

**BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 20, 2020 - 7:30 p.m.**  
**236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823**  
[www.bellefonte.net](http://www.bellefonte.net)

**7:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation Committee**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The April 20, 2020, virtual meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Council was called to order by Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey at 7:30 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence for the COVID-19 pandemic front line workers, all of the victims of COVID-19, and the family from Centre County who lost a loved one.

**ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT (via Zoom):**

Mr. Randall Brachbill  
Ms. Debbie Cleeton  
Mr. Jon Eaton  
Ms. Melissa Hombosky (late arrival)  
Mr. Michael Prendergast  
Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey  
Ms. Gina Thompson  
Mayor Tom Wilson (late arrival)  
Ms. Anne Walker  
Mr. Douglas Johnson

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Mr. Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager  
Mr. Donald Holderman, Ass't Borough Manager  
Sean Weaver, Chief of Police

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Eaton moved to approve April 6, 2020 meeting minutes.**  
**Cleeton seconded the motion.**  
**Motion carried.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

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

**Prendergast moved to approve the Consent Agenda.  
Johnson seconded the motion.**

Tosti-Vasey removed the budget v. actual along with the summary.

**Motion carried.**

*Gina Thompson joined the meeting at this juncture.*

When Tosti-Vasey reviewed the summary and the budget v. actual reports, two expenses for the bulk water budget were more than budgeted. One was a payment to Northwest Bank, and the other was a Conditional Grant Loan for the IDA. There is no supporting income for these expenses. Holderman will check on this and get back to Council.

The budget information was voted on conditionally.

**Johnson moved to accept the budget information with clarification from the  
Finance Director.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

**NO PUBLIC COMMENT**

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**May 2, 2020 Watershed Clean-Up Day Canceled.**

Residents are encouraged to do what they can for watershed clean up, on their own, practicing social distancing.

**June 6, 2020 Children's Fair Canceled.**

**Clearwater Conservancy** - requested a motion to recognize May 2-9 as watershed clean up week.

**Eaton moved to recognize May 2-9, 2020, as Watershed Clean-Up Week.  
Johnson seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

**The Cruise is canceled for 2020**

This cancellation was decided over the weekend. It was also on the news. They may reschedule a smaller event in September 2020.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Wilson reported that courtesy parking remains in effect, and police are only checking for hydrant and intersection violations. There is a 2-hour courtesy parking with alternate street parking enforcement. He asked Council to consider a motion for non-enforcement during the stay-at-home order for the alternate street parking. It generally is in the downtown area, per Stewart. The signs can be covered up.

**Brachbill moved to suspend the enforcement of the alternate parking areas, covering the signs.**

**Cleeton seconded the motion.**

**Motion carried.**

The Cruise has been canceled. They may try to have it the last weekend in September with Milesburg Cruise.

He thanked Holo Vision regarding the presentation for the front-line workers at the park. Wilson also thanked Stewart for helping to set the video up. Persons watched from their vehicles. There was some news press on Channel 10.

## **Joanne Tosti-Vasey, Council President Report**

Restrictions remain in place relative to the stay at home order, and the Borough offices are closed to public entry. The Borough office's phone number is 355-1501. Residents can email the staff at [boro@belefonte.pa.gov](mailto:boro@belefonte.pa.gov)., mail correspondence to 236 W. Lamb Street, or use the drop box.

An email was received from Carol King regarding a Census outreach promotion. Food distribution was discussed. The Census Bureau provided a flyer for daily food deliveries to encourage responses to the Census. Tosti-Vasey requested a motion to deliver the flyers with the food distributions. The Census was discussed relative to funding of public services. Currently, only 29% of Centre County has responded.

**Prendergast moved to approve the flyer distribution.**

**Thompson seconded the motion.**

The current Borough response rate was 37% two weeks ago, per Tosti-Vasey. Wilson reported that all the people he spoke with had completed their Census. He opined that he thought the Borough was doing pretty well, given the current state of emergency.

The flyer will be sent with the assistance of DBI to the restaurants for takeout and food distribution outlets.

**Motion carried.**

Tosti-Vasey stated that that the Statement of Financial Interest deadline has been extended to July 15, 2020.

Thompson offered that the Borough has experienced some confusion about entities in the Borough and wanted to clarify the differences between Downtown Bellefonte, Inc., HARB, and Bellefonte Borough. Thompson is the Main Street manager for DBI. She explained that DBI is a Main Street program.

The former HARB director was also part of DBI. There may have been some confusion relative to this. Any historical district issues need to come to the Borough office and not DBI, per Tosti-Vasey.

### **Randy Brachbill, Safety Committee Update**

Fire Executive Meeting for April 23, 2020, is canceled. The decision for a May meeting will be delayed until sometime in May.

### **Gina Thompson, Finance Committee Update**

On April 16, 2020, a finance meeting was held. The budget was reviewed relative to the COVID crisis. For the most part, the budget looks good and has not had a big impact from the emergency. Some of the taxes are starting to come in. If the emergency declaration and stay-at-home orders continue for an extended period, the budget will need to be reevaluated. Major projects have been suspended. Stewart confirmed this.

### **Melissa Hombosky, Parks and Recreation Committee**

A meeting was held before tonight's Council meeting relative to Good Sports and their request to rent out Governor's Park for tournaments. A \$175.00 per day fee plus a \$100.00 refundable deposit for rentals was decided. The current pavilion rental price would stand, and a certificate of insurance would need to be provided. This fee will be added to the fee schedule and approved at a future Council meeting.

### **Joanne Tosti-Vasey, Personnel Committee**

The WWTP operator position was open. Three applications were received per Stewart. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom. This position is essential, and the interviews will move forward, per Tosti-Vasey. The plant is short-staffed, and the plant is a 24-hour operation.

On Wednesday, from 2:30 to 5:30, the PSU Sustainability Institute is doing a presentation, including the Bellefonte Armory project for police services, from 5-5:30 p.m. Public participation was discussed relative to discouraging Zoom bombing. Holderman stated that the Zoom code and password was changed. He will forward the message re the presentation to interested persons.

## **Shawn Weaver, Chief of Police**

Weaver reported on operations over the past few weeks. From April 1, 2020, 1 assault, 1 child abuse, 3 911 no voice calls, 1 cruelty to animals, 6 disorderly, 5 domestic violence, 3 DUI, 1 fraud, 3 harassment, 1 missing persons, 1 mental health crisis call, 3 suspicious persons, 18 vehicle stops, 6 thefts from vehicles, 2 overdoses, 6 vehicle crashes, 1 weapons violation, 3 ordinance violations, and 1 unsecured property on a foot patrol.

Tosti-Vasey inquired about persons being isolated, creating more incidences of child abuse and domestic violence. Weaver has not seen an increase since the COVID-19 crisis started. An increase is something that may be seen later on.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Update on Strategic Management Plan**

A consultant was hired with the grant funding for the plan. The progress is ongoing. The consultant will be reaching out to elected officials, staff, and department heads shortly. There is survey information to be completed.

### **Brush and Grass**

The collection on April 15, 2020, went well. The brush collection will continue every Wednesday through May 2020, just as planned. Stewart stated that the Borough is only able to take what is in the waste container provided by the Borough. Residents need to contact the Borough to pay the \$10 one-time fee for the season. A container needs to be purchased through the Borough. The container is \$60.00. The fees can be added to the resident's utility bill.

The Musser Lane compost facility is now open during the week from Monday thru Thursday, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. No key is needed. Only brush and grass clippings can be taken, and no humanmade materials can be dropped off.

### **Good Sports Letter**

Fees were discussed prior to the meeting. A resolution to add fees for the use of the ballfield to our list of annual fees will be drafted for the next Council meeting. The motion on the request for the use of the ballfield by Good Sports is handled under old business.

### **Park Playground Equipment is Closed**

All equipment is closed for the time being.

### **Talleyrand Phase II Pre-Bid Meeting**

Holderman attended the meeting last Wednesday. Seven contractors participated in the mandatory meeting and purchased the drawings. The bids are due on May 4, 2020, before the

next Council meeting. Bids will be opened via Zoom at 3 p.m. and reported to Council in the evening.

### **Email CDBG**

Funds are being distributed for COVID 19. The Borough may get \$70,000. HUD is still working on the regulations for the use of the funding. Holderman stated that residents in the LMI category might get help for their utility bills. He does not have a time frame for receipt.

### **Email 2020 Funding Allocation**

The Borough received \$ 115,190.00 as our portion of the 2020 CDBG grant allocation.

### **DEP 902 Grant Update**

Holderman stated that the only remaining project on the funding was the security gate at Musser Lane with cameras. \$84,000 remains for those projects. 90% will come back to the Borough on those projects.

The railroad easement contract for the cantilever pedestrian walkway will be signed in the next few days. The solicitor reviewed it, and it is acceptable. This easement contract needs to be approved before the funding is received.

### **Good Sports**

**Prendergast moved to remove the Good Sports issue from the table.  
Cleeton seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

**Hombosky moved to request that the fee schedule be changed  
And allow Good Sports to move forward with their tournament for a \$175.00  
a day fee plus \$100.00 refundable deposit, certificate of insurance, with  
regular pavilion fees of \$45 per day, which includes electricity.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.**

The tournament is currently scheduled for July 24, 26, and 26, 2020, at the ball field. Brachbill inquired if the motion should be amended to include social distancing guidelines.

**Brachbill moved to add guidelines for social distancing as required  
By the COVID 19 recommendations.  
Thompson seconded the motion.**

Thompson inquired if COVID guidelines should be kept separate for future reassessment. Prendergast stated that if the lockdown is still occurring in July, the tournament would be canceled. Brachbill's inquiry concerned what would constitute a group for social distancing purposes. The motion was specific to Good Sports only, per Tosti-Vasey.

Johnson stated that the Central PA Arts Festival, Heritage Days, Boalsburg Memorial Day, and other events are already canceled. He offered that he could not imagine the tournament continuing. He is not in favor of approval at this time. Wilson interjected about the financial impacts of the other events that were canceled. If they did not cancel the events at this juncture, funds for ads would need to have been expended. The early cancellation was more due to funding rather than the social distancing and COVID 19 regulations. Johnson stated that he was not comfortable approving this event for July 2020.

Eaton inquired if the Good Sports was a for-profit event. Tosti-Vasey confirmed that they are for profit. The Good Sports decision process would be different from a public entity putting on an event, i.e., the Arts Festival. He was concerned that the tournament might take some risks as a for-profit event that a public entity would not take on; he wanted the Borough to maintain separation from that if those risks occur.

Thompson stated that it is hard to make a call now and would instead conditionally approve the event and assess closer to the date. With that Council would have the authority to make the assessment, if Good Sports fails to reevaluate and cancel the event. Hombosky stated that currently the playgrounds are closed, and if the playgrounds are closed in July, the tournament would be a moot point, and the Borough would decide when the ballfields are reopened.

An amendment was requested based on social distancing and reopening of all playground and recreational areas of the parks. If the playgrounds are still closed, then the ballfields will also be closed, and the event could not be held. Stewart stated that a letter could be provided in that Council reserves the right to cancel the event if COVID-19 regulations are still in place relative to the playgrounds and parks. The Borough has the right to govern what goes on at the parks per Brachbill, and if it is not realistic and according to the guidelines, the Borough can let them know that the tournament will not be permitted.

**Motion carried on the amended motion, with one nay (Johnson).**

Johnson said he understood that the official fee schedule was included in the motion just passed. He said he did not approve of the tournament but was in favor of the fee schedule. Tosti-Vasey noted that the official approval of the fees would be next Council meeting. This motion only addressed the Good Sports Tournament request.

**Motion carried on the main motion with the conditions and the amendment, with two nays (Tosti-Vasey and Johnson).**

Johnson inquired if someone became ill with an approved event if the Borough would be liable in any way. Stewart stated that there would be some liability, and the Certificate of Insurance would most likely cover \$1 million. He discussed the cancellation of the Easter Egg event. The tournament is not a Borough event, per Johnson. The option to cancel is still there if things do not improve, per Prendergast. Eaton offered that a firm idea would need to be presented when cancellations are made if necessary. Prendergast stated that the basis would be medical evidence of the virus. Stewart noted that the Borough has been following the PA Department of Health

guidelines from day 1. Eaton explained that in the Borough canceling the event, if needed, makes the financial burden fall on the group holding the event.

Stewart stated that the June 2020 Borough Association conference is canceled. The resolutions are being taken up at the October 2020 conference in Gettysburg.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Memo from County Commissioners, Resolution 04202020-01 regarding real estate taxes.**

The County and the Borough property taxes are on the same bill, so the resolution needed to be approved by Council. Eaton commended this step for financial relief. Other Council members concurred.

**Johnson moved to approve the resolution maintaining the April 30 deadline for the discount and moves the face value of the property taxes from June 30 to September 30, 2020, and the 10% penalty from July 1 to October 1, 2020  
Eaton seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

### **Community-Wide Yard Sale May 15-16, 2020 and the Riff Raff Pick Up May 22, 2020**

Consideration was given to postponing these events until the Fall.

**Johnson moved to approve postponing the yard sale, and riff-raff pick up.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

### **Union Cemetery Grass Cutting**

Rockview inmates normally cut the grass. The Borough does not own the cemetery, and the association that owns it is struggling. The inmates are not permitted to work outside the prison at present, so Borough employees will cut the grass when they can. The crews are doing the best that they can to get the mowing done. The parks crew has been used the past few weeks, per Holderman, and they are doing a great job. Brachbill volunteered to do some mowing as well.

Bill Hughes is retiring from Penn State, and his father oversaw the cemetery in the past. Every spring, he coordinates with the Boy Scouts to do clean up, but that will not be done this year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### **Waterfront Development Project**

Stewart stated that the developers of the waterfront approached the Borough regarding whether or not the Borough would want to continue allowing the public to cross the property, including the brick walkway. There is liability involved with this. They did not want to fence off the property and wanted to allow the public to use the property. Only construction would be fenced



off, and the rest of the green area would be available for special events and public crossing. Stewart checked with the insurance company, and they can extend the liability of the general policy to the property at no cost. A simple agreement would be drawn up, and they asked that the Borough cut the grass in consideration of the deal. If the Council approves this agreement to be worked out, the solicitor could draft the agreement. A motion was requested. Follow up will be done with Tosti-Vasey and Walker.

**Brachbill moved to approve moving forward with a draft agreement to allow the public on the property.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.**

Brachbill inquired about timelines for construction. With everything going on, Stewart stated that it would be put off a little bit. They were previously scheduled to start this summer.

**Motion carried.**

### **NIMS Training**

National Incident Management System training is a free online class for elected officials and government officials. Everyone in local government needs to understand the communication process. The training is free of charge and helps persons understand the language used in the event of an emergency. A certificate can be printed online when the course is completed. NIMS 402 is designed for government officials. Stewart can provide the links to Council members.

Tosti-Vasey attended a webinar that discussed NIMS in light of the coronavirus emergency declaration. The emergency funds associated with COVID-19 will be limited if NIMS training is not received.

Brachbill offered that this current emergency is something to remember and use as an example for the future and any emergencies that could arise.

### **Hazardous Waste Collection Postponed**

Stewart stated that the Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority hazardous waste collection has been postponed to November 20-21, 2020.

Stewart stated that the Council would be doing into Executive Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business coming before Council,

**Brachbill moved to adjourn the Council meeting.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.