



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

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MAYOR
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Christopher Rasmussen (Mayor Pro Tem)
Patricia Dennison
Maria Robles
Lynn White

Minutes Town Meeting May 11, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Mayor Kulpa-Eddy, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen, Councilmembers (CMs) Lynn White and Maria Robles, as well as Mayor-elect Cheryl Jewitt. CM Dennison had an excused absence. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper, and citizens.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Hearings

FY 2017 Town Budget: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy opened the hearing at 7:31 p.m., and invited comments on the budget. She said that the FY 2017 budget has not changed since introduction at the April 13 Town meeting and highlighted the important features. The real property tax rate remains at 53 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation; it was not reduced to offset the rising assessments, and will produce an estimated \$99,00 in additional tax revenues. The additional funds will be spent mostly on employee salaries, COLAs, merit increases, and promotions. The Council also decided to join the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) health cooperative, which includes new dental, vision and life insurance plans for employees.

On the capital side of the budget, the vehicle replacement reserve will be fully funded so that the Town can purchase expensive specialty vehicles when they reach the end of their useful life. The budget also appropriates funds to purchase a new hybrid vehicle, with a contribution from a Smart Energy Communities grant, and a new furnace for the Town office, and to make investments in IT infrastructure, traffic safety and police equipment. With no comments, Mayor Kulpa-Eddy closed the hearing at 7:34 p.m.

FY 2017 Public Safety Taxing District (PSTD) budget: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy explained that this budget levies a special tax on commercial and industrial businesses in the town to pay for an additional police officer. The PSTD budget maintains the tax rates of 10 cents per \$100 of assessed real property valuation and 15 cents per \$100 of assessed personal property valuation. The Commercial District Management Authority (CDMA) approved the FY 2017 PSTD budget at meeting held on April 19.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy opened the hearing at 7:35 p.m., and with no comments, closed the hearing at 7:36 p.m.

2. Minutes

Clerk Harper read the minutes of the April 13 Town meeting. On a motion by CM White and second by MPT Rasmussen, the minutes were approved 4 to 0.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Rodriguez gave the Treasurer's report for the month of April.

4. Unfinished Business

Ordinance 171 - 2nd Reading & Adoption of the FY 2017 Town Budget: Clerk Harper read a summary of the Ordinance. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy noted that this budget was easier than those of recent years because revenues have started to rise following the December 2015 re-assessment of real property. There were no further comments. On a motion by CM Robles and second by CM White, the FY 2017 Town budget was approved in a 4 to 0 vote.

Ordinance 172 - 2nd Reading & Adoption of the FY 2017 Public Safety Taxing District Budget: Clerk Harper read a summary of the Ordinance. With no comments, CM Robles moved, and MPT Rasmussen seconded to approve the FY 2017 PSTD budget. The motion passed 4 to 0.

5. New Business

Ordinance 169-A - 1st Reading & Introduction of FY 2016 Budget Amendments: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy explained that at the end of each year, budgets are amended to reconcile appropriations with actual expenditures. In FY 2016, the Town spent money on installing emergency generators and the Safe Routes to School Sidewalks project originally budgeted for FY 2015. The money had to be re-appropriated for FY 2016 because the projects were not finished in time. Unplanned expenses were incurred for overtime during the January snow storm, for curb and gutter work and for a Public Works dump truck. The Town will be reimbursed for some snow removal expenses.

Clerk Harper read a summary of the Ordinance. MPT Rasmussen added that the Town will not have to pay for one of two property demolitions, as it is paid for by the owner, and will recover demolition costs for the other when it will be sold at a tax sale. With no further comments, CM Robles moved and MPT Rasmussen seconded to introduce the FY 2016 budget amendments. The motion passed 4 to 0.

6. Recognitions

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that there was some turnover during this Council term. CM Robles joined the Council in June 2015 after Mayor Calvo resigned to pursue professional opportunities and CM White stepped in on short notice after CM Schreiber resigned in August, but she decided not to run again. The Council appreciated her accepting oversight of the Public Works Department and her calm and collected approach. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy presented CM White with a plaque in recognition of her contributions to the work of Council.

CM White thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve and oversee the Public Works Department. She hopes residents appreciate the hard work those employees are performing daily when cleaning the Town in all types of weather.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy closed the term of the 46th Town Council.

7. Election Results

Clerk Harper read the results of the May 3, 2016 Town Council election. Of 2,043 active registered voters 186 voted. Cheryl Jewitt received 116 votes, Jodie Kulpa-Eddy 115 votes, Chris Rasmussen 84 votes, CM Maria Robles 80 votes, and Patricia Dennison 46 votes.

8. Swearing-in of 47th Town Council

Rita Robinson of the Clerk of the District Court's Office swore in Mayor Jewitt, Mayor Pro Tem Kulpa-Eddy, and Councilmembers Rasmussen and Robles.

9. Mayor's Remarks and Organization of the Council

Mayor Jewitt opened the term of the 47th Town Council. She thanked the voters for electing her and her parents and husband for supporting her in this new endeavor, and pledged to listen and learn from the residents. Since the election, she has met with TA Cowles, Town staff and the Council to discuss the business before the Town and the assignment of departmental responsibilities.

Mayor Jewitt announced the heads of departments for the next term: Mayor Pro Tem Kulpa-Eddy accepted charge of the Administration Department, which will benefit from her extensive knowledge of the operations of Town government; Councilmember Rasmussen will resume oversight of the Code Department, a field in which he has a long-standing interest; Councilmember Robles will oversee the Parks & Recreation Department, a role to which she will bring new ideas and enthusiasm. Councilmember Dennison will take on responsibility for the Public Works Department when she is able to resume her service. As the longest-serving Councilmember she has a broad understanding of and interest in the services this Department provides. In the interim, Mayor Jewitt will supervise the Public Works Department as well as the Police Department, a field with which she is familiar from her professional background.

Mayor Jewitt said she hopes the 47th Town Council will work together as respectfully and productively as the 46th Town Council. She believes repairing Town streets, a new police station and development of the Greenbelt Road commercial corridor should be among the top priorities in the next term. She is on the job and ready to work.

10. Remarks of the Council

MPT Kulpa-Eddy said she is looking forward to returning to the Administration Department, which she had the pleasure of overseeing in her 1st term in office. The Department has the important responsibilities of managing the financial and record-keeping functions of the Town government, acting as the human resources office for Town employees, serving as legal liaison and providing a service counter for information and complaints from Town residents.

CM Rasmussen said that this year's election offered the important civics lesson that every vote counts: the Mayor's position was decided by a one-vote margin, confirmed by a recount. Both Mayor Jewitt and MPT Kulpa-Eddy campaigned hard and should be commended for their efforts. He also noted that the last term saw many new faces in senior staff positions, starting with Jessica Cowles as Town Administrator, Freddie Glass as Code Supervisor and soon a new Public Works Director when interim Director Kenneth Hall retires at the end of June.

CM Rasmussen said he looks forward toward heading the Code Department again, where he started his service, helped hire a new supervisor and purchase new code tracking software now used to streamline the code enforcement functions. As the owner of several rental properties, he is subject to the rental licensing regime and has an interest in the rental code. He would like to make the review of the Rental Housing Ordinance a priority for the next term as some of the licensing and inspection processes need updating.

The Code Department also tracks construction and remodeling activities in Town to ensure that any additions, accessory structures, plumbing and electrical installations conform with County code. This promises to keep the Code Department busy with permit issues in the near future as the housing market has revived and construction activities are picking up. Finally, the Urban Forest Initiative he has championed, and which is underway, also falls to some extent under the purview of the Code Department. He intends to continue to advocate for protecting the tree canopy as an amenity that improves the quality of life. He thanked the residents that have voted for him and placed their trust in him to serve another term on the Council.

CM Robles said, after being appointed to the Council last summer, she had the opportunity to learn how the Council operates and decided to be a candidate in this election. She thanked those who placed their confidence in her ability to serve and voted for her. She is excited to serve as head of the Parks, Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs (PRECA) Department in the next term. She has long been an advocate for children, having served on the boards of PTAs and the Boys & Girls Club, and as head of PRECA, she hopes to launch new initiatives for youth. For example, she would like to try to establish a summer internship program for high school students with the Town, but also to work with other local organizations to improve educational opportunities. In addition, she plans to promote involvement of all residents in school matters as a way to strengthen the community.

11. Citizen Comments

Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, asked where the speed camera revenue is listed on the treasurer's report. TA Cowles replied that is listed under the Public Safety Reserve Fund and now stands at \$32,900 after expending most of the accumulated funds on the Priority 1 Sidewalks project. Mr. Attick also asked if taxes were raised in the FY 2017 budget. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said the tax rate remained the same at 53 cents per \$100 of assessed real property valuation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk