



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Amanda M. Dewey
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)
Christopher S. Brittan Powell
Jason W. Papanikolas
Ethan D. Sweep

Town Meeting Minutes Town Council Chamber April 13, 2022| 7:00 p.m.

Call to order

Mayor Amanda Dewey called the meeting to order at 7PM. Present were Mayor Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell, and Councilmember Ethan Sweep, as well as Town Manager Laura Allen and Assistant to Town Manager Yvonne Odoi. Also present were Angie Wolfinger, Dave Wolfinger and Matthew Huddle of Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department (BHVFD).

Pledge of Allegiance

1. **Announcements**

No announcements.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Dewey asked the Council to approve the agenda: CM Brittan-Powell moved; CM Papanikolas seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Public Hearing**

- a. Introduction & First Reading: Ordinance 183 A-Amend the FY 2022 Budget to add ARPA projects for FY22, add the Thriving Earth Exchange grant revenue, add the State bond bill money
 - a. No public comment
 - b. Mayor moved to leave open for comment until the May Town meeting.
- b. Introduction & First Reading: Ordinance 185 FY2023 Town Budget and Tax Rate. This proposed budget provides level funding for infrastructure, increases for Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs (PRECA) committees.
 - a. No public comment
 - b. Mayor moved to leave open for comment until the May Town meeting
- c. Introduction & First Reading: Ordinance 186 FY 2023 Public Safety Taxing District Budget. The Commercial District Management Authority (CDMA) will be meeting virtually on April 27 to review and provide their comments.
 - a. No public comment
 - b. Mayor moved to leave open for comment until the May Town meeting.

4. Consent

Discussed approval of the consent agenda without the inclusion of the minutes, which are delayed due to staffing constraints. CM Brittan-Powell moved; CM Sweep seconded. Discussed the addition of the “Fund Balance Calculation”. This is required under the newly approved Reserve Fund Policy.

Motion carried unanimously.

Department Reports

- a. Administration/ Treasurer
 - General Fund Reserve Report
- b. Code Compliance
- c. Police
- d. Public Works

5. Mayor & Councilmember Reports

Mayor Dewey – attended the MML Strategic Planning workshop with Town Manager Allen which included succession planning. She also attended the NW/EP, Green Team and Rec Council meetings,. The mayor confirmed the PGC Municipal Association meeting is next Thursday followed by the Four Cities meeting hosted by the City of Greenbelt, location to be determined. She also shared the annual Maryland Assembly Legislative Session, which passed the Highway User Fund Revenue Bill, ended this week. Additional announcements are that the Crime Community Conversation, hosted by the County, can be attended via the county’s zoom and YouTube platforms; College Park Church of the Nazarene is still hosting food distributions Saturdays @ 10am; and that the County is hosting hearings on their budget on 4/26 & 5/2. Lastly Mayor Dewey added that the public safety emergency phone numbers are as follows;

- 1. 911 – in an emergency
- 2. 301-474-6554 – BHPD - General questions
- 3. 301-352-1200 – PG County; request a BHPD to respond

MPT Kulpa-Eddy started with the tax filing deadline that is coming up on 4/18/2022 for Federal and 7/15/2022 for the State. The ARPA provided tax benefits to some who may not usually file; you may want to consider doing so this year. She mentioned that PGC Public Schools are on Spring Break so please be vigilant while driving. The BH Community Center is sponsoring a “Dog-Gone Egg Hunt” for pet dogs. Dogs must be leashed and up to date on shots and attendees should be prepared to pick up anything your dog deposits. Registration is required and available on the PG Parks website at pgparks.com/parksdirect. The County Budget hearing will discuss a proposed tax bill increase of 4.5% on their portion of our property tax bills, primarily due to increased assessments.

CM Papanikolas shared that with the warmer weather and residents being outdoors working on their properties, they must ensure that all project material is properly stored or removed in a timely manner. Also ensure that all vehicles on your property are properly covered or registered and tagged. He reminded residents that the grass needs to be mowed and properly maintained. Code Compliance is available for questions and concerns about property standards. In other news, 6 new properties have gone from rental to owner-occupied; down a total of 10 rentals in this fiscal year. CM Brittan-Powell discussed the national movement of blocks of houses being purchased for rentals by companies. CM Papanikolas replied that in Berwyn Heights, sales are made to house flippers rather than investors. Lastly, CM Papanikolas is working on tracking vacant properties in Town.

CM Brittan-Powell shared that Administration is focusing on the FY 2023 Budget. He thanked Administration for their hard work in putting forth the Budget. MPT Kulpa-Eddy’s question on the status of the elevator was answered by Town Manager Allen. The elevator passed the state inspection, and the Town is finishing up on documentations and signage. Candidates’ Night will be held in the

Town Center (2nd Floor) as scheduled and the BH Day Pancake Breakfast as well. Town Center maintenance is being completed by a combination of contractors and Public Works.

CM Sweep reminded residents that yard waste is collected on Mondays for the north side and Tuesday for the south side of Town. There are no schedule changes for refuse collection in April, but Town offices will close at 1pm on 4/15 in observance of Good Friday. Thank you to the City of Greenbelt for sharing their bucket truck to allow Public Works to hang the BH Day and Election Day street banners. The playground equipment supplier will provide a replacement tube for the slide at Pop's Park; the Town will be billed for installation only.

6. Committee Reports

- a. Education Advisory Committee. 3 members, including the Mayor and MPT, attended the last meeting; not enough for a quorum. The next meeting Monday 4/25 is hybrid, both in-person and via Zoom. The BHEAC received 1 application for the second grant cycle. The application did not meet the criteria and they are looking for an alternative use for the \$2,000 remaining in the grant budget line item. The committee will have a table at BH Day. Any questions can be directed to Allison Holmes thebheac@gmail.com or asked at the upcoming meeting.
- b. Green Team met last night. Planning for BH Day with fun giveaways and information on resources currently available to residents. Also looking to expand a tool library to include ivy removal tools. The group recapped the Route 1 Green Team Summit that was attended by team members. The next meeting 5/19 is in person; a Zoom link is available on request.
- c. Historical Committee President Debby Steele-Snyder announced that their last meeting was in person. The next meeting is 4/27/2022 at 7:30 pm. They are focused on participating in the BH Day parade and having an informational booth with historical items. The 1950 U.S. Census is now available; there is a link to it on the BHHC Facebook page.
- d. Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Committee met last week focusing on BH Day. They will participate in the parade with the new trailer and have giveaways and information at their booth. Officer Wright was selected for Special Training but will be leaving to go to another agency.
- e. No Recreation Council member called in to give their report. MPT Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that the Rec Council is working on Berwyn Heights Day. This is the 126th celebration of the founding of the Town. They are bringing back all the past favorites: Pancake Breakfast served by Town Council, Senior Bake sale, games, kiddie rides, local vendors, and Town Organizations providing great resources for all attendees. Please support the Town Organizations (Seniors, Karate and the Boys & Girls Clubs) that are fundraising at this event. The parade will be back as well. The final BH Day planning meeting is on Sunday 5/1/2022 @ 4pm in-person and via Zoom. Lastly, the Town-wide Yard Sale is scheduled for June 18th, 2022. CM Brittan-Powell suggested that BH Day banners be in Spanish as well as English; this was referred to the Rec Council.

7. Old Business

The Audio Visual Quote Approval was recapped from the presentation of 4/4/2022. Council had requested that the presented quote be adjusted. WPS re-evaluated the proposal and made the needed adjustments to lower the quote. Town Manager Allen requested that Council approve the proposal as the current equipment is in dire need of replacement as parts of it are no longer under warranty or supported by our vendors. CM Brittan-Powell commented on the process that was taken to acquire the quote. Town Manager Allen gave background information that of the 2 responsive vendors, only one useable responsible quote is available. This quote provides for training and staff support. Mayor Dewey recapped that the decision before the Council is to accept or not accept the proposal. She also reviewed the portion of the Charter that allows for the

Mayor to forego the formal advertising procedure for contracting. These are the 4 circumstances listed in the charter that allow for this exception:

1. In an emergency situation
2. Proprietary articles involved
3. When competition is precluded
4. When bids are solicited and insufficient responsive bids are received

CM Brittan-Powell followed up with additional questions on awarding WPS the contract. TM Allen explained that the current equipment has aged warranty and technical support. Staff is working on previous knowledge and learning by trial and error. TM Allen provided clarification as to the details of the contract with WPS. Mayor Dewey reiterated what the decision before the Council is. MPT Kulpa-Eddy explained that the process of acquiring this quote has been done prior with the generators. Mayor Dewey also confirmed that this process meets 2 of the 4 qualifications for making an exception in this contract.

- Resident Question: Will this new video equipment have wireless capabilities to broadcast events and meetings in the Town Center?
- Answer: No. There is a mobile cart that does allow some broadcasting option with a better quality than the current layout.

CM Sweep motion: to authorize the Town Manager to enter into contract with WPS for audio visual equipment services in an amount not to exceed \$148,000.00. MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

a. Ordinance 183 A – 1st Reading and Introduction of FY 2022 General Fund Budget Amendment
Comments: TM Allen clarified the State requirements for Budget adoption. Upon approval, the funds become available June 1, 2022. No public or Council comments.

- a. CM Papanikolas moved to introduce and waive the 1st reading of Ordinance 183 A – amending the FY 2022 Budget. CM Sweep seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. The hearing is open for comment through the May 11th Town meeting

b. Ordinance 185 – 1st Reading and Introduction of FY 2023 Town General Fund and ARPA Budget

Comments: Mayor Dewey brought attention to the staff report that tracks evolution of this ordinance. TM Allen elaborated on the details and the process of this ordinance. MPT Kulpa-Eddy commented that the constant yield tax rate was not being maintained. She hopes that the next Council will alleviate the increase in property tax by adjusting the Town's homestead tax credit. CM Papanikolas proposes, just for FY2023, that the Council absorb the \$90 refuse fee for residents with surplus from the general fund balance, while the next Council tackles the larger issue of infrastructure and the HUR funds. CM Brittan-Powell wants landlords to pass this refuse fee credit on to their renters.

- a. Proposal: to suspend the current refuse collections fee for one year
- b. CM Papanikolas Motioned: waive the 1st reading of FY2023 Town General Fund & ARPA Budget and to further direct Staff to remove the \$90 Refuse Collection fee for FY2023. MPT Kulpa-Eddy second.
- c. No further discussion
- d. Motion carried unanimously. Ordinance introduced.
- e. Open for comment through the May 11th Town meeting

c. Ordinance 186 – 1st Reading and Introduction of FY 2023 PSTD Budget

- a. CM Sweep motioned to introduce and wave the 1st reading. CM Brittan-Powell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. Hearing is open for comment through the May 11th Town meeting
- d. Resolution 8 – 2022 Town Organizations Policy
 - a. A resolution to update the Town Organization Policy for creation of a new assembly: the Immigrant Neighbors Committee. This assembly would grant immigrant neighbors access to town resources and services paid for by their taxes. The new assembly wants to start meeting in this fiscal year and has requested funds. TM Allen explained that funds will be distributed through a reimbursement process. Council discussed the issue of the actual name of the assembly including the wording ‘committee’ although they have not received that designation. Discussion on the intention of the action tonight that will give them a designation by the Council. Mayor Dewey read the section of the policy.
 - b. Designation by the Council gives the group access to funding, Staff resources and a potential line item in the budget.
 - c. CM Sweep motioned to approve Resolution 8-2022 CM Brittan-Powell seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Immigrant Neighbors Committee established as a Town organization.

8. Resident & Community Comments

1. BH VFD

- a) BHVFD gave stats on the previous month’s activity. They also noted that the department does not fundraise via phone, and suggested residents call BHPD if they receive fraudulent calls. They are preparing for Berwyn Heights Day participation. With meetings in person, they will plan to attend future Council meetings and share contact info for new BHVFD leadership.

2. Resident Comments

Residents can comment by calling 301-474-9570 or e-mailing Mayor Dewey at adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov.

- a) None

9. Adjournment

- a) 8:33 pm