

MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK

MINUTES OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Date: April 11, 2011

Time: 7:30 P.M.

Location: Municipal Building

1. Roll Call

Present: Council Members Allen, Dixon, Gibbons, Hannan, Harrison, McLean, Moury, and O'Brien

Absent: Council Member Pape

Also Present: Mayor Morton; William Spagnol, Manager; Robert McTiernan, Solicitor; Judith Miller, Assistant Manager; Robert Cygrymus, Director of Community Services; Chief John Mackey; Gerard Duke, Municipal Planner; Mark Romito, Finance Director; Mike Smith, Environmental Engineer; Jean Statler, Municipal Engineer

Mr. Moury announced that following the Pledge of Allegiance, there will be a moment of silence in memory of Sharon Zimmermann, a member of our Municipal family.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence was held in honor of Sharon Zimmermann.

3. Chair Announcement

An Executive Session of Council was conducted on March 28, 2011 to discuss real estate issues and Police Department legal issues. An Executive Session of Council was held tonight, April 11, 2011, to discuss Police Department issues.

Reports of Officials

4. Librarian's Report

Library Director, Christine McIntosh, stated that the Bethel Park Public Library provides services to inform, inspire and enrich the community. Ms. McIntosh announced funding news. Last July, Legislation was passed at the State level that earmarked 1% of table gaming funds for Libraries. The first payment was received and payments are to arrive quarterly. This year's amount is expected to

be around \$12,000. For those of you who participate in table gamings at the Casino, the Library thanks you.

The Library is currently seeking board members. This is an excellent leadership development opportunity for residents of the Municipality over the age of 18. They are looking for advocates who can donate approximately 2 hours per week. The Board meets one evening a month and for committee meetings as needed. People with interest and experience in fundraising or marketing can call the Library or send a letter of interest with a current resume to Christine's attention.

Ms. McIntosh reminded everyone that April 12, 2011 is the last day for the AARP tax aide. This is on a first-come, first-served basis. Bring last year's tax return and pertinent documents for this year's return.

Upcoming programs: Tuesday, April 12 at 7:00 p.m., the Library is offering a program called "What Happens When We Die". Thursday, April 14 is Home School Happenings Day from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The program is geared towards the home schooling community in the Municipality. This is held once a month and is opened to all home-schooled students in kindergarten through Grades 5 or 6. Wednesday, April 20 at 7:00 p.m., there will be story time for adults. This is a program where Ms. McIntosh reads to adults. All of these programs are free of charge and open to the public.

It is time for the Library's annual gala entitled Sip, Savor and Support. The theme is Night at the Races. The gala will be held in the Library on Friday, May 6 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 which includes alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, traditional Kentucky Derby finger foods and desserts. You will be entitled to name a horse in one of the races, and also entitles you to enter the book sale preview party in Council Chambers. The book sale will continue and be opened to the public on Saturday and Sunday, May 7 and 8. The gala will be a 21 and over event because alcohol will be served. Tickets can be purchased at the Library or on line at the website. If you would like more information on the gala, book sale, or any other program, call or check the website at www.bethelparklibrary.org

5. Police Chief's Report

Chief John Mackey announced that the Crime Watch Program will be reinstated. This program was not held for some time, but it will be revived by the use of the Swift Reach notification system. This gives the opportunity to organize the Crime Watch captains. Two meetings have been scheduled for those who might be interested in signing up as a Crime Watch captain or become involved in the program. On Monday, May 2, meetings are scheduled for 1:30 p.m. or at 6:30 p.m. at the Bethel Park Community Center. Chief Mackey and Crime Prevention Officer Tom Rigatti will host the meetings. You can sign up at the meeting if you are interested in participating or you can attend just to ask questions. Please spread the word to neighbors and family members. He looks forward to bringing the program back even stronger than it has been.

Chief Mackey announced that the Annual Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Bethel Park Police Charity Basketball game will be held on Friday, April 29, 2011 at the Bethel Park High School Gymnasium. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. with a game between players from the Police Department vs. School District employees prior to the Steelers game at 8:00 p.m. Proceed will benefit the Bethel Park Police Association's Sgt. Charles Bonczek Scholarship Fund. Each year, a couple of scholarships are awarded to high school students that plan to attend college to study criminal justice. Sgt. Bonczek was with the police department for over 30 years.

The Police Pals are sponsoring discounted tickets to four Pittsburgh Pirates games. The form and details are in the upcoming issue of the Bethel Park Chronicles and also on the Municipality's website.

Last year, the police department participated, along with the Drug Enforcement Administration, in a National Drug Take-Back Day at the Community Center. The program will be held this year on Saturday, April 30, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. You can bring your unwanted or expired medications (pills and capsules only) to the Community Center. They are turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration and disposed of safely. Please do not wash medications down the sink or flush any medications because it is not good for the environment.

Chief announced that the week of May 15 through 21, 2011 is Police Memorial Week. Blue ribbons are available to the public to tie on your car antenna, rear view mirror or door handle. This will show support for law enforcement. It has been tough in the area recently with the loss of police officers in the line of duty and last week's incident with the shooting of a police officer in Clariton.

Last Friday, the Police Department's Citizen's Police Academy and Law Enforcement Apprentice Program had a graduation ceremony at the Community Center. It was an extremely successful year for both programs. Some Council Members were in attendance and remarked how proud they were of the program and what was done for the community. The members of the Citizen's Academy are in attendance wearing their shirts from the Academy. Tom Rigatti, Crime Prevention Officer, also in attendance. He coordinated the program and many compliments were given to Chief Mackey by the members of the academy on the job that Officer Rigatti does.

Chief introduced and thanked Officer Rigatti and asked him to step forward along with the members of the Academy. Chief offered his thanks for their involvement in the community and the with the police department and then introduced Mr. David DeLallo.

Master Sgt. John DeLallo (USAAF, Ret.), on behalf of the members of the Academy, thanked Chief Mackey and Crime Prevention Officer Rigatti and made a statement to Municipal Council, Mayor Morton and the Municipal Manager relative to various events as a residents of the Municipality of Bethel Park and the positive experiences of the students of the Citizen's Police Academy.

Mr. McLean followed up on the Chief's discussion about the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program. He stated that this is a good example of the kind of program where the Municipality and the government provide the leadership, but the success of the program depends on the response of the people of the community. The people from the Academy are a great example of the interest that the residents show in their community and law enforcement. The Neighborhood Crime Watch Program is an extension of that and in order to be successful, the people in the community are needed to respond. He encouraged everyone in the community to attend the meeting on May 2nd. The program will be arranged by Ward, so if anyone is interested in being a captain, you can attend the meeting or contact your Council Member indicating your willingness to serve as a captain. The Chief will tell you that law enforcement begins with the people who live in the community and on the streets. It is a fervent wish to get this program reestablished and make it successful.

Mr. Moury mentioned that residents who do not want to get involved can access the Anonomous Tip Line at 412-851-BPPD (2773). The calls are not traced, just leave the information and the police will follow up.

Again, Chief Mackey encouraged residents to obtain a blue ribbon. They are available at the Police Records Room, Evey Hardware, Eat 'n Park on Route 88 and Skip Young's Auto Repair on South Park Road at Drake Road.

6. Fire Chief's Report

None

7. Mayor's Report

Mayor Motion mentioned that Judge McLean, former Mayor of Bethel Park and Allegheny County Judge and father of Council Member Jim McLean, was in the audience.

Mayor Morton announced the ninety-plus birthdays for April.

Mayor Morton then recognized and welcomed the Southwestern Pennsylvania Registered Nurses Association who is celebrating their 50 anniversary. A Proclamation was presented to Emily Machery, past president, in recognition of their 50th Anniversary.

Mayor Morton mention that he is pleased to be invited annually to the nurse's Veterans' Day Memorial Ceremony at South Park in November.

Mrs. Machery commented that she was the first and 40th president and it is a pleasure to represent the club. She thanked Mayor Morton for the recognition.

At this time, Mayor Morton recognized Vince Gastgeb, Allegheny County Councilman and Ed Kress, Allegheny County Councilman At-Large.

Mr. Gastgeb mentioned that he also gets invited to the annual Nurse's Veterans' Day Ceremony at South Park and is proud that Allegheny County has been able to help with some of the aspects that transpired over the last couple of years on the beautification and thanked the nurses for all they do.

Mr. Gastgeb introduced Ed Kress, County Councilman At-Large. He mentioned that, after a delay in getting started, Bethel Church Road was paved. Allegheny County used new technology regarding curbing and pavement. It was dug deeper and space-aged type polymers were used. New concrete-type islands were built where Bethel Church Road meets Ft. Couch Road.

He also announced that the Montour Trail and the Montour Bridge project is now going on, which has great significance to Bethel Park and recreation. Construction has begun and again, he gave credit to Municipal Council, Municipal Manager Bill Spagnol and Municipal Staff for working with Allegheny County. Allegheny County purchased the bridge for \$1.00 and worked with PennDOT, but came up \$250,000 short despite volunteer money and in-kind contributions. Mr. Gastgeb was able to obtain the \$250,000 needed in the Capital Budget. Now the missing link is completed and this means a lot to everyone including the Taylor family. Another goal of Mr. Gastgeb's is to complete the link to South Park.

Mr. Gastgeb and Senator John Pippy will be announcing a \$500,000 State grant for the fairground area at South Park. Lights are there now for people to be able to walk in the evenings. Car cruises are held and more children are using the fields.

Mr. Gastgeb then asked Mr. Kress to speak about the county assessments, particularly regarding a one year delay in doing the assessments. He would like to see the appeals happen first and then pay the taxes accordingly. He would like to protect senior citizens during this period.

Mr. Kress stated that he is the new County Councilman At-Large. He agrees with Mr. Gastgeb on the one-year delay for assessments in order to have time for an appeal before you pay the higher taxes. He recently introduced a bill to protect seniors from losing homes from tax sales. Allegheny County has the second oldest population in the country. After paying taxes for 30 or 40 years, seniors should not lose their home to a tax sale especially because the equity in the house is the only savings that some seniors have. He feels that they should have a licenced real estate agent sale the property for fair market value. The bill was introduced and he and Mr. Gastgeb will be working on this. Nursing home care is another issue that he is working on to ensure that the patients are getting the best possible care in Allegheny County and that more inspections take place.

Mr. Harrison asked Mr. Gastgeb if he has been taking heat from the County Republican Chairman and the Tribune Review and if he would he like to say any thing about this.

Mr. Gastgeb responded by saying that he does not believe that they should be talking politics in a governmental meeting.

Mr. Moury followed up by saying that delaying the assessments for a year would make sense from a financial perspective. It is up to Municipal Council to pass their budget by the end of November. The last time this happened where the assessment went into effect and we had a one-year grace period, we had a number of assessment appeals that were held after the tax bills went out which made it very difficult to generate or determine what our tax income is going to be. Let's not put the cart before the horse.

8. Approval of Minutes

Regular Council Meeting Minutes of March 14.

Motion by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2011. Motion Carried 8-0. Council Member Pape absent.

9. Bills and Payrolls

Motion by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mr. Gibbons to approve the Bills and Payrolls for the Municipality per Bill List #041111 in the amount of \$726,850.31. Motion Carried 8 - 0. Council Member Pape absent.

10. Residents' Comments (non-agenda items only)

Richard Chongaway, Eighth Ward, Bethel Park gave comments and asked questions to Municipal Council and the Municipal Manager on various municipal, signage ordinances and park issues.

GENERAL POLICY AND FINANCE

11. Citizens' Comments – General Policy and Finance Items
None

12. General Policy and Finance Items

Resolution – Small Games of Chance

Motion by Mr. Hannan, Seconded by Mr. Allen to approve a resolution recognizing the Bethel Park Public Library as a Civic and Service Association under the Local Options Small Games of Chance Act. Motion Carried 8 - 0. Council Member Pape absent.

PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS

- 13. Planning and Zoning Items

None

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE ITEMS

- 14. Citizens' Comments – Health, Safety and Welfare Items

None

- 15. Health Safety and Welfare Items

Resolution – Emergency Operation Plan

Motion by Mr. McLean, Seconded by Mr. Allen to adopt a resolution updating the Municipality's Emergency Operation Plan as per the recommendation of Police Chief John Mackey. Motion Carried 8 - 0. Council Member Pape absent.

Ordinance – Removal of Stop Sign

Motion by Mr. McLean, Seconded by Mr. O'Brien to approve an ordinance for the removal of Stop Sign on Keystone Drive at the Entrance/Exit of the Former Logan Elementary School. Motion Carried 8 -0. Council Member Pape absent.

Mr. McLean commented on the earlier discussion on taxes and in particular the upcoming assessment on county taxes. He wants to make sure that people are aware that there are a number of tax abatement and exemption programs administered by Allegheny County. Most people are aware of the Homestead exemption because it is required that you receive a notice from the school district. There are a number of other programs that are not as well publicized. You can receive abatements when you do renovations on your homes in connection with new construction. There is also a senior citizen property tax relief abatement that is available to seniors over 60 years of age if they meet certain income requirements. You can get more information on any of the programs by going to Allegheny County Treasury website or by calling them at 412-350-4100.

PUBLIC WORKS AND MAINTENANCE ITEMS

- 16. Public Works and Maintenance Item

None

Mr. O'Brien announced that last month he put out a call to the people of Bethel Park for information on Leo John Kelly. Two individuals helped and they are present tonight, Diane Kletch and LaVerne McConnell who knew the family of Leon John (Jack) Kelly. He will be remembered on Memorial Day and never forgotten by this community.

Mr. O'Brien said goodbye to his friend, Sharon Zimmermann. She was a great asset to this community and a great organizer for the Veterans' Memorial.

Mr. Moury then gave a quick overview on the ID Card System at the Community Center that went into effective in January. The percentage of non-resident people using the center had climbed to 26% in December of 2010. Since January 1, 2011 when the card system was implemented, from the revenue side, we collected around \$15,000. The number of non-residents using the gym after 3:00 p.m. went from 26% in December to 13% in January and to 12% in February. The attendance is virtually the same. The program we implemented is working. We appreciate the support from the community in getting membership card and, in turn, making the center available for Bethel Park residents.

17. Adjournment

Motion and second to adjourn at 8:28 p.m.



Manager