



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Minutes Worksession April 3, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy and Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, Christopher Rasmussen, and Gerald Shields. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Public Works Director Stevie Cox, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Green Team members Amanda Dewey and Kayla Agonoy.

### 1. Action Items

**Replacement of damaged police car:** TA Cowles explained the circumstances of the accident. An officer responding to a call for service was struck by another vehicle that failed to yield. The officer's 2012 vehicle was a total loss. The Town's insurance company will reimburse \$13,400 for the loss. A low-mileage 2015 Dodge Charger costing \$22,500 has been located as a replacement. This leaves approximately \$18,800 in Town expenses, including repainting and outfitting costs. There is a possibility of recovering some money from the insurance company of the at-fault driver at a later date. TA Cowles recommended purchasing the replacement now, using funds from the unrestricted fund balance or the BHPD budget and charging them to the FY 2017 budget.

After some discussion, CM Dennison moved, and CM Shields seconded to not exceed \$19,000 on the purchase of the 2015 Dodge Charger. The motion passed 5 to 0. The Council asked TA Cowles to look into the price of insuring vehicles at "full replacement" cost.

### 2. Discussion Items

**Proposed Green Purchasing Policy:** Green Team members Kayla Agonoy and Amanda Dewey were present to discuss a "Green Purchasing Policy" the Green Team proposes that the Town adopt. The policy was first presented at a March 6 worksession. MPT Kulpa-Eddy offered a number of edits to the policy, which the Council and Green Team members discussed. The following substantive changes were made:

Section 2.1, Last Sentence: The policy is not intended to....prevent proceeding in ~~the most~~ a fiscally prudent manner.

Section 2.3, Use of Best Practices: Title was changed to "Toxic Substances in Products Used and Services Provided."

Section 2.5, Use of Social & Environmental Product or Service Labels: Green Team was asked to provide examples of legitimate third-party certifiers of green products.

Section 3.4, Data Collection & Performance Reporting: Last bullet was changed to indicate Town

Council's role in requesting progress reports on sustainable procurement activities and the effectiveness of the policy.

The Council and Green Team members discussed whether social equity factors, listed in Section 2.2 and 2.5, should be included in a green purchasing policy. It was agreed that social considerations such as fair trade, use of local and minority businesses, child-labor-free products, etc. remain part of the policy, but to modify the purpose of the policy as a commitment to "environmental stewardship and sustainable procurement" and rename it as an "Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy."

***FY 2018 Proposed General Fund and Public Safety Taxing District Budgets:*** TA Cowles provided requested follow-up information from the March 25 budget workshop:

- The Public Safety Taxing District (PSTD) budget was adjusted to reflect a 2-cent increase in the commercial real property tax rate from \$0.63 to \$0.65 per \$100 of assessed valuation.
- Police officers' bullet-proof vests are Level III types designed to stop heavier-grain bullets.
- The cost of green or "frangible" ammunition is approximately 60% higher than regular lead bullets with a considerably higher rate of malfunction.
- Permanent repairs to a grassy parking area next to the T-Ball field on 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue are the responsibility of M-NCPPC, which owns the properties along Indian Creek. The Town may spend some money on temporary repairs.
- Tree maintenance in most neighboring municipalities is handled by a combination of an in-house employee with arborist certification and independent tree contractors. Currently, there is no interest in sharing the expense of an arborist. However, Hyattsville plans to purchase a bucket truck it may be willing to lease to other municipalities.
- The FY 2018 BH Volunteer Fire Department budget was provided.
- A 2001 Police Department Feasibility Study was provided to Council by email.

Information yet to be provided includes:

- A 2012 NW/EP study of dark areas due to insufficient lighting was reviewed by BHPD and priority areas were identified. TA Cowles and Director Cox are looking into the cost of additional street lights, as well as the availability and cost of more efficient street lights.
- A personnel rule may be considered that sets a minimum employment period for employees that obtain a CDL license at Town expense.
- A performance benchmarking system for Town services needs extensive research.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy requested additional information on budget line items that had overages in FY 2017:

- Code Department network software support
- Administration Department payroll processing fees
- Public Works Department temporary labor expenses
- Revenue estimate for outstanding liens

Director Cox provided information on Public Works initiatives funded in the FY 2018 budget. He and Foreman Cardenas plan to take arborist training costing approximately \$400 per person to be able to assess tree maintenance issues. He recommends using contractors for pruning and removal of trees. Neighboring municipalities for the most part do not have a minimum employment requirement for employees obtaining CDL licenses or other certification in their employment agreement. A longer-term commitment to work for the Town might be considered when larger sums are invested into training its employees. The *temporary labor* expenses should decline sharply, once the vacancies for a crewman

and administrative assistant have been filled. He has extended job offers to two applicants and expects them to start working shortly.

Director Cox discussed the issues with testing new recycling bins of different sizes. He recommended identifying a representative sample of households to whom a larger 64-gallon toter on wheels and a smaller 32 or 48-gallon toter would be given for the purpose of collecting data, rather than distributing bins upon request. Neighboring municipalities make available only one larger size of recycling bin to residents, and will not collect recyclables that are not set out in the provided bins. Standardized trash and recycling bins that can be picked up with an automated lift should be considered as part of the Town's overall refuse collection strategy. It was agreed to have a few bins of different sizes available on Berwyn Heights Day for residents to test and give feedback. Evaluation by residents will probably postpone the purchase of recycling bins to late summer or fall 2017.

**Four Cities agenda:** Follow-up on the County's tax differential program setoffs was proposed for the agenda.

**MML conference plans:** Five Councilmembers will attend the MML conference, 4 will participate in the formal dinner and 3 in the PGCMA breakfast.

### 3. **Minutes**

On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Rasmussen, the March 6 worksession minutes were approved 5 to 0 with corrections.

### 4. **Announcements**

During the April 1 Good Neighbor Day event, the body of an elderly resident of Westchester Park condominiums was found in Indian Creek. CM Shields participated in the removal of invasive vines from Lake Artemesia's water front and hiking paths. CM Rasmussen and MPT Kulpa-Eddy worked at the volunteer registration desk. M-NCPP completed the removal of trash from the lake. CM Shields shared the survey of Town organizations and NW/EP's draft social media policy with the other Councilmembers.

### 5. **Department Reports & Citizen Comments**

Mayor Jewitt received a comment commending Staples on erecting a new fence along the edge of the parking lot and recommending the beautification of the green strip. MPT Kulpa-Eddy, along with other Councilmembers, attended a joint meeting with the Cities of Greenbelt and College Park about prospects for economic development along Greenbelt Road. Unfortunately, few State or County representatives were present. Previous plans for improving the Route 193 commercial corridor were made available and discussed.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy also attended a meeting on the status of the Prince George's County zoning rewrite and was pleased to find out that most of the comments Berwyn Heights had submitted were incorporated into the rezoning drafts. Notably, opportunity for municipal and County Council review of development plans was restored in Module 3. A concern is inclusion of a stretch of Route 193 into an "innovation corridor" that may permit 12 – 13 story buildings to be erected as part of higher density development. A comprehensive review document will be published in May.

CM Rasmussen received a comment about bamboo that was allowed to spread to a neighboring

property based on mutual agreement among the neighbors, on loose trash in the Staples/ Dominos/ Verizon parking lot, and on a rental license required for an owner-plus-one rental unit prior to adoption of the revised Ordinance 120. CM Rasmussen also met with CM Shields to discuss the format of a citizen survey.

6. **Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the calendar for the upcoming month. No changes were made.

7. **Executive Session (9:11 p.m. – 9:27 p.m.)**

CM Dennison moved and CM Shields seconded to go into executive session to discuss a personnel issue. With the issue discussed, CM Dennison moved and CM Shields seconded to close the executive session. The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*