

**BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 4, 2020 - 7:30 p.m.**  
**236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823**  
[www.bellefonte.net](http://www.bellefonte.net)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The May 4, 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 emergency responders, grocery employees, other essential workers, and all persons who have lost their jobs due to the current pandemic emergency.

**ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT (via Zoom):**

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

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Mr. Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager  
Mr. Donald Holderman, Ass't Borough Manager

Guests: Chris Morelli, Loch Haven Express

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Brachbill moved to approve April 20, 2020 meeting minutes, as revised.**  
**Eaton seconded the motion.**  
**Motion carried.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Nothing presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Nothing presented

**COMMUNICATIONS:  
WRITTEN:**

**Centre County Covid-19 Community Response Rent Moratorium Petition**

The petition was addressed to the Borough and all municipalities requesting a moratorium on rent, mortgage, and utility payments due to the pandemic crisis. They are asking for the passing of a resolution calling upon the Pennsylvania General Assembly to call a moratorium until the emergency ends.

**Brachbill moved to approve providing a resolution in support of the rent moratorium.  
Walker seconded the motion.**

Tosti-Vasey stated that the request for a resolution relates to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's order for a moratorium on evictions through April 30, 2020. Additionally, Tosti-Vasey asked if this group is asking Bellefonte Borough to 1) call for a rent freeze (no rental increases at this time), 2) a cancellation of all rents and mortgage payments during the COVID-19 emergency for either everyone or for those making less than an unknown amount of income during this emergency period, 3) a rent forgiveness program that people apply for (NY state's proposal), OR 4) are they just asking us to have the General Assembly address this issue via a resolution.

Utility payments are also included in this petition request, per Stewart. The Borough has bills and without income, it would be in serious trouble. He also stated that right from the beginning, the Borough agreed not to shut off utilities due to nonpayment and work with the residents. To date, there have only been a few customers that have needed help.

In order to provide water and the wastewater processing, the system still must operate, and funding needs to be received.

Tosti-Vasey stated that later in the meeting, there will be a discussion regarding a grant that may assist with this issue.

Brachbill stated that the universal program is without requiring proof of job loss due to Covid-19. He agreed that the Borough needs to keep the utilities going. He would like to see the proposal tweaked for Bellefonte. More detail is needed for discussion.

**Brachbill moved to table this issue.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

**Email Request re: Flag Day Ceremony**

The Elks Club is unsure about having the Flag Day Ceremony. They are requesting a backup plan to have C-Net air archived videos. They need a municipal sponsor and they asked Bellefonte to be the sponsor. They would like a sponsor for one-quarter of the cost of the Flag

Day Ceremony that would air on C-Net on June 14, 2020. This request is only if Centre County is still in the “yellow” phase of reopening.

**Prendergast moved to approve sponsoring a quarter cost of the C-Net filming.  
Hombosky seconded the motion.**

The cost is based on a formula based on all of the programs aired in accordance with the individual municipal C-Net budgets, per Stewart.

**Motion carried.**

### **Reopening Centre County - PowerPoint Commissioners’ Office**

Tosti-Vasey summarized the PowerPoint presentation. The presentation was from the Centre County Planning Office. On May 1, 2020 golf courses, marinas, guided fishing, and private campgrounds opened up. On April 22, Governor Tom Wolf announced that Centre County would move into the yellow zone on May 8. Construction started on May 4, 2020.

Restaurants and bars are carry-out or delivery only. Masks are still required. The yellow phase requires continued teleworking, and safety orders need to be followed with businesses that can be opened. Social distancing is required. Childcare can be opened. Congregate and prison restrictions are in place and schools are closed. Large gatherings of less than 25 persons are permitted. Gyms and spas and entertainment are still closed.

Centre County qualified for the yellow phase as the county has testing available. Because of Penn State, the contact tracing infrastructure is available and high-risk settings have been identified.

Cases have leveled and safeguards have been set up for high-risk settings. Contact tracing was discussed briefly, in that the infected or contacted person would be questioned and put under quarantine for two weeks. Mt. Nittany Medical Center and Geisinger have the protocol.

Centre County’s health can be helped by residents washing hands for at least 20 seconds often, use of hand sanitizer, cough into sleeve or elbow, do not shake hands, regularly clean surface areas, and social distancing. When sick, stay home and do not gather in groups of more than 25 persons, including business meetings. If numbers start to go back up, Gov. Wolf will put the County back in the red zone.

Testing and social distancing were discussed briefly.

### **Centre Region Code – Reopening Inspections**

Centre Region Code will reopen inspections of construction sites. New building inspections will start the week of May 4 and next week they will start existing/rental properties.

## **Centre County Recycling and Refuse – Curbside to resume April 27**

Curbside pickup resumed on April 27, 2020.

## **Letter Request – Governor's Park Ball Field**

This is a request to use the ball field to showcase some of the high school athletes for college prospects. They are asking to use the field a few nights during the week and possibly weekends. The school district has approved this since school is not in session. They will maintain and abide by the emergency restrictions of no more than 25 persons.

The other request to use the field was still pending, per Tosti-Vasey. She offered that a new motion should be done for both of the groups to use the field.

Bellefonte School District cleared both groups to use the field.

**Johnson moved to approve the events to be held at the ballfield, conditioned upon two groups need to communicate with each other this week and come up with an agreement for dates and times for each group; they will provide certificates of insurance and pay the appropriate fees for the days using the field and follow the Covid-19 guidelines with the understanding that the Borough may cancel the events if needed due to the pandemic emergency.**

**Prendergast seconded the motion.**

The nonprofit exemption is only for Bellefonte based nonprofits, per Tosti-Vasey.

Eaton stated that as long as they can work out a schedule, he was okay with the use of the fields. For clarification purposes, Junior Legion Baseball asked to use the park in March, per Hombosky. This was from the March 2, 2020 meeting.

The team that is playing would be responsible for grooming the field. There are times that the Borough mows it but during the school year, the school district maintains it. Johnson inquired if the Borough is responsible to maintain the field now that the school team is not playing, and school is cancelled due to Covid-19 emergency restrictions.

If the school is not using the field, Holderman stated that they are allowing the other venues to use the field and, in that case, they would have to groom the field. Stewart stated that the regular full-time staff is cutting grass, but he is not sure if they are doing the ball field. They are mowing the park in general.

Brachbill had concerns about baseball being held so soon in the Yellow Zone and he did not know how distancing would be practiced on a ballfield. The playground equipment is closed for the same reason. If the playground equipment is closed it should include the ball fields. The

Borough is not prepared to prep the equipment even after May 8. Johnson stated that the field may not be playable possibly using Borough staff to groom the field.

**Prendergast called the question.**

In Yellow Zone, no organized sports are allowed, per Johnson.

**Motion failed unanimously.**

Good Sports was approved at an earlier meeting for July with a condition to cancel by the Borough if necessary.

Johnson would like the policy for field maintenance reviewed concerning Governor's Park. Stewart will review it and provide a copy to Council members. Johnson wanted to make sure that the park was covered as far as maintenance now that the school is not in session due to Covid-19.

**Email – Food Truck Competition**

An email was received regarding concerns about the food trucks in the Borough. They asked if the Borough would suspend any ordinance that allows the trucks on public streets. Some are on private property, but the request is for Talleyrand and other places.

**Brachbill moved to suspend the ordinance that allowed food trucks on public roads during Covid-19.**

**Thompson seconded the motion.**

Wilson offered that the request is not to have the trucks on the Borough streets or Borough properties, i.e. parks. He is not requesting that they are suspended for private property. He does not want to see the trucks banned from the Borough.

Prendergast stated that the ordinance states that the trucks may not park within 150 feet of another brick and mortar restaurant. There were some violations over the weekend, per Stewart. There is no local permit required by the Borough; only state currently permits this type of business. Enforcement was discussed. Tosti-Vasey stated that if they are parking on the High Street bridge, they are more than 150 feet from the restaurants.

Hombosky stated that the owners of Brazilian Munchies live in her ward. She will not support denying the food trucks use of public streets, within the ordinance. The letter pointed out that some of the persons do not pay local taxes and some do, per Hombosky. All food trucks that support DBI are Bellefonte businesses. Residents that she spoke with are pro-trucks and when she spoke with persons, they often applauded Bellefonte for allowing the food trucks in the town. She feels that the ordinance stands on itself. She would rather institute a permit system for trucks outside of the Bellefonte Borough.

Stewart stated that the choice would be to suspend it or to amend the ordinance. Wilson stated that he is looking for a solution that would make both the trucks and the Borough storefront

restaurants happy. Measurement can be taken down to the park to see how it lines up with the ordinance, per Stewart. Johnson does not want to see regulations put into place that are otherwise addressed in the ordinance.

Eaton inquired about tax revenue from food trucks in the Borough versus brick and mortar restaurants. He would like to stay with the current ordinance as changing it will not change the tax revenue and only shifts rules a little bit too due to the Covid-19 situation, which is temporary.

Brachbill understood the concern for the brick and mortar restaurants and wished to continue to support them. He offered that the Borough owes it to the restaurants downtown who have remained serving the residents of Bellefonte and found ways to stay open during the emergency. Otherwise, the restaurant would have closed and once they close you may not get that business back. He thinks it would be best to maintain the ordinance and promote the downtown restaurants and encourage patronizing them.

**Prendergast called the motion.**

**No opposition to calling the question.**

**Motion failed unanimously.**

### **Press Release from DOT**

The Route 26/80/99 interchange press release was released by PennDOT. The next large phase of this project will begin soon. The low bidder is lined up. That work will be starting up in June 2020. There may be a lot of congestion, but the project is moving forward and will be beneficial to Bellefonte.

### **Memo re: Brush and Grass Container Fee**

There is a \$10.00 fee for brush collection per container for the season. Stewart stated that the fee is new for 2020. If the container is out and is not picked up it is probably due to nonpayment of that \$10 fee. Residents can call the Borough offices and sign them up for the pick-up service. It is on Wednesday through the season. This is an annual fee. There is also a one-time fee of \$60 to purchase the brush container. Both can be put on the utility bill.

Johnson stated that he appreciated the Borough staff accommodating persons who forgot to pay the fee. He thanked the crews and Borough staff.

Cleeton inquired about bundled brush. Stewart stated that materials should be kept in the bin. The compost facility can be used for any large amount of brush. The facility is open during the day Monday through Saturday when crews are staffing the facility. Persons are welcome to go to the facility with their brush.

Johnson stated one staff crewmember collected about 800 containers up, all by himself. That is quite a workload for one person to handle. He thanked him for that.

### **Letter Request: Roll On Raiders Banner**

This banner normally goes up in the fall.

**Eaton moved to approve the banner along South Allegheny Street  
Conditioned upon providing specific dates for the PennDOT application.**

Fees have not been charged for some time and can continue to be waived, per Stewart.

**Johnson seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

### **Email Request re: Temporary Parking for curbside pick-up at Governor's Pub**

This was a request from Governor's Pub to add two temporary parking spaces on High Street for curbside pick-up. Johnson asked that the police monitor this. The spaces would be a pull in pull out type of space.

**Johnson moved to approve the request for two temporary parking  
spaces on High Street with police monitoring the spaces.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.**

Cleeton offered that there is two-hour complimentary parking at present. There are five parking spaces in front of the pub. She stated that it appeared that the area is pretty wide open. The spaces would be assigned for curbside pick-up only and not parking. Thompson stated that other businesses have requested this as well. She thinks the request is reasonable.

Stewart gave State Burger administrative approval for their curbside pick-up space. He offered that perhaps the signs should be available to all of the restaurants. Thompson will get the word out through DBI.

**Brachbill moved to amend the initial motion to approve the  
request for two temporary parking spaces for curbside  
pick-up on High Street for Governor's Pub with police  
monitoring the spaces, adding that this approval also be  
automatically be granted to other restaurants in Bellefonte  
if they request them during the COVID-19 emergency regulations  
regarding restaurant openings and curbside-only services.  
Prendergast seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

### **CDBG Information Packet**

This was an information packet from CDBG. Holderman discussed the information in the packet and stated that the packet provided the 2020 allocation. It speaks about the Covid-19 funding and he will find out some more today about the timeline. The funding may come in July 2020. The funding can be used for rent and utility payments. Phase 2 is still under consideration by the Federal government to provide funding for municipalities due to the pandemic.

The Bellefonte Borough has a water project that the Borough could apply for a competitive grant from DCED. That may be a good opportunity to do some projects that have not been able to be done thus far.

Tosti-Vasey added that usually CDBG funds are limited to the two Census districts, but the special Covid-19 funding would be open for up to three months' of rent, utilities, and shelter for all persons struggling at this point.

### **Letter from Centre County Office of Emergency Services**

On May 28, 2020, a virtual meeting will be held. Tosti-Vasey will send the letter to all so that they can participate in the meeting.

### **MAYOR:**

#### **Operating with 2-Hour Courtesy Parking: Suspension of Alternate Street Parking Program**

Wilson reminded residents about the 2-hour courtesy parking and the suspended alternate street parking program.

#### **Cloth Masks made and donated by Police Officer's Mother – Thank you**

Wilson thanked Bill Witmer's mother for making 70 masks for staff and police department.

The Pennsylvania State Mayor's Association meeting was held on Saturday. They canceled the convention in July and are exploring having a modified version done via Zoom.

Johnson offered that the Tor Michael's Show is on the air from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. Wilson calls in and reports frequently on the Borough and alerts residents of events. He thanked Wilson for participating in that show.

### **COUNCIL PRESIDENT:**

#### **Memo re: COVID-19 issues from state agencies April 23, 2020**

Tosti-Vasey Chairs the Centre County Advisory Council for Human Relations. She attends a monthly meeting which is organized by the Human Relations Committee, Attorney General, and

State Police. She attended a meeting on April 23, 2020. They discussed that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has postponed Real ID to October 1, 2021. PennDOT is giving extensions on driver license renewals during the pandemic. PennDOT.gov has more information. The Attorney General's office has released several fact sheets regarding crimes during the pandemic including hate crimes, and price gouging. Both the federal and the state CARES packages and unemployment information was also provided to the council.

The Human Relations Committee stated that there has been increased discrimination in housing and employment. Contact PA HRC office if you experience any of the above.

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

#### **Lobby Furniture Donation – Caparella Furniture**

Johnson ascertained some pieces of furniture donated for the lobby of the Borough building. Stewart commended Johnson on being able to get some nice pieces. He thanked Johnson for his part in getting the furniture. Johnson thanked the Caparella and employees. They support the Borough immensely and it was kind of them to make the donation. He would like to write a letter thanking them for their donation to the Borough and perhaps place a sign in the lobby.

**Johnson moved to write a thank you letter to the Caparellas and also, place a recognition sign in the lobby thanking them for the furniture.  
Brachbill seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **Sustainability Presentations – Reuse of Armory Stable Building – Virtually on April 22, 2020**

Stewart stated that the presentations were received in PowerPoint today and he asked Council to review them. The groups were part of the Sustainability Class at Penn State. They were nicely done. Some of the ideas may be incorporated into the project. Tosti-Vasey stated that the presentations were excellent. The costs for each design were not able to be provided.

#### **Resolution No. 05042020-01 Revised Fee Schedule – Governor's Park Ball Field**

**Johnson moved to approve Resolution 0504020-01.  
Walker seconded the motion.  
Motion carried.**

#### **Annual Bellefonte Cruise June 19, 2020, Cancelled**

### **Community Yard Sale and Bulk Pick Up (riff-raff) – postponed**

These events usually occur in mid-May. These events have not been rescheduled yet. The reason for the decision to postpone these events is due to a reduced refuse crew with only two persons on per week for the entire operation. All other departments are also cut during the pandemic. This was done to prevent illness spreading throughout the entire crew and staff. There are also persons concerned that due to the lockdown, that persons who would ordinarily have to hire someone to help with getting things to the curb, would not be able to do so. There is a high population of older persons in the Borough.

Stewart stated that personal yard sales are permitted to be held.

### **Liability/Public Access Agreement with Waterfront Property Owners – progressing**

The liability public access agreement is ongoing. This would allow the public to still use the green space and brick sidewalk near the proposed waterfront development. A draft has been circulated to the borough's insurance agent for review.

### **WWTP Operator Opening- interviews conducted May 1**

The staff is working through the process.

### **Note from L. McGowan re: Bulk Water Fund Question from Last Meeting**

This was a note relative to the bulk water fund inquiry from the prior Council meeting. The discrepancy occurred due to the money coming in in 2019 and money sent out was in 2020.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Revolving Grant Terms and Conditions – State Funds for Gamble Mill**

This funding comes from the State to the Borough and the Borough then loans it to the developer. This is in the works for the Gamble Mill, per Stewart. Holderman offered that the packet contained a draft commitment to the Virgilios, owners of the Gamble Mill, to get the grant from the State. \$485,000 of the \$500,000 will be loaned to the developer and the rest will be held back for attorney fees and administration costs. A 7.5 percent interest rate has been applied for 24 months. This will allow the construction to begin and the project to be stabilized. The principal will then be amortized over 20 years. The interest has been adjusted and the balance will be paid at the 12-year point with a balloon payment. The interest will be used to loan to other interested developers in the Borough.

**Prendergast moved to move forward with execution of the grant documentation for The Gamble Mill.  
Eaton seconded the motion.**

Tosti-Vasey confirmed that this grant is provided for historical preservation. She did not see anything in the paperwork that the developer needs to follow HARB and the regulations of historical preservation. Holderman stated that the packet just contained the draft commitment letter and the attorneys are working on the actual loan documentation and agreement, in which all that information will be included.

**Motion carried.**

**(Hombosky recused herself from discussion and voting)**

### **Talleyrand Park Phase 2 Bridge Walkway Bid Opening Update**

Holderman discussed the bid opening. This walkway project is part of a long-range plan. Five local contractors (Spearly, HRI, Mastas, Lycoming Supply and Hawbaker, Inc.) bid on the project. The bid was based on a base bid with an option 1 to lay the base with timber, option 2 lay the base with fiber polymer, and option 3 was an add on from the new part of the park to create an asphalt path from that area to the bridge. Jason Shura is the engineer on the project from Stifler McGraw. The bid was set up by Shura.

Base bid from Lycoming Supply came in low on the base at \$184,324.00. The option 1 for the timber for the base was \$31,500.00. The total bid was \$215,825.00.

Spearly Construction was \$235,887.00 with option 1 at \$41,074.00 for a total of \$276,934.

The low bidder was Lycoming Supply. There are \$225,000 funds available through CDBG. There is some flexibility with that money as there is money that has not been pulled down yet. That can also be used for the project. This may add \$15,000 or \$20,000 to the project budget. \$184,325.00 plus \$57,500 for the polymer.

Holderman would like the Council to consider adding option 3 (the walkway from the bridge to the figure 8 in the Talleyrand Park Extension) at \$16,000.00. The Borough could probably do that work but mixing work with other contractors causes some liability issues.

Holderman would also like Council to consider the \$184,325, option 2 with the polymer which would last longer, and the option 3 for the path. Bulk water has project funding and could be a consideration.

The engineer will be reviewing the bids in the near future. The project needs to be kept moving. If Lycoming does not qualify, Holderman stated that the bids will come back to Council as the second bid was much higher.

**Johnson moved to approve the bid from Lycoming Supply with options 2 and 3, conditioned on the engineer's review and approval.**

**Thompson seconded the motion.**

**Motion carried.**

Holderman stated that HRI will begin paving this week. 136 N. Wilson, 421 and 710 Willowbank and 231 E. Burroughs Street. This is for the work done by Columbia Gas.

### **Penn State Data for Action, Centre County Community Covid-19 Study**

This study will look at how faculty, staff, and residents and students interact in Centre County, making preparations with faculty for returning to campus. The study involved Penn State professors. They are asking the municipalities to help get the survey out to Centre County residents. The second study will be more specific. Penn State is trying to get the word out relative to this study.

**Prendergast moved to approve Council's support to reach out to citizens to participate in the survey for the impacts of Covid-19, assess financial impacts on the community and the perceptions of the stay at home orders and the initial restrictions of the Covid-19 Order.  
Johnson seconded the motion**

The survey will come out in May 2020.

**Motion carried.**

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business coming before Council,

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION on Personnel and Real Estate issues followed meeting.**