

***MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK***

**MINUTES  
OF  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date:** October 10, 2011

**Time:** 7:30 P.M.

**Location:** Municipal Building

1. Roll Call

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

**Absent:** Council Members Dixon and Pape

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Chair Announcement

Executive Sessions of Council were conducted on September 26, 2011 to discuss Public Works and Police Department staffing and contractual issues and on October 10, 2011 to discuss Public Works and Police Department staffing and contractual issues.

**Reports of Officials**

4. Librarian's Report

None

5. Police Chief's Report

Chief John Mackey made several announcements. Halloween Trick or Treat will be observed on Monday, October 31, 2011 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. He asked that parents carefully check children's costumes so they can see, and use flashlights. Also, he urges residents to be careful as they drive through the community while children are out. If there are any concerns, contact the Police Department immediately.

Applications for the Police Citizen's Academy and Law Enforcement Apprenticeship programs can be obtained on the website as well as at the Records Room at the Municipal Building. The programs run for 12 consecutive weeks beginning January 18, 2012.

Chief mentioned that the annual Bethel Park Police Pals Food Drive will begin November 28 and run for a little over two weeks until December 14. Volunteers are needed to collect, sort and box donations. Residents are asked to contact Officer Tom Rigatti at 412-831-6800, extension 104, for more details on volunteering.

Chief announced that the third Drug Enforcement Administration's National Drug Take-Back Program will take place at the Community Center on Saturday, October 29, 2011, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Residents can bring unwanted or expired medications (pills and capsules only, no liquids, and taken out of the prescription containers) to the Community Center drop off where they are turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration and disposed of safely.

The next Crime Watch meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Currently, we have over 600 volunteers and the goal is to have 1,000.

Mr. Harrison asked Chief Mackey if the Police Department will be distributing the flashing light pins for Halloween this year. Chief replied that he will check into this and, if available, they will be passed out.

#### 6. Fire Chief's Report

Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Department Deputy Fire Chief Bob Brown announced that bingo continues at the Brightwood Fire Station on Saturdays. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. and bingo begins at 7:00 p.m.

He said that October is Fire Safety Month. Batteries should be changed in smoke and C.O. detectors. Also, log burning fire places should be serviced at this time of year.

Deputy Fire Chief Brown said that the third fundraising mailing will be going out shortly to those residents who have not yet donated.

He then mentioned to check the Almanac for an upcoming article about two Bethel Park volunteer firemen who ran in the Tunnel To Towers Race in New York City recently which coincided with the Tenth Anniversary of 9-11.

At this time, the Fire Chief's report was announced for the month of September.

7. Mayor's Report

The Mayor announced the 90+ Club birthdays for October. He then mentioned that the annual 90+ Club Luncheon was held on Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>. The two oldest members in attendance were Curtis Campbell, age 103, and Patsy Denti, age 102.

Mayor and Mrs. Morton recently attended the Fireman's Dinner. The dinner was a very nice affair and he encourages everyone to attend next year.

Mayor Morton then mentioned that the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held at the Community Center on Monday, December 5, 2011. At this event, the Bethel Park 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Time Capsule will be dedicated, therefore, concluding the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary festivities.

8. Approval of Minutes

Regular Council Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2011.

Motion by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2011. Motion Carried 7 - 0. Council Members Dixon and Pape absent.

Public Hearing of September 26, 2011.

Motion by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve the Public Hearing Minutes of September 26, 2011 - Comcast Cable Franchise proposed agreement between the Municipality and Comcast of California / Pennsylvania / Utah / Washington. Motion Carried 7 - 0. Council Members Dixon and Pape absent.

Special Meeting of September 26, 2011.

Motion by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of September 26, 2011 - Ordinance authorizing execution of a Cable Franchise Agreement between the Municipality and Comcast of California / Pennsylvania / Utah / Washington. Motion Carried 7 - 0. Council Members Dixon and Pape absent.

9. Bills and Payrolls

Motion by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve the Bills and Payrolls for the Municipality per Bill List #101011 in the amount of \$2,738,565.77. Motion Carried 7 - 0. Council Members Dixon and Pape absent.

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

None

**GENERAL POLICY AND FINANCE**

## 11. General Policy and Finance Items

None

Per request from Mr. Moury, the following is verbatim text.

Mr. Moury said:

"I think it has been reported in the paper that on September 1, Municipal Council received a copy of the Proposed 2012 Budget. It wasn't good news. It was basically maintaining the services we had for the Municipality and it was recommended that we have a 1.25 mill increase. Council has asked staff to look at it. We went through a list at our last Committee Meeting when we were doing the budget review. We cut several hundred thousand dollars out. We met tonight before coming out and we cut some more money out. We have a Public Hearing scheduled for October 24th at 7:45 p.m. in this room. I would encourage anybody that has any question - there is a copy of the budget in the library. If you have any specific questions, contact your Council Member or the Mayor. We are looking at everything. I think it was reported that we are looking at fireworks, to personnel, to equipment, grass cutting. Everything is on the table at this point and time. There is not a lot in there without affecting the service to the community, but we are always looking on how to do things better. If there is a savings that we can make, we are trying to. Not every decision we make is going to be right, but I promise you that we are going to look at everything and then after the budget is done, on a regular basis, we do review the budget. If some of the decisions we made don't necessarily work out as we thought, we're looking to make adjustments. Kind of tied into that there are two other "unknown" factors for us in 2012. First thing is that the State is going into a regional collection system. We had used Jordan Tax Service for the last several years, actually, to collect our wage tax. Effective the first of the year, the State, in their infinite wisdom, passed some legislation a few years ago and now there will be four tax collectors for the entire Allegheny County. It's the City of Pittsburgh, and then the county is broken up into three areas. Our region, which is the southern region, will be done by Jordan Tax Service who will still do the collections. From a downside, it is projected to increase our collection rate because now the employers are mandated

to collect our earned income tax. The downside is we are paying a little bit more to have our taxes collected and we are not 100 percent sure what the flow-through process is going to be. We are not sure what our cash flow is going to be. So, it is going to be a year of concern and Mr. Romito, our Finance Director, will be monitoring getting our monies in. So, that is a tough situation for the Municipality. Kind of tied in with that, it has been reported in the paper over the last two years that there is a new reassessment coming to Allegheny County, and I will say that we may or may not see it. There've been some reports that it is due out in December. Other reports have it due out early next year. The County, from what I read in the paper, is projecting to be about 70,000 appeals. Having said all that, we are going to probably end up passing our budget based on the information that we know at that time. If the assessment value changes, we don't normally send our tax bills until June or July. There is a chance that the millage rate could be adjusted. It would have to be revenue neutral to where, I believe, this is my own opinion, where we approved a budget this year. We are going to seek clarification from the solicitor. We are going to see if and when a new assessment comes out. But we could be faced with a potential financial hardship because the last time the assessment was done, the Municipality did a revenue neutral where we did not take the 5% windfall because the appeals that were in play, it took us about three years to catch back up on the revenues we lost. In year one, in the new system, we actually collected less than we did the last year on the old system. There are a number of different factors that are going to be influenced on this decision process, but rest assured, we are looking at everything. Thank you."

Mr. Harrison addressed the issue of prevailing wage. He received a letter dated September 30th from Ron Grutza, Assistant Director of Government Affairs for the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs stating "I know you have been a prevailing wage reform warrior over the years. I wanted to call your attention to the recent action alert we sent to all boroughs across the state. The time is NOW for real prevailing wage reform and I think it is now or never." Mr Harrison had relayed the same sentiment last month. He said he sent a copy of this letter to all the Council members, some staff members and to all of the members of SHACOG and encourages folks to call their legislators and tell them that you have been made aware that it is pending and that the people, like the Boroughs' Association, are saying that it is now or never, so let's make it now.

Per request from Mr. Moury, the following is verbatim text.

Mr. Harrison said:

The other thing that I'd just mention in passing, as Mr. Moury mentioned, the fact that there was a letter in the Almanac, and I appreciate the Almanac publishing the letter, which is my take on the proposed budget submitted by the Municipal management. So I am just reminding you, as Mr. Moury indicated, that on October 24<sup>th</sup>, there will be a hearing on the budget, so if you want to talk to Council about any issues in the budget, that's the time to appear here in the Council Chambers and make your feelings known, either pro or con, whatever your take is about. My single main concern is the proposed budget, Mr. Moury

said it has been worked on, but the proposed budget was an increase of 57.3% in the real estate tax. That is from 2.18 mills to 3.43 mills. So the total increase goes into real estate taxes and that covers a large segment of the population of fixed income people, where, if part of it could be put in an earned income, these people don't like to pay taxes either, but at least they are getting a paycheck every week, two weeks or every month. So my whole bit is two things, one, if we could find ways to reduce the amount of increase and the second is to redistribute the collection so it will help the fixed income people in terms of the burden on them. Thank you very much."

12. Citizens' Comments – Planning and Zoning Items

None

**PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS**

13. Transfer of License Agreement – 2840 South Park Road

Motion by Mr. McLean and seconded by Mr. Allen to approve the request made by James Hughes to transfer his rights and responsibilities as contained in the August 13, 2004 License Agreement for the utilization of a parcel of property located at 2840 South Park Road to RIMM, LLC. Motion Carried 7 - 0. Council Members Dixon and Pape absent.

**HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE ITEMS**

14. Health Safety and Welfare Items

None

Mr. McLean mentioned that he had two items of recognition that are appropriate for the members of Council. Governor Tom Corbett announced the formation of the Pennsylvania Dairy Leadership Council and has appointed Council President Moury to the board. Secondly, Mr. McLean said that Allegheny County Council recently named Council Member Hannan as a member of the Council of Friends Organization of South Park. This recognition shows the sort of leadership we have on Council not only by this community but outside of it as well. He offered congratulations to both Mr. Moury and Mr. Hannan.

**PUBLIC WORKS AND MAINTENANCE ITEMS**

16. Public Works and Maintenance Items

None

Mr. O'Brien had two announcements. The first was the reminder regarding fall leaf collection and provided the dates beginning Monday, October 17th and running through Friday, December 2nd with the exception of Thanksgiving week.

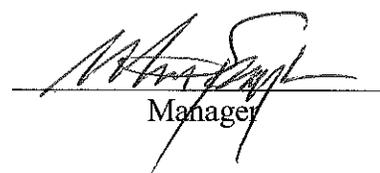
The second announcement is regarding the ongoing work to locate the family of a Vietnam veteran who passed in service. At this time, he asked Mr. McLean to provide the details.

Mr. McLean was happy to announce that the sisters of Private First Class Charles Michael Swaim have been located. An article regarding the Veterans' Memorial Committee's search for his family ran recently in the Almanac which got into the hands of a veteran in Florida who served with Mr. Swaim in Vietnam. He in turn contacted one of the Swaim sisters. Mr. McLean then received correspondence from Mr. Swaim's twin sister Margaret. She and younger sister Julie are deeply honored that their brother will be recognized by the Bethel Park Veterans' Memorial Committee at the upcoming Memorial Day Ceremony in May of 2012 and they both plan to attend. Mr. McLean said that this was accomplished as a result of a great deal of research by State Representative Matt Smith's office, particularly his staff member, Lauren Hurley, and by Bethel Park resident Dick Kraft. A special thank you also goes out to Deana Carpenter, writer for the Almanac.

Mr. O'Brien, on behalf of the Veterans' Memorial Committee, thanked Mr. McLean for stepping up and making this endeavor possible.

17. Adjournment

Motion and second to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

  
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Manager