

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
MEETING MINUTES
March 17, 2025 - 7:30 p.m.
301 N. Spring Street, Suite 200, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania 16823
www.bellefonte.net

I. CALL TO ORDER (Council President Barbara Dann)

The March 17, 2025 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
Mr. Randall Brachbill
Ms. Deborah Cleeton, *Pro Tempore*
Ms. Barbara Dann, *President*
Mr. Douglas Johnson, *Vice President*– Zoom
Ms. Shawna McKean
Ms. Rita Purnell
Ms. Johanna Sedgwick – Zoom
Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey
Mr. Christian Larson, *Jr. Council Member*
Ms. Jalyn Meckley, *Jr. Council Member*
Mayor Buddy Johnson

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Bill Witmer, Police Chief
Ms. Gina Thompson, Zoning, Planning & HARB Adm.
Mr. Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager

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.

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENT (Oral)

Borough Council intends to take public comment related to the motion that is on the floor after it has been duly made and seconded. The order of comment will be public comment and then council comment including, proposed amendments by council members. If amendments are proposed to the original motion, the public will then only comment on the amendment(s) before final votes are taken. You must be a Bellefonte resident, non-profit representative, business owner, or an official representative of another governmental agency. Speakers shall identify themselves by name and street, municipality, if outside of the Borough of Bellefonte. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes.

None

VI. COMMUNICATIONS (written)

Clearwater Conservatory Watershed Clean Up Day, Saturday, April 12, 2025. No council action required.

Invitation to Centre County Solar Tours. No council action required

Victorian Storefront Overlay proposal. A proposal for new zoning regulations has been received by council. No council action required.

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:

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| 1. General | DRAFT Council Meeting Minutes March 3, 2025. |
| 2. General | Solicitor Stover Invoice. |

Brachbill motioned to approve the Consent Agenda items listed above. Tosti-Vasey seconded. No further discussion. Roll call vote, motion carried.

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

VIII. REPORTS

Mayor Johnson

Mayor Johnson is unavailable to give a report this week. He has asked the council to speak on his behalf to let the public know that they are more than welcome to reach out if they need anything in the aftermath of the recent storm.

Proclamation in recognition of 4-H and their impact on local youth, and establishing March 16 through March 22, 2025, as “PA 4-H week”, acknowledging and celebrating 4-H for its valuable service to our community.

Police (Chief Witmer)

February 2025 Report

The department is completing their hiring process, there were 4 applicants, two of which dropped out.

Parking

February 2025 Report

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

The HARB meeting for March 11, 2025 will be canceled. The next scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 8:30 AM

The Planning Commission meeting for March 10, 2025 has been moved to Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 5:00PM in the Large Meeting Room.

Liaison Reports (Reports were submitted)

Submitted

Borough Manager

February 2025 Report

Musser Lane Compost Facility to be open every day this week until 4PM including Saturday in order for residents to dispose of brush from the recent storm. Borough crews will be collecting brush from properties and neighborhoods for ALL residents for 2 weeks in order to help residents clean up any debris.

Comments/Additions:

Benner to pull out of Benner-Walker Spring Joint Authority.

IX. CURRENT and OLD BUSINESS

Reminder. Real Estate Tax Bills will look a bit different this year. The Borough partners with Centre County Government to send out the two (County and Borough) tax bills. In 2024, the County chose a new vendor to provide the tax form. Please watch for mail that has "OFFICIAL TAX BILL" on the front. Call 814-355-1501 with any questions. No council action required.

Bellefonte Borough Authority - Big Spring Cover Project. The Authority will be holding a special work session to review all concepts. No decision on a particular concept has been made. The special work session will be held at 6PM, Tuesday, March 18, 2025 in the Oak Room, 301 North Spring Street. The public is welcome to attend, but no public comments will be held at this meeting. No council action required.

Request for Proposals (RFPs) for grant writing and administration services. Proposals were due March 14, 2025, and distributed to Council for review. Call for a motion to have council's Finance and Administration Committee review the RFP's and bring back recommendations to council.

Cleeton motioned for Finance and Administration to review RFP's and advise council.

Johnson seconded, no further discussion. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

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

Efforts to sell the surplus large wooden desks at Spring Street have been unsuccessful. Call for a motion to approve giving away the desks for free on a first-come first-serve basis - a notification will be made on the borough website.

McKean motioned and Brachbill seconded to approve giving the desks away. Further discussion included how many desks were going to be given away, whether or not some of the desks should be kept as surplus for the fire department or otherwise. It was decided to give away the desks as previously discussed. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

X. NEW BUSINESS

Resolutions to PA State Association of Boroughs (PSAB). Current PSAB legislative policy priority information is included in the council meeting materials. Council may discuss new policies that would be submitted to PSAB in the form of a Resolution for their legislative priority process to take place at the annual conference in June. Council may approve Resolutions to be submitted to PSAB for consideration in their annual legislative priorities process.

Cleeton motioned to submit any stated policy resolutions to PSAB. McKean seconded. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

Selecting a delegate and alternate for PSAB Annual Conference voting.

Tosti-Vasey motioned to appoint Deb Cleeton as the delegate and Doug Johnson as the alternate for voting at the PSAB annual conference. McKean seconded, no further discussion, Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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|---------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| Mr. Kent Bernier | yes | Ms. Shawna McKean | yes |
| Mr. Randy Brachbill | yes | Ms. Rita Purnell | yes |
| Ms. Deb Cleeton | yes | Ms. Johanna Sedgwick | yes |

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|------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| Ms. Barbara Dann | yes | Ms. Joanne Tosti-Vasey | yes |
| Mr. Doug Johnson | yes | | |

Consider legal review of Peddling and Soliciting “Do not Disturb” ordinance.

Johnson motioned to have the Borough Solicitor review the Ordinance and submit any recommendations. Tosti-Vasey seconded. Further discussion included: making sure to review policy around busking and electioneering. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

Ralph Stewart Retirement announcement.

Brachbill motioned to accept Mr. Stewart’s retirement letter. Tosti-Vasey seconded. Roll call vote. Motion carried.

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

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ISSUES NOT ON THE AGENDA

This Public Comment period is for oral comments regarding items not listed on this meeting agenda. Speakers shall identify themselves by name and street, municipality, if outside of the Borough of Bellefonte. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes maximum.

Elliot Killian - Ferguson Township resident and High Street property owner - voicing concern over the state of the Downtown Bellefonte Business District and proposing various ideas for potential solutions. Presented an argument as to why removing the first-floor commercial requirements in the business district of downtown Bellefonte could be beneficial - potentially freeing up these underutilized properties to be used for housing or other purposes which are more community-oriented than the ways in which they are currently being utilized.

XII. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS/FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Please try to limit all comments/rebuttals to three minutes maximum.

Purnell - voicing concern over water pollution at Walnut Grove Estates in Benner Township. Was wondering if others felt that it would be beneficial for council to seek information and advice about this situation such that we could prevent the same thing from happening to the residents of Bellefonte.

Tosti-Vasey: concerns over the recent storm in Bellefonte. Wanted to raise a reminder that the Planning Commission is going to be meeting tomorrow (3-18-25) to discuss Killian's recommendation as well as the Waterfront Development Project.

Brachbill: Kudos to Logan Valley fire department storm response.

Continued thanks from multiple council members for Mr. Stewart's service.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Call for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tosti-Vasey motioned and Brachbill seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

An Executive Session was held before the meeting to discuss personnel matters.