

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday  
June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ed Kisselback, Council President  
Joseph Knowles, Council Secretary  
Michelle Benitez, Council Member  
Stacey Champion, Council Member

**SUPPORTING PERSONNEL:**

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo  
Debora McBreen, Council Clerk/Recording Secretary  
Quinton Nearon, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager  
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor  
Phil Wursta, Township Engineer

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of the microphone.**

**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING:**

**Council President Kisselback** opened the meeting with a moment of silence and/or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Council President Kisselback** recognized a Boy Scout in attendance, Noah Fender, from Troop 132, working on his Merit Badge.

**The Mayor** announced that the Philadelphia Business Journal, a subsidiary of Forbes magazine, has named Bensalem as 1 of 50 Best Places to Raise a Family. Bensalem came in at number 26 out of 50 in the whole Country. The Mayor is very proud of the Team that made this possible. The Mayor indicated he will not rest until Bensalem is #1.

**The Mayor** suggested Lieutenant Bugsch update everyone on the position Bensalem is taking on the quads and dirt bikes.

**Lieutenant Bugsch** indicated he had a meeting with the Mayor, Director McVey and a group of concerned citizens. Lieutenant Bugsch and the Police Motorcycle Unit got their off-road

vehicles repaired and placed them back into service. The Unit is investigating the wooded areas on various days and nights. So far there has been one motorcycle recovered that was possibly stolen.

**Council President Kisselback** indicated by an Ordinance that was created some time ago, that the Police Department has the authority to seize any vehicle that is illegally riding on property and causing a disturbance.

**Council President Kisselback** indicated that the Bensalem Council and especially the Mayor respond to the citizens with their concerns.

**Councilwoman Benitez** thanked Lieutenant Bugsch and the Police Motorcycle Unit for their swift action. Councilwoman Benitez visited Grove Avenue and indicated that you can definitely see the actions taken have deterred the nuisance of these vehicles.

2. **INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, STAFF AND MAYOR:**

**Council President Kisselback** introduced Supporting Staff, Council Members and Mayor.

**DISCUSSION REGARDING TABLED AGENDA ITEMS:**

**Council President Kisselback** asked **Solicitor Pizzo** if there were any changes to the agenda this evening.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated Agenda Items 7 and 8, a settlement consistent with the direction given to the solicitor's office has been filed with the court. At this point, the court has not entered an order and would suggest these items be tabled to the Council meeting date of July 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to table Agenda Items 7 and 8, be tabled to a date certain of July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. **Council Secretary Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated Agenda Item 10 is the continuation of the Lot Line Change for Chaudry. Mr. Pizzo received an email this afternoon requesting this item be continued to the Council meeting date of July 10<sup>th</sup> to allow them additional time to complete the PSA with the Township and to take care of the required escrow that Council has asked to be put into place. The attorney is happy to report that they have provided the Township with multiple demolitionists estimates and that they have agreed to an escrow amount and all of the documents have been submitted to the Township.

**Council Secretary Knowles** motioned to table 1206 Crespo Lane to a date certain of July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**Solicitor Pizzo** indicated Agenda Item 11, 448 Mill Road, Lydon Realty Associates, and there was communication between the Township Engineer and the applicant earlier today that there

are apparently some items related to the Stormwater Management that have not been submitted to the Township. It appears to have been an oversight on the part of the applicant and have asked the item be tabled to the Council meeting date of July 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to table Agenda Item 11 to a date certain of July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. **Council Secretary Knowles** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Council President Kisselback** indicated the Public Comment will be heard at the time the agenda item is heard. Seeing no one come forward the first of two Public Comments was closed.

4. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

**Council Secretary Knowles** motioned to approve the Minutes from the June 12th Council meeting as presented. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

5. **CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BENSALEM BY ADDING CHAPTER 60 – “AUTOMATED RED-LIGHT ENFORCEMENT SYSTEMS.”**

**Lieutenant Bugsch** indicated this is an automated red-light enforcement. Abington is the only town outside of the city of Philadelphia that has had it for about 8 years. This system will record violators that are not stopping for red lights. The Township contacted the company that outfitted Abington’s red-light system. The system is self-sufficient, there is no cost to the Township. The intersections that will be enforced are Knights and Street Roads and Route 1 and Old Lincoln Highway.

Once this system is approved, the turnaround time is about 30 to 60 days to get it up and running. Depending on the infrastructure that is in place, they do not believe there will be any issues. The first 60 days of implementation of this program the violators will receive a warning. The ticket is \$100 and does not carry any points on the violators license. The company installing the equipment recoup their cost from the citations.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked if a car continues to run the red light what is the Township’s ability to do anything?

**Lieutenant Bugsch** indicated if they make multiple violations they are mailed multiple citations and if they are not paying them, they go to a collection agency that is run by the company that owns the equipment. Bensalem will model the Abington program which has been very successful.

**Councilwoman Champion** asked if the intersections where they have this program implemented in Abington, have they seen a significant decrease in the number of accidents?

**Lieutenant Bugsch** indicated Abington has seen a reduction in the number of accidents and that is why they have maintained the program.

**Council President Kisselback** asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this ordinance. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment was closed.

**Council Secretary Knowles** motion to approve amending the code of the Township of Bensalem by adding Chapter 60 “Automated Red-Light Enforcement Systems” and to allow the two locations at Old Lincoln Highway and US Route 1 and the intersection of Knights and Street Roads. **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

6. **CONSIDERATION AND PUBLIC HEARING OF AN ORDINANCE UPDATING AND AMENDING THE DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLAN (DROP) ESTABLISHED FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL FULL-TIME POLICE OFFICERS EMPLOYED BY THE BENSALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT:**

**John Chaykowski, Finance Manager and Pension Administrator** indicated the Ordinance before Council is amending the original DROP that was adopted by Council in 2014 and was subsequently amended due to an arbitration award in 2015. Through recent contract negotiations there was a minor amendment to the DROP program which is signified in Exhibit A as the actual agreement. When an Officer becomes eligible to retire, based on their years of service and their age and depending on their date of hire in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, they can elect within 90 days of the superannuation date. There is an exception of a few individuals, through negotiations they have a longer timeframe to elect when they are entering. They can elect to retire for Pension purposes only, however, they will work for a maximum timeframe of an additional 3 years. Basically, what happens is their pension becomes frozen at that point, their pension payments start to be disbursed and will go into a separate individually managed account in their name that the Township holds for that timeframe. They will continue to work for the Township for 3 years and the Township has a definitive time when the individual will be actually leaving the department so the Township can prepare accordingly for their replacement.

For example, if the Officer were to retire today they would start receiving a monthly pension from the Pension Plan. Instead of that money going directly to the retiree it will go to that managed fund through Mission Square in the individuals name. The money will sit in the Money Market account and gain interest and is guaranteed not to lose any money. The retiree can decide to stay for either a year or a maximum of 3 years once they enter the DROP Program.

The benefit of having a DROP Program is you have a definitive date when the individual is leaving so you can actually be prepared to start recruiting individuals for that position. It is a benefit to the Township to lessen the manpower issues on the street.

**Council President Kisselback** asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this ordinance. Seeing no one come forward the Public Comment was closed.

**Council Secretary Knowles** motioned to approve the DROP Program for the benefit of all full-time Police Officers employed by the Bensalem Police Department as presented. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**7. CONSIDERATION OF A PRELIMINARY AND FINAL SUBDIVISION FOR:**

**Applicant:** Gibson Holdings, LLC  
**Location:** 1515 Gibson Road  
**Proposed Use:** 6 Residential Lots  
**Zoning Classification:** R-2 Residential District  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-054-005

**This matter was tabled by a prior motion.**

**8. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR ACT NO. 537, PA SEWAGE FACILITIES ACT, PLAN REVISION FOR NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT OF A PARCEL OF LAND IDENTIFIED AS 1515 GIBSON ROAD SUBDIVISION:**

**This matter was tabled by a prior motion.**

**9. CONSIDERATION OF A PRELIMINARY AND FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT FOR:**

**Applicant:** Shax Express Cargo, Inc – Mr. Sheroz Vafaev  
**Location:** Winks and Marshall Lane  
**Proposed Use:** Truck Parking  
**Zoning Classification:** G-I – General Industrial District  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-075-079

**Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to table Shax Express Cargo, Inc to a date certain of July 10<sup>th</sup>. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**10. CONSIDERATION OF A LOT LINE CHANGE FOR:**

**Applicant:** Iftikhar & Aisha Chaudry  
**Location:** 1206 Crespo Lane  
**Proposed Use:** Residential  
**Zoning Classification:** RA1 Residential District  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-072-478

**This matter was tabled by a prior motion.**

**11. CONSIDERATION OF A FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT FOR:**

**Applicant:** Edward K. Lydon Realty Associates, LP  
**Location:** 448 Mill Road  
**Proposed Use:** Manufacturing/Warehouse Addition  
**Zoning Classification:** L-I – Light Industrial District  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-023-025

This matter was tabled by a prior motion.

**12. CONSIDERATION OF ESCROW RELEASE FOR:**

**Developers Request:** PA Steel – Release #1  
**Location:** 1717 Woodhaven Drive  
**Tax Parcel:** 02-060-013-013, 02-060-013-001, 02-060-013-017  
**Amount:** \$633,119.64

**Quinton Nearon**, Senior Municipal Inspection Manager, indicated this is PA Steel’s first release. The project is almost complete but there are items that still need to be rectified. There are enough funds to guarantee that work will be completed.

**Councilwoman Champion** commented on the excellent job that PA Steel has done with the property at 1717 Woodhaven Drive.

**Council Secretary Knowles** motioned to approve Release #1 for PA Steel located at 1717 Woodhaven Drive in the amount of \$633,119.64 as audited by the Township Finance Department. **Councilwoman Champion** seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

**13. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Council President Kisselback asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to come forward, seeing no one come forward the second public comment portion was closed.

**14. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Engineer Wursta** wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

**Solicitor Pizzo** wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

**The Mayor** wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

**Councilwoman Benitez** congratulated everyone on the top 50 recognition, it takes a team to make it happen and wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

**Council Secretary Knowles** wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Acknowledged Bensalem's 26<sup>th</sup> Best Place to Raise a Family.

**Councilwoman Champion** wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Acknowledged Bensalem is a great place to live. Enjoy the concert on Wednesday.

**Council President Kisselback** acknowledged Bensalem's 26<sup>th</sup> Best Places to Raise a Family and how I-95 was up and running in 2 weeks.

July 10<sup>th</sup> is the next Council Meeting. Goodnight and God Bless!

**15. ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Council Meeting of June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

[www.bensalempa.gov](http://www.bensalempa.gov)

or

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra F. McBreen  
Recording Secretary/Clerk of Council