



# 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 July 11, 2022| 7:00 p.m. Council Chamber

### Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:24 PM. The delayed start was due to an Executive Session that ran long. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar, and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Staff members present were Town Manager Laura Allen and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Also present were residents of the Town.

### Approval of the Agenda

CM Menjivar moved to approve the agenda. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he'd like to amend the agenda, adding an item for discussion in the Administration portion of the meeting. CM Hemby seconded the motion to approve. CM Papanikolas moved to approve the agenda as amended. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. After no further discussion, the motion to pass the amended agenda was unanimously approved.

### 1. Mayor

#### a. Announcements

##### • Executive Session Report out

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reported out on the Executive Session that happened prior to the Council meeting. The meeting ran from 6:05-7:18 PM, with all Councilmembers present in the Council Chambers. The Session was held to consult with staff, consultants or other individuals about pending or potential litigation. Members of the Local Government Insurance Trust were present as consultants for that portion of the meeting. The Session also addressed a personnel matter, involving the continued employment of a staff member.

MPT Brittan-Powell made an announcement stating that the Council may want to consider participating in the "Feed the Fridge" program as part of the ARPA spending. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked that MPT Brittan-Powell send all the pertinent information to her and it would be added to a future agenda.

#### b. Presentation from WSSC on account delinquency and support programs:

This item was removed from the agenda at the presenters' request and will be rescheduled.

#### c. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy inquired if the Educational Advisory Committee would be meeting in July as they are not on the calendar. She also noted that Game Night is listed on the calendar, but the new Walking Club is not. The Walking Club meets at 8AM on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the Sports Park parking lot. On July 28, the Town of Berwyn Heights will be hosting the next Four Cities meeting.

**d. News from the Town Manager**

TM Allen shared that Public Works has begun re-stripping the parking lot at Town Hall. She updated Council that an interview had taken place for the Public Works Administrative Assistant position. She also shared that the Town has received notices from the County recycling facility as a large number of plastic bags have been included in the recycling from residents. Additionally, the ARPA application is on the website in both English and Spanish. The Town had its annual insurance renewal with LGIT and the quote came in on budget.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked about the recycling issues and asked for ideas on reducing the bags that residents put out in their recycling. CM Papanikolas shared that many places that used to accept plastic bags for recycling are no longer doing so. MPT Brittan-Powell said that since the Town has recycling at Town Hall for other specialty items, perhaps a collection for plastic bags could begin at Town Hall. CM Hemby asked about the trash that has been in the compost behind Town Hall. TM Allen stated that this has also been a problem. CM Menjivar stated it would be helpful to have signage in English and Spanish on what is allowable and agreed to work on that with staff.

**e. Citizen Comments**

Claudia Barragan called in and asked how she could comment on the ARPA memo that will be discussed later in the meeting. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that she could comment on it now or call in during that time and give comment. Ms. Barragan stated she'd call back later.

**f. 50<sup>th</sup> Town Council goals in table format**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that the goals mentioned at the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting have been turned into an Excel spreadsheet and wanted to make sure that all the goals were captured correctly. She also asked for any additions or deletions. CM Papanikolas inquired about the 2018 changes to the system of government. It was clarified that the Ord. 121 (Powers and Duties) was updated prior to 2018 with the 2018 Charter change only reflecting a title change for the position of Town Manager (from Town Administrator). The item will be corrected to reflect the date that the Ordinance changes were made, approximately 2014. CM Menjivar added that he and CM Hemby are interested in working on a program that would help teens in Town find volunteer positions that would help them earn their required service hours. CM Papanikolas stated that he would work to condense the goals into appropriate groupings. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy would like Councilmembers to be prepared to champion items to ensure that they are completed. She also stated that she is hoping this can become the strategic plan for the 50<sup>th</sup> Council.

**g. ARPA Resident Emergency Assistance Program, Approval Process**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that this agenda item had come about because MPT Brittan-Powell had some concerns regarding the approval process for the applications. She reviewed the history of the ARPA funds and the development of this residents' assistance program. She reviewed that she advocated for using the College Park model for the program, and the previous Council agreed. She further reviewed the program in question and shared that each applicant is eligible for up to \$5,000 in relief funding that would be sent directly to the vendor or creditor. Continuing, Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that the original plan was to use a consultant from College Park to evaluate applications. However, the consultant is no longer available to the Town due to a family emergency. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked TM Allen if there were other staff available at College Park that would be able to review the applications. TM Allen clarified that no staff from

College Park would be made available to the Town of Berwyn Heights and that the consultant was only available due to the drop in applications for the College Park's relief program. She stated that College Park uses a committee made of three staff members to evaluate and approve/deny the applications that they receive. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he was in favor of following the College Park program as long as a College Park staff person was available to evaluate the applications. He indicated his belief that staff should have come to Council before evaluating any applications as the process was being changed. He also indicated that he believes "proof of hardship" is not met to his standards based on the current application. He continued that other programs use a set of prequalifying questions and applicants should only be considered if they had met the "proof of hardship" standards of another State or County. He stated that Town staff are using different standards and processes than College Park. He also stated that he would not approve applications and checks for residents he knows. Resident Jose Valcarcel stated that he is confused about why Town staff are not being trusted to make a decision. He also asked about the employer requirements as part of the application. MPT Brittan-Powell stated again that he would like more "proof of hardship". Resident Claudia Barragan called into Town Hall. There were several issues with the connection; however, it was understood that she believes the application to be overly long and intrusive. She stated that she is glad that College Park is not reviewing the applications of Berwyn Heights residents. She also believed that the application should not have been a cut/paste of the College Park application. She indicated that she does not believe that Code Compliance should be involved in the committee that reviews applications, that Council should review the applications. She also shared census data that indicates that the Town has 35 households that fall under the poverty line and that the Town should be proactive in reaching those households. TM Allen asked Council for direction. She also advocated that the application that has already been approved should be paid. Council had continued discussion about the process, including that an eligibility checklist should be included on the approval/denial portion submitted by the review committee. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he would consult with Ms. Barragan to review and revise the application. TM Allen sought clarification that the program would be suspended until the application has been revised. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy confirmed that the program would be suspended until the process has been revised. CM Papanikolas stated that the final rule indicates that all that needs to be done is to self-attest income and number of individuals in the household. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he would attempt to have the revised application by the end of the week.

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

CM Papanikolas expressed gratitude for how neighbors helped each other during the rain event that caused some flooding.

### **a. Council Rule 2**

CM Papanikolas reviewed that re-writing Council Rule 2 began during the previous Council. The goal was to make the rule and Council roles easy to read and understand. Section one is a breakdown of what the Town Council does. Section two addresses the Mayor's specific duties and privileges. Section 3 reviews the role of the Town Manager. Section 4 basically addresses the responsibility of Town Council to work together.

## **3. Public Safety**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared about the upcoming Primary election, reviewing that it is a closed primary and that early voting is underway through July 14 at 13 early voting centers in the County with same day registration available. Mail-in ballot requests sent by mail must be received by July 12<sup>th</sup>, or the 15<sup>th</sup> if requested by e-mail. Mail-in ballots must be mailed

(postmarked by the 19<sup>th</sup> of July) or hand delivered to a drop box. The election day polling place for Berwyn Heights will be Berwyn Heights Elementary School. She encouraged everyone eligible to vote.

#### **4. Public Works**

CM Menjivar shared that he will be working with CM Hemby on a committee for teens and is working with TM Allen about the recycling issue. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about equity in training which was brought up in a previous meeting. CM Menjivar stated that he is working on that with Director Pudner and TM Allen. MPT Brittan-Powell followed with a question about salary and the possibility of doing a comparison with other similar municipalities. CM Papanikolas shared that Council had discussed the possibility of doing a salary study, but that local and state governments are losing staff because of a lack of flexibility. TM Allen will put together a proposal for a salary study.

#### **5. Administration**

##### **a. Budget amendment discussion/amended agenda item**

MPT Brittan-Powell stated that we don't have a lot of flexibility in activating ARPA funds because of the realities of passing a budget amendment. He is seeking to have funding available at the time that students are returning to the University and will be seeking internships. His idea is to have a greater amount of money (\$200,000) in an account that would give the Town more fluidity in funding. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked for clarification that this proposed amendment is tied to the agreement with the University of Maryland School of Public Health. MPT Brittan-Powell confirmed that the proposed amendment is tied to the agreement with SPH. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that the Town needs to see the MOU before attempting to provide funds for it. MPT Brittan-Powell proposed a MOU presentation and a "meet and greet" over Zoom at the Town Meeting on July 13. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy expressed that the Town would need to see the MOU, discuss and review it, then approve it and propose a budget amendment. TM Allen stated that in order to have a substantive conversation it needs to be posted with notice so that the public can see it and Council can consider it. MPT Brittan-Powell reiterated that his goal is to get the money allocated in a manner that would meet the educational year. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked MPT Brittan-Powell to get a timeline and procedure from the University. MPT Brittan-Powell replied that students return in mid-August and that they begin looking for internships then, if not before. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy summarized that it sounds like the Town would need to have the MOU in place by early August. TM Allen stated that there is a lot of detail on the funding structure in a budget amendment and that more detail is generally required for a budget amendment. Resident Jose Valcarcel asked about the process for a budget amendment. TM Allen explained that typically a MOU will outline staffing and budget needs which guide the Council in drafting the budget amendment. CM Papanikolas and Mayor Kulpa-Eddy discussed if it would be possible to create a more general fund in response to Public Health that could be used for other things depending on the result of the conversations with the SPH. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that she will reach out to the University on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> to see where they are in the process of the MOU and share that information with Council. The Council can then decide how to amend, if they amend, the agenda for the Town Meeting.

#### **6. Code Compliance**

##### **a. Welcome Packet**

CM Hemby thanked the residents for sticking with the meeting so long. She reviewed where she is on the welcome packet for new residents to the Town that will also

introduce everyone to the programs available in the community. She thanked Town staff for the work that had been done previously on a welcome packet. She'd like to have color pictures in the packet. It will include a "Welcome to the Town of Berwyn Heights" introduction, a history of Berwyn Heights, including the mission, vision, motto, and seal of Berwyn Heights as well as a map of the Town. Then, a table of contents and how the Town Council serves the community. It will have a section on Departments and Services, including Administration, Code Compliance, PRECA, Public Works, Police Department and the Volunteer Fire Department. It will have a section for local heroes and future leaders (youth). It will also have information on healthy living in the area, including walking trails, medical and fitness centers and other resources in the neighborhood such as dog parks, libraries, and tutoring. She asked for Council to consider if they would want to sell advertising in the booklet as it will be larger than the Bulletin and more costly. She also stated the hard copy would be updated annually and the web version monthly. She invited input on other topics to include. She also asked for ideas on how to deliver it to new residents.

CM Papanikolas spoke about a voicemail he received stating there is an abandoned car and work trucks parked on the street on Vernon Terrace.

## **7. Adjournment**

CM Hemby moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Papanikolas seconded. After no discussion the motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:46PM.