



Borough of Ben Avon

Council Work Session

February 7, 2023

The Borough of Ben Avon Council met in a work session meeting on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, virtually and at 7101 Church Avenue. President Richard Wagner presided and opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Jennifer Bett, Russell Kuehner, Ken Opiery, Kara Roggenkamp, Richard Wagner, Melanie Hughes-Holcomb

Council Members Absent: Jim Thornton, Tavia Washington

Others Present: Representative Arvind Venkat, Solicitor Daniel Conlon, Borough Secretary Terrie Patsch

INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION

Representative Arvind Venkat met with Council members to introduce himself, outline some of his goals while in office, and ask the Council about any concerns or questions they may have to ask of him. In addition, he shared three important requests for those in attendance. 1) everyone registers for his e-newsletter, 2) he would like to be kept abreast of events in the community so he can be engaged and present, 3) if the members know of something going on in the community, please let him know whether it is good or bad.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – *there was no public participation.*

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Administration Committee

Ms. Bett reported the staff laptops were delivered and installed this past week. Ms. Patsch is working with Connolly Steele to address any problems that arise during the process.

Public Affairs

Ms. Bett said the Spring edition of the Ben Avon Bulletin is in process. Ms. Roggenkamp sent out a draft this evening to the Council members for their review and comments. Mini copies of the publication were provided for those in attendance to see the current layout. The new edition

is quite full, but Ms. Roggenkamp reported she will need to add the Mayor's Message once it is complete, and some updates from Public Works and a building update from Mr. Wagner.

Ms. Bett also reported that four companies have been interviewed for website design and maintenance providers, and there will be a committee meeting in the next week to narrow the choices and present them to the Council.

Finance

Mr. Opipery plans to use the formula established by resolution to provide the 2023 tax rate. In addition, the final 2022 statements may be available for approval at the February Council meeting.

Public Safety

Mr. Wagner noted a recent email by the current Emsworth fire marshal offering his services to Ben Avon. Mayor Holcomb reached out to Jim Kohl, Fire Chief, and the president both of Emsworth Fire Company for more information on this service, however she has not had a response at this time. Mr. Wagner stated that more information would be needed for further discussion.

Mr. Wagner updated the Council on recent complaints and steps taken to address the ongoing problems at 225 Park Avenue. Mr. Conlon worked with Harshman to send a request for access letter so the properties can be inspected by code enforcement. There have been reports of rodents and other vermin as well as garbage.

Mr. Wagner also shared that the ongoing dispute on Woodland and Flaccus should be nearing an end as the remediation period is ending this week. If the problem of the fence's position is not corrected then, the complaint will go to the magistrate.

The settlement agreement signed off with the Ben Avon Fire Company that was approved at January's meeting has not been picked up by the Bellevue Fire Chief as of today. Mr. Prichard has been notified several times that the signed document is ready for him, and today he was also made aware of the backlog of mail in the former location of the BA Fire Company mailbox.

Public Works

Mr. Opipery reported that after a listing on Municibid, Mr. Regrut secured the rescue truck sale for \$10,001.00. Ms. Patsch has informed the insurance carrier to remove the vehicle from the policy. Mr. Conlon recommended the Council vote via resolution at the next council meeting and formally approve the sale.

He also presented a diagram of the ongoing problem with the Western Avenue sewage leak and updated the Council on the options available and their costs. He stated that the leak could be at one of several offsets in the line and felt the best course of action was to line the pipe manhole to manhole as shown on the map.

MOTION: Mr. Pipery; **SECOND:** Ms. Roggenkamp; **MOTION CARRIED** by unanimous voice vote to allow an emergency authorization to repair to the sewer line up to \$35,000.

Mr. Pipery stated that Mr. Regrut continues to research options for a street sweeper for the borough and has found one that fits his needs through COSTARS. The sweeper in question lists for \$215,000 and should be available in April. The sweeper is smaller and has a patent on its design. It would be compact and appropriate for smaller streets. Ms. Roggenkamp noted that after investigating the options for an electric vehicle, she has concluded the purchase would enable the Public Works staff to keep the streets clear and work on other priorities for the Borough that would be in line with the Climate Action Plan. Mr. Pipery also noted that used equipment has been considered, but it is costly and would have a shorter lifespan.

Community of Governments

Mr. Wagner reported that Waste Management will again be collecting glass in the recycling. The sudden change in policy was communicated poorly, and many were confused by conflicting information. The COG (Councils of Governments) will keep the glass recycling locations for the time being.

In addition, he noted that the COG will be sponsoring a happy hour at the Lincoln Brewery on February 16th at 6:00 p.m.

Sustainability

Ms. Roggenkamp reported that Mr. Regrut has informed her that the decorative streetlights have been replaced with LED bulbs reducing the usage from 150W to 36W. He asked her to contact Duquesne Light and ask about reducing the bills to reflect the changes. In addition, various streetlights in the Borough are being replaced by Duquesne Light by their own process, and hopefully reducing costs as well.

Special Projects

Centennial Building Project

Mr. Wagner stated a second grant was submitted with estimate amounts and he hopes to hear on the local share in April or May. He will reach out to Representative Venkat for more information.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Kuehner; **Second:** Mr. Pipery; **Motion Carried** by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting to executive session at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrie Patsch
Borough Secretary