

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
MEETING MINUTES
August 7, 2023- 7:30 p.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania 16823
www.bellefonte.net

I. CALL TO ORDER

The August 17th, 2023 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (followed by a moment of silence)

III. MEMBERS PRESENT

- Mr. Kent Bernier
- Mr. Randall Brachbill
- Ms. Deborah Cleeton
- Ms. Barbara Dann
- Mr. Douglas Johnson
- Ms. Shawna McKean (Zoom)
- Ms. Rita Purnell
- Ms. Johanna Sedgwick (Excused)
- Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey (Excused)
- Mayor Buddy Johnson

STAFF PRESENT

- Mr. Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager
- Mr. Don Holderman, Assistant Borough Manager
- Mr. Shawn Weaver, Police Chief
- Ms. Gina Thompson, Planning, Zoning & HARB Administrator

IV. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Brachbill requested to add an item regarding the appointment of an interim fire chief under New Business.

Brachbill motioned and Cleeton seconded to approve adding the above item to the agenda under New Business. No discussion. Roll Call Vote. Motion carried. The item will be added to the meeting agenda.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	n/a
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	n/a
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

V. PUBLIC COMMENT - Agenda and Non-Agenda/General Items and Comments

The Mayor awarded Officer Macy Neideigh a public commendation for her service to the borough in apprehending armed robbery suspects.

There was an extensive discussion regarding the Rental Housing Code Ordinance. Several residents spoke and Council voted to NOT adopt any new changes to the ordinance, other than those that are mandated by the state.

A resident spoke regarding a hardscape project being completed by her neighbors in Parkview Heights neighborhood. Her concerns included trees that were removed, a retaining wall and fill that has impacted their property.

A resident spoke regarding issues with usage of the baseball field.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Community Drought Watch remains in place across Pennsylvania. No Council action is needed.

Written Comments on the Centre Region Rental Housing and Building Safety Code Ordinance. No Council action is needed.

Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) Safety Group Dividend Program. The Borough received a dividend of \$7,015.38. No Council action is needed.

Thank you to Officers Brower and Luse from Ed Mann pertaining to a Welfare Check. No Council action is needed.

Mr. Demartino's concerns within the Borough. Council may consider action to address the concerns in a future work session.

CATA 2023 Fall service changes effective Thursday, August 17, 2023. No Council action is needed.

Trinity United Methodist Church requests Borough Council consider adding language to the Commercial Zoning Ordinance to allow the use of temporary emergency shelters /ground floor residential. Council may consider action in a future work session.

Downtown Bellefonte Inc. (DBI) Bellefonte Under the Lights event involving Street Closures, Use of Parking Lot, alcohol vendors (potentially) request for October 20, 2023. Staff can review this application and come back with recommendations.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda includes the following items:

1. <i>General</i>	Council Meeting Minutes July 17, 2023
2. <i>Finance</i>	Stover McGlaughlin Invoice June 2023
3. <i>Finance</i>	Budget v. Actual June 2023

4. Finance	Budget V. Actual Summary June 2023
5. Finance	Treasurer's Report June 2023
6. Finance	Voucher Summary June 2023

Brachbill motioned and Cleeton seconded to approve the Consent Agenda items 1, 2,4, 5, & 6. No discussion. Roll Call Vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

Brachbill motioned and Dann seconded to approve the Consent Agenda item 3, Budget vs. Actual, June 2023, with the proposed amendment of changing the date from 2022 to 2023. No discussion. Roll Call Vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

VIII. REPORTS

Mayor Johnson

The mayor commented that he is very proud and thankful for the Borough Police Department for their service. Earlier in the meeting, he presented Officer Neideigh with an award for Outstanding Service.

Office of Community Affairs (OCA)/Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB)

NONE

IX. CURRENT and OLD BUSINESS

Centre County Courthouse Wall Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin mid-October 2023. No Council action is needed.

Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) Sustainability Survey Letters to Community Members were mailed out on Friday, August 4, 2023. No Council action is needed.

Rental Housing Ordinance No. 08072023-01. (This item was moved to earlier in the meeting to accommodate the guests who attended the meeting tonight to discuss the Ordinance.) There was an extensive discussion regarding the ordinance and numerous residents spoke.

Bernier motioned to not approve/adopt the current, proposed changes to the Rental Housing Code Ordinance, except for state-mandated changes. Brachbill seconded the motion. The motion to NOT adopt the proposed changes carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

Shentel Cable Franchise Agreement and Resolution No. 08072023-01.

Dann motioned and Brachbill seconded to conditionally approve the Shentel Cable Franchise Agreement and the Shentel Cable Resolution No. 08072023-01 as presented. The motion carried with no discussion.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

South Potter Street Railroad Spur Title Search. Borough Solicitor has indicated that the title search is clean. Staff recommends if the purchase is approved, that it be conditional upon obtaining an Agreement with Bellefonte Historical Railroad Society regarding any joint uses and path connections to the spur.

Consider a motion to purchase the spur from SEDA-COG JRA with the tracks in place for a cost of \$18,932.00. Discussion included clarification of what benefits are included in purchasing the spur with the tracks. It was clarified that there are at least 2 benefits – tourism and it is an asset that will be easy to sell. It is approximately 600 ft of track. It was also asked where the money for the purchase would come from and it was clarified that the money would come from the General Fund. It’s possible that there could be grant monies available to help complete repairs of the tracks. It was also asked if there would be a fee charged to use the spur. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

Governor’s Park Baseball Field signage.

Brachbill motioned and Cleeton seconded to place signage at the Baseball field indicating a fine would be issued if used without Borough Permission. Discussion included clarification of what the fine would be and how to keep people off the field to avoid damage to the field by unauthorized users. It was discussed that there is no process in place for the public to be allowed to use the field and that it is a goal to establish a process. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

2023 Paving update- Paving in the Borough is delayed until late September. No Council action is needed.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Request Donald Townsend Volunteer Application for Civil Service Commission 6-year Alternate Vacancy.

Dann motioned and Cleeton seconded to appoint Donald Townsend to the Civil Service Commission as an alternate. No discussion. Motion carried. Mr. Townsend was sworn in to begin his service and duties.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

Brachbill motioned to delegate plan reviews to provide/ approve projects to Centre Region Code. Dann seconded. The duties would include planning reviews. This would be a temporary delegation. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yay	Ms. Shawna McKean	yay
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yay	Ms. Rita Purnell	yay
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yay	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yay	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	N/A
Mr. Doug Johnson	yay		

Bellefonte Elementary School Municipal Notification of Planned Land Development for Chapter 102 Permit. No Council action is needed.

Bid Opening for South Spring Street Streetscape Project - No motion necessary as this is a SEDA-COG project (Opposite side of Dollar General)

- o John Nastase Construction: \$194,981.74
- o G&R Charles Excavating: \$158,019.50
- o Bowman Excavation: \$199,608.25
- o Glenn O Hawbaker: \$293,508.00
- o Midstate Paving: \$202,127.25
- o Enterra Sitework LLC: \$257,421.75
- o HRI INC: \$263,375.50

XI. COUNCIL COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Members may offer comments regarding various events and issues within the Borough.

Ms. Purnell asked if there had been any follow-up with concerns regarding railroad safety in our Borough. Mr. Steward responded that there is some sensitive information that cannot be released – but that the Railroad Authority can say what the trains are carrying.

Ms. Purnell also suggested that we update the website and the TV screen in the lobby of the Borough Building to better announce upcoming events. She also suggested we mention “Upcoming Events” at each meeting.

Ms. Cleeton asked about the S Spring Street project start date. It was clarified that the project will likely start sometime in September, with a proposed completion date of before Thanksgiving.

She also offered congratulations and thanks to the organizers and volunteers of the Arts & Crafts Fair. The Fair was a huge success!

Mr. Bernier invited the public to the opening of Happy Valley Short Stays. There will be a tour on August 17, from 12:00 pm-3:00 pm and 5:00 pm -8:00 pm.

Mayor Johnson mentioned that he did some traveling this summer but it is always good to come home. He really appreciates the people he works with.

Mr. Holderman is just happy to be at the meeting tonight. :)

Mr. Johnson thanked Ms. Cleeton for her hard work and dedication to the Arts and Crafts Fair. He said the entertainment groups were fun to watch.

Mr. Johnson also mentioned that he would like to move forward with the Climate Action Plan and the Environmental Advisory Board. He strongly encouraged Council members to discuss this at the next work session and get it on the agenda as an action item.

Mr. Johnson also encouraged residents to check in with their local state legislators and representatives regarding support of House Bill 451 – which establishes the Tax-Exempt Property Municipal Assistance Fund. This bill would help the Borough collect revenue for Borough use.

Mr. Stewart thanked crews for finishing the Water Street Wall project before the Arts Fair. He commended the crew for their hard work.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.