

# Bellefonte Borough Council holds reorganization meeting; adds junior member

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<https://www.lockhaven.com/news/local-news/2024/01/bellefonte-borough-council-holds-reorganization-meeting-adds-junior-member/>



BREANNA HANLEY/THE EXPRESS Bellefonte Borough Council recently held its reorganizational meeting. Pictured, from left, Borough Manager Ralph Stewart, Pro Tempore Doug Johnson, Shawna McKean, Johanna Sedgewick, Council Vice-President Barbara Dann, Council President Kent Bernier, Junior Borough Council Member Christian Larson, Mayor Gene “Buddy” Johnson, Randy Brachbill, Rita Purnell, Deborah Cleeton, Joanne Tosti-Vasey and Assistant Borough Manager Don Holderman.

**BELLEFONTE** — During their first meeting of the year, Bellefonte Borough Council welcomed its first Junior Council Person in many years.

The Junior Council Person (JCP) Program offers students in the community an opportunity to engage in local government and hone their leadership skills. It also serves as a way for current borough officials to mentor future leaders of the community.

Christian Larson, a junior at Bellefonte Area High School, wrote a letter to council expressing his interest in the position and describing his applicable skills.

Larson has a lot of active roles including in the class cabinet, the Raider Revolution (PBIS program) student team and National Honor Society. He's also a secretary for Bellefonte's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA).

On top of the school extracurriculars he is involved in, he takes part in community service opportunities.



BREANNA HANLEY/THE EXPRESS Bellefonte Borough Mayor Gene “Buddy” Johnson swears in new Junior Borough Council Member Christian Larson.

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In his letter, Larson noted that he works with students at the Marion-Walker Holiday Workshop, the Spanish Honor Society Club to assist in “Family Reading Night” and helps in the advancement of his school clothing drive.

Due to his extensive resume of club activity and volunteer work, Larson has been recognized through a College Board National Recognition Program and has been awarded the National Rural and Small Town Recognition Program.

After graduation, Larson plans to continue his education and obtain a Bachelor’s Degree in Biology.

Larson attended a business meeting in November to introduce himself to council and explain his reasoning for wanting to be its junior member, noting the opportunity will allow him to get involved in the local community and enhance various skills such as advocacy, leadership and networking.

Mayor Gene “Buddy” Johnson read out the pledge for Larson.

Within the pledge, Larson promised to attend monthly meetings, observe borough council rules and actively participate in borough business. Though he cannot vote on any issue or attend executive sessions, Larson acknowledged all that was asked of him.

Larson was welcomed into council with a round of applause from current council members and audience members, taking his seat at the table with everyone else.

The board reorganized immediately following the swearing-in — in early 2022 council agreed to rotate and reorganize annually.

Doug Johnson stepped down from his role as council president; Kent Bernier shifted from his role as vice-president to fulfill the role of council president; Barbara Dann shifted from her role as Pro Tempore to fulfill the role of vice-president.

Council held a vote for who should be Pro Tempore. Both Johnson and Deborah Cleeton were nominated, with Cleeton receiving four votes in her favor and six against, and Johnson receiving seven votes in his favor and two against. Johnson accepted his new role as Pro Tempore.

In other news:

— The Planning Commission will meet on Monday, Jan. 8 at 5 p.m. in council chambers.

— The Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 8:30 a.m. in council chambers.

The Bellefonte Borough Council will meet again on Jan. 16, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.