



# 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

## Work Session Minutes April 3, 2023 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chamber

### Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:02PM. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Also present was Interim Town Manager Peter Jones, Town Treasurer Mike Lightfield, and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen.

### Approval of the Agenda

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

### 1. Mayor

#### a. Announcements

MPT Brittan-Powell wished everyone a good Easter and Spring Break. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy also mentioned that we are in the middle of Ramadan. CM Papanikolas asked for residents to be careful as students are on Spring Break and will be out during the day.

#### b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the calendar for April, highlighting the Committee meetings and the budget listening session prior to the April Town Meeting.

#### c. Quantum Companies discussion on new tenant at the old Staples property:

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that the discussion with Quantum Companies will need to be rescheduled. ITM Jones added that they did make contact regarding the renovations and stated that they seemed open to enacting some green practices.

#### d. DHCD Sustainable Communities Council Review

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy introduced that this is the application the Town will be voting on during the April Town Meeting. The Council reviewed the document and made requests for some changes. In particular, the demographic information will be checked and some corrections made. In the Environment Action Plan section, additional strengths such as being a Bee City USA and the installation of pet waste stations will be noted. Additional requested action items for Environment were to make the “drainage problem areas” strategy more robust, including to work with State and community partners to implement projects. Under Economic Development, there was a request for more

specificity on grant funding opportunities, as well as to highlight the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Program report from 2018. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy also asked for clarification on the call-a-bus program, stating that it was the Town-sponsored program run by Code Compliance that had been cancelled, not the County's call-a-bus which is still available to residents. Discussion of the Transportation portion of the application did not result in any requested changes to the application, but CM Papanikolas asked about the status of the Dragon handheld camera for police officers. CM Hemby asked about "local traffic only" signs and if they should be larger and at more entrances to Town. CM Papanikolas added that "local traffic only" signs signal Google Maps to avoid routing traffic through Town as a bypass route. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy expressed some concern that when there are too many signs they get ignored. There was also discussion asking for follow-up with the police department on the status of temporary speed bumps and LED stop signs.

CM Papanikolas stated that he does not care for the action items for improving communication with Town residents and businesses, stating that surveys have been conducted in the past. CM Hemby added that she is distressed by the weaknesses in the Quality-of-Life portion of the application, especially a lack of after school activities. There was discussion on options to improve this area, including possible collaboration with the Community Center and Boys and Girls Club. Both Parks and Planning and the Boys and Girls Club will be invited to a future worksession to discuss options to improve this area.

There was discussion on the comprehensive assessment with some edits to be made on the order of items as well as some additions and modifications. Examples include focus on the improvements in the commercial district and adjusting crime data to reflect the size of the community.

MPT Brittan-Powell asked about CM Papanikolas' idea of adopting this as an interim strategic plan. CM Papanikolas added that there would also need to be an implementation plan. Council discussed reviewing the Strategic Plan that was developed in 2016, but due to turnover did not have the implementation plan developed to keep it active. The strategic plan and the possibility of using this application as part of an updated strategic plan will be part of a future agenda.

**e. Codification Project: Code and Police**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy discussed that the Town has received an extension until April 24<sup>th</sup>, but that there are still pending responses from Code Compliance and the Police Department. ITM Jones will set a deadline for those departments to respond so that all items can be sent to the Town Attorney for review. TC Friesen will ask American Legal about additional response time.

**f. Updated FY 24 Budget Documents, ARPA (18 months), PSTD, General Fund**

ITM Jones introduced a budget draft that is still open for edits and highlighted that the draft discussed is based on the current tax rate of \$.545 per \$100 of assessed real property value. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that keeping the current tax rate will result in additional funds that help the Town keep up with the growing cost of maintaining a government. CM Papanikolas added that the Town's sources of revenue are limited and that the largest source of income is from real estate taxes. He also asked for Council confirmation that they understand that this proposed tax rate is provisional until after there has been a public hearing on the subject. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy informed Council

that they will be responsible for presenting their department's budget during the Town Meeting. ITM Jones added that this budget has been balanced based on moving many of the requested budget enhancements to the proposed ARPA budget. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked about the considerable increase in proposed income from Town Center rentals. ITM Jones replied that staff is proposing expanding the rental opportunities in order to maximize the income opportunities. There was concern expressed about expanding this beyond Berwyn Heights residents where the perceived lack of community ownership could result in damage and noise issues associated with the rental.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked for confirmation about the proposed income tax revenue, expressing concern that it seems high. TT Lightfield explained that more revenue will come in after April 15<sup>th</sup> and explained how he projects income for the coming fiscal year. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked to have this item reviewed for several years, beyond what is shown on the current spreadsheet. She also asked about the transfer to infrastructure reserves, which resulted in discussion on dedicated funding and the need for an additional line item to show how funding is transferred into a reserve fund. TT Lightfield explained that changing that on this budget will result in a small deficit. There was a discussion about best accounting practices. There was discussion on several smaller items, such as the AirCard costs and solid waste fees.

ITM Jones introduced a proposed APRA budget that captures the remaining 18 months until funding must be allocated. He reviewed his proposed expenditures. MPT Brittan-Powell asked why some items in proposed enhancements for the General Fund are coming from the ARPA fund instead out of reserves. He stated that there are several other projects that the Town has discussed that aren't in the proposed spending plan. ITM Jones advocated using the ARPA funds to make the enhancements for the departments viable without using Town Reserves. Council discussed the status of the Town's dedicated reserves as well as continued discussion on the requested vehicles for Police and Public Works. ITM Jones advocated that the Council begin to actually spend ARPA funds. Council considered the purchase of a building for a community center, adding an executive session on April 6 at 6PM.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked about the Emergency Assistance Fund. Council discussed stormwater funding and the County's involvement. Additional conversation included articulating the priorities and processes of the budget process. CM Hemby advocated for a plain language explanation to be made available to residents.

TT Lightfield reviewed the proposed Public Safety Taxing District and the proposed tax increase for the PSTD which was initially calculated at a much higher rate but will only need to be increased about \$0.0015 per \$100 of assessed value.

CM Menjivar noted that the pickup truck that was allocated for this year in the General Fund will likely not be received and needs to be added to the budget for FY24. Council briefly addressed the requested Public Works reorganization and decided to add that to the next worksession.

**g. FY24 Fees and Fines Schedule**

Council determined to wait to address this at the next worksession.

**h. Vehicle Reserve Fund Update**

Council addressed out of order as part of agenda item 1.f.

**i. Resident Comments**

There were no resident comments.

**2. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs**

CM Papanikolas shared that there are two events coming up, an invasive plant pulling event with the Green Team and the BHHC is hosting a Meet the Author event with Dr. Richard Bell on his book “Stolen”. He highlighted attending the Rec Council meeting if you are involved in Berwyn Heights Day.

**3. Public Safety**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that she’d like to consider using the education grant that the Council has not allocated this year to sponsor attendees at STEAM summer camp programs at the Community Center. She also met with the School of Public Health, and they are working on a proposal to be sent within a few days. Berwyn Heights Elementary School is having a health and wellness fair and invited the Town to participate. CM Hemby offered to take point on that.

**4. Public Works**

CM Menjivar reviewed that Director Pudner has completed the road report and is looking to target areas where there were issues caused by water over the winter. He also mentioned the bathrooms at Sports Park are opening. Council reviewed who is responsible for maintaining the bathrooms throughout the season.

**5. Administration**

MPT Brittan-Powell thanked ITM Jones and TT Lightfield for all their work on the budget. He also thanked CM Hemby for volunteering during Berwyn Heights Day. He added that he and ITM Jones are meeting with Greenbelt to discuss possible opportunities to team up on some projects involving aging-in-place.

**6. Code Compliance**

CM Hemby reviewed the status of the residence that was the subject of a Code appeal, and that the decision was made to not fine the residents as they had completed the requested work. She added that she would like to review the appeal process. There was discussion on refining the language in the ordinance so that appeals could be made in closed session.

TT Lightfield inquired about the approval status of checks for the ARPA business relief grants.

**7. Adjournment**

CM Papanikolas moved to adjourn the meeting. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:42pm.