

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
November 1, 2021- 7:30 p.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania 16823
www.bellefonte.net

The November 1, 2021 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Council was called to order by at 7:30 p.m. Executive Session and Work Sessions were held prior to the meeting,

Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Randall Brachbill
Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey
Mr. Douglas Johnson
Mr. Jon Eaton
Mayor Tom Wilson
Ms. Melissa Hombosky
Ms. Debbie Cleeton
Mr. Frank Halderman
Ms. Mary Abbott
Mr. Michael Prendergast

STAFF PRESENT: Mr. Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager
Mr. Don Holderman, Assistant Borough Manager
Harry Brooks, Code Enforcement Officer
Gina Thompson, HARB Administrator
Gary Lohr, Fire Chief
Jason Brower, Police Officer
Julie Brooks, WWTP Assistant Superintendent
Lori McGowan, Finance Director

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Michael Desmond
Barbara Dann
Rick Jacobs
Mark Dello Stritto (via Zoom)

Additions to the Agenda: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: The bandshell project was discussed. The MOU was discussed as well as fund raising. Compliments on the volunteerism of the community towards Talleyrand Park and the community in general were also presented.

Consent Agenda: Brachbill moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Cleeton seconded. Motion carried.

Written Communications:

Library contribution was requested. Eaton moved to move forward with the same donation as last year for the library. Brachbill seconded. Motion carried.

Eaton moved to return to a policy of only accepting written communications from residents stating their name and address to the comment/correspondence. Halderman seconded. Motion carried.

Office of Community Affairs:

PLANNING COMMISSION: Planning Commission meeting is November 8, 2021.

HARB: Administrative approvals were presented to Council. Thompson spoke with Council regarding the short rental ordinance and the committee meeting that was held. A follow up meeting will be held to clarify a few points. That meeting will be scheduled for some time in November 2021. A written report will be presented after committee members have had the chance to review.

Prendergast moved to seek the advice of solicitor to suspend short term rental permitting for the time being. Eaton seconded.

The rental permit process was discussed and how rental properties without permits were currently being handled. Brachbill and Hombosky opined that it was not appropriate to suspend the rentals because the ordinance was not completed. The perception of rentals as a business versus rentals as rentals was discussed briefly.

Brachbill opined that short-term rentals are a benefit to Bellefonte as they draw people into the town. Without a hotel, these seem to be a good alternative. Eaton discussed not being able to have control of the short-term rentals and complaints from the neighbors.

Motion to seek the advice of the solicitor carried.

Mayor: Wilson requested a vote for the cooperation agreement between the Bandshell committee and DBI so that these two groups can start fundraising; all other details effecting the borough will be finalized later. Wilson thanked members of the committee for their hard work on the bandshell campaign.

Brachbill moved to approve execution of the cooperation agreement. Prendergast seconded. Motion carried.

Council President: Tosti-Vasey attended the Drive Electric Event on October 21, 2021.

Building and Property: Halderman stated that the meeting with Enterprise Fleet Services has been scheduled for November 8 at 10 a.m.

Finance and Government Performance: Cleeton discussed the committee meeting.

Cleeton moved to approve funding for new HARB design guidelines. Eaton seconded. Motion carried.

Cleeton moved to send the draft of a proposed LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Abatement ordinance to the solicitor for review. Eaton seconded. Motion carried.

Halderman discussed the bulk water funds to assist with the Big Spring cover project. This issue shall go before the finance committee. The Authority will send a letter to Council for the record.

Parks and Recreation: Hombosky moved to approve Talleyrand Park Committee's request for landscaping at the figure eight. Prendergast seconded. Motion carried.

A group of downtown merchants would like to gift a temporary ice rink that would last between 5-7 years for Talleyrand Park. Changes to the ground would be temporary and they would make the ground as it was before the rink was installed annually. Mr. Dello Stritto was present on zoom and discussed the project in detail. The proposal would bring in activity to the park during the winter months. Costs and maintenance were discussed. Proper signage relative to liability was discussed. Lighting for the skating rink was discussed. Walkway lights are solar powered.

Prendergast moved to approve the skating rink in Talleyrand Park. Hombosky seconded. Motion carried.

Human Resources: Eaton discussed the non-uniform union contract. A draft tentative agreement will be presented to Council in the near future. Manager and police chief evaluations are due by Council members.

Safety: The Fire Executive Meeting was held on October 28 and the committee moved to approve Tim Schreffler to the SAFR ad hoc Grant Committee to assist in the recruitment and retention of firefighters in Bellefonte. The fire department budget was also discussed and will be finalized as part of the 2021 Bellefonte Borough Bu. Chief Lohr gave a presentation on emergency reporting.

Water/Refuse/Compost Facility: Authority meeting will be held on November 2, 2021 at 6 p.m. Big Spring cover design ideas will be discussed. Public comment will be taken by the Authority. Holiday refuse pick up dates were discussed. Brush and leaf collection was discussed.

The One Water Report response from Spring Creek Watershed Commission was discussed briefly. The requested resolution was discussed.

Fire Marshall's authority to review an emergency event was discussed briefly.

Streets: Abbott discussed the committee meeting. Meetings regarding safety measures at the Diamond was discussed. There are two upcoming public meetings. There will also be the opportunity for online submission of comments through the end of November. Right of way vegetation will be discussed again in the future.

Energy and Environmental Conservation: The advisory review board had a meeting with the County offices, etc. regarding the climate action plan. Solar United Neighbors are holding a home tour throughout the county on Sunday November 7. Sustainable Energy System was chosen for the solar co-op. The Department of Energy provided an informative newsletter.

Special Committee Reports: Johnson and Stewart reported on the Airport Authority meeting held on October 28.

OLD BUSINESS: Eaton moved to remove the Reimagine Appalachia resolution from the table. Cleeton seconded. Halderman discussed origins of the group. Eaton discussed natural gas power. Brachbill was not in favor of the resolution as it did not benefit Bellefonte.

Hombosky moved to pass the resolution No. 20211101-01. Abbott seconded. Motion carried 6-3 with Johnson, Halderman and Brachbill voting nay.

NEW BUSINESS: Eaton moved to approve advertising the Bellefonte Borough Plan Amendments and Ordinance to increase the Municipal Contribution Rate for borough employees. Prendergast seconded. Motion carried.

A letter from the Nittany Valley Recreation Authority requesting payment on the upgrades and repairs to the pool at Governor's Park was presented with options for payment. This request was referred to the Finance Committee for review and recommendations.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Nothing presented.

ADJOURNMENT: Prendergast moved to adjourn. Eaton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.