. There are many, many signs in the Borough, and they are trying to have a common theme that looks nice and is attractive. It has been narrowed down to a logo that looks like the Big Spring. It will be black and white. It will be on the perimeter of the signs. You will see them around Talleyrand Park, the Big Spring, and the Waterfront walkway areas to start with. That project will be completed soon.

There was discussion about marketing the Borough. There are non-profits exploring how to better market the Borough.

The Borough website has been updated and made more ADA usable. There have been some improvements that make it easier to use.

One of the Junior Council members from the school was asked to do a Social Media Policy.

For quite a long time the Borough has been trying to get funding to see sprinklers installed in the large, old historic mixed-use buildings. A lot of progress has been made over the years, but there are still several large buildings that do not have sprinkler systems installed. The Borough is moving towards the funding to make that possible.

Some ongoing projects include looking at all the unordained, unopened streets in the Borough. There are quite a few. They are mostly what would have been an alley or lane. After an inventory is made, the Borough will decide which ones to keep and which ones they may never need, and what the best way to disperse them is.

The issue of feral cats comes up from time to time. In December there was an article about how to address this issue. A lot of it is catch, fix and release back into the community. It is done by volunteers.

The Innovation District is tied to creating an atmosphere that is attractive to millennials, to business start-up folks, entrepreneurial-type folks, etc.

The parking realignment on South Thomas Street to improve efficiency is being examined.

The Borough opened the proposals for redesigning the Howard Street parking lot and the West High Street parking lot.

Storm water issues are an issue. The Borough is waiting for a report from the Storm water engineer to see what can be done better.

The current code service contractor agreement and services is set to expire June 30, 2017. The Borough needs to explore the options, including staying with the current service, putting out RFPs, or hiring somebody in-house.

Governor's Park pool has lived past its expected life. It is now owned by an Authority but the Borough has a hand in what they want to see.

Union Cemetery is not owned by the Borough. It is owned by a cemetery association made up of a small number of people who maintain it. There is concern that those volunteers will retire, and there will no longer be an association. Council needs to examine how to attract and retain volunteers.

There are other additional grants to apply for. There is the safety light on Bishop Street near the fire station, which will help the fire truck get out and back into the fire house. Grant funds will be applied for to do the pedestrian walkway that will go on the side of the railroad bridge, which will complete the walkway to the new part of Talleyrand Park. Also, the intent is there to apply for funds to help with the HARB administration.

Ms. Hombosky asked if there could be a fundraiser done for the new brick walkway in Talleyrand Park to help alleviate funding problems for the bridge.

Mayor Wilson said part of the problem with the cemetery association is that a lot of people don't know that it doesn't belong to the Borough and that there is a cemetery association that needs volunteers. He wondered if you could reach out to some clubs and organizations such as the Legion or Vets for help. He will reach out to the Commander of the Legion and see if there is an interest in sending representatives or volunteers to talk to the three remaining cemetery association people.

Mayor Wilson asked how far things are with the common theme sign. Ms. Hombosky feels it is still in discussion. There is agreement on the Big Spring logo but not on the sign type. Ms. Hombosky said there are a lot of stakeholders in this decision. Mr. Wilson feels the logo looks like a house with a swimming pool in front of it. If fishing is not going to be allowed on the walkway, then signs need to be installed.

Mrs. Dunne reported some work sessions will be scheduled based on themes. Council members should send suggestions about work sessions by email.

- Mr. Johnson asked if Council is still considering combining committees to take less time. Mrs. Dunne reported that hasn't been considered further at this time. Mr. Stewart said if there is interest, something can be scheduled. Ms. Hombosky suggested that individual committees develop their own list of objectives and priorities for the next year.

NEW BUSINESS

- Termination Notice, Agreement for Code Administration Services – sent by Mr. Stewart to Centre Region COG about the contract. Mrs. Dunne referred this to the Safety Committee for review and recommendation at the first meeting in February. Mr.

Beigle said there was a meeting some time ago with them, and he never heard anything afterward about whether they addressed any of the issues that were presented to them. Ms. Tosti-Vasey talked to a business that is moving out of town because of the codes. Mr. Brachbill suggested doing the RFP at this point may be a good idea.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to put out a request for proposal for Code Enforcement Services for Bellefonte Borough. Mr. Brachbill seconded the motion. The Safety Committee can review the RFPs when they come in. The question was raised as to whether modifications on the time frame of inspections are made after the Safety Committee reviews it. Mr. Stewart said anytime the Safety Committee wants to make recommendations, the word needs to go out to the Centre Region. They wanted to get through two cycles before they went to three years. Mr. DeCusati said you typically have your internal meeting first and then issue an RFP so that if in your analysis you are happy with the service and maybe put a few tweaks in there, you may be better off having a discussion with the supplier and telling them you would renew the contract if they would make a couple changes. With an RFP, don't always assume prices go down. Sometimes the inflation of those three years makes all the prices go up. The Construction, Building Code Inspection and Rental Inspection Fees are established by Centre Region Code and Bellefonte adopted them. Mrs. Dunne suggested the Safety Committee meet with Mr. Stewart and/or Mr. Holderman and see if they would still like to issue the RFP. Mr. Brachbill removed his second to the motion. Mr. Johnson removed his motion. Ms. Tosti-Vasey made a motion to table the motion. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.

A Safety Committee meeting will be held one-half hour before the work session before the Council meeting of January 16, 2017.

- Mr. Johnson made a motion to submit for the RACP funds. Ms. Tosti-Vasey seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.

- Process for Filling Council Seat Vacancy – Council has thirty days to fill the vacant Council Seat left by Mr. DeCusati's resignation. There are four letters of interest for the Council vacancy. Mrs. Dunne would like the vacancy advertised on the Borough website with the deadline to receive applications January 12, 2017. The term of service is filling out Dr. DeCusati's term, which goes through 2017. There will be interviews at the Council meeting of January 16, and Council will vote on the appointment at that meeting.

- A letter of support for the CLG Grant – The grant application requires support from the Council president for the Certified Local Government Grant. The Borough is applying for \$12,500.00 and a \$12,500.00 match is required. Mr. Holderman said he is able to use the majority of it for in-kind for the salary of the current Keystone Coordinator. There is a possibility that there may need to be some cash match to meet the grant application. It could be up to \$3,000.00, but it wouldn't be needed until 2018.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey made a motion that Council supports the application for the Certified Local Government Grant from PHMC. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.

- The joint IDA/Council meeting will be held Wednesday, January 11, at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Holderman said one of the main topics will be the RFP for marketing the property.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- None.

ADJOURNMENT

- With no other business to come before Council, Mr. Beigle made a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting of January 3, 2017, at 9:10 p.m. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Following adjournment Council went into Executive Session to discuss Personnel Matters.