



# 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

## Worksession Minutes March 21, 2022| 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

### Call to Order

Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order at 7PM. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, Councilmember Ethan Sweep and Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell. Also present were Town Manager Laura Allen, Town Clerk Melanie Friesen, and residents.

### 1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey shared that there are still at-home Covid tests at the Berwyn Heights Police Department.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy shared that Mary Lou Milstead, a longtime resident of Berwyn Heights, has passed away and shared the viewing and services arrangements.

### 2. Approval of Agenda

CM Brittan-Powell moved to approve the agenda. CM Sweep seconded. Discussion included asking CM Papanikolas if he had an item to add to the agenda. He stated it could be addressed as a budget item. After no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

### 3. Discussion Items

#### a. Draft General Fund, Public Safety Taxing District, and ARPA Budget

Mayor Dewey provided background on the items, including that the General Fund budget was reviewed on February 9, but has updates for insurance costs, highway user revenue, and executive coaching. She continued that this is the first look at the Public Safety Taxing District (PSTD) budget and the ARPA budget for projects approved by the Council on March 9. TM Allen reviewed that budget amendments for 2022 will be up for approval in May. She further reviewed components of the PSTD and that the PSTD budget has been reviewed by Chief Antolik. CM Brittan-Powell expressed thanks to TM Allen for her work and skill set. CM Papanikolas expressed appreciation for the Staff report. Mayor Dewey asked to focus on the PSTD budget first. TM Allen explained that the Commercial District Management Authority meeting is being coordinated by Code Compliance and will happen in April. She stated that the purpose of the PSTD is to cover the salary and all associated needs for one police officer. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if it was possible to cover the costs of a less expensive officer than Det. Krouse. She also asked how much would need to be set aside for a vehicle, as this is not covered by the PSTD budget. TM Allen replied that a new police vehicle costs between \$50-55,000. CM Brittan-Powell asked if the pandemic had any impact on revenue from the PSTD. TM Allen replied that she does not believe the pandemic had any effect on the revenue. Council had a discussion about possible reasons for the

revenue changes. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked what kind of tax increase would be required to address the cost of the police vehicle. TM Allen replied that she would need to do the calculations.

Council moved to discussing the ARPA budget. TM Allen shared that no account numbers have been assigned and that there are no specific codes beyond the revenue loss code that will be required by Treasury. CM Papanikolas shared that some Councilmembers have been in touch with staff at Berwyn Heights Elementary School and due to budgetary constraints at the school they are unable to buy some needed technology for classrooms. The “visualizers” are about \$500-\$600 a unit and the school would need between 10-15 units. He asked if the Council would consider funding a one-time purchase either through the ARPA or General Fund budgets. CM Brittan-Powell stated that his understanding is that the school needs these right away. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said there is money in the ARPA budget to address education loss and that the PTA could make a grant request to cover the cost of the units. TM Allen explained the budget amendment process makes it so that the Council wouldn’t have access to the money until the end of May. Budget amendments must be adopted by ordinance, which means first and second readings, plus 20 days before it becomes effective. Mayor Dewey suggested amending the 2022 APRA budget in this line item by \$25,000 to have more available to other schools attended by Berwyn Heights students. Council continued discussion on the amounts allocated for the fiscal year to address education loss. Council determined to keep \$50,000 in FY22 but increase FY23 to \$75,000. CM Brittan-Powell asked about the stormwater engineering project, stating he thought it was a FY22 project. TM Allen explained that it will need to go out for RFQ so there would not be time in FY 22 to have that completed. CM Brittan-Powell asked about continuing funding for the emergency resident relief in FY 23. After fund discussion, Council agreed to keep the dollar amount allocated to that item to \$60,000 but to allocated \$20,000 for FY22 and \$40,000 to FY23.

TM Allen explained that there have been some changes since the last presentation in terminology around “premium pay”, changing it to “retention pay” and so Council should be prepared for that.

Council moved to discuss the General Fund budget. TM Allen explained the changes between the last presentation of the budget and this one. She explained that the employee health insurance costs did not go up as much as anticipated and that savings has been programed into executive coaching and team building. She further explained that the State decreased the Highway User Revenue by about \$2000 and that the Treasurer has refined his calculations on the Roadway Set-Aside which resulted in an additional \$7000.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked which roads are slated to be repaired next year.. TM Allen replied that the Council has generally found out about what roads need to be worked on toward the end of the process. CM Sweep stated that the Roadway Condition Report has been very helpful in figuring out what needs to be worked on. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that she wondered about reducing this line item in order to maintain a constant yield tax rate. TM Allen replied that she would be able to provide a more detailed report on roads at the April 4 Worksession.

CM Brittan-Powell asked about restoring funding to some of the items that had been cut. There was extensive discussion regarding block parties, including possible ways to fund and make such a program work. Residents Angie Wolfinger and David Wolfinger provided feedback to the Council discussion.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy raised questions about several small items, including a request to fix the floor in the kitchen and replace the chairs in the Senior Center. CM Brittan-Powell asked about a community bulletin board in the Town Hall parking area as well as

entrance signs to Town. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about the amount of money allocated to temporary services in Public Works. TM Allen expressed concern about taking money from a department that hasn't been fully staffed in a number of years. CM Sweep explained that core services are getting done, but that without temporary staff other services such as beautification are not regularly addressed. Discussion resulted in reducing the line item by \$15,000 that would leave \$30,000 in the line item, and still maintain full staffing salaries. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about tipping fees, as a recent webinar indicated an increase was being implemented by the County. MPT Kulpa-Eddy discussed a number of PRECA items, including increasing the Rec Council line item by \$5,000. Resident Angie Wolfinger asked if there was a way for the Rec Council to have direct access to the funds. TM Allen expressed that the Town is in discussion with the Rec Council president about that. There was discussion about increasing the amount of the grant for the Boys and Girls Club and the structure and requirements for that increase. CM Brittan-Powell expressed a desire to increase the number of trash cans around town as well as curtailing road litter to avoid such trash entering the woods at the end of Osage Street. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked questions about the health insurance costs as well. CM Brittan-Powell asked about the dog park plans. CM Sweep shared that the County would be the entity building a dog park and we are on the list.

**b. Draft Communications Policy**

Mayor Dewey introduced the item by stating that this is the last item on the Council priorities list. TM Allen shared that this policy is based on policies from other communities but addresses communication broadly and touches on social media. She further explained that it gives users agency without micromanaging, but still gives constraints. CM Sweep asked who the users are in the policy. TM Allen stated that the definitions are at the back of the policy and could be moved to the front. CM Sweep asked for a list of staff who are users. There was discussion about how staff post community organization information. There was further discussion about community organizations who use their social media and post information contradictory to a Council statement. CM Sweep suggested an update to the Town Organization Policy that includes a disclaimer they don't necessarily represent Town views. TM Allen stated that the Town Organization Policy makes the organizations extensions of the Town. There was considerable discussion about Town Organizations and their use of social media. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked why the Organizations need their own pages. Mayor Dewey stated it was because those Organizations are using their pages for education. TM Allen will take Council questions to the Town attorney. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about Section 2.H. and whether businesses could sponsor Town events. Council discussed a comment policy for social media pages, including if the pages should accept comments. TC Friesen expressed concerns about removing comments until a Town Policy had been created and posted on the Town social media pages.

**4. Department Reports**

**Mayor Dewey** reported on the Covid front that there are low case rates and in response to that, the County is phasing out some of their vaccine and testing sites. She recommends checking the County website at [mypgc.us](http://mypgc.us) to look for sites if you need them. She also shared that the Council has been invited to join the Greenbelt City Council meeting at 8pm on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the Greenbelt Road Corridor. She shared about the MML Young Municipal Leaders advisory meeting on March 24, that the BHEAC will be holding a hybrid meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> and that the Historical Committee will be meeting in person on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. She thanked everyone who came out for the ivy clean up demonstration and asked residents to reach out to the Green Team if they want to be more involved. She also shared about the MML "If I were Mayor" contest for 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

**MPT Kulpa-Eddy** shared about attending the *Municipalities in the Know* webinars presented by the County's Department of the Environment, where they are updating the raincheck rebate program, enforcing illegal dumping, conducting a flooding study, and initiating a stormwater stewardship grant program. She also attended the PGCMA meeting on March 17 and members will be asked to vote on bylaws and a policy on the use of the PGCMA logo. She attended the resource fair by County Councilmember Glaros, where lots of good information was shared. She reported that Pops Park is being worked on and shared that Parkdale High School is accepting donations to repair a shed that was vandalized and burned.

**CM Papanikolas** shared that there was an ugly incident directed at Code Compliance staff. He encouraged residents to reach out to their Councilmembers if they have issues, but to not engage staff by yelling.

**CM Brittan-Powell** stated that the whole worksession has essentially been a focus on the work of the Administration department. He reiterated his thanks to TM Allen for her financial expertise and thanked TC Friesen for her work on the Town website.

**CM Sweep** shared that there are no updates to the trash schedule in March. He updated that the street sweeper schedule posted in the bulletin was incorrect, and that the street sweeper will not be in Town during March but rather will be here beginning April 4. He shared about the Greenbelt Road Corridor Plan meeting and that the link is posted on the Town website. He also shared that he had applied to be a member of the "Public Leaders for Inclusion Council" and he has been accepted. It's a 6-month program addressing bigotry against Muslims and those perceived as Muslims. Mayor Dewey stated that she feels the street sweeper isn't coming as often and asked staff to check on the schedule. MPT Kulpa-Eddy expressed her concerns that the timing may make it difficult for the street sweeper to return before Berwyn Heights Day, when it traditionally comes.

## **5. Resident & Community Comments**

There were no resident or community comments.

### **Adjournment**

CM Sweep moved to adjourn the meeting. MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded. After no discussion the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:57PM.