

MINUTES
BOROUGH OF NORWOOD MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK /EXECUTIVE SESSION
March 31, 2021

MAYOR BARSÀ

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ASCOLESE

COUNCILMAN ROONEY

COUNCILWOMAN HAUSMANN

COUNCILMAN BRIZZOLARA

COUNCILMAN FOSCHINO

COUNCILMAN KIM

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Norwood was held on the above date at Borough Hall and with Zoom access to the meeting.

Mayor Barsa stated that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, pointed out the exits and asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

All members were present at roll call.

Mayor Barsa wished all who celebrate a happy Passover and a happy Easter. He advised the residents that yard waste pickup will be starting soon and the DPW is out chipping. He also advised that the next Mayors Wellness event will be a biking event with multiple routes and there will also be a beautification walk. Lastly, registration for summer camp has begun.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilman Brizzolara made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Council President Ascolese seconded the motion and the Council unanimously agreed on a roll call vote.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mayor Barsa advised that the first item for discussion would be employee Brian Lally. Mr. Lally was rice noticed and chose to have this discussion in open session. Due to multiple issues, DPW Director Robert Tracy has requested that Mr. Lally be terminated. The personnel committee has met and discussed the issues and agree with Mr. Tracy.

Councilman Foschino made a motion to terminate DPW employee Mr. Brian Lally. Councilman Rooney seconded the motion and the Council unanimously agreed.

Councilman Rooney advised that there is over \$700,000.00 in surplus due to COVID. This will help to minimize the impact to the tax payers. There is a placeholder in the budget for the DPW contract negotiations. All department heads are very conscious of their spending which also helps the budget. There is enough there to cover all capital expenditures. Mayor Barsa asked if the budge can be introduced at the next meeting and Councilman Rooney said he does not see why not and will check with the auditor.

Mayor Barsa asked the Council what their feelings were on hiring a grant writer. Councilman Rooney said the fire department has asked for multiple items and most can be covered by grants. Councilwoman Hausmann said there are private grants available as well. She found one from the Firehouse Public Safety Foundation that could be used towards the purchase of the requested thermal imaging cameras. With the Council's approval she would like to send in the application on behalf of the fire department. Mayor Barsa said it's a great idea and to move forward with submitting the application. Councilman Foschino would like to see each department head supply a list of what they feel their department needs. He would like to review the lists before agreeing to hire a grant writer. He would also like to explore the option of having Mr. Padovano or Mr. Buginsky attend the online course from Rutgers for grant writing and to keep it in house. Councilman Rooney suggested having a grant writing company come to a meeting and give a presentation and present their fee schedule. Councilman Brizzolara said it would be foolish not to consider this as an option. Mayor Barsa asked Mr. Padovano to schedule a grant writer to come to the next meeting to give a presentation.

Mayor Barsa advised that a COVID plan for the batting cages is in place and has been reviewed by the Council.

Councilman Foschino made a motion to approve the COVID plan for the batting cages. Councilwoman Hausmann seconded the motion and the Council unanimously agreed on a roll call vote.

Mr. Christopher Mercado, 301 Tappan Rd., submitted an application for tree removal. He would like to remove 9 trees from his front yard and replace them to make the yard to nicer. Councilman Foschino asked to table to application until the borough is provided with a drawing or survey of the property showing the existing trees and noting which trees will be removed.

Mr. Evan Chrenko asked the Council for approval to place his bat boxes along Broadway near the Penny Lane pond. There will 5 poles with a bat box on each side. This location was approved by the DPW director. Councilman Foschino said he spoke with Director Tracy regarding this and they both felt the pond is a better location than Kennedy Field.

Council President Ascolese made a motion to approve the location of the bat houses. Councilman Foschino seconded the motion and the Council unanimously agreed.

Mr. Padovano said the website design has finished the first phase. The home screen will have scrolling images, including the most important items with a link. There will also be a quick links section, upcoming event section that will take the user to the main calendar and a news section. All department heads will be in charge of their department section on the website.

Mr. Corriston informed the Council that baseball/softball had an upcoming fundraiser and still had money in the corporate account. Once that money has been spent, they can close the account and dissolve the corporation.

Lastly, a resident asked the borough to remove a tree on the right-of-way. Though the borough did remove and trim trees in the past, we are not required to. Mr. Fede is under the same understanding. It was done in the past as a courtesy. Councilman Brizzolara agrees, it would become too expensive for the borough to be responsible for the maintenance of all the trees in the right-of-way.

Mr. Jacobs advised the Council that there is an underground storage tank in the DPW parking lot that DEP has deemed noncompliant. It is no longer in use by the DPW because they send the vehicles out for service. It will be more cost efficient to remove the tank than to get the tank in compliance and maintain it each year. He will also be submitting an application to the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund for financial help with the playground. He recently met with a playground contractor who is under state contract. By using a state contract contractor, the borough will not need to go out to bid.

Councilman Brizzolara made a motion to open the meeting to the public. Councilwoman Hausmann seconded the motion and the Council unanimously agreed.

Ms. Kathy Fable from Old Tappan said she was made aware of a situation where Councilwoman Hausmann made disparaging expletive remarks about the Borough Administrator on a conference call with over 50 elected officials and she feels the public is owed an apology and the governing body should sanction the Councilwoman. Mayor Barsa asked Councilwoman Hausmann if she is aware of this, to which Councilwoman Hausmann responded she has no idea what she's talking about. Mayor Barsa said to be fair to both Mr. Padovano and Councilwoman Hausmann this should be investigated and asked Mr. Corriston to get a copy of the meeting.

Ms. Schanck, the baseball/softball representative, stated that the account has not yet been closed because of the upcoming fundraiser. She is looking for guidance on how to close the account and dissolve the corporation.

Mr. Allen Rapaport said was on the committee that agreed to the payouts for the police department each year, instead of one lump sum at retirement. This was beneficial to the tax payers because they were getting paid at the current rate of each year. He wanted clarification that the law had changed and they did not do anything wrong. Mayor Barsa explained that it cannot be discussed in open session.

Mr. Ermin Suljic started by saying the grant writer is a great idea and should be tried and evaluated. He also feels the tree ordinance is unfair and many people do not understand it. He believes it should be rewritten. Lastly, he does not think it is appropriate for people from other towns to comment during a Norwood meeting.

Council President Ascolese made a motion to adjourn the meeting for closed session. Councilman Rooney seconded the motion and the Council unanimously agreed.

Mayor & Council Work/Executive Session Meeting Minutes – March 31, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Buginsky, Deputy Borough Clerk