



Borough of Ben Avon

Council Work Session

Minutes

February 1, 2022

The Borough of Ben Avon Council met in a work session meeting on Tuesday, February 1, 2022, virtually and at 7101 Church Avenue. President Richard Wagner presided and opened the meeting at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Jennifer Bett, Russell Kuehner, Ken Opiery, Kara Roggenkamp, Jim Thornton, Richard Wagner, Tavia Washington

Others Present: Mayor Melanie Hughes-Holcomb, Solicitor Daniel Conlon, and Borough Secretary Terrie Patsch

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – *there was no public participation*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration Report

Mrs. Bett noted that although Borough Council is allowed to continue with a virtual option for public meetings, there is a requirement that a quorum be present at the Borough hall. Mr. Conlon confirmed that an in-person quorum is required. Mrs. Bett also reported that she has asked Mr. Kuehner to assist with the fee schedule revisions and in particular the fees for pavilion rentals at Avon Park.

Public Affairs

Mrs. Bett reported that the new council member's names have been added to the website. She asked that the new members submit a short bio and picture to upload as well. Mrs. Bett also stated the minutes on the website have been updated.

Mrs. Bett also reported the Committee hopes to have the new edition of the Borough newsletter available by the end of March. She asked for each committee to submit a brief update on their progress.

In addition, Mrs. Bett noted another winter storm approaching late Wednesday and into Thursday this week.

Mr. Thornton asked if a new separate email account could be set up for the two solicitors to enable easier access to Borough records and scheduled meetings. Mrs. Patsch will reach out to Mike at Connolly Steele and have him create an account solicitor@benavon.com

Finance

Mr. Pipery noted that the tax rate millage will be presented to Council in the next month by calculations put forth by the December Ordinance. Once initial calculations are complete, he will forward to council with an explanation ahead of the meeting. These calculations will set the millage for the tax bills going out later in the year.

Mr. Pipery also reported the final 2021 financials will be presented in the coming month once final incoming invoices have been posted. Mr. Wagner asked if the ACORD payment on the Accounts Payable list was accounted for in the budget, and Mr. Pipery stated that it was as expected and is billed in quarterly payments.

Public Safety

Mayor Hughes-Holcomb noted that at the beginning of her term as mayor she notified Council of her desire to perform weddings. As she has been re-elected to another four-year term, she was notifying council that she will again like to perform that service.

Mr. Wagner noted a recent meeting with Jarrod from Harshman. Mr. Thornton, Mr. Wagner and the Borough Secretary all met to discuss the Harshman shared document updates and asked for a monthly meeting with Harshman to improve communications in reporting property statuses.

Mayor Hughes-Holcomb noted two recent emergency events in the Borough both at the coffee shop and in an apartment building, and noted the great response from emergency services.

In addition, Officer Andreakos has been following the violators of the snow removal ordinance and distributing a letter from the PD to have those areas cleared. Mrs. Patsch will ask for a copy of the letter for Borough records.

Public Works

Mr. Pipery explained that the Borough has two separate sewer systems, one sanitary and one storm sewer. These require a permit from the DEP to allow flow to go into the river. The storm sewer records and system are audited every 3 to 4 years. Ben Avon's audit took place last week and there were no findings.

Mrs. Roggenkamp reported that in December a meeting was held with Gateway Engineers concerning the current GIS system that is being phased out. There will be a cost to transition to a new system, and there are advantages to keeping the system with the engineering firm.

Mrs. Roggenkamp and Mr. Pipery also discussed a large retaining wall project that will be coming in the Spring. More information will be available in next month's meeting.

Ms. Roggenkamp stated considering the recent bridge collapse in the city, she would like to get inspection reports on the Port Authority bridges in the Borough for our records.

Community of Governments

Mr. Wagner stated new leadership was elected at the last delegate meeting. One topic of importance is the glass recycling program, and he would like to work with Emsworth as a collection location. Ms. Washington attended the presentation on the Route 65 Corridor study and reported that there was a call to improve the aesthetic; making the corridor greener, cleaner and more safe.

Sustainability

Mrs. Roggenkamp reported the committee met for the first time on the 23rd. The energy assessment team was waiting for more utility information, and now will finish. She is continuing research on renewable resources for the Borough utilities. She is looking for a five year plan.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Gaming Grant

Mr. Wagner reported the Borough was the named recipient for a state gaming grant in the amount of \$200,000. The committee will be meeting this coming Sunday night, and lay out the next steps. This grant will cover the improvements to the envelope of the building.

Park Project

Mr. Wagner was working on a survey to post on the website in order to engage residents in the park improvement project. He is looking at an Eagle Scout project in the Spring to help with park clean up.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *To discuss potential litigation*

Motion: Ms. Bett; **Second:** Mr. Thornton; **Motion Carried** to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:10 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Thornton; **Second:** Mr. Pipery; **Motion Carried** to adjourn Executive Session at 8:50 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Thornton; **Second:** Ms. Bett; **Motion Carried** by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrie Patsch
Borough Secretary