

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
MEETING MINUTES
April 15, 2024 - 7:30 p.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania 16823
www.bellefonte.net

I. CALL TO ORDER

The April 15, 2024 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. MEMBERS PRESENT

- Mr. Kent Bernier, *President*
- Mr. Randall Brachbill
- Ms. Deborah Cleeton
- Ms. Barbara Dann, *Vice President*
- Mr. Douglas Johnson, *Pro Tempore*
- Ms. Shawna McKean
- Ms. Rita Purnell
- Ms. Johanna Sedgwick Excused
- Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey
- Mr. Christian Larson, *Jr. Council Member*
- Mayor Buddy Johnson

STAFF PRESENT

- Mr. Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager
- Mr. Don Holderman, Assistant Borough Manager
- Mr. Matt Auman, Superintendent of Public Works
- Ms. Julie Brooks, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works
- Mr. Bill Witmer, Acting Police Chief

IV. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

In accordance with Act 65 of 2021, If a matter is not on the Agenda, Council cannot take official action on it with some exceptions. The Council can act on matters relating to potential or real emergencies. Council may add a matter of agency business to its agenda through a majority vote. The Council should state the reason why the action item is being added to the agenda. Council may vote to add an action item(s) to the agenda.

Mr. Brachbill requested to add an executive session after the meeting this evening to discuss personnel.

Brachbill motioned to add an executive session after the meeting. Cleeton seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	<i>no</i>	Ms. Shawna McKean	<i>yes</i>
Mr. Randy Brachbill	<i>yes</i>	Ms. Rita Purnell	<i>yes</i>

Ms. Deb Cleeton	yes	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yes	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	yes
Mr. Doug Johnson	yes		

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

NONE (from public)

Tosti-Vasey commented that on January 2, 2024 she asked Council and Administrative staff to invite Brandy Robinson, co-director of the Climate Action Plan Training Program to a future work session to discuss the new program being run by the PSU Sustainability Institute. She is requesting that Council give an exact date of when this will occur.

Tosti-Vasey also reminded Council and the public that Tuesday, April 23, 2024 is election day.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS (Written)

Campus and Community Sustainability Expo April 25, 2024. No action is requested.

Mr. Stewart also noted that there is a flyer on the table at the meeting tonight regarding a CATA Public Hearing involving the changes to the Bellefonte CATA Service Schedule (B-Line). The hearing will be held in the Borough meeting room on Wednesday April 24, 2024 from 5:30-7:30pm. This information is posted on the Borough website and on the CATA Website.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA (will be acted upon by a single motion unless otherwise noted)

All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and will be acted upon by a single motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless members of the Council request specific items to be removed for separate action.

Consent Agenda includes the following items:

1. Finance	Budget V. Actual March 2024
2. Finance	Budget V. Actual Summary March 2024
3. General	Council Meeting Minutes April 1, 2024
4. Finance	Campbell Durrant Invoice March 2024
5. Finance	Stover McGlaughlin Invoice March 2024
6. Finance	Treasurers Report March 2024
7. Finance	Voucher Summary March 2024

Purnell requested to pull item 3, Council Meeting Minutes April 1, 2024.

Tosti-Vasey requested to pull item 2, Budget V. Actual Summary March 2024.

Johnson motioned to approve the remaining Agenda items, items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7. Second by Brachbill. No further discussion. Roll call vote. Motion to approve items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yes	Ms. Shawna McKean	yes
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yes	Ms. Rita Purnell	yes

Ms. Deb Cleeton	yes	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yes	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	yes
Mr. Doug Johnson	yes		

McKean motioned to approve item 3, Council Meeting Minutes. Cleeton seconded. Discussion included Purnell thanking Council for including “editing comments” in the minutes draft. This makes it easier to track changes. Purnell also mentioned that she wanted to discuss a sentence that was added under consent agenda regarding a violation of Borough Council Code of Conduct. Purnell feels that the statement that is added is adding discussion to the minutes that was not actually said. Tosti-Vasey countered by stating that although she did not use the exact wording included in the added statement – the statement she added is a summary of what she said in her longer statement. She claims that her added statement is “what she said, although not in those words”. She felt the added statement is a concise way to express what she was saying. Purnell suggested that, in the future, if a clarification to statements made during a previous meeting need to be made, the council member should make a statement during the public comment time at the next meeting rather than amending the meeting minutes. Purnell commented that according to Robert’s Rules of Order, the purpose of the minutes is to allow absentees to see what was discussed from an impartial point of view, rather than from someone in attendance at the meeting acting in an official order. She commented that the minutes are a summary, and not intended to include every detail. Purnell also asked if the minutes are edited to a “clean copy” – and it was clarified that the minutes are edited to a clean copy without the edits.

Purnell motioned to amend the minutes to remove the added sentence. Dann seconded the motion to amend the minutes. No further discussion. Motion to amend the minutes to remove the added sentence carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yes	Ms. Shawna McKean	yes
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yes	Ms. Rita Purnell	yes
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yes	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yes	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	no
Mr. Doug Johnson	yes		

Johnson motioned and Dann seconded to approve the original minutes as amended. No further discussion. Motion to approve item 3, Council Meeting Minutes April 1, 2024, carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yes	Ms. Shawna McKean	yes
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yes	Ms. Rita Purnell	yes
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yes	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yes	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	no
Mr. Doug Johnson	yes		

Cleeton motioned and Dann seconded to approve item 2, Budget V. Actual Summary March 2024. Discussion included Tosti-Vasey asking for clarification regarding the N. Spring Street budget. Mr. Stewart offered clarification of the different budgets and also commented that the Finance Officer would be able to better answer the question. Motion to approve item 2 carried.

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

VIII. REPORTS

Mayor Johnson

Introduction of Acting Chief William Witmer

- Acting Chief Witmer offered a statement regarding his goals and priorities for the department. He also mentioned that the department will be hiring 2 new officers.

Proclamation-Clearwater Conservancy Watershed Cleanup Day April 20, 2024. The Cleanup Day is in its 28th year, and includes approximately 500 volunteers. This year's Cleanup Day is Saturday April 20th for the Bellefonte Borough.

Proclamation-National Small Business Week April 28-May 4, 2024

Junior Council Member Report

April 2024 Report

- 4th quarter just started.
- Students created a student store.
- Underclassmen prom is scheduled for May 4th, 2024.

Police

Acting Chief Witmer highlighted several items from his report including the Bellefonte Easter Egg Hunt at Talleyrand Park, adding a new vehicle to the fleet, and completing the Civil Service process/eligibility list which will aide in the possibility of adding personnel to the team. Finally, officers are in the process of completing the required continuing education for certification. Officers are required to complete 16 hours of Continuing Education each year.

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

HARB: Next meeting will be Tuesday, April 23 at 8:30 a.m.

Planning Commission: next meeting will be Monday, May 13, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Nittany Valley Joint Planning Commission: next meeting will be Thursday, May 16 at 6:00 p.m. at Marion Township.

See Memo for additional information.

Liaison Reports (Reports were submitted)

Borough Manager (Report submitted)

IX. CURRENT and OLD BUSINESS

An Executive Session on personnel matters was held on April 10th. No council action is needed.

Council formal acceptance of resignations from Officer Matthew Pollock, Officer Jason Brower, and Chief Shawn Weaver.

Tosti-Vasey motioned and Dann seconded to accept the resignations. No discussion. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

Council formal designation of Detective William Witmer as Acting Bellefonte Borough Police Chief.

Dann motioned and Cleeton seconded to approve Detective William Witmer as Acting Police Chief. No discussion. No discussion. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

Council action to select police officer candidates from Bellefonte’s Eligibility List. Acting Chief Witmer is recommending the selection of Andrew Hurd and Lisa Larken.

Brachbill motioned and Tosti-Vasey seconded to select Andrew Hurd and Lisa Larken from the Eligibility List and to make a formal offer to hire. No discussion. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

Council approval of Borough Manager to begin the hiring process for a permanent Chief of Police.

Cleeton motioned and Brachbill seconded to have the Borough Manager start the hiring process for a permanent Chief of Police. No discussion. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

Mr. Doug Johnson	yes	
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Borough office move to the Armory Building. Consider hiring movers to move borough office contents to the Armory building offices. This would be in place of using in-house borough labor forces as time allows.

Dann motioned and McKean seconded to approve hiring movers for the work as described. Discussion included Cleeton asking if this is something that would need to be bid. It was clarified that a bid contract would not be necessary but that the borough staff could gather estimates. Mayor Johnson commented that he is concerned that the grant money, which was intended for upgrading the police department, is being used for other expenses, and he cautioned Council that he hopes that the money from the grant is not being used for other purposes, but will be used for its intended purpose. Tosti-Vasey also mentioned that this expense was not included in the annual budget and she is concerned that there are no extra funds for this expense. Mr. Stewart commented that he can gather estimates to bring back to council for final approval. It was further clarified that some items that needs to be moved are very heavy, and equipment will need to be rented for some items. Tosti-Vasey motioned to table the vote to hire movers until three estimates are received and brought back to council for review and approval. There was no second.

Johnson motioned to amend the motion to add that 3 estimates should be added to the original motion before final approval. Brachbill seconded the motion to amend. Roll call vote. Motion to amend the motion carried.

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

Vote to approve the amended motion. No discussion. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	no	Ms. Shawna McKean	yes
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yes	Ms. Rita Purnell	yes
Ms. Deb Cleeton	yes	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yes	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	yes
Mr. Doug Johnson	yes		

X. NEW BUSINESS

John Claar Excavating Certificate for Payment No. 4 of \$34,297.82 for the Parkview Heights Stormwater Management Project.

Johnson motioned and Cleeton seconded to remit payment to John Claar Excavating for the Parkview Heights Stormwater Management Project Application No. 4 of \$34,297.82. No discussion. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	yes	Ms. Shawna McKean	yes
Mr. Randy Brachbill	yes	Ms. Rita Purnell	yes

Ms. Deb Cleeton	yes	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	N/A
Ms. Barbara Dann	yes	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	yes
Mr. Doug Johnson	yes		

Memo from Assistant Borough Manager on various projects and updates within the Borough. No Council action needed.

Memo from Finance Director inviting Council to attend the Real Estate Tax Collectors Meeting scheduled for April 23, 2024 at 6:00 pm. No Council action needed. Comments were made regarding this meeting being held on election day, clarification of what the meeting’s purpose is, and recording the meeting for viewing by persons who are unable to attend. Deb Burger, Borough Tax Collector, clarified that this meeting is an informational gathering meeting with the tax collectors in the Bellefonte Area School District. She then said that only note will be taken at this meeting; there will be no recording.

Spring Leaf Pickup will be Monday, April 22nd - Friday, April 26th, 2024. No Council action needed.

Teener League Field Agreement Amendment.

Johnson motioned to approve the amended Teener League Field Agreement from a year to year agreement to a 11-year agreement. Dann seconded. Discussion included Mr. Johnson asking to amend the agreement.

Johnson motioned to amend the agreement to allow Council to review the agreement every 3 years. McKean seconded to amend the motion. No discussion. Roll call vote. Motion to amend carried.

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

Johnson motioned to approve the amended Teener League Field Agreement from a year to year agreement to a 11-year agreement, with the amendment that Council be allowed to review the agreement every 3 years. Dann seconded. No further discussion. Roll call vote. Motion to amend carried.

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

Teener League Field Dugouts, Press Box and Concession Stands paint color change.

Dann motioned and Johnson seconded to approve the color change from hunter green to red that matches the Governor's Park Baseball Field. McKeen said that she does not care for the color change and prefers the borough's maroon color. Other council members spoke in favor of the change. No further discussion. Roll call vote. Motion to approve the amended agreement carried.

Mr. Kent Bernier	<i>yes</i>	Ms. Shawna McKean	<i>no</i>
Mr. Randy Brachbill	<i>yes</i>	Ms. Rita Purnell	<i>yes</i>
Ms. Deb Cleeton	<i>yes</i>	Ms. Johanna Sedgwick	<i>N/A</i>
Ms. Barbara Dann	<i>yes</i>	Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey	<i>no</i>
Mr. Doug Johnson	<i>yes</i>		

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Johnson motioned and Dann seconded to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:22pm.

An executive session followed this evenings meeting.