

MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK

MINUTES OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Date: September 9, 2013

Time: 7:30 P.M.

Location: Municipal Building

1. Roll Call

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

Absent: Council Member Allen

Also Present: Mayor Morton; William Spagnol, Manager; Judith Miller, Assistant Manager; Gerard Duke, Director of Community Services; Robert McTiernan, Solicitor; Police Chief John Mackey; Michael Smith, Municipal Planner/Assistant Director of Community Services; Joseph Villella, Finance Director; Jean Statler, Municipal/Environmental Engineer

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Chair Announcement

Executive Session of Council was conducted on Monday, September 9, 2013 to discuss Police personnel and legal matters.

Reports of Officials

4. Library Director's Report

Library Director, Christine McIntosh, stated that the Bethel Park Public Library provides services to inform, inspire and enrich the community.

Ms. McIntosh is proud to announce that the Bethel Park Library is the first to have access to Gym America which is a digital resource that provides personalized online nutrition, fitness and exercise programs. The program has been selected by Forbes magazine as "Best of Web" for nine consecutive years. You can create an account and access your program from any computer or download the mobile to your device.

Club Hub, various clubs for school aged children from K to Grade 5 begins. You must call to register. Teen Zone begins on Fridays starting on September 13, 2013 for Grades 7 and 8. Ms. McIntosh also stated that September is National Library Card sign-up month.

Ms. McIntosh said that Entertainment Books are available in the Library for \$25 each. Also, the Fall Vendor and Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, October 26, 2013 from 10:00 am to 3:00 p.m.

For more information on any of the programs and services offered by the Library, visit the website at www.bethelparklibrary.org

5. Police Chief's Report

Police Chief John Mackey announced that the next Crime Watch Meeting will be held on Monday, September 16, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Also, the first Crime Watch/Crime Prevention Recognition Dinner will be held on Saturday, October 19, 2013 at the Community Center. Tickets are \$15 each and can be obtained at the Police Records Room or at one of the Crime Watch meeting. At this year's dinner, the Crime Watch officers who have served over the years in that capacity will be honored dating back to Officer John Sherbondy, who is being recognized as the first Crime Watch Officer and credited with starting Crime Watch in Bethel Park over twenty years ago.

The Department is also accepting applications for the 2014 Citizens' Police Academy. The Academy begins on Wednesday, January 15, 2014. This is a 12-week program. Experts in law and law enforcement will act as guest instructors. Anyone interested in attending can contact Officer Tom Rigatti or visit the Police Records Room to apply.

Chief said the Police Department will participate once again in the Drug Enforcement Administration Drug Take Back Program on Saturday, October 26, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Bethel Park Community Center as well as the Highmark Direct Building on North Highland Road. Chief reminded everyone that they will accept pills only, no liquids or needles.

Chief reminded the community that the new school year has begun and asked that drivers adhere to the 15-mile per hour school speed limits posted and to please continue to be cognizant of the children in the neighborhood who stand at bus stops and walk to and from school in the morning, at recess and again at the end of the school day. Speeding in a school zone is a major violation.

Chief Mackey said that the Police Department recently came in possession of a number of lost or stolen bicycles. These bicycles have not been claimed. If you have a missing bike, you can contact Detective Fred Paganico at extension 413. All unclaimed bicycles will be donated to SHIM.

Finally, Chief announced that the Police Department was victorious over the Fire Department at the Community Day softball game on Saturday by a score of 24-12.

6. Fire Chief's Report

None

7. Mayor's Report

Mayor Morton presented the winner's trophy from the Community Day softball game to Chief Mackey. The Fire Department was not present to accept the trophy for the losing team.

Mayor stated that Community Day was very successful and thanked Chuck Stover and the Recreation Department for doing a great job again this year.

Mayor Morton then announced the 90 Plus Club Birthdays for the month of September.

At this time, Council President presented Mayor Morton with a birthday cake in honor of his upcoming birthday.

8. Approval of Minutes

Regular Council Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2013.

Motion by Mr. Hannan and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2013. Motion Carried 8 – 0. Council Member Allen absent.

9. Bills and Payrolls

Motion by Mr. Hannan and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve the Bills and Payrolls for the Municipality per Bill List #090913 in the amount of \$664,252.26. Motion Carried 8 – 0. Council Member Allen absent.

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

None

GENERAL POLICY AND FINANCE

11. Citizens' Comments – General Policy and Finance Items

None

12. General Policy and Finance Items

Approval of Retirement – Police Officer Thomas Rigatti

Motion by Mr. Hannan and seconded by Mr. O'Brien to approve the DROP Pension Retirement Election of Police Officer Thomas Rigatti with an effective date of September 1, 2013, in accordance with Ordinance 08-10-09. Motion Carried 8 – 0. Council Member Allen absent.

13. Resolution – Purchasing Policy

Motion by Mr. Hannan and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to adopt a Resolution to increase the threshold for a Municipal Purchase Order from \$100 to \$1,000, effective October 1, 2013. Motion Carried 8 – 0. Council Member Allen absent.

14. Ordinance – Sewage Rate Increase

Motion by Mr. Hannan and seconded by Mrs. Gibbons to approve an Ordinance amending Section 55.2 of Ordinance 7-12-93A (Bethel Park Code) establishing sewer rates. Motion Carried 7 – 1. Council Member Allen absent. Dissenting vote was by Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Moury turned the gavel over to Mr. Hannan.

Mr. Moury said:

“I will just talk real briefly about this. Real quick, over the weekend, I guess Friday a week ago, we received a copy of the Municipal Budget. Good news, bad news. The Municipal millage rate for the operations of the Municipality will remain unchanged at 1.98, I believe. There will be the additional .34 mil that will be added to that. That will be a dedicated tax strictly for the Fire Department. The budget also has a separate fund for the Fire Department. While we’re going to collect it, we’re going to distribute it. All the bills are going to be paid by the Municipality. As we’ve talked over the last several months, we are in the process of doing a bond issue. We’re in the process of developing an agreement with the Fire Department hopefully to be executed prior to January 1st. So the Municipal operations will stay at 1.98 but you will have the .34 mil increase. We had a Budget meeting this evening before we came out. We made some adjustments to the budget. A lot of work was done by staff getting it to us, covering all the things that we expect as Municipal Council and as a community to cover. On the down side, the sewage rate increases we have tonight are going up and a lot of people asked me why. Primarily, it is due to our commitment we have on projects and updating the sewer system. We are under consent order via ALCOSAN via our Sewage Treatment Plant, with the EPA. And tied to all of these projects we have in place over the next ten or fifteen years, our revenues are declining. Our usage at the end of last year, we collected about a \$400,000 less than what we had projected through June of this year. We get a quarterly review from our Finance Director, our collections year-to-date were down about 6%. So our expenses are flat or increasing slightly, our revenues are down. We opted to do this effective

November 1st because if we waited until January, we aren't sure where we would be financially, if we would have the amount of money we needed to pay our bills. But secondly, no increase is easy. This will minimize a little bit the increase of the rates to the rate payers, increasing the base from \$10 to \$13 and we are also increasing the usage. The base we have not done in several years, but we need to kind of stabilize the revenues as the usage goes down. There could be many reasons, it could be the people in the community are conserving, could be people are not watering their grass or washing their cars. It has been an extremely wet summer so our overall usage is down. The thing we are voting on tonight is increasing rates and like I said earlier, our budget process, there is a copy in the Library. We will continue and we will have what will be scheduled is a Public Hearing and potentially voting on the new Municipal budget in November of 2013."

Mr. Harrison said:

"I'm serving my fortieth year on this governing body, and I endeavor to live by the law to the best of my ability as I understood it. And also to serve the constituents, the people of Bethel Park as best I can. Several years ago, the school district collected, if you opted not to pay your sewer bill at one time, you could pay it in quarters, but they skipped a month. They'd do October then December, so on and so forth. Well, the school district decided to make it four months in a row and I got many calls from people, we have a lot of, in my district, for instance, the old mining town, we have a lot of widows who have a pension that hadn't changed probably ever, their husbands worked in the mine and that type thing, and their feeling was that they have this minimum money but they try to put a little bit of money aside so they have money to give to maybe children or grandchildren, that type thing over the holidays. Well, I made a stew about that which I want to do on occasion and the school district backed down. They went back to the every other month. Well, in this case, I'm going to make a claim that, and I just want to mention it, recently, I've had to contend with about being a law abider, I had to contend with this governing body doing what I call trashing the constitution of Bethel Park, which is the Home Rule Charter, relying on what I call a Philadelphia lawyer ruling by our solicitor, Mr. McTiernan, to give question on the ballot in May and all that was caused by the ineptness of this governing body. All they had to do was take the action a month earlier, and we wouldn't have gone through that. Well, in this case, their stating that the ordinance presented starts the collection of the additional fee in November and we got the same situation we had with the school district in my opinion. The people are concerned that now the few bucks they've been putting aside, they're going to end up having to dip into to pay additional sewer fees and I hear what Mr. Moury says, but I don't think a couple of months are going to kill us, so what having given you the background about the concerns starting the increase in November, I make a Motion that we amend the Ordinance to delay the start of the collection two months, in other words, we start it in January instead of November. Thank you.

Mr. Hannan said there is a Motion on the floor to amend the Motion on the floor about the amenities of the sewer ordinance. There was no second to the Motion. The Motion failed.

Mr. Hannan returned the gavel to Mr. Moury.

PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS

15. Planning and Zoning Items

No Items

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE ITEMS

16. Citizens' Comments – Health, Safety and Welfare Items

No Items

Mr. McLean announced community items. The much anticipated common household chemical recycling event is scheduled by Allegheny County for Saturday, September 21, 2013 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the South Park Wave Pool Parking Lot. There is a charge of \$2 per gallon, cash only.

Also, Mr. McLean said the Bethel Park Recreation Department is sponsoring Town Hall Speakers at the Community Center. Local Sports Author and Historian Jim O'Brien is scheduled to speak on Wednesday, September 18th at 6:30 p.m. Dr. Cyril Wecht, Forensic Pathologist, will speak on Wednesday, November 20th at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free.

PUBLIC WORKS AND MAINTENANCE ITEMS

17. Public Works and Maintenance Items

No Items

Mr. O'Brien said that during the month of September, the flags on the Veterans Memorial are in honor of the Air Force. The committee is leaving the Navy flag next to the ramp up until the end of October in honor of the late Judge Rob Wyda in an effort to help the community heal from his death.

Mr. O'Brien mentioned that the paint on the engraving of the pavers has lightened over the years. Mr. O'Brien, along with his daughter and Caroline Briggs, volunteered to darken the engraving with sharpie pens in an attempt to restore their color. He extends his thanks for their help with this arduous task.

18. Adjournment

Motion and second to adjourn at 7:58 P.M.



Manager