

Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bogota and the Bogota Board of Education held on Thursday, June 1, 2017, in the Bogota Senior Center at 7:30pm.

The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied as notice was sent to two newspapers on May 29, 2017 and posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board on May 30, 2017.

Salute to the flag was led by Councilman Miranda.

Mayor and Council Roll Call: Mayor Kelemen and Council members Fede, Gates-Ferris, Macfarlane, Miranda and Murphy were present. Councilman Napolitano was absent. Also attending were Borough Administrator Scarpa and Borough Attorney Bossong.

Board of Education Roll Call: Board member Carpenter, Granquist, Kohles, Lewis, Montgomery, McHale, Moore, and Severino were present. Board member VanBuren was absent. Also attending was School Superintendent Varcadipane.

Mayor Kelemen welcomed everyone to the first ever Joint Meeting of the Mayor and Council and Board of Education. He agreed to show cooperation for the benefit of the members, taxpayers, and children of Bogota. He said that he will support any decisions made that will improve the school system, and he wants the governing body and Board of Education to work together and to leave any attitudes at the door.

School Superintendent Varcadipane conducted a power point presentation which highlighted all the improvements being made to the Bogota School System and facilities over the next year.

Areas of Cooperation between the Governing Body and the Board included the Council agreeing to pay to fix the fields to be used for soccer games and the Council making sure stumps etc. were removed from the field in order to install a new fence. Concern was expressed about voting in the schools, so a police officer will be stationed at each school voting district to ensure the safety of the students.

Board of Education President Charlie Severino said that electrical inspections were delayed by the Building department. Mr. Varcadipane said that the paperwork for the electrical work was now complete and ready to be submitted, and Administrator Scarpa said that once the paperwork is submitted, the electrical inspection can be done. Mr. Scarpa also mentioned that six years ago Best Practices suggested joint meetings of the Mayor and Council and the Board of Education. Tonight's meeting was the very first joint meeting and hopefully they will continue. He said that other areas of cooperation can be discussed at future joint meetings. He also pointed out that grants are available for classes for disabled students.

Mayor Kelemen commented on Council President Napolitano's disappointment that the Safe Routes to School Grant was turned down for Bogota, but said that the Mayor and Council will try again to get the grant.

Councilwoman Fede said that she would like to coordinate something with the High School Environmental Program. As an Environmental attorney, she could mentor students interested in the Environmental field.

Mayor Kelemen said that fixing the fields should be a group effort, and a committee could be formed to ensure cooperation.

Mayor Kelemen then asked if anyone on the Board of Education or Council would like to say anything. Board of Education Attorney Brovarone reported that he spoke to someone involved with the River

Development project and was told that their finances were in order and the construction would begin within a year. Mr. Brovarone asked if the Mayor and Council would commit to giving more money to the Board of Education when there is an increase in the number of school students due to this development. Mayor Kelemen explained that when a town needs more money due to an influx of students, the State Board of Education requires the town to give more money to education. Mr. Brovarone disagreed with Mayor Kelemen's explanation and requested support from the Mayor and Council for this influx of students.

Borough Administrator Scarpa said that a Council cannot make a commitment based on hypotheticals. Mayor Kelemen said that you cannot ask for a commitment for a future occurrence since there could be different people serving as Council members by the time this influx occurs. Mr. Scarpa reminded everyone that tonight's joint meeting was the first of many. If an influx of students occurs, it can be handled at a future joint meeting. Mr. Brovarone insisted that construction was starting soon and that the first units built would be the low income units. Borough Attorney Bossong asked Mr. Brovarone if he spoke to the attorney for the project who had another proposal for the affordable housing units, so the number of students could be very small. Mr. Brovarone insisted that low income units produce a lot of children. Board of Education member Kohles said that there are a lot of houses for sale, and classrooms can become overcrowded. Mayor Kelemen said that no governing body would deny a child an education.

Mayor Kelemen said that he appreciated everyone's concerns and then requested a motion for Citizen Remarks. Motion was made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilman Miranda to open the meeting for Citizen Remarks. Motion carried.

Antoinette Ramirez said that on Field Day for the elementary schools the grass was overgrown at Olsen Park, and there was a dead rat in the ladies' room.

Vanessa Erham said that Dunn and Fisher Avenues have stop signs. She asked if there could be four way stop signs near the perimeters of Route 80.

Mr. Valentinetti asked if special needs programs are going to be brought back to Bogota, would the students presently attending out of town programs be brought back to Bogota. Board of Education Attorney Brovarone interrupted the normal procedure for Citizen Remarks and insisted that Mr. Valentinetti's question be answered immediately by the School Superintendent. In order to maintain balance and civility, Mayor Kelemen allowed the School Superintendent to answer the question immediately. Mr. Varcadipane said that each student's case will be handled individually, and if a student's needs can be addressed by the new programs in town, that student will return to town.

Tito Jackson told Mayor Kelemen that he should answer questions right away.

Motion to end Citizen Remarks was made by Councilwoman Murphy, seconded by Councilwoman Fede. Motion carried.

Councilman Miranda said that he would send the Police Chief an email with the streets that Vanessa Erham was talking about. Police Chief Maye said that he will have Sgt. Cole look into the traffic issue near Bixby school. Administrator Scarpa said that four-way traffic stops must be approved by the State.

Board of Education member Jim Moore said that there was a lot of rain, so the grass on the fields could not be cut sooner. The grass was cut early this morning, and the rat problem was addressed. The door to the bathroom needed to be repaired to prevent rodents from entering.

Mayor Kelemen pointed out that a joint meeting should be run by the hosting entity. He then reminded Tito Jackson that when Tito Jackson was mayor, meetings became chaotic. It is the job of the Mayor to run an efficient meeting and maintain control.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Councilman Miranda, seconded by Councilwoman Murphy. Motion carried and the Joint Meeting of the Mayor and Council and Board of Education adjourned at 9:00PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Borough Clerk Jeanne Cook.