

BEN AVON BOROUGH  
August 18, 2020  
Council Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of Ben Avon Borough Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Jennifer Bett.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present:

Jennifer Bett (X ), Henry Casale(- ), Megan Dolan(- ), Ken Opipery( X ) Kara Roggenkamp ( X ), David Stoeckle ( X), Richard Wagner(X )

Others Present:

Mayor Melanie Holcomb(X ), Chief Joe Hanny(X), Solicitor Anne Sweeney(X), Public Works Supervisor Dale Regrut(-), Catherine Houska (JPC) (X)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – No public participation

BOROUGH SECRETARY APPROVAL – Terrie Patsch

Motion: Rick Wagner; Second: David Stoeckle; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve Terrie Patsch to be the full-time Ben Avon Borough Secretary, Tax Collector and Open Records Officer effective August 24, 2020.

Mr. Wagner voiced appreciation to Ms. Bett and Ms. Holcomb for filling in to perform the Borough Secretary duties in the interim.

BOROUGH REPORTS

Mayors Report – *report given by Mayor Melanie Holcomb*

There have been complaints from residents about roaming cats in the neighborhood. The police and mayor are monitoring the situation to see if it improves.

There have been complaints about kids playing in the street on Woodland. The mayor will try reaching out to the parents.

Mayor provided Administrative committee update – hiring of Borough Secretary.

Police Report – *report given by Chief Joe Hanny*

There have been complaints from residents about roaming cats in the neighborhood. The police and mayor are monitoring the situation to see if it improves.

Fire Report – *no report given*

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

Catherine Houska presented on the available rotating solicitor position with the Joint Planning Commission. The Council decided to defer the decision until after a scheduled meeting with the JPC's current solicitor later this week.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Stoeckle; Second: Mr. Wagner; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2020 council meeting.

Motion: Mr. Wagner; Second: Mr. Stoeckle; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2020 council working session as corrected.

FINANCIAL REPORTS – *report given by Ken Opiery*

Statement of Revenue & Expense

Mr. Opiery reported that revenues are slightly down this year vs. last year, mostly due to fewer collections on delinquent sewage, but this is balanced out by fewer delinquent sewage expenditures. Real estate transfer tax collections are up.

Motion: Mr. Opiery; Second: Mr. Wagner; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the statements as presented for the month of July.

Accounts Payable

Mr. Opiery presented the accounts payable list. No unusual expenditures

Motion: Mr. Opiery; Second: Mr. Wagner; Motion Carried by unanimous voice vote to approve the payment of the bills shown on the accounts payable list in the amount of \$18, 628.79 for the month of July.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration Report - *report given by Jennifer Bett*

Mayor provided an update.

Focus has been on hiring and onboarding secretary.

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

Mrs. Bett reported that benavon.com has been updated with voting information. Jennifer Bett updated on recent COVID requirements; website has been updated.

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

Mr. Stoeckle reported on recent code enforcement. A meeting is scheduled with Cary to discuss short term rental ordinance enforcement. Catherine requested that she and Mary from the JPC be invited to the short term rental ordinance meeting. Mr. Opiery reported a complaint reported to Dale regarding 308 Spruce.

Public Works - *report given by Ken Opiery*

Mr. Opiery reported a need to hire another DPW employee. The new leaf loader should be delivered in time for leaf pickup. Old one will be kept until the new one arrives.

Mr. Opiery discussed the unsafe situation that leaf pickup on Ohio River Boulevard has created in the past for the DPW crew. In order to perform this more safely, the Borough would need to get permits from PennDOT for appropriate traffic control measures and lane closures. This would involve renting equipment and additional cost to the Borough. The DPW Committee will determine the potential additional costs. Several Council Members expressed concern over the safety of leaf removal operations even with additional traffic control measures.

QV COG Report – *report given by Rick Wagner*

Mr. Wagner summarized a meeting he had with the director of the CONNECT group. It is a regional initiative similar to a COG, a program of the University of Pittsburgh graduate school of public affairs. Mr. Wagner plans on attending a few of their upcoming meetings to learn more.

Glass recycling events were successful – Mayor reported positive feedback from residents.

JPC Report – *report given by Catherine Houska.*

The JPC is working on several new ordinances including a bicycle ordinance and a fence and wall ordinance.

Liquor ordinance – Ben Avon is not listed as a dry community. Bellevue has been listed and wants to change their status. The current ordinances allow small scale liquor production and samples, which is not classified as a restaurant or bar. JPC Solicitor has suggested additional language regarding liquor production.

Ms. Sweeney provided some history of the current situation vis a vis alcohol in the Borough.

Ms. Houska requested further input from the Council on the draft language regarding alcohol manufacturing and liquor ordinances in general.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Trash Receptacles

- Ms. Bett provided information on the costs of trash receptacles (including pickup from Waste Management – pickup for 3-4 receptacles, 1x per week) and photos of potential locations for siting trash receptacles.
- Ms. Bett reported on conversations she had with neighboring boroughs regarding their experience with trash receptacles on Borough property. Emsworth had 4 cans during a revitalization project in the 90s. Their cans were open & rain would get in. They couldn't replace liners after a while. Had issues with odors and flies, had to change bags almost daily. Council decided to remove the cans last year. Avalon has 2 different types of cans. Have had issues with abuse of them for inappropriate waste. They have dog waste cans (Mutt Mitt) and pick up trash every other day. They found it helps people pick up their poop rather than leave it on the street. Overall Avalon thinks it is positive due to increased dog waste pickup.
- There are currently only 2 viable locations for cans in the Borough.
- Mr. Opiery stated that the 3 cans at Avon Park are picked up 1x per week and are at times very full.
- Ms. Holcomb asked for additional information about more frequent pickups from Waste Management or another carrier and how much that would cost, whether there is alternative to plastic bags, and whether there are additional spots to put cans.
- Ms. Houska suggested a location on the sidewalk for a trash can at Forest and Breeding.

### Diversity and Inclusion

Ms. Sweeney provided a sample resolution for review.

Council will plan to review further and discuss at the September working meeting.

### Local Climate Action Program

Ms. Roggenkamp provided an update on the program. It has started and we have been assigned a college student. We have joined as Ben Avon Borough, not with CONNECT.

### Solid Waste Ordinance

Mr. Wagner reviewed and suggested updating it. He will further review with the COG as the contact with WM is renewed.

Ms. Houska stated that there is not good compliance with the current recycling guidelines from WM.

## NEW BUSINESS

Borough building rental policy - do there need to be changes due to COVID?

Ms. Bett has received questions from residents about upcoming community events – fall festival, Halloween parade, trick or treating. This will be agenda item for the September and/or October meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Pipery; Second: Mr. Wagner ; Motion carried by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Roggenkamp