

Bellefonte talks baseball

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PHOTO PROVIDED Pictured are coaches and members of the Bellefonte Area School District's Boys' Varsity Baseball team who attended the Bellefonte Borough council meeting to receive a proclamation.

BELLEFONTE — Mayor Gene “Buddy” Johnson recognized the members of the Bellefonte Area School District's Boys' Varsity Baseball team for their achievements during the 2023 season.

Bellefonte's 22 outstanding players were listed by name during the meeting for their skill sets, determination, teamwork, scholastic achievement and selfless commitment to others.

The team achieved great things this year, becoming the 2023 PIAA Class 4A State Champions after persevering through 25 hard-fought games. The Red Raiders, according to Johnson, took great pride in

respecting their opponents and playing the game with class and dignity.

The team consists of: Logan Aviles, Josh Brown, Jacob Corman, Dominic Capperella, Parker Capparelle, Alexander Ebeling, Nathan Fisher, Ryan Fraley, Isaac Gall, Triston Heckman, Nash Irwin, Trevor Johnson, Braedyn Kormanic, Reese McCloskey, Felix Oquendo, Levi Purnell, Kenneth Squires, Caleb Stock, Ethan Tomasacci, Peyton Vancas and Mason Weaver.

The team was coached by Head Coach Jon Clark, with the help of assistant coaches Drew Bryan, Adam Gearhart and Rick Hall.

Coach Clark said a few words after receiving the proclamation from the Mayor, taking to the podium to address the whole council.

“Everything that happened with our field this year and our playing surface up there, everything that was done in a very short timeframe, everyone coming together to make sure these boys and the community have a fine place to play, we appreciate it. Thank you all for all your efforts and support for the program,” said Clark.

Council also discussed during the work session what to do with the remaining money from the \$1.1 million state grant former Pennsylvania Sen. Jake Corman helped to secure.

The grant allowed for improvements and renovations to the ball field, including a state-of-the-art turf infield, a natural grass outfield, a drainage system, signage throughout, two new dugouts, stadium-style seating, bleacher seats and a new press box, among other upgrades.

The field, though intended for community use, is locked and special permission is needed for those who want to play.

To combat this, Johnson suggested that the money be put towards the batting cages — upgrading facilities that would be left open to be used by the public.

“I spoke to the booster club. (There are) minimal repairs with this — eight, 10, 15 years they might need new batting cages that the booster club will look into replacing. I feel, and the people I spoke with feel, that this would be something in the community’s best interest,” said Johnson.

Currently, there is a batting cage beside the field. However this cage is old and in desperate need of some upgrades. The goal is to add a second cage along with the repairs to the current cage, doubling the size of the facilities.

“This would be something that is provided for people to practice the skills of baseball,” said Johnson, who showed some images of possible cages that could be constructed with the remaining funds.

Of that \$1.1 million grant, there is around \$152,000 left in the grant.

Don Holderman, Assistant Borough Manager, doesn’t have an official estimate at this point regarding costs of this facility, but he did point out that the primary line item was construction for the grant.

Another suggestion for upgrading the nearby bathrooms was suggested, but it was pointed out that the grant was intended for baseball facilities rather than restrooms.

Bellefonte Borough will meet again on Sept. 5 at the borough building with the work session beginning at 6:30 p.m. and the business meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m.