

MINUTES
BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK/EXECUTIVE SESSION
MAY 26, 2021

MAYOR BARSА	
COUNCIL PRESIDENT ASCOLESE	COUNCILMAN BRIZZOLARA
COUNCILMAN FOSCHINO	COUNCILWOMAN HAUSMANN
COUNCILMAN KIM	COUNCILMAN ROONEY

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Norwood was held at Borough Hall on the above date.

Mayor Barsa called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM and led those in attendance in a salute to the American Flag and asked for a moment prayer for Councilman Rooney who lost his mother today.

Mayor Barsa stated:

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, setting forth the time, date, place and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in the Record and Star Ledger, filing a copy in the Borough Clerk’s office, and posting on the bulletin board.”

Roll Call:	Mayor Barsa	Present
	Council President Ascolese	Present
	Councilman Brizzolara	Present
	Councilman Foschino	Present
	Councilwoman Hausmann	Present
	Councilman Kim	Present
	Councilman Rooney	Absent

Mayor Barsa took a moment to remind everyone as we celebrate Memorial Day this coming weekend, we should be honoring those who gave their lives while serving our county and protecting our freedom. The American Legion Post 272 will be holding their annual Memorial Day Parade on Monday May 31st at 11:00AM as it follows its normal route. Mayor Barsa asked for everyone to please join us in honoring those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Mayor Barsa went on to state that our current vaccine numbers show that 55% of Norwood residents have had their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 47% of the residents have had their complete vaccine. Mayor Barsa also stated that Governor Murphy has issued a new Executive Order and as of May 28th, you are no longer required to wear a mask while indoors regardless of the ability to maintain a social distance of 6 feet. Mayor Barsa also stated that the CDC recommends that non-vaccinated individuals still wear a mask inside although it is no longer a

requirement. Restaurants no longer must seat patrons 6 feet apart. Retail establishments, personal care businesses, and health care clubs may operate at full capacity and as of June 4, 2021 the outdoor gathering limit will be lifted. Mayor Barsa stated that we are now beginning to open up and are heading in the right direction. Mayor Barsa also reminded those who are not comfortable, you have every right to continue to wear a mask while out. Mayor Barsa then went on to remind residents that a permit is required to hold a garage sale. Applications are available on the Norwood Borough website and at Norwood Borough Hall.

Mayor Barsa informed everyone that the PTO has organized “Adopt an 8th Grader”. They are asking all who take part in this activity to decorate the front door, yard or porch of their assigned student on Saturday June 12th. If you would like to participate, please visit the borough website, and Facebook page for the more information and for the link to register.

Mayor Barsa went on to thank impact Zone for hosting our last Healthy Norwood event. Residents of all different ages participated, and we all had a great workout. The next event is scheduled for Sunday June 13th and it will be a more relaxing way to start the morning. Bridgepath Wellness will be here to lead us through some yoga poses that will refresh our body and mind.

Mayor Barsa stated that each month the American Cancer Society puts out different challenges to help us get into healthy habits and on the healthy lifestyle path. We have started posting these challenges on our Facebook page. It is a great way to stay motivated between our events and to get healthy together, as a community. On our website you can find a log, that we will update each month to correlate with the new challenges, where you can document your progress. Mayor Barsa stated he would love to hear how everyone is doing and to please comment on our Facebook posts and at the end of the month, if you feel comfortable, email us a copy of your log sheet. Mayor Barsa continued saying we can inspire each other to get moving and get healthy.

PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCE 2021:02

Mayor Barsa stated he had before him an ordinance for Council action entitled:

An Ordinance to exceed the 2021 Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and Establish a Cap Bank

It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann to open the meeting to the public for comments concerning this ordinance. All Council Members present voted for the motion. There being no member of the public wishing to be heard, it was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann to close the meeting to the

public. It was moved by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann to approve Ordinance 2021:02. On the roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Ascolese, Brizzolara, Foschino, Hausmann, and Kim
Absent: Councilmember Rooney
Nays: None

There being five (5) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2021:02 was approved.

Approval of Resolution 2021:110 Authorizing the 2021 Municipal Budget to be Read by Title Only

It was moved by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara to approve Resolution 2021:110. On the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC HEARING OF THE 2021 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Upon the public portion of the meeting, the governing body will approve the 2018 Municipal Budget (Resolution 2021:112)

Mayor Barsa began by thanking Mr. Steve Wielkottz, Chris Battaglia, Councilman John Rooney and all Borough employees for working so hard on what he believed to be a wonderful budget with minimal increases while leaving the Borough of Norwood in great financial shape.

Mayor Barsa invited Steve Wielkottz to add any additional comments. Mr. Wielkottz stated the municipal tax levy will go up under 1.5% which equates to less than one tax point. The municipal tax increase on the average residential assessment, which is a little over \$553,000, is approximately \$60 for the entire year. Budget increases included an increase of \$100,000 for solid waste and the required payment for Police and Firemen Retirement System increased \$79,000. These mandated increases were offset by using some of the initial surplus.

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public to address comments regarding the 2021 Municipal Budget. The motion was made by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann with all Council Members present voting aye. No one wishing to be heard, a motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Council President Ascolese. All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Approval of Resolution 2021:111 Approving the Amendments to the 2021 Municipal Budget

It was moved by Councilman Foschino and seconded by Council President Ascolese to approve Resolution 2021:111. On the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Approval of Resolution 2021:112 Adoption of the 2021 Municipal Budget

It was moved by Councilman Foschino and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann to approve Resolution 2021:112. On the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Mayor Barsa thanked all Councilmembers for the 100% vote approving the 2021 Municipal Budget.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Barsa reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda and asked if any Council Member wished to remove an item. Mayor Barsa asked for a motion approving the Consent Agenda consisting of the following items.

Approval of the following resolutions:

2021:113 Authorizing the Submission of the Application for the Kennedy Park
Improvements to the County Trust Fund

2021:114 Payment of Vouchers

2021:115 Authorizing Amended Emergency Solid Waste Contract

It was moved by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara to approve the Consent Agenda. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- Grant Presentation by Millennium Strategies
Peter Blanos joined the meeting via Zoom. Mr. Blanos is the Director of Business Development at Millennium Strategies which is a full-service grant consulting firm out of Morristown, NJ and has been operating since 2005 while providing services for municipal, county, and board of education agencies in NJ, NY, and PA. Services are based around grant research and grant writing with a team of 30 employees. Mr. Blanos explained the primary service which is the Grants Portal Service as it combines both grant research and grant writing giving clients full access to federal, state, county, corporate and philanthropic grants which are updated weekly. The cost to access the portal is an annual flat fee of \$8,000 while the cost to write the

grant is \$130/hour with a “not to exceed” amount which is disclosed prior to beginning the process. Mr. Blanos explained that most of the grants written will cost between \$1,500 and \$3,000. Answering Councilman Brizzolara’s question of what the expected return on investment is, Mr. Blanos stated it is sometimes two to four times the investment up to fifteen times the investment depending on how active the municipality is on pursuing funding. Responding to Councilman Kim’s question, Mr. Blanos stated the typical grant takes approximately 10 to 20 hours to complete and would inform the municipality if the cost benefit is not there. Responding to Council President Ascolese’s question, Mr. Blanos stated the \$8,000 flat fee would not increase year over year. Councilwoman Hausmann asked the question which was also asked by Councilman Foschino in a prior meeting whether a discount would be available if the municipality was to join in with the school under one contract. Mr. Blanos stated there would be a \$1,000 discount each to both the municipality and the school if that were to happen. Mayor Barsa thanked Mr. Blanos for joining the meeting and Mr. Blanos thanked the Mayor and Council for their time as well. Mayor Barsa asked Mr. Corrison whether an RFQ is required to move forward which Mr. Corrison stated he would research. Councilman Foschino requested to interview one more grant writer to which Mayor Barsa agreed. Councilman Foschino stated Demarest used a grant writer who was able to successfully obtain a grant for a new fire truck.

- **Bond for Development at Broadway and Tappan Road**
As per Mr. Corrison, Gino Tessaro was concerned with the lack of road access to the development were there to be an emergency. According to the developer’s agreement, Mr. Corrison stated we could take the position that they are currently in default. Mr. Corrison stated he could draw up a resolution holding the developer in default but felt it would be better to first send a letter to the developer. If no response were received, we could then pass the resolution and possibly move to file a lawsuit. Mayor Barsa recommended putting the bond company on notice right away as time is of the essence. Mayor Barsa stated if the borough were to wait until August, the less likely anything would be completed prior to the winter season. Mayor Barsa stated he would be in support of whatever is the fastest way to get this resolved. Mr. Corrison recommended notifying the developer, his attorney, the bonding company, and the bank of the current situation. Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to move forward and give Mr. Corrison authorization to put the bonding company on notice. The motion was forwarded by Councilwoman Hausmann and seconded by Council President Ascolese. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion.
- **Liquor License Transfer – Paul Van Dyke to Norwood Liquor License LLC.**

Councilman Kim asked who Norwood Liquor License LLC was in which Mayor Barsa explained was a company that will be opening a liquor store/wine bar in the smaller building of the new development on Livingston Street. Mayor Barsa explained the Norwood Police successfully completed their investigation and approved the transfer. At this time, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2021:116 authorizing the transfer. The motion was forwarded by Council President Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion.

- Tree Removal Application – 350 Summit Street
Councilman Foschino stated this a simple application. The resident is looking to remove trees from the back corner of his property which extends 247 feet, and the removal would not be a detriment to anyone. With no questions presented, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to approve the application. The motion was forwarded by Council President Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Foschino. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion.
- Use of Basketball Court/Knights of Columbus request for Free Throw Contest
Mayor Barsa stated that we have never had an application until recent regarding use of the basketball courts. Mayor Barsa stated our basketball courts are extremely active and being used by community residents all the time. Mayor Barsa explained that tying those courts up and renting them to outside organizations only takes away from the community of people using them. Mayor Barsa asked why we would put our children out for a \$75 application fee for an outside organization to use our basketball courts. Mayor Barsa stated while we do rent out our fields, we only have one basketball court. Councilwoman Hausmann asked if it is a problem being that we receive funding from Open Space. Mr. Corrison stated we cannot restrict outside residents from using the courts, but we can limit who rents the courts. Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to just let organization in town and the public use the courts and not rent to outside firms. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Foschino and forwarded by Council President Ascolese. Councilwoman Hausmann voted no while the remainder of the councilmembers voted in favor of the motion. Councilman Brizzolara asked if we could possibly develop a resolution so that the issue is clearer. Mayor Barsa asked Mr. Corrison to review the issue. Mr. Corrison stated he would reach out to Mr. Padovano to possibly separate the use of the fields from the use of the basketball courts. Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to allow the Knights of Columbus to use the basketball court for their free throw contest. The motion was forwarded by Council President Ascolese and seconded by

Councilwoman Hausmann. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

- **Property Maintenance Stipend & Procedures**
Councilman Foschino picked up on the discussion from last meeting stating that Mrs. Volpitta has drafted a warning letter to resolve the property maintenance issues around town. The letter will be delivered to the homeowner. If no response is received, the issue will go to Mr. Tessaro to being issuing summonses. Councilman Foschino stated there are issues in town with grass not being cut while some of the homes are occupied and others are not. Councilman Foschino stated that the Council is all in agreement that it is impossible for Mr. Tessaro to inspect the town on a weekly basis. Mayor Barsa agreed and stated the first step should be to knock on the door and ask if there is anything we can do to assist the situation. If the resident is not responsive after the first step, then move forward. Councilman Foschino went on to state that time is of the essence as properties are getting worse. Councilman Foschino stated the DPW can compile a list of landscapers to assist and turn this negative situation into a positive one. Council President Ascolese stated the property maintenance ordinance needs to change and asked Mr. Padovano to distribute a copy to all councilmembers for review. Councilman Brizzolara asked if we had a number of confirmed infractions, how does it compares to the past and how do we quantify if things have gotten worse in town.
- **Borough Clerk Report**
Mr. Buginsky reminded everyone that June 8th is the primary election, and we will return to a normal election cycle with both polling locations open (Community Center and Council Chambers at Borough Hall)
- **Borough Engineer Report**
Evan Jacobs provided his report stating that the contractor will begin work of the 2020 Municipal Road Program consisting of Briarwood Ave, Pierson Ave, Frasco Ave, Mohawk Ave, Knoll Way, Rockland Ave, Broadway sidewalks and the fire department parking lot. Mr. Jacobs also stated Oak Street work is actively underway. Mr. Jacobs stated he spoke with Boswell Engineering and the project for the Blanch Avenue Bridge is out to bid. Livingston Street is currently being repaved with paving completed June 1st or 2nd. Mayor Barsa asked Mr. Jacobs to ensure that the parking spots that were in front of Ferguson Plumbing are not repainted, as they were eliminated. Regarding Kennedy Park Playground, the CDBG advised him that they do not fund playground equipment but will cover everything else in the park. The Open Space program will cover the playground equipment.

- Borough Attorney Report
Mr. Corrison just wanted to remind the Mayor and Council that the deadline for the marijuana law is August 22, 2021.

APPOINTMENT

Mayor Barsa informed every one of his appointment of Celia Lane to the Environmental Commission and he looks forward to involvement with the commission.

- Approval of the Following Minutes:

2/12/2020 (Absent: Councilman Rooney & Scott), 3/11/2020, 3/20/2020

Mayor Barsa stated it was discovered during our recent audit that the Meeting Minutes listed above were not formally approved. Mayor Barsa asked that Councilmen Brizzolara, Ascolese, and Foschino make a motion to approve those minutes as Councilman Kim and Councilwoman Hausmann were not a part of the Council at that time. Council President Ascolese forwarded the motion and Councilman Foschino seconded the motion.

Councilman Brizzolara stated he cannot recall what happened a year ago but would be happy to vote yes as he believes the minutes are accurate. Councilman Brizzolara went on to ask when was the last time the Governing Body approved minutes as he did not see updated minutes since last November.

Mr. Buginsky stated he had fallen behind on the minutes and will be working on those over the next 3 weeks.

Council President Ascolese, Councilman Brizzolara, and Councilman Foschino voted in favor of approving the minutes for the meetings referenced above.

Approval of Resolution 2021:116 - Approving the Liquor License Transfer from Paul Van Dyke to Norwood Liquor License LLC.

(Discussed and approved earlier under “Items for Discussion”)

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2021:116 authorizing the transfer. The motion was forwarded by Council President Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Barsa opened the meeting to the public. Seeing and hearing no one, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Brizzolara and seconded by Councilwoman Hausmann. All councilmembers present approved the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion to come before the Council, Mayor Barsa adjourned the meeting at 8:49PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Buginsky
Deputy Borough Clerk