

Community Ward Meeting for **Wards 1 & 4** was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, March 24, 2014. Mayor Koci called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Stan Koci, Don Saunders [left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.], Sandy Spinks, Paula Mizesak, Marilyn Zolata. Absent: Walter Genutis, Greg Pozar. Also Present: Clerk of Council Lorree Villers. Administration: Acting City Manager and Economic Development Director Mike Mallis, Service Director Clint Bellar, Deputy Police Chief Marty Stemple, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Recreation Director Randy Lewis.

Mayor Koci and Acting City Manager Mike Mallis welcomed all residents in attendance tonight. Mayor Koci said the most important thing this evening was to hear from the residents. He explained Council was in the process of selecting a new City Manager.

Acting City Manager Michael Mallis started the evening with a PowerPoint presentation highlighting all City Departments. He read the attached PowerPoint in its entirety. He introduced the Department Heads that were present this evening. He noted all the departments work together as a team to ensure quality service. He was proud to be working with the group of employees the City currently had on staff. He stated it was important not to let the actions of two employees paint everybody with the same brush. There was a current investigation with Cuyahoga County regarding these individuals and these two employees were not currently working in their capacities at the City of Bedford. The City was cooperating 100% with the investigation. The City would continue to provide for its residents.

- He explained the current situation with Ben Venue and how the closing of this facility had drastically affected the City of Bedford and its own employees. He stressed the City and the State and County Representatives were doing the best they could regarding the current situation with Ben Venue. The cuts the City Administration and Council had to deal with were \$2.3 million from the closing of Ben Venue and \$1.7 million from the State of Ohio. The City managed to maintain the \$5.8 million in Reserves plus operate on a balanced budget in 2014. Many of the departments gave money back to assist these cuts in 2014. The City was able to operate smoothly in 2014 because of the severance packages and bonuses Ben Venue paid out but 2015 was going to be a very different situation. The concerns were the business and the buildings could be dealt with differently; the business sold and then the buildings torn down with zero liability. He assured everyone the City was in very close contact with Ben Venue and the City remained optimistic. It was important that Ben Venue consider the drastic impact this closing has had on Bedford.
- The City was able to receive the old Taylor Chair property for future development.
- He expressed his appreciation regarding the new company Art of Beauty that moved into the vacant Taylor Chair building and the pleasant visual exterior upgrades plus the 50+ jobs.
- West Grace was scheduled for resurfacing; from Broadway toward the dip.
- The City was considering an extension of the Metroparks into Bedford with bike paths.
- The Broadway Avenue and Forbes Exit enhancement and waterline. This was a major entrance into Bedford. A lot of the issues needed to be addressed by ODOT.

- Crack sealing was necessary on the streets that were paved in 2013.
- Implementation of the Regional Dispatch Center would be a combination of Maple Heights, Bedford Heights, Garfield Heights and Bedford. This would be paid by a \$3.3 million grant. The center would be at Bedford Heights in the Municipal Center.
- The Recreation Department was working closely with UH Medical Hospital for senior type programs. Anne O'Neill was a licensed social worker which was a huge benefit for Bedford.

He added points of interest throughout the PowerPoint presentation as listed:

Police Department: This department ran on a \$4,929,890.00 million budget. Two new cars were purchased in 2014. Mr. Mallis urged everyone to utilize the Code Red, NIXLE, Facebook, E-NEWS and Twitter.

Fire Department: This department ran on a \$3,568,820 million budget.

Roads, Cemetery and Refuse: This department ran on a \$1,601,830 million budget.

Administration and Miscellaneous: This department ran on a \$2,797,201 million budget.

Service Department: This department ran on a \$1,700,450 million budget.

Recreation Department: This department ran on a \$1,255,955 million budget.

Municipal Court: This department ran on a \$2,689,670 million budget.

Water & Waste Water: This department ran on a \$7,484,910 million budget.

General Fund Debt: This department ran on a \$1,339,610 million budget.

Health Insurance: This department ran on a \$2,472,920 million budget.

Operating Budget: Bedford's total budget was \$31,804,294 million; it took a lot of money to run the entire City of Bedford with all the repairs and maintenance.

Bedford Auto Mile Dealerships: A lot of the dealerships were making fantastic improvements to their facilities to the tune of \$25 million of improvements. The City was very pleased that these dealerships were still dedicated to Bedford. The Projects of Scale estimated at a construction value of \$12,850,000.00.

Ellenwood Renovation Project: This project would cost over \$150,000 that would address the men's restroom, senior lounge, front entranceway and primary meeting room.

Councilwoman Mizensak reported the following for Ward 4:

- urged everyone to ask questions, voice their concerns, complaints and even compliments,
- thanked the Service Department for snow removal, water and sewer line repairs,
- thanked the Safety Forces for their excellent and professional services,

- urged everyone to call the non-emergency number if they had any questions or concerns at 232-1234,
- hoped for more resident/community involvement,
- stressed the importance of property maintenance,
- help and respect your neighbor and watch for the children,
- noted the City's Finance Director did a good job watching the finances,
- and the City always worked as a cohesive team and hoped the new Council would do as well for our citizens.

Councilwoman Spinks reported the following for Ward 1:

- thanked everyone for their support during the election,
- noted 41 Tudor Avenue had raccoon problems that was being addressed,
- she referred to a newspaper article that neglected to list Bedford as posting its agendas online; she commended Clerk Villers for being Council's backbone,
- resident concerns regarding the poor quality and service at Wal-Mart,
- noted the poor condition of Grand Boulevard,
- and announced the Garden Club Mother's Day sale would be a Ellenwood Recreation Center.

Demetrius St John explained the reason behind "Issue 7 - Sin Tax". This tax kept Cleveland's Progressive Field, Quicken Loans Arena and First Energy Stadium facilities strong. The idea was to keep Cleveland strong. He urged for everyone to vote "yes" for Issue 7. (see attached)

Acting City Manager Mallis and Mayor Koci opened the meeting to questions from citizens.

A resident complained about all the rubbish on Grand Boulevard. Mr. Mallis pointed out this time of the year the rubbish was more visual because it's been covered up all winter by the snow. It was determined it wouldn't hurt the residents to also pitch in and pick up the rubbish around their homes instead of waiting for the Service Department to clean it up. Deputy Chief Stemple also thought the Juvenile Diversion Program could be of some assistance. He said to call Penny Jarrell. Mr. Mallis explained how the Building Department would be contacting the residents advising them that their grass, lawns, bushes and trees needed to be maintained. The Building Department was working closely with the Water Department monitoring water usage. If there was no water being used, then the Building Department would notify them the grass and yards needed to be taken care of. This proactive notification would be their initial notification and if there was a violation it would be addressed immediately at their expense. This was the City being proactive in addressing these types of issues.

A 53 year Bedford resident referred to the area of Greencroft Road and Tudor Avenue as looking like a "war zone"; a lot of homes in this area were deteriorating. She also spoke about the drug issues that were going on at playground near her. She spoke about some children that were riding an office chair in the street which was very dangerous. Deputy Chief Stemple urged the residents to call when these things were happening so an Officer could respond; waiting after the fact wasn't something they could enforce.

A resident spoke about the 44 buckles in the street on the West Glendale area by the Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Bellar explained the buckles would be addressed by the Service Department.

Mr. Zarlino said City Manager Form of Government was an excellent way to run a City. He was disturbed to read some of the articles in the newspapers regarding actions of two employees. The City of Bedford was here to help the residents.

A resident asked about the damaged Automile sign. Mr. Mallis explained the sign had been damaged twice: first by a drunk driver and another driver experiencing a seizure but it would be repaired.

A resident asked if Ben Venue had any type of incentive/tax abatement for the next owner. Mr. Mallis said there are several different incentives on this property/business for various buildings. He thought about five years were left on these. The resident asked about the Business Activity Tax. Mayor Koci suggested he contact the Finance Director for information.

A resident asked if the fire hydrant near 455 Westview Road was going to be fixed. Mr. Bellar said the City would be addressing the hydrant this summer. The resident also pointed out this address also had a car in the drive that hadn't been moved for several months. Deputy Chief Stemple said the Police Department would check on the status of the vehicle. Mr. Mallis, again, urged the residents to call when something was happening and not wait until a meeting.

A resident pointed out the drug activity at 395 Kenyon Avenue; they can smell pot smoke in the air at all hours of the day and night. There was a lot of activity going on in this home. Deputy Chief Stemple, again, urged the residents to call when something like this was going on. Mr. Mallis explained the Police Department might decide to monitor the activity for a while so if a resident didn't think something was happening they may be mistaken. They should not expect the Police Department to run up and kick down the door.

A resident complained about the unloading of the vehicles at the Mercedes Dealership. Mr. Mallis said he would check into it. Mrs. Spinks said she was told by the dealership they don't have adequate room to load these cars.

A resident asked what was going on with the bus service. Mayor Koci said Southeast Bus Service merged with another company. He was not sure of the name of the new service.

A resident said she had several prescriptions in her purse she would like to dispose of. Deputy Chief Stemple explained there was a Pill Drop Box by the Police Department at the end of the hall.

A resident complained about the yellow paper advertisements that were laying all over the yards. It was suggested everyone pitch in and pick up the rubbish around town.

Jean King was concerned about the Marketing of Bedford; she had hoped for different types of businesses. She noticed a lot of the same type businesses (Tattoo Parlors) were popping up not only in Bedford but in every town. Mr. Mallis pointed out Tattoo Parlors were zoned as Art Studios. Bedford needed to review its zoning throughout the City. He explained the City had a new brochure marketing Bedford plus he was in the process of looking into different options to market the City. He was focused on a business type brochure to assist interested parties or spark interest for Bedford. He hoped to involve the business owners so the City could assist them in being successful. A business owner was present at the last Ward meeting that seemed interested in participating with the City for suggestions.

There was discussion regarding the new improvements to the Ellenwood Recreation Center. One resident wanted to know what was being done as a benefit for the children. Mr. Mallis explained the grant had to be used for certain criteria not monies to be used for whatever the City chose. The City Administration prided itself for applying for every grant possible regardless of the amount. To date the City had applied for about \$30 million in grant monies. He clarified the project would cost over \$150,000 that would address the men's restroom, senior lounge, front entranceway and primary meeting room. The entranceway canopy was going to be on the West end doors: it was much needed because this area was deteriorating.

A resident asked if Bedford was going to get the large recycling cans he has noticed in other communities. Mr. Bellar and Mayor Koci explained the cost would be approximately \$500,000 for the City and the current contract still had 1 ½ years remaining. Mr. Mallis urged everyone to participate in the City's Shred Day on June 14, 2014 and October 11, 2014 from 8:00 a.m. to noon. Shred Day was also a \$5,000 grant.

A resident congratulated Councilwoman Spinks on her election. She noted she doesn't have a problem calling the Police Department when she has an issue.

A resident had some concerns regarding 35 Thames and 51 Thames regarding rental homes. She felt one of the homes should be occupied because of its condition. Mr. Beverly would look into these two addresses. Mr. Mallis said the City was changing its rental inspection policy. These homes would be inspected every other year instead of when there was a change of tenant. The City was going to be stricter with rentals. The rental fees were going to increase also. She spoke about a water or drainage issue at one of her neighbors that allowed the water to pool on the street this past winter which turned to ice. The water was running into the street from 51 Thames. Mr. Bellar would check it out.

Eileen Barto pointed out she could not participate in some of the recycling programs because of the hours she worked. Mr. Bellar said during the month of April the City would have a Household Hazardous Waste Program from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mrs. Barto asked if the City would consider different hours or a Saturday to accommodate some of the residents. Mr. Mallis said he would check into it.

Mayor Koci invited everyone to join the free FriDates concerts for excellent entertainment.

Councilwoman Mizsak pointed out this summer would be the Strawberry Festival's 50th Year Anniversary. Councilwoman Spinks thanked the citizens and said she was proud to support the Bedford Schools. She also joined the WIMG at the NLC seminar. She brought the Let's Move Program to the Bedford City Schools.

Mayor Koci, Mr. Mallis, Councilwoman Mizsak and Councilwoman Spinks reiterated to the residents to call City Hall or the non-emergency number at the Police Department if they saw something strange, had a concern or a suspicion of something. The City staff could not address issues if they weren't aware there was a problem in the first place.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

Clerk of Council

Mayor Stanley C. Koci

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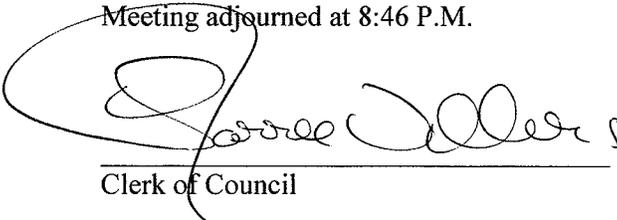
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