



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Christopher Brittan-Powell (Mayor Pro Tem)
Shinita Hemby
Faustino Menjivar
Jason W. Papanikolas

Town Meeting Minutes Town Council Chamber November 9, 2022 | 7:00 p.m.

Call to order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present were Councilmember Shinita Hemby and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell attended remotely. Councilmember Faustino Menjivar and Town Manager Laura Allen had excused absences. Town Clerk Melanie Friesen was also present as were several residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. **Announcements**

MPT Brittan-Powell expressed his deep appreciation for TM Allen and her work for the Town.

a. **Municipal Government Works Proclamation**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy read the “Municipal Government Works Month” Proclamation.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

CM Papanikolas moved to approve the agenda. CM Hemby seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Public Hearing Ordinance 185B- AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET TO ADD \$100,000 IN ARPA FUNDING FOR AN AGREEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy gave a brief background on the budget amendment. MPT Brittan-Powell added that this amendment would allow the Town to have access to ARPA funds to spend as may be needed as part of the agreement with the University of Maryland School of Public Health (UMD SPH) but does not require that the Town spend any of the funds.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy opened the public hearing at 7:08 pm.

Resident Angie Wolfinger of 58th Avenue asked if this means that this funding can only be spent with UMD SPH. She expressed her understanding that during the original ARPA discussions, funding was set aside in the ARPA budget for promoting wellness in Town and would like clarity on if this money is separate from that. MPT Brittan-Powell and CM Papanikolas both weighed in stating that this is additional funding and would be a separate line item in the budget. Ms. Wolfinger also asked if the funding would be spent on events for Berwyn Heights, or if the Town would be included in events hosted by the University. CM Papanikolas replied that this funding would be for use within the Town. Resident Claudia Barragan spoke on behalf of INCbh stating that they have had a complete loss of confidence the funds will be allocated appropriately, as there is no background documentation on this item. She stated that much greater detail and specific goals should be available. She encouraged Council to vote no on the ordinance. She also reported reaching out to Erin McClure at UMD SPH to

see if they had any information regarding this amendment and was referred back to the Council. She expressed concern about earmarking and the potential for creation of slush funds using ARPA money. The hearing closed at 7:15 pm.

4. Consent

CM Papanikolas moved to approve the consent agenda. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Mayor & Councilmember Reports

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared some items of note, specifically giving a detailed account of how two town officers were involved in the capture and arrest of a bank robber in Town. She gave the accounting from the publicly available police report on the event and commended the officers involved on their professionalism. She shared that she has been busy attending several different meetings including one on the Municipal Tax Differential, the PGCMA meeting in Cheverly that included a Park and Planning presentation and one on legislative priorities. She added that the Four Cities Coalition resulted in communities sharing their legislation regarding shopping carts as that has been an interest in dealing with these in Town. She had attending meetings of the Berwyn Heights Community School steering committee which involved a needs assessment for the school. She also attended the MML Summer Conference Planning committee in Annapolis and a virtual presentation on Fire Safety. She added that the enrollment period is now open for health insurance and shared ways about how to get information on the options at MarylandHealthConnection.gov. MPT Brittan-Powell thanked the many members of the community who have been sharing input and suggestions to improve the Town. He will continue to work with residents on projects to advance economic stability. He expressed gratitude to staff for all they are doing and gratitude to the work done by TM Allen, particularly in terms of accounting and developing an excellent team of administrative staff.

CM Hemby shared that the Code Department is working on possible ordinance changes for landlord and rental properties to ensure that all is fair, and will bring these to the Council. She has had comments from residents about how dark some parts of Town are at night due to inadequate streetlighting. She encouraged residents to wear reflective or lighted gear on themselves and their pets at night. She shared about a report of a carjacking in the area (it did not occur in Berwyn Heights) and encouraged residents to be vigilant. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated they will be following up with Pepco on replacing the poles and lights lost during the summer storms. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy also added that that a permit has been issued for the construction of an EV charging station near the Police Department.

CM Papanikolas thanked everyone who participated in democracy on Election Day and shared that he will be representing Berwyn Heights at the Peace Cross rededication in Bladensburg on Veterans' Day.

6. Committee Reports

- a. Education Advisory Committee- CM Papanikolas shared that they are still lacking a quorum for their meetings and due to that, the Council will be handling the educational grant request this evening.
- b. Green Team- CM Papanikolas shared that their meeting is scheduled for tomorrow evening. Their previous meeting was primarily administrative in nature, addressing the storm damage to trees and exploring if anything could be done in the community garden to prevent stormwater runoff. They also have interest in hiring an arborist for a year. The INCbh representative to the Green Team will be reaching out to the Extension Program to see if they can provide any assistance. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about previous Council discussions on hiring an arborist, perhaps in collaboration with Hyattsville. CM Papanikolas said he'd review his notes

- on Council discussions.
- c. Historical Committee: Debby Steele-Snyder shared that the Wine and Cheese Event had more than 30 people attend, with Maya Davis from the Riversdale House Museum presenting on what is happening at that location as well as other nearby locations. In their last meeting they had a quorum and were able to hold their elections, sharing that the current leadership was reelected for the same positions. She updated that the November and December meetings will be moved due to the holidays.
 - d. Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that they were out driving around on Halloween and there were no issues noted. They are talking about conducting training on Emergency Preparedness. The County will be getting their training classes running again soon. Lastly, the NW/EP will be trying to host a “shred event” in January.
 - e. Recreation Council: CM Papanikolas shared that Trivia night, held on November 18th, will be Green Team themed. There is an upcoming craft sale on December 3rd, with a tree decorating party and tree lighting ceremony that evening. The Crafting club will be meeting every Saturday until mid-December and the Rec Council has donation boxes for Toys for Tots and a food drive at Town Buildings. Game Night continues every Friday.

7. Old Business

a. Adoption of Ordinance 185B

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy introduced the vote on the item from the Public Hearing. She shared that she has been in touch with the UMD SPH and their main need is to know what the needs are for the Community. Council hopes to hold a listening session next week to hear from residents on this topic. MPT Brittan-Powell stated this money makes funding available but does not commit the Town to spending it. CM Papanikolas shared that residents have expressed their concern that this number has been pulled out of thin air and that UMD SPH has not even asked for money, and that scholarships and financial aid typically pay for interns. He believes this is putting the cart before the horse. CM Hemby stated that she agreed with CM Papanikolas as well as expressing concern that they have allocated ARPA money for other items that hasn't yet been spent.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy called for a motion. MPT Brittan-Powell moved to adopt Ordinance 185B. There were no seconds. The motion failed to progress.

b. BHES PTA Grant Request

CM Papanikolas shared that the BHES PTA is asking for a grant to replace or upgrade essential educational technology that PGCPSS has not prioritized. He shared that the Council will be voting on the application that complies with the grant request, not the letter previously submitted and included in the agenda packet. He added that he has familial connections to BHES and would abstain from the vote. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy clarified that this grant will be coming out of the ARPA funds allocated to address learning loss. MPT Brittan-Powell moved to award the Berwyn Heights Elementary School PTA \$8500. CM Hemby seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed with Mayor Kulpa-Eddy, MPT Brittan-Powell, and CM Hemby in favor of the motion with CM Papanikolas abstaining.

8. New Business

a. Ordinance 106 Amendment, Cable Franchise Renewal (Comcast) First Reader

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared the history of the cable franchise agreement. The results of this updated ordinance ensure that the Town will be able to maintain their Comcast cable channel and keeps the I-Net functioning while its replacement, the C-Net, is built.

CM Papanikolas moved to introduce Ordinance 106 Amendment and waive the first reading. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. After no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Resident & Community Comments

Resident Claudia Barragan shared that she came out of the last worksession feeling positive that projects were moving forward and hopes to see a home retrofit application soon. She also stated that during the worksession there was mention of bias and racially motivated incidents in Town. INCbh will be working with the Police Department on reporting these incidents. She expressed that she would like to have her emails read into the record at worksessions. She asked for an update on the Interim Town Manager search and inquired why it would be open to remote work. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy responded that the advertisement is out and will be open until November 30th. They hope to have someone in the position by mid-December. She added that Town Managers are a specialty position and interim Town Managers are even more so. CM Papanikolas added the ability for the person to work remotely will generate a larger pool of candidates to find the best person for the position.

Resident Angie Wolfinger said that she tried to watch the worksession, but the sound is hard to hear in hybrid meetings. She shared that Ordinance 113 is older than she is and as one of the 50th Council goals and objectives is to review the Town Organization policy, she'd like to have this reviewed. She gave commentary on the number of residents volunteering and expressed that volunteers need to have access to funds for events. She spoke on public safety, that she has seen an increasing number of drivers who are passing cars that are stopped or slowing to stop at stop signs.

CM Papanikolas encouraged residents to look at the ordinances that affect them and suggest changes.

9. Adjournment

CM Hemby moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Papanikolas seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:04PM