

MINUTES
BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK/EXECUTIVE SESSION
FEBRUARY 23, 2022
7:00 PM

MAYOR BARSA		
COUNCILMAN ASCOLESE		COUNCILMAN BRIZZOLARA
COUNCIL PRESIDENT 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 7:02 PM and led those in attendance in a salute to the American Flag and asked for a moment of silence

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
	Councilman Ascolese	Present
	Councilman Brizzolara	Present
	Council President Foschino	Present
	Councilwoman Hausmann	Present
	Councilman Kim	Present
	Councilman Rooney	Present

The mayor announced that the next Mayors Wellness event will be held this Sunday, the 27th, at Yoga6. They will be hosting a class at 1:30pm that will be suitable for all levels of yoga experience. The March event will be hosted by Norwood Fit Body Boot Camp and is scheduled for Saturday, March 19th at 11am. There will be more information coming soon.

The Mayor also said that The Mayors Wellness Campaign is not only about eating right and exercising but also about mental and emotional well being and educating our community about the different conditions many of our resident’s face. The Borough of Norwood has partnered with the Bergen County Department of Health Services to raise awareness of mental health issues and to support the members of our community living with such a disease. Tonight, the governing body will be passing a resolution declaring Norwood a stigma free zone.

The Recreation Committee has been working very hard trying to take this department to the next level. Their first new event will be a Winter Festival scheduled for Saturday, March 12th, from

5pm-8pm at Heroes Pond. There will be two bonfires, music, games, and the Soup Phantom will be selling homemade specialty soups and one pot meals.

PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCE 2022:01

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

1. Ordinance 2022:01 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 168 of the Code of the Borough of Norwood to Establish a New Recreation Fee Schedule

It was moved by Councilman Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Rooney 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 Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara to approve Ordinance 2022:01. On the roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Ascolese, Brizzolara, Foschino, Hausmann, Kim, and Rooney

Absent: None

Nays: None

There being six (6) ayes and no nays Ordinance 2022:01 was approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Matters listed below are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion of the Council and one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests an item be removed.

Approval of the following resolutions:

2022:60 Employment of Hyung Ho Ahn as Alternate Crossing Guard

2022:61 Authorizing Emergency Repair of 26 Brook Street Pumping Station

2022:62 Approval to Submit Grant Application Extension to the Bergen County Department of Parks for the Norwood Dog Park & Shuffleboard Courts Project

2022:63 Authorizing the Designation of the Borough of Norwood as a Stigma-Free Zone

2022:64 Awarding Contract for Knickerbocker Baseball Field Improvements Project to Robert Wogisch Landscape/Contractor Inc.

2022:65 Payment of Vouchers

2022:66 Retirement of Perry Buongiorno

Approval of February 9, 2022 Mayor and Council Minutes

Approval of Resolutions 2022:60 through 2022:66 and approval of the February 9, 2022 Mayor and Council Minutes was motioned by Councilman Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. In the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Health Ordinance Change:

The Borough Administrator / Clerk explained the intent behind the ordinance change from the Board of Health as per the email request from the President of the Board of Health at the time. The ordinance will be introduced at the first meeting of March 2022.

2022 Harrington Park Dumping Contract:

Council President Foschino explained that 2022 is the 2nd year for the agreement with Harrington Park to allow them to use our composting and dumping site in town. There is a 2% increase in the price for Harrington Park for this year's contract. Payment is due on April 1, 2022. Councilman Brizzolara asked what has been done in the past and Council President Foschino explained that Norwood needs to be compensated for the use of the facility. Councilman Brizzolara wanted to make sure that the facility is up to code. Mike Neglia explained that the current operator has been dealing with the permits and we have never received any fines. The current operator is currently winding down his operation and we will need to put someone new in there. Councilwoman Hausmann asked why the Borough needs cameras in that location. Mike Neglia said that there was some illegal dumping there. The Mayor said that the smell problem has dissipated. The Council agreed to move forward with the contract.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station:

Council President Foschino said that he and Councilwoman Hausmann had a meeting with Jamie Auger with ChargePoint. The environmental commission met with Bryan Electric who is a subcontractor. There is another meeting to discuss this project on Thursday afternoon. Councilwoman Hausmann met with the representative from ChargePoint at the League of Municipalities Conference. I spoke with Council President Foschino and gave him the research from the Environmental Commission. The interest in the charging station on Livingston Street will be between the business owner and vendor. The Environmental Commission is exploring the municipal lot as a location for a charging station. Mayor Barsa feels that the parking in the municipal lot is hard to come by when the fields are in use as it is. Another concern of his would be how much actual use the charging station would get. Also, the parking lot of borough hall floods pretty frequently which may not be good for an electric station. Councilman Brizzolara suggested we find out where other

municipalities put their charging stations. Councilman Rooney suggests the flood plan be looked at extensively. Council President Foschino stated that the municipalities who put charging stations at the municipal buildings do so because those lots are also commuter lots, or close to a train or bus station. The unit will cost around \$11,000 to \$15,000. Bryan Electric is an electrical contractor that installs the systems. 521 Livingston St can have stations for the residents and tenants. Councilwoman Hausmann said that there is a lot of money in grants for electric charging stations. There is a lot of data for how much these stations are used at municipal parking lots. More and more electric vehicles are on the road today. Councilman Brizzolara wanted to know if grants are only available for municipal lot-based charging stations. Councilwoman Hausmann said that the grants she saw in her research apply to municipal lots. Councilman Kim wanted to know if any of the surrounding municipalities have charging stations. Mayor Barsa answered by saying that Closter has them in their retail shops. Mike Neglia reminded the council that zoning laws may have to be looked at because of parking lot zones. Councilwoman Hausmann explained that the user of charging stations do not have to pay. Sometimes they are free. She also stated that Kennedy Field is always being used and for long periods of time. There are ways to install these without costs. Councilman Ascolese wanted to know how long it takes to charge a car. Councilwoman Hausmann explained that on an empty battery, it could take as long as 8 hours. Councilman Rooney said that if we do not have enough spots for normal cars, there could be fights in the parking lot among drivers.

Municipal Budget & Grant Writer Discussion:

Mayor Barsa stated the following:

Our next item for discussion will be our 2022 budget, including our requested capital expenses and the possibility of hiring a grant writer.

These three items go hand in hand and an informed discussion cannot be had on one topic without including the others. I would not feel comfortable deciding on any part of our budget, capital requests, or the hiring of a grant writer without having analyzed and explored all options available to us.

We would not be this far along in the budget process if it were not for the efforts of Councilman John Rooney and our CFO Chris Battaglia. They have been working extremely hard to prepare for this meeting.

I am proud to say for the past 15 years, my administration has continued to provide our residents with the services they have come to expect, as well as new services, all while continuing to be fiscally

responsible. It is not only my goal but also my responsibility as your Mayor, to continue to put the needs of the taxpayers at the forefront.

In 2021 our capital expenses were 1.75 million. Our requested capital expenses are in excess of 6 million. We need to bring that number way down, to a number that is manageable for the Borough and the residents. I personally feel it cannot be more than 2.5 million.

I am currently reaching out to our neighboring Mayors to gather more information on shared service and mutual aid. I would also like my Borough Administrator to work with our department heads to review where they feel we can benefit from shared service and mutual aid agreements. It is important to remember that past practice does not dictate the way of the future. We have new opportunities that will help to save money and bring income into the Borough. Towns that participate in shared services are eligible for state funding.

When we look at the capital requests before us, we need to be able to put aside our personal feelings and be able to make decisions based on what is best for Norwood and the residents as a whole. We need to say what is a need, what is a want, and what can be done next year.

There are many reasons why I am cautious with your money. We are in a world of uncertainty, and we need to plan for our future. We do not know what tomorrow holds and I feel a financial safety net could only help prepare us for the unforeseen. Inflation, uncertainty in the marketplace, and the cost of goods and services are continuing to rise. I feel it would be monetarily prudent to wait until costs have stabilized before undertaking projects that do not need to be completed this year.

The American Rescue Plan will end in 2023. We will be losing out on \$300,000.00 in income. We have also lost the income from the CARES Act. In 2028 we will need to once again start our bond process. The amount of municipal debt could have a negative impact on our ratings. The use of our surplus could also have an adverse effect on our percentage increase towards property taxes.

I have given much thought to whether a grant writer would be beneficial to the Borough of Norwood. There is a large upfront cost associated with it, and at times, the Borough also must put money towards the project the grant is funding. Once an item or project is budgeted for it is no longer eligible for a grant in most situations.

Norwood is an affluent community and based on that we do not qualify for many grants.

We are incredibly fortunate to have the services of Michael Neglia and Neglia Engineering. They have always done an outstanding job providing us with grants through DOT, Open Space, Community Development, and Safe Routes to School to name just a few.

We are still waiting for a few more pieces of information that need to be added to the budget. At this time, I have not made a decision on any of the capital requests before us tonight or the grant writer. I look forward to the discussion and input by all.

Councilman Rooney said the spreadsheet that he distributed was a first attempt and there is no science behind it. The biggest request comes from Neglia Engineering, and he looks forward to hearing from him. The Infrastructure Bill is a great option to fund some of these line items through the bill. I think a grant writer is a smart idea. The ordinance in 2017 has \$700,000 in funding dedicated to the Broad Ave Bridge. Mike Neglia stated that he wants to get that bridge re-appraised. Mayor Barsa said that the Borough closed the Broad St. bridge once before and it negatively affected the businesses on Broad St. He wants to know if they can close one side and do the work while keeping on lane open. Mike Neglia said that the bridge is too small of a structure to have that kind of system. The problem with the bridge construction is that the work has to be done from below and work its way up. This kind of work would take even longer than the Blanch Ave project. For budgeting purposes, Neglia would like to get a structural engineer out to take a look at the structure to get a better sense of the price. Discussion was held on the Blanch Ave Bridge timeline. Mike Neglia feels confident it should be opening within the next 2 weeks. Councilman Kim feels that we should utilize the infrastructure improvement act without the help of a grant writer. He wants more information on how to apply for aid through this bill. Mike Neglia explained that no municipalities have this information as the bill is still in the senate. Council President Foschino feels that the items the Borough “wants” should go to a grant writer and the items the Borough “needs” should go into the budget. Councilwoman Hausmann stated that she spent a lot of time going over this spreadsheet and feels the most important items are sidewalks and crosswalks. DOT and other grants can help cover those areas. She stated that these are the things that grant writers can apply for. Councilman Gotheimer told me what is accessible. Grant writers can get materials that are needed for the fire truck. They do all the prep work and have gotten the Jaws of Life for 3 different municipalities. Resources for the DPW can get achieved through grant writers. The Department of Defense can also help out and that is not matching. We should have a 1, 3, 5, 7 year plan and that is another thing that the grant writers can help us with. Mike Neglia stated that the

crosswalk for the borough hall cannot be pointed at grass in order to comply with ADA guidelines. Councilman Ascolese asked if we can maybe hire a grant writer for a trial run to see how it goes. If we are spending less than we are receiving then it is a good investment. Mike Neglia suggested we pare down the list and give it to a grant writer. Councilman Brizzolara said that the council needs to figure out a schedule and doesn't understand the hesitation with hiring a grant writer. CFO Battaglia said that there is a time issue here and the governing body can always do two separate bond ordinances. Mayor Barsa stated that the road program must be funded as we do it every year. Councilman Brizzolara feels that the Fire Department should come and present at the next work session to educate the council on the new proposed fire truck. Councilman Ascolese will bring the leasing option of a police car to Chief Krapels.

Borough Administrator Report:

Borough Administrator / Clerk mentioned that pet licenses are due on the 28th of February. There will be a shred event on May 21st at the DPW building. Borough Administrator / Clerk mentioned that he and the deputy clerk will be attending a meeting with the other clerks in Bergen County to learn more about the upcoming election.

Borough Attorney Report:

No Report

Borough Engineer Report:

No Report

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was forwarded by Councilman Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Brizzolara. All councilmembers present voted in favor of the motion

Michael Congiusti (Fire Chief) – 345 Tappan Road

If any of the council wants to know more about the fire truck before the next meeting, my door is always open. I would also like to sit with CFO Battaglia to go over a few things. Mayor Barsa stated that he would like the fire chief at the next work session along with any member of the truck committee who wishes to attend.

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.

CLOSED SESSION

2022:67 Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Council to proceed in Closed Session – Matters Relating to Employment

Motion by Councilman Brizzolara , second by Councilwoman Hausmann, and unanimously agreed that 2022:67 Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Council to proceed in Closed Session – Matters Relating to Employment be approved. The meeting temporarily adjourned to Closed Session at 9:00 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN

The meeting resumed in open session at 9:24 PM.

Motion by Councilman Ascolese, second by Councilman Rooney, that 2022:68 Approving Application for State Recognized Chapter 48 be approved. During a roll call vote:

Roll Call:

Councilman Ascolese	Aye
Councilman Brizzolara	Abstain
Council President Foschino	Aye
Councilwoman Hausmann	Aye
Councilman Kim	Aye
Councilman Rooney	Aye

Motion Carries

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was forwarded Councilman Ascolese and seconded by Councilman Rooney. All councilmembers present approved the motion. Meeting was adjourned the meeting at 9:26PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Padovano
Borough Clerk