

Community Ward Meeting for **Wards 3 & 5** was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, March 10, 2014. Vice-Mayor Zolata called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Vice-Mayor Marilyn Zolata, Greg Pozar. Absent: Mayor Stan Koci, Don Saunders, Sandy Spinks, Paula Mizesak, Walter Genutis. Also Present: Clerk of Council Lorree Villers. Administration: Acting City Manager Michael Mallis and Economic Development Director Mike Mallis, Finance Director Frank Gambosi, Service Director Clint Bellar, Police Chief Kris Nietert, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Recreation Director Randy Lewis, Superintendent of Public Works Shawn Frances.

Vice-Mayor Zolata and Councilman Pozar welcomed all residents in attendance tonight. Vice-Mayor Zolata said the most important thing this evening was to hear from the residents.

Councilman Pozar thanked the residents for their involvement and he urged the residents to ask questions. He explained the process Clerk Villers did to post a meeting as: City's Website Calendar, City's Website Council Agendas & Meetings, City's Website Public Meeting Notices, posted at the five (5) locations in the City, fax/email 3 newspapers, emailed 34 people the Council agenda as a standing public record request, a hardcopy in Council Chambers, the meeting date and time is displayed on the Sign out front and possibly at the Square depending on the meeting, the Utility Bill insert. Clerk Villers also did the agendas and postings for Board of Building Standards and Appeals, Organizational Meeting, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Assessment Equalization Board, Public Hearings, Special Meetings, Master Plan, Charter Review and Ward Meetings. He couldn't understand with all the notification why the Council Chambers was not filled for every meeting. He referred to the Department Heads and the employees as being professionals that he was proud of. He reflected on the recent incidents regarding the TV stations and their actions. In dealing with the current financial situation in Bedford with the closing of Ben Venue and State cuts, the focus was the safety services. He felt before employees were laid-off the Administration and Council might have to ask the residents to assist in paying for some of the City services. The Department Heads and employees were doing their jobs and it was important to keep them here to deliver the services at the same professional level.

Mr. Mallis, Councilwoman Zolata and Councilman Pozar strongly urged 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 suspension of something. The City staff could not fix something if they weren't aware there was a problem in the first place.

Councilman Pozar reported the following for Ward 5:

- urged everyone to voice their concerns, complaints and even compliments,
- urged the residents to be the eyes and ears for the community,
- he was concerned with the current situation regarding the closing of Ben Venue,
- he felt the priority during budget issues was the safety forces,
- and Citywide services may be an option for payment by the residents to assist the City during these difficult budget times.

Councilwoman Zolata explained years ago the City decided not to salt the side streets; the main roads were the priority. There were many waterlines that broke over the winter season. It was a benefit to the residents to keep the City's Water Department for their expedient services. If the City had contracted with

the City of Cleveland years ago, the residents would wait days or weeks before their waterline issues would be resolved. She reiterated the steps Clerk Villers did to inform everybody of the monthly meetings and agenda topics. Clerk Villers also was active in the IIMC for continuing education for her job and with the City being under a microscope with the recent investigation. Ms. Villers assisted Council in a professional manner. She touched on the importance of recycling, vacant and foreclosed homes, grass cutting, exterior home maintenance; citywide safety for the residents and businesses, quality services for the residents, Quality of Life issues, and that a new City Manager would be hired soon.

Councilwoman Zolata reported the following for Ward 3:

- complimented the City employees for the delivering of quality services,
- commented on the many waterline issues this past season,
- felt Bedford was in need of a daily newspaper,
- the Broadway waterline project was well worth the inconveniences,
- the vacant/foreclosed homes were being addressed proactively,
- safety concerns were being addressed as needed,
- urged everybody to call regardless of the situation if there was a concern,
- urged everybody to recycle to save on rubbish costs,
- urged her Ward residents to email her at MZward3@sbcglobal.net,
- and the hiring of a new City Manager shortly.

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 Chief Nietert and Chief Nagy were two of the best Chiefs to work with.

- 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 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.
- In being proactive, 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.
- 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 \$1,255,955million budget.

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

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

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

Rich Novak understood Maple Heights recently laid-off four firefighters so how was this going to affect Bedford for additional calls. Chief Nagy explained Chief Drsek would be careful on how many times he utilized Bedford for assistance. In 2013, Bedford provided mutual aid 103 times and received it 102 times. Chief Drsek was very aware of Bedford's workload and Bedford had limited resources as well. Mr. Novak noted the problem house in his neighborhood located at 1271 Broadway Avenue was for sale so he hoped for better neighbors. The NOPEC Opt-out topic was brought up but there was nobody on the Administration that could address the topic.

Dick Bender told a story about a foreign car company that was doing between 75 – 80 mph on Wandle Avenue. He stressed this was a safety issue.

A resident asked what the downtown initiatives were. Mr. Mallis explained the City would like to have a meeting with the property owners to discuss how the City could help assist them in being successful by the summer. There were a few downtown property owners in the audience; they thought it would be nice to have another crosswalk across Broadway. Mr. Pozar explained the focus was to have the business owners engage at a meeting to discuss their concerns and issues. He hoped the business owners in the audience would contact the other owners to peak interest. A harmony needed to be developed between the business owners; it was not the City's position to do this. He urged the business owners to call the City Manager for a private meeting or join Council at a work session for direction or ask questions. Communication and dialog was the key. Mr. Mallis referenced the Cuyahoga County Store Front Program which in the past was successful but in 2013 only one was approved. He has had discussions on how the City could administer its own program and not use the County's. It was in the best interest of the City to hear from the business owners; not just administer a program that might not help the owners. It was also pointed out the business owners didn't open their stores during the weekend events all summer long. Council and the Administration often wondered why the businesses were not open. The event schedule was advertised every year on the sign near Los Gallos. It was determined the City would send the Event List to every downtown business owner so they knew when the events were so they would hopefully open their doors to the public.

A resident asked about the Ben Venue tax abatement and what if Ben Venue "stuck the City". Mr. Gambosi said it would be in the best interest of the City to forward the abatements to the new property owners. The City would monitor this tax abatement. Mr. Mallis explained the Taylor Chair tax abatement was transferred to the Art of Beauty when they chose that facility. There was discussion regarding the Taylor Chair pay back for the brownfield. Mr. Gambosi noted those loans were personal which had to be handled through the State of Ohio; not Bedford. After a brief discussion, it was determined a house could be vacant indefinitely; there was no set number of years. These homes still needed to have exterior maintenance kept up on the entire outside of the home. The City was very focused on exterior maintenance; in 2013 there were 900 notifications mailed to these property owners. Mr. Mallis urged the resident to call the City if they noticed a home that needed addressed. It was determined the City could

not enforce specifically interior black mold issues; this would be the Health Department. Mr. Beverly was in the process of working on a plan to enforce several issues throughout the City. Mr. Pozar touched on the fact the Building Department did not have a Building Commissioner for 1 ½ years. Mr. Beverly was working very diligently on several issues. Mr. Pozar urged residents to call in problems if they noticed something. The Cuyahoga County Landbank was handling funds to demolish homes. Cleveland had thousands of homes that needed to be addressed; however, Bedford only had a few compared to surrounding cities. The focus was to work smart and diligently to get these homes paid for without using City funds but it took time to accomplish these type tasks. There were several different situations when it came to these homes; nothing was easy even though the City had resources available to them.

A resident's personal opinion was to see more retail downtown and less service type businesses. She wanted to know if there was someone interested in St. Peter Chanel, the YMCA and the old Medic store downtown. Mr. Mallis replied yes to all three but nothing he could comment on today. The lease on the old Medic building just ended and the best renter was one who paid and did not use the facility. The city would continue to mail out the new marketing brochure to certain businesses to peak interest.

A resident that never knew there was a bridge on Columbus Road wondered how long it was going to be closed. AT&T and Dominion East Ohio had to agree to allow the temporary one-way road to be built for traffic. A signal light would be placed at each end to control traffic flow. The County was the deciding factor as to why this bridge was closed; not the City. It was determined the bridge would be closed for over a year; the temporary road construction would be started very soon. The same resident thought Doty & Miller had moved and the outside needed cleaned up. Doty & Miller were still in the facility after they had downsized but they hoped to sell and move to a downtown location.

A resident complained about the one vacant storefront that had a lot of dead plants in the window; she requested this be addressed.

A resident asked about the snow removal on the Northfield Bridge. Mr. Bellar explained after all the streets had been plowed; the sidewalk on the bridge was cleared. The problem was it kept snowing and accumulating so it was impossible to get to the bridge. It was noted even if the sidewalks were shoveled certain people still walked in the streets. Walking in the streets was a year around problem that was being addressed.

A resident bragged on the Code Red system but she wondered why she received several calls last week in a row. Chief Nagy explained it was operator error and he was the "glitch".

A resident wanted to know if the Juvenile Diversion Program could shovel the sidewalks. Chief Nietert explained Penny Jarrell was in charge of the program and people should contact her. A resident suggested the Recreation Department address this issue because they coordinate the snowplowing for the seniors; Mr. Lewis created the list of drives to be plowed. Another resident suggested the Boy Scouts, Youth Marines, Youth Ministries or different organizations. There were different organizations that had programs specifically for youths that needed to build community hours.

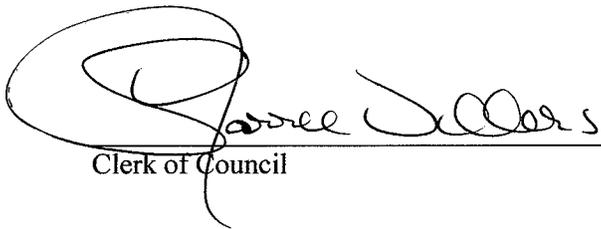
Dick Bender said he had attended Council Meetings for the past nine (9) years. He urged the people in attendance this evening to attend the other meetings as well instead of once a year at a Ward meeting because they did not realize what they missed throughout the year.

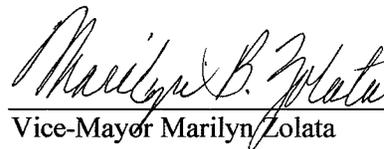
A suggestion was made to install another crosswalk in the downtown area for the other parking lot. It was determined one crosswalk was sufficient for the downtown foot traffic plus there was two traffic lights; one at each end of the downtown area.

Acting City Manager Mallis, again, urged the residents to call if they had a concern, question or problem.

Vice-Mayor Zolata thanked everyone for attending this evening. She said the new Mayor was at the NLC conference.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 P.M.


Clerk of Council


Vice-Mayor Marilyn Zolata