

August 21, 2019

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING

The Special meeting of the Pottstown Borough Council was called to order on Wednesday, August 21, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Meeting Room, Pottstown Borough Hall, 100 East High Street, Pottstown, Pennsylvania, with President Weand in the Chair.

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

President Weand requested a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Carol Kulp, Donald Lebedynsky, Trenita Lindsay, Dan Weand, Rita Paez and Joseph Kirkland. Also present were Manager Justin Keller, Solicitor Charles Garner, Mayor Stephanie Henrick and Grants Administrator Kourtney High.

RICKETTS CENTER DISCUSSION

Manager Keller provided a brief background and time line for the future operations of the Ricketts Center. Items to be addressed are as follows: Operations through the end of the year, Process to find a New Operator, the Status of Current Proposals and the Role of the Borough in the Center.

Operations through end of the year

Mr. Keller explained and clarified rumors as follows: Olivet's is committed to fulfill obligations to operate the Center through the end of year. Beginning August 28th, Olivet's will have staff on the premises to allow for safe and supervised training. The Center is on a two-week in service, which occurs every year to allow for staff training. Paul Winterbottom is to maintain the weight room. Fall programming will not be provided since it does not make sense to begin when they won't finish through the end of the year. No charge to new children. Olivet's will work with anyone wanting to offer additional programs as long as they fulfill requirements for child abuse clearances.

Mr. Keller confirmed that proposals were received from Hobarts Run, STRIVE and the YWCA to provide programming during the week and hours on the weekend.

Solicitor Garner explained the lease requirements for operations of the Center under the existing lease. Olivet's began operations by submitting a proposal under the RFP requirements and the proposal was incorporated into the lease.

Mr. Keller advised that in the interim, it may be prudent to allow Olivet's to operate until the end of the year, working with Hobart's Run, STRIVE and the YWCA for programming and the Borough can help to coordinate under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Director.

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Member of STRIVE, Hobart's Run, the Hill School agreed to work together for the benefit of the children and operations of the Center.

Process to find New Operator

Mr. Keller advised that a draft request for qualifications was emailed to the Councilors and noted that proposals are due on August 30th. Interviews will be conducted prior to the September 4th Committee of the Whole meeting. Financial resources, track records and previous experience will be considered. Mr. Keller added that if there are people interested, they should be tuned in and already preparing to submit a proposal. He advised that proposals have been received from STRIVE and the YWCA.

It was the consensus of Council to authorize Staff to proceed with the RFQ process.

Howard Charles of Pottstown Community Action is interested in participating and volunteering.

Proposals to Date

Mr. Keller confirmed that STRIVE is still interested in submitting a proposal. No one from YWCA was present and Mr. Keller confirmed that he spoke with the Director and assumes that they are interested in submitting a proposal.

Justin Valentine questioned if the model is to lease out the facility and not just have tenants and questioned if the operations would continue with lease tenants or should Parks and Recreation run it with community assistance.

Councilor Lindsay added that she met with the Parks and Recreation Director and had this discussion.

Borough's Role for Operations

Mr. Keller advised that staff is still analyzing its role regarding the operations. Olivet's was bringing at least \$60,000 additionally into the Center.

Councilor Kirkland commented that there was a hands-off approach from the Borough, adding that the Borough should run the Center and do away with a contract.

President Weand outlined the financial changes in the last 10 years such as increased expenses, the loss of tax revenue and the two contractual obligations.

Mr. Lenhart advised that an estimate to run the Center is between \$195,000 and \$200,000, with a full-time staff person, a fitness instructor and three-part-time staff for after school programs. The Borough shortfall would be \$50,000.

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Bishop Everett Debnam stated that the NAACP is recommending that the Borough and the Parks and Recreation take care of running the Center and do whatever is possible to support it. He advised that grant money is available for which it must be applied.

President Weand commented that a decision must be made in order for the Center to operate in January 2020.

Twila Fisher, Hobart's Run, commented that she provided a proposal to the Hill School on behalf of Hobart's Run. She was not aware that her proposal was to be made public this evening and adding that it was meant to be a bridge solution.

Mr. Keller confirmed that Mr. Lenhart will contact Hobart's Run and the other entities willing to run the programming.

Update on Carousel

Mr. Keller noted that the Carousel will be coming before Council regarding obtaining a liquor license for the Carousel. They are also asking for approval of a patio and water feature improvements to the Carousel. Plans will be submitted to Licensing & Inspections.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

- a. Robert Brown, 543 Grant Street – commented that kids are the future and must be made a priority or they will become a liability. The community needs to be refocused on taking care of the kids and the community.
- b. Robert Edmonds, 535 Beech Street – also stated that he is volunteering his services.
- c. David A. Charles, 1105 Rambler Avenue – noted that he didn't have enough time to engage the community. He read a section of his proposal expressing the voice and desire of STRIVE's commitment.
- d. Denia Bullock, 440 Walnut Street – expressed her care for the children and just wants more for the community.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Justin M. Keller
Borough Manager