



Borough of Ben Avon

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Council Meeting – June 16, 2020

Minutes

Call to Order

Council President Jennifer Bett called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Council Members Present

Jennifer Bett, Henry Casale, Megan Dolan, Kenneth Opipery, Kara Roggenkamp, David Stoeckle and Richard Wagner

Others Present

Mayor Melanie Holcomb, Chief Joe Hanny, Solicitor Anne Sweeney and Public Works Supervisor Dale Regrut

Public Participation –

Mitch Wright – 6930 Church Avenue - Mr. Wright was recently appointed as the Ben Avon representative for Avonworth Community Park. He provided Council with a general overview of current status of the Avonworth Community Park, including the impact due to COVID-19.

Chris Cieslak – 7400 Brighton Road- Ms. Cieslak attending the meeting to discuss police transparency following the death of George Floyd. Ms. Cieslak thanked Chief Hanny for posting the FAQs on the Ohio Township Police Department website and entertaining her questions. She did send questions to Council President, but these questions were just presented to Solicitor and to Chief Hanny during the meeting. Ms. Cieslak asked for additional information regarding transparency and related policies. Chief Hanny would need to follow up with the Ohio Township Police Solicitor if additional detail is required, but he referred her to policies and procedure in place that were reference in FAQs. Ms. Cieslak inquired regarding the creation of a Civilian Review Board and if legislation is brought at the State or County level would Council be receptive to the creation of such a function. Ms. Bett indicated that Council would review once additional details are presented, but reminded Ms. Cieslak that anything at county or state level would supersede anything done at the Borough level.

Natalie Taylor -141 Ridge Avenue – Ms. Taylor also attended the meeting to discuss police transparency following the death of George Floyd. She inquired regarding alternative means to communicate if there is a complaint or concern. Ms. Bett and Ms. Holcomb offered their email addresses. Mr. Wagner also provided some statements provided by the QVCOG which he circulated for review.

Mayor's Report - Report given by Melanie Holcomb

Ms. Holcomb notified Council of a potential prayer vigil at the Presbyterian Church. She also noted a variety of inquiries from resident issues and that all are being addressed by responsible parties.

Police Report – Report given by Chief Joe Hanny

Chief Hanny reported that in the month of May the police had 44 calls. He highlighted that there was a burglary noted on report, but that was not the correct classification. Officer responded to a call regarding people going in and out of a residence. It was determined the individuals were construction and that was clarified upon arrival by the officer. He also noted that various cars in Bellevue and Emsworth were entered and items stolen over the last several nights. Chief Hanny would like to remind citizens to lock your cars.

Fire Report – No report

Solicitor's Report – No report provided by Solicitor Allison Sweeney – However, she did note that she is working with council members to draft a diversity and inclusion statement. In addition, in response to a question from Ms. Bett, Ms. Sweeney clarified that, in absence of borough secretary, that sending information to all members of Council is acceptable, but no deliberation or discussion is permissible in those communications to all council members.

MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Casale; Second: Mr Wagner.; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2020 council meeting with one small change. The minutes note that there were 9 cases of coronavirus in the Borough, but that needs to be updated to reflect 0 cases in the Borough.

Motion: Mr. Casale; Second: Mr. Wagner; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020 working session meeting as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORTS – *Report given by Ken Opiery*

Statement of Revenue & Expense

Mr. Opiery reported nothing exceptional on the statements reviewed by council, but continues to keep a close eye on revenue due to events surrounding COVID –19. Mr. Opiery noted that real estate taxes are down by about \$70,000, EIT is behind by about \$29,000 and real estate transfer is up on a YTD basis. Mr. Opiery is reaching out to our service providers for collections to get their perspective on how other communities compare to our collections and will share any information received at next meeting.

Motion: Mr. Opiery; Second: Mr. Casale; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the Statement of Revenue & Expenses as presented for the month of May.

Accounts Payable

Mr. Pipery reported nothing exceptional with accounts payable. Ms. Roggenkamp inquired regarding a payable attributed to the borough engineer.

Motion: Mr. Pipery; Second: Mr. Casale; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the payment of the bills shown on the accounts payable list in the amount of \$22,339.25 for the month of May.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration Report - *report given by Jennifer Bett*

Mr. Wagner reported that the job posting for Borough Secretary has been posted on various job posting sites and interviews are in the early phase of being scheduled. The solicitor recommended reaching out to the COG regarding interim positions and the possibility of coverage if this will be an extended opening. Ms. Holcomb asked about putting rental inspection form on the website. Ms. Sweeney noted that would be permissible. Ms. Holcomb will facilitate posting the rental inspection form on the borough website.

Public Affairs/Communications Committee – *report given by Jennifer Bett*

Mrs. Bett reported that benavon.com has been updated now that Allegheny County is in the green phase. She provided a written statement, which is included in the materials, regarding the implications of entering the green phase.

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

Mr. Stoeckle reported that the borough is continuing to receive complaints and thanked Ms. Holcomb for her help in responding and facilitating these inquiries, in the absence of a borough secretary. The borough continues to work with Harshman on facilitating complaints and Mr. Stoeckle is happy with the service provided. Ms. Holcomb echoed Mr. Stoeckle's sentiments.

Public Works - *report given by Ken Pipery*

Mr. Pipery reported that they are continuing to work on getting bids for HVAC system in coffee shop. It is below the threshold that requires advertisement, but the Committee is still waiting for third bid. Mr. Pipery is asking Council to give permission to spend up to \$18,000 for replacement of HVAC system. Ms. Roggenkamp asked about the efficiency – Mr. Pipery and Dale noted there will be two split units and Mr. Casale ask if they will be separately metered, which they will.

Motion: Mr. Pipery; Second: Mr. Casale; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the payment of up to \$18,000 on two split ductless air conditioning units.

QV COG Report – *report given by Rick Wagner*

Mr. Wagner reported that the monthly meeting will be tomorrow night. The COG did release suggestions on statements regarding inclusion and diversity, which will be reviewed by Council. There is a community forum this weekend on fracking.

NEW BUSINESS

Diversity and Inclusion

Ms. Roggenkamp is researching potential language with the solicitor and Ms. Dolan and will circulate language at next meeting.

Glass Recycling

Ms. Holcomb had two inquiries from residents regarding whether the borough would sponsor an event. Mr. Wagner will follow up with the COG tomorrow night. Ms. Bett will post resources for glass recycling.

Food Truck Fridays

Residents are facilitating. It is supposed to be a control ordering environment. Have not received any complaints. No permitting is required based on our ordinances.

OLD BUSINESS

Fireworks Donation – 4th of July fireworks held in Avalon have been cancelled. Council inquired if the donation provided could be carried over to 2021, no additional information has been received.

Borough Secretary Position - No additional report. Ms. Holcomb inquired if candidate needs to be approved by whole Council. Ms. Sweeney noted that an appropriate candidate can be recommended by the committee, but does need to be approved by the whole Council. Such approval could occur at a special meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Opiery; Second: Mr. Stoeckle; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

President Jennifer Bett adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.