



# Town of Berwyn Heights

5700 Berwyn Road  
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740  
Tel. (301) 474-5000  
Fax (301) 474-5002

**MAYOR**  
Stephen D. Isler

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)  
Amanda M. Dewey  
Jeffrey Jay Osmond  
Ethan D. Sweep

## Worksession Minutes February 19, 2019 7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Jeffrey Osmond and Ethan Sweep. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Public Works Director Kenneth Hall, Public Works Foreman Luis Cardenas, and citizens.

### 1. Announcements

Mayor Isler announced a forecast snow event. Schools are in the process of announcing closure. TM Broadbent announced that representatives of Quantum Company will attend the March 4 worksession to give an update on the Beltway Plaza redevelopment process. A public hearing on the Beltway Plaza conceptual site plan will be held on March 14 at 10 am at the County Administration Building.

### 2. Budget Presentations

**Public Works FY 2020 budget enhancements:** Director Hall provided the FY 2020 budget enhancements request. TM Broadbent explained that Public Works has a vehicle replacement reserve, which is in the process of being updated. Meanwhile, Council was provided a list of Public Works vehicles in operation, highlighting those in need of replacement. This includes:

- + \$205,000 for a new refuse truck. Public Works has 3 trucks. Two for day-to-day operations and one backup. The truck to be replaced is a 2012 model, which will become the spare. The current 2002 spare truck will be sold.  
The vehicle replacement schedule assumes a refuse truck has an average life span of 15 years, but Director Hall believes it is closer to 10 years. He recommends *Freightliner* diesel trucks because they are dependable and provide the best value for the price. There are more environmentally friendly trucks that run on bio diesel or natural gas, but the former often have mechanical problems and the latter are very expensive. All newer diesel trucks use exhaust fluids to reduce pollution.
- + \$25,000 to equip refuse trucks with tipper to empty larger refuse cans.
- + \$20,000 for new crew cab dump truck dating from 2007, minus dump body. The truck is used mainly for appliance pickups. A second 2004 crew cab dump truck is scheduled to be sold.
- + \$45,000 for a new pickup truck used for crew transport and snow removal. The current pickup dates from 2008.

The total for the above fleet improvements comes to \$295,000. TM Broadbent plans to finance some of the truck replacements from unspent funds in the FY 2019 capital budget.

Director Hall explained the remaining Public Works budget enhancement requests:

- + 10,000 in *Tree Service/ Urban Forest* line item for regular maintenance of the tree canopy began as a capital project in FY 2018, as well as the planting of new trees.
- + 2,000 in a new *Landscaping* line item to maintain the raingardens and other green spaces on Town property.
- + 2,000 in *Public Works Building maintenance* line item to replace gutters and downspouts, which are in bad shape. This may include replacement of soffit and fascia board.
- + 6,000 in *Disposal Fees* line item to cover the increased cost of disposing refuse, recyclables and yard waste.
- + 30,000 in *Vehicle Repairs* line item for a total of \$64,000 to more closely reflect actual expenditures. The question was raised if the increase would be less if several older vehicles are replaced. An itemized explanation of the vehicle repairs expense list was requested.

Temporary labor: It is proposed to hire seasonal help for the summer and fall leaf collection, when the Public Works crew is the busiest.

Street repairs: Director Hall plans to make only the most necessary repairs, for example, where bus traffic has damaged streets. A larger resurfacing project will be undertaken in conjunction with WSSC's upcoming water main replacement project.

Welcome signs: No estimates have been provided because the cost varies significantly depending on what type of sign is chosen. Electronic message boards would be very expensive, costing around \$30,000 for a 2x6' sign, and require a location that has access to power. Wooden or metal 'Welcome to Berwyn Heights' signs without a message display capacity would be less expensive at several thousand dollars each. Councilmembers are requested to think about and give direction on what type of sign they would like.

***Administration FY 2020 budget enhancements:*** TM Broadbent and Treasurer Rodriguez explained budget enhancements for the Administration Department:

Electronic agenda packets: Purchase of 7 tablets to provide and display agenda packets in electronic format only. This is an optional item.

Staffing changes: It is proposed to realign the duties of staff to separate the treasurer from the human resources manager function. The human resources function would be transferred to the current Administrative Coordinator, who would be elevated to an Assistant to the Town Manager. This would give a long-time employee the chance to advance to a higher position and do more challenging things. The Treasurer would focus more on financial controls and assume greater responsibilities in the budget process. An estimate of the cost of the change will be forthcoming.

Leave policy: Mayor Isler presented a proposal to increase the hours of leave an employee can carry over from one year to the next. Prior to the adoption of a new Employee Manual in 2016, Town employees could carry over 240 hours, or 6 weeks of leave. With adoption of the new Manual, the hours were stepped down to 120 in 2017 and to 80 in 2018. This is less than in most neighboring jurisdictions, where at least 120 hours or more can be carried over. This may negatively impact the Town's ability to retain employees.

Mayor Isler said among the various leave policies he reviewed he likes Riverdale's stepped approach, which incentivizes long service: employees with 0-4 years of service can carry over 120 hours; 5-9 years 160 hours, 10-14 years 184 hours, 15-20 years 200 hours, and 20 plus years 240 hours. TM Broadbent and Treasurer Rodriguez recommended considering setting up a reserve to cover expenses resulting from leave payouts. Accumulated leave represents an unfunded liability and can be a significant expense when a long-time employee terminates his/ her employment, or multiple employees leave at the same time. Apart from that, employees should be encouraged to use their annual leave instead of carrying it over.

TM Broadbent noted that she plans to provide estimates on painting and replacing the carpet in the Council chamber. Mr. Ventura commented that a limit of 80 hours on carried-over leave in effect encourages employees to use their leave.

**Chart of accounts:** Treasurer Rodriguez provided a chart of accounts of the Town budget with a description of each line item. This document is intended to familiarize the Council with the budget format prior to in-depth budget discussions. In addition, the Council was given an update on actual revenues and expenses for the first half of this year and a preliminary FY 2020 budget. TM Broadbent said this meeting serves primarily to provide an opportunity for the Council to start thinking and give feedback about budget enhancements before a proposed budget with definitive numbers is presented. It was suggested to postpone the presentation of the Town Manager's proposed budget from the first to the second worksession in March, so that the Council might ask questions and give feedback at the March 4 worksession.

**COLA and merit increases:** TM Broadbent provided the Council with a document giving cost estimates for Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) and merit increases. She said traditionally the Town has given a combination of COLA and merit increases, with merit increases based on employee performance evaluations. The Council is requested to think about the amount of COLA and/ or merit increases they might like to adopt as part of the budget and give her feedback.

At 9:50 p.m., the Council took a 5-minute break.

### **3. Discussion Items**

**Maryland Department of Agriculture mosquito spraying program (discussed out of order):** Mayor Isler said last year the Town was not included in the Department of Agriculture's (MDA) mosquito spraying program. He received a number of comments from residents saying mosquitos were out of control. He would like the Council to discuss whether to join the program this year. TM Broadbent said she provided several documents describing MDA's mosquito program and the pesticides used. MDA starts with larviciding in spring and supplements with spraying for adult mosquitoes in summer based on local counts. The deadline for municipalities to participate in the MDA program is coming up soon.

In discussion MPT Papanikolas, CM Dewey and CM Sweep said they are not opposed to larviciding but prefer not to spray for mosquitoes in summer because 1) it is not very effective at controlling mosquitoes unless standing water is also eliminated; and 2) it may harm other species of animals. It may be more productive to educate residents on how to reduce mosquito populations by eliminating breeding grounds.

Jeff and Therese Forbes, Cunningham Drive, were present to ask the Council not to join the spraying program. They are bee keepers and the fogging kills any bees still active late in summer day light hours. Other insects that may be desirable or useful for pollination are also killed.

There ensued discussion about whether the Town might utilize private contractors to perform local mosquito treatments or provide insecticides for property owners so they could do it themselves. The Council agreed that the Town should not utilize private contractors but focus on education. CM Dewey added she would prefer not to sign up for larviciding if it is an option until she knows more about how it is done. TM Broadbent will seek to get answers to the Council's questions.

**Ordinance 125 Small Cell Facilities:** TM Broadbent said this Ordinance was introduced at the February Town meeting and amended to delete references to it being an emergency ordinance. Additionally, she would like to propose another amendment, which would require permit applicants to cover the cost of reviewing the plans and inspecting the installation of cellular networks. She believes Town staff is not

qualified to do this. The Council had no objection.

**Resolution 6-2019 – Ordinance 125 Fee & Fine Schedule:** TM Broadbent said this Resolution sets forth the fees and fines to be charged in connection with the installation of small cell facilities regulated under Ordinance 125. They were proposed by the Town Attorney and are in compliance with amounts allowed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). They are also similar to the fees and fines charged by neighboring jurisdictions. The Council had no objection to adopting the proposed fees and fines.

**Education Advisory Committee:** CM Dewey said she plans to put out a call for volunteers to join the Education Advisory Committee in the next Bulletin. Clerk Harper provided background documentation on the history of the Education Advisory Committee (BHEAC) originally established in 1996 to reopen the Berwyn Heights Elementary School. Since then, the Committee has regrouped a couple of times following the reopening of the school in 2002, and around 2015, after the earlier Committee had ceased to meet. However, the people who were most recently involved are no longer interested in participating or have relocated out of Berwyn Heights.

CM Dewey said if she receives enough responses, she would like the Council to formally re-establish the Committee. She sees value in having a body advising the Council on education matters. Mayor Isler agreed saying such a Committee's efforts to communicate with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) administrators, neighboring municipalities and PTAs is important for improving local schools. The BHEAC's mission, however, would likely have to be revised to reflect current concerns and priorities.

There ensued a discussion about the feasibility of revising the Town's school boundaries, and what the mission and goals of a future BHEAC might be. It was agreed that it would be difficult to change PGCPS' boundary decisions, which are based largely on demographic considerations, and that it may be more productive to inform the school community about navigating the PGCPS system to help parents get their children the best education possible.

**MML convention attendance:** All Councilmembers and TM Broadbent plan to attend the convention. Hotel reservations will be made at the La Quinta Inn. Convention registrations will be made when they open in mid-March.

#### **4. Minutes**

On a motion by CM Sweep, seconded by MPT Papanikolas, the January 14 worksession minutes were approved 4-0-1, with CM Osmond abstaining. On a motion by CM Dewey, seconded by MPT Papanikolas, the February 4 worksession minutes were tabled to the next worksession.

#### **5. Department Reports**

Mayor Isler said he is looking forward to working with the Police Department and is in the process of scheduling a ride-along with Chief Antolik. He also announced that Town offices will be closed tomorrow due to inclement weather. CM Sweep cautioned everyone to drive carefully and watch out for Public Works vehicles clearing the streets. Residents are requested to park off the street where possible.

CM Dewey said that Town organizations should submit their budget requests to TM Broadbent by February 28 and are invited to attend the March 23 budget worksession to discuss their budgets with the Council. CM Osmond said that he is delving into Code Department issues and met with TM Broadbent to get oriented.

TM Broadbent reported she has been working with Code Clerk Zelda Bell to map out the Code Department's transitioning back to using *Comcate*. All Code staff will be asked to use *Comcate* and share

the work of performing inspections. She will review all Code notification letters to ensure that they align with code requirements. She has also had a good meeting with Park & Planning and made progress on the dog park and Sports Park. Lastly, she owes the Council a memorandum on the revised status of the Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Committee.

#### **6. Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the upcoming Town Council calendar. A date for the annual briefing of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Association (ATHA) was discussed.

#### **7. Citizens Discussion**

Phil Ventura, 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue, commented on street repairs, suggesting the Council set aside money annually to pay for the next street project, as was done for the street project that has just been completed. He also commented on WSSC's trenching activities and sub-par repaving as the cause of pavement problems at bus stops and other areas.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk