

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
June 1, 2020 - 7:30 p.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.bellefonte.net

7 p.m. Executive Session – Real Estate
7:25 p.m. Connect to Zoom
7:30 p.m. Council Meeting

CALL TO ORDER:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The June 1, 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 to pay condolences to George Floyd who was choked to death, and his family in Minneapolis as well as members of the community in Bellefonte and around the country, including the police, who have stood up for civil treatment and respect for all, no matter their origin or race. Whether you are black, white, or brown, male, female, gay or straight, hate has no place here.

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
Mayor Tom Wilson
Mr. Douglas Johnson
Ms. Anne Walker
Ms. Gina Thompson

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mr. Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager

OFFICIALS ABSENT: Mr. Donald Holderman, Ass't Borough Manager

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Eaton moved to approve May 18, 2020 meeting minutes, as amended.
Prendergast seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

(The following 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 Council request specific items to be removed for separate action).

Nothing Presented.

REGULAR AGENDA:

COMMUNICATIONS:

WRITTEN:

Letter from the YMCA regarding Summer Camp Program

The YMCA would like to hold the summer camp program at Governor's Park. They are willing to abide by the COVID-19 State mandates.

Tosti-Vasey referred this request to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Letter Request re: 2021 East Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 3, 2021

They request to reserve Talleyrand Park for April 3, 2021.

Johnson moved to approve the April 3, 2021 Easter Egg Hunt conditionally, dependent on mandates related to COVID-19.

Prendergast seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Email re: Centre County Baseball League Pleasant Gap Peppers – use of ballfield at Governor's Park

Stewart stated that Tony Rider, author of the email asked that he be called, if a discussion was held on this request. Tosti-Vasey stated that this falls in line with the summer camp request, deferring to Parks and Recreation.

Email request re: Concerts in the Park

The concerts are usually summer nights during the summer. The organizers are asking Council to make the decision on whether they can hold the concerts as they normally do. They would like Council to make that decision as the organizers would like to hold the event.

The organizers would insist on abiding by the Green mandates by the State, per Wilson. They have already canceled the June 28 concert. Tosti-Vasey referred this to Parks and Recreation. There are some conflicts in information she would like clarified in addition to some other CDC recommendations. Enforcement was discussed briefly. Stewart stated that the CDC

recommendation state that the leadership of the community that permits the event would ultimately be responsible, and liable. Brachbill concurred with the committee meeting with the organizers to get more details and assurances.

DAI Group – Solar Project

Tosti-Vasey stated that they are requesting a sustainability committee meeting to discuss their proposal and the impacts of COVID-19 on their proposal.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Nothing presented.

MAYOR:

Emergency Declaration Update – Consider any modification

The declaration has been amended to reflect the State’s provisions relative to the Green Phase regulations. Tosti-Vasey would like to add - the local emergency declaration will stay in enforce as long as the statewide proclamation is in force.

Wilson discussed that he witnessed the enforcement of the food truck ordinance relative to placement. Officer Igoe was in the park on Friday, and there was a truck parked near the Governor’s Monument in Talleyrand Park on W High Street. He spoke with the vendors and told them they were noncompliant with the distance with the new café. They moved the truck up about 10-feet and that made them in compliance. It was hopeful that the ordinance would eliminate and satisfy the downtown business, but in speaking with the two closest businesses to the park, they are unhappy with the ordinance. Wilson would like to see the ordinance reviewed.

The unusual circumstances due to the pandemic were discussed briefly. It was unknown whether the foot truck presence would become the new normal. The brick and mortar’s restricted schedules and seating will eventually come to an end and their competition with the food trucks will become minimal, per Prendergast.

Brachbill inquired about the trucks requesting approval from the Borough. The ordinance does not include any local permit, per Stewart. A fee to the Borough may be something to review.

The topic was referred to the streets committee.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Building and Property Committee meeting has been scheduled for June 3, 2020 6:30 p.m. at which Union Cemetery and the pop-up drive in request will be discussed.

Water and Sanitation Committee Meeting was held on June 1, 2020. Johnson stated that a request for an outside vendor to use Musser Lane Compost Facility for grass and brush disposal was discussed. This was discussed and it was determined to be a good idea to allow. Johnson believed that Halfmoon Township residence would be served.

The tub grinder cost is shared by a few of the municipalities. If the vendor is approved, they would be asked to share in on that expense which would help with the cost of the rental of the grinder. It also assists with the 902-recycling grant application. Staff would prepare a proposal (approved by Council) and it would be sent to the vendor.

Authority meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2020 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

Primary Election day is June 2, 2020. Tosti-Vasey discussed counting of the mail in votes and absentee ballots.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Bellefonte Fire Chief Selection – Brachbill

At the last executive committee meeting of the Bellefonte Fire Department, the committee suggested that Gary Lohr from Undine to become the new Fire Chief.

It was the consensus of the committee to ask Bellefonte Council to recommend Gary Lohr as Fire Chief beginning July 1, 2020, to complete the third year of Chief Snyder's ending term.

Brachbill moved to approve Gary Lohr for the position of Bellefonte Fire Chief to complete the third year of Chief Snyder's three-year term, effective July 1, 2020, ending June 30, 2021.

Prendergast seconded the motion.

Chapter 35 guidelines would be followed with this appointment. Tosti-Vasey inquired about the pay for the position. Brachbill stated that there is a stipend for the position of \$150.00 and is funded by the fire budget, not the Borough budget.

Motion carried.

Parks Expanded Reopening Guidelines (pdf) – Hombosky

Hombosky discussed the parks expanded reopening guidelines. The guidelines from the PA Parks and Rec Society were provided to Council in the packet. She will check for any additional changes.

Finance Committee Report – Meeting held on June 1 - Thompson

There is a committee meeting scheduled for June 4, 2020 at 9 a.m.

Little League Resumptions Guide

A brief discussion was held on the little league and Bellefonte Borough's involvement with the fields, and the structure, permission, or maintenance. Stewart stated that there was a lesser

liability for the Little League group. The property is in Spring Township and it was given to the Little League but put in the Borough's name.

Gamble Mill Near Miss

Brachbill discussed a near miss with a pedestrian near the Gamble Mill. There used to be a stop sign and the sign is not there any longer. It is a dangerous area and always has been with the sign correcting some of that. He would like to see the stop sign back, or place two signs calling out pedestrian crosswalk at the location to slow traffic down. Stewart suggested sending it to a committee and possibly bring in a consultant. The stop sign was controversial in the past. The proper way to handle this would be to have a study done to see if the sign is warranted.

**Brachbill moved to approve hiring a consultant for this issue.
Prendergast seconded the motion.**

Johnson would like to see the street committee review this before hiring the consultant. A push button safe crossing sign may be a good alternative to a stop sign.

**Johnson moved to have the streets committee look at alternatives
before hiring a consultant.
Thompson seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

In the meantime, a couple of temporary pedestrian crossing signs will be placed at the location.

OLD BUSINESS:

CDBG-CV Fund Designation Memo - Action Required

This is grant money made available due to the Corona Virus and the human services emergency due to so many people losing their jobs. The State has expanded the threshold of persons able to apply for the funds. It is for low-moderate incomes and persons with disabilities.

**Brachbill moved to approve Council's application for CDBG funds
for rent, utility bills such as water, sewer, refuse, electric
gas, restoration and internet costs and Centre Volunteers
for Medicine for the residents of Bellefonte Borough.
Eaton seconded the motion.
Motion carried, with one recusal (Johnson).**

Benner Township Act 537 Plan Questions

Stewart discussed the Act 537 Plan briefly. This was discussed at the prior meeting. A public meeting will be held on June 2, 2020. The Authority already has made comment on this. There was no further interest by Council to comment. Johnson stated that the questions have been addressed before and he offered that any comment should come from the Nittany Valley Joint

PC. Brachbill and Tosti-Vasey offered to submit comments individually, and not on behalf of Council.

Johnson inquired why the public was not upset about this interference with the environment like they were about the biosolids and Nestle Water in speaking up about this.

NEW BUSINESS:

Thoughts on future face-to-face committee meetings

Eaton would like to stay with the Zoom meeting for the next month or so until things settle down in the Green Zone. Johnson and Prendergast concurred. Brachbill stated that there is the possibility of a fire executive meeting being held at the end of June 2020. Council chambers is not large enough for a public meeting. That meeting may need to be Zoom or in another location. The fire companies are an alternative for a meeting location.

Downtown Bellefonte Inc. Wayfinding Signage Project

Thompson discussed the Wayfinding Signage Project. There will be a presentation by the design committee in the near future. A stakeholder presentation meeting is scheduled for next week.

Masks

CDC guidelines were discussed. Being in the Green phase, and for the sake of keeping everyone consistent, there is a concern that some businesses are allowing customers and employees not to wear masks. From day one, the Borough has been trying to follow the state and CDC guidelines.

Businesses are required to protect customers and employees in the Commonwealth. Masks should be provided to employees to wear at all times. There is no ambiguity. Cleaning and disinfecting the buildings is required, especially high touch areas. Employees need access to hand sanitizer, etc. If someone is ill, they should be sent home immediately. Social distancing needs to be practiced as well as meetings conducted virtually. No more than 10 employees should be in one group and they should be spaced apart.

Mask requirement is clear, even in the Green zone. Walker inquired whether this was a guideline or a requirement. Enforcement was ambiguous.

Borough Operations Memo

There have been changes with the Borough practices as well due to the pandemic. The office is currently closed to the public. Staff was working from home and the office, with staggered scheduling. Stewart would recommend keeping the office closed for now, until August 2020. Temps are checked and the counters have safeguards for employees and customers. Modifications are being made to the entry. The shutdown has stopped the completion of that project.

Virtual meetings were discussed. No HARB or PC has been held. Those meeting need to start again, but should be virtual rather than face-to-face at this time.

Utility services and refuse are still going on and everything is still running and in operation. Eaton stated that this plan will protect staff and allow operations with minimal impact. The same policies are being instituted at GM. They have been successful for the last two weeks, operating without interruption. Eaton stated that the current procedure in the Borough is working and he would like to see it continued until the Borough is out of the woods. Tosti-Vasey concurred.

The playgrounds will remain closed for safety purposes. Thompson offered that this may be upsetting to parents, but there are other playgrounds opening and they can go to the others. This issue was referred to the Parks and Recreation Committee for a review and recommendation.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business coming before Council,

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.