

BEN AVON BOROUGH
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

April 7, 2020

Call to Order

Council President Jennifer Bett called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Council Members Present via Zoom Meeting

Jennifer Bett

Henry Casale

Megan Dolan

Ken Pipery

Kara Roggenkamp

David Stoeckle

Rick Wagner

Others Present

Mayor Melanie Hughes-Holcomb

Anne Sweeney, Solicitor

Terrie Patsch, Borough Secretary

Public Participation - *There was no public participation*

State of the Borough – *Statement by Jennifer Bett*

See Attachment A

Borough Reports

Mayor's Report – *Report given by Mayor Melanie Hughes-Holcomb*

Mayor Hughes-Holcomb asked Ohio Township Police to monitor Avon Park to ensure people are not gathering and disregarding social distancing policies. Public Works will be adding a chain around the playground, and new, more permanent signs will be installed.

Mayor Hughes-Holcomb stated that there are several community groups checking on residents who may need help while in quarantine. She asked if council members know of someone in

need of this help, please reach out to her and she will put them in touch with those offering assistance.

Solicitor's Report – *Report given by Solicitor Anne Sweeney*

Mrs. Sweeney has been working with the Mayor, Council President Bett and the borough secretary to explore the legalities of virtual meetings enabling the borough business to be accomplished in a timely manner through the state shutdown.

Approval of Minutes

February 18, 2020 Council Meeting/March 3, 2020 Council Work Session

Motion: Mr. Casale; Second: Mr. Opiery; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of both the February 18, 2020 council meeting and the March 3, 2020 council work session.

Financial Report – *Report given by Ken Opiery*

Statement of Revenue & Expense

Motion: Mr. Opiery; Second: Mr. Casale; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the February 2020 financial reports.

Accounts Payable

Motion: Mr. Opiery; Second: Mr. Casale; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to approve accounts payable in the amount of \$94,459.48 for February, 2020.

Administration Report – *Report given by Jennifer Bett*

Mrs. Bett reported that the Administration Committee met recently and discussed several ongoing topics. The recent resident request for trash cans along Church Avenue has been tabled for the time being following the emergency declaration and the recent correspondence from Waste Management of a reduction in collection service. She stated the borough's first concern is getting through the current crisis and providing a safe and healthy environment for residents and borough staff.

Public Affairs / Communications Report – *Report given by Jennifer Bett*

Mrs. Bett reported the borough has not declared a state of emergency at this point as there are no large businesses impacted and there is a small staff where this would come into play. She also reported while there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in the borough, she hopes all residents would continue to conform to safety guidelines set forth by the state.

Mayor Hughes Holcomb reported during a recent patrol through Avon Park, Ohio Township Police disbanded a group of teenagers in who were not in compliance with published social distancing guidelines. With that in mind, Mrs. Hughes-Holcomb has contacted a local company

to provide more permanent signage which will be installed in the park to assist with reminding everyone of the social distancing requirements.

Mrs. Bett reminded everyone that all COVID-19 information is available on a separate page on the Ben Avon website and is updated as it changes occur. This information includes a statement from Joe Hanny, Ohio Township Police Chief, and a letter from Mayor Hughes-Holcomb.

Mrs. Bett also reported that she received a reminder via the Quaker Valley COG, passed on to her from Mrs. Dolan, reminding residents not to dispose of items such as cleaning wipes into the sanitary sewer system.

Public Safety/Code Enforcement Report – *Report given by David Stoeckle*

Mr. Stoeckle reported Jarod and Randy, Harshman CE Group, are following several recent complaints. Harshman is up and running, however, they are not entering properties for rental inspections at this time. The two recent complaints involved garbage left at a rental property on Forest Avenue, which was documented and issued a citation. The second report was of a retaining wall in poor condition and was collapsing, and Randy is investigating.

Mayor Hughes-Holcomb noted that the recent state directives do not list Airbnb properties as essential businesses, and she asked how the borough would go about ensuring their compliance with state mandates that they not allow guests. Solicitor Anne Sweeney stated she would look into the matter and report back to council.

Public Works Report – *Report given by Ken Opiery*

Mr. Opiery reported that in the public works supervisor's absence, recent hire Ed Nuttall will continue to prepare the borough for the summer months. Ed will be assisted by Tom Kachinko, who has served with the Public Works department in the past as a temporary part-time employee. Ken and Dale will be available for direction and to assist with any questions or concerns from staff.

Mr. Opiery plans a meeting soon with Ms. Roggenkamp, Co-Chair of Public Works, to assist with getting her up to date on the workings of the Public Works department.

Quaker Valley COG Report – *Report given by Rick Wagner*

Mr. Wagner reported the QV COG delegates held a virtual meeting this past month and much of the conversation was centered around how the different municipalities are handling the changes in meetings, parks and staff during the pandemic. There are plans for another virtual meeting this month.

Mr. Wagner also noted that he will follow-up with QV COG concerning the recent Waste Management reduction in services through the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Business

Anchor & Anvil Coffee Shop

Motion: Mr. Wagner; Second: Ms. Roggenkamp; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the action recommended by the Administration Committee on March 25 to waive the April rent collection from the Anchor & Anvil. With this action, Council is hoping to ease the economic hardship brought on by the emergency declaration and March stay-at-home order as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Casale inquired if the utility payments were also waived; they were not, and the borough secretary reported the tenant paid those as required.

Old Business

Cyber Security Insurance

Motion: Mr. Casale; Second: Ms. Roggenkamp; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the purchase of cyber security insurance for the borough at the rate of \$994 per year.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Opiery; Second: Mr. Casale; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the council meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrie Patsch

Borough Secretary

ATTACHMENT A

Good Evening,

Thank you to everyone for your willingness to join remotely. This will be a test of our resiliency so I thank everyone in advance for their patience as we work through this new meeting protocol. As is governed by the Sunshine Act, this meeting will be recorded and posted publically. In addition, minutes will need to be posted within 48 hours. For other housekeeping essentials, in order to maintain protocol, everyone will be muted except for the Mayor and members of Council. I will unmute everyone for Public Comment at the beginning and end of the meeting. If anyone would like to comment otherwise, please use the Chat feature at the bottom of your screen or the “raise hand” icon.

STATE OF THE BOROUGH:

Ben Avon Officials are continuing to monitor the developments of the COVID-19 virus as the health and well-being of all of our community members, including our employees, remains our primary concern. To date the Allegheny County Health Department confirms that there are no Coronavirus cases in Ben Avon. For best practices, please follow the guidelines of the Allegheny County Health Department and the Center for Disease Control.

Until the Stay-at-home order is lifted by Governor Wolf, the Ben Avon Administration office is available remotely by calling (412) 766-7704 or sending email to benavon@benavon.com.

Ben Avon Public Works is operating as usual while maintaining physical distancing and following federal and state guidelines

Ohio Township Police Department, Ben Avon Volunteer Fire Department and Northwest EMS are operating with increased Coronavirus protocols

Waste Management has suspended all extraneous services except for basic household pick-up and recycling

US Postal Service is operating as usual

All group activities are restricted in Avon Park including playground, pavilion and recreational equipment.

Avonworth School District is currently on spring break but is adhering to a virtual learning experience.

If anyone has any questions or required additional information, please refer to benavon.com or contact your local council member or the associated website.

On behalf of all of Ben Avon’s local officials, we wish everyone health and safety as we all work through this pandemic together and the best of holiday wishes. Please remember to practice physical distancing, stay in small gatherings only, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, and now wear a face covering when out in public (sew and no-sew instructions are on the CDC website).