

February 27, 2020

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Joint meeting of the Pottstown Borough Council and Pottstown School Board was called to order on Thursday, February 27, 2020, 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room, School Administration Building, 230 Beech Street, with President Dan Weand and President Amy Francis in the Chairs.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

School Board Directors present were Amy Francis, Laura Johnson, Steve Kline, Thomas Hylton, John Armato, Bonita Barnhill, Katina Bearden and Raymond Rose. Also in attendance were Superintendent Stephen Rodriguez and Business Manager Maureen Jampo.

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Lisa Vanni, Donald Lebedynsky, Trenita Lindsay, Dan Weand and Michael Paules. Also present were Manager Justin Keller, Borough Secretary Virginia Takach, Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Finance Directors Janice Lee and Ann Maletsky and Michael Lenhart.

Personnel: Administrative Election

Mr. Rodriguez introduced Melisa Morgan, as the new Director of Co-Curricular Activities with the anticipated effective date of May 19, 2020. She is the first African American female director of co-curricular activities and the 2nd in history of Montgomery County.

Mr. Armato moved to approve the appointment of Melisa Morgan as the new Director of Co-Curricular Activities for the Pottstown School District, with effective date of May 19, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hylton and passed unanimously.

Walk-Bike Education Program

Kourtney High, Grants Administrator for the Borough of Pottstown, provided an update on the Walk and Bike Pottstown Education program. This has been a collaboration effort between the Borough and the Pottstown School District. Ms. High outlined the new mapping, wayfinding signs and safety brochures. She also presented the new logo and t-shirts. Ms. High explained the student bike programs with the assistance of the Pottstown Police Department, along with the results of the bike rodeo and the bike to school challenges. This year's rodeos are scheduled for April 29th at Lincoln School and April 30th at Rupert. The bike to school challenges are at Lincoln and Rupert scheduled for May 4th through May 7th.

Urban Lad Institute Plan Presentation – PAHWF

David Kraybill, Executive Director of the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation advised that the Borough and School District have been provided grants from the foundation in cooperative initiatives. He added that the Foundation provides \$3 million per year in grants with 60% going into the Borough itself and 40% to the surrounding regions.

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Howard Brown, Program Officer for Schools, Active Learning, and Community Development Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation presented a review of the October 2019 Urban Land Institute report. He advised that the first ULI study was done in 1976.

Josh Warner, PAHWF, outlined Actionable recommendations and the Informational Recommendations presented in the report. Mr. Warner also noted the recommendation to create a housing Resource Center and to choose an Economic Development Pillar. He confirmed that a recommendation was made to create an ombudsman or a clear leader to address economic development and the recommendation was PAID.

PAID Update

Ms. Peggy Lee-Clark, Economic Development Director for the Pottstown Area Industrial Development, provided the annual update for PAID. She highlighted new development plans and new businesses throughout the Borough, advising there were 18 in 2018 and 19 in 2019. She also explained the LERTA and the QOZ initiative and the Downtown Pottstown Pioneers. Ms. Clark thanked Alex Thigpen for his efforts in the TRec district. She also reviewed the proposals for the opening of the Boutique Hotel and the Keystone Boulevard extension and the initiatives for the 400 block of High Street.

Blight Remediation Update/Land Bank/Demolitions

Mr. Keller provided an update on the Land Bank process and referred to the Land Bank page of the website. He noted there is a forum tentatively scheduled for March 23rd, 5:00 p.m. He also highlighted the blighted properties that have been demolished or scheduled to be demolished and the legal process involved. Mr. Keller also announced that a CDBG grant is being sought for lighting updates in the Washington Street area.

Sustainability Plan Implementation Updates

Mr. Keller and Mr. Rodriguez highlighted the list of updates as recommended by the Sustainability Plan. Mr. Rodriguez noted the Landscape maintenance electrical upgrades, air quality measure and the use of well water for field irrigation.

Mr. Keller reviewed the initiatives being promoted by the Borough, which include the conversion to LED lighting in Borough Hall, the installation of water quality inlets.

Assessment Amendment for Properties

Mr. Keller proposed a consideration in lowering the threshold of properties if underassessed by the County from \$250,000 to \$150,000.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of both boards to allow the Solicitors to review and provided recommendations to the Boards.

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Discussion

Mr. Keller recommended to all to attend the Citizens' Leadership Academy and introduced the Councilors that attended the class and then ran for office in the Borough.

President Weand requested consideration to have the School District address the situation of children running through yards, especially with the spring season approaching.

Mr. Rodriguez advised that this is addressed every year.

Mr. Keller also announced that PCN will be airing a segment on March 5th, 7:30 p.m. featuring and highlighting the Borough.

Councilor Lindsay reminded all of the meeting on February 29th, 9am at the Bethel AME Church and also the March 23rd trip to Harrisburg.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Justin M. Keller
Borough Manager