Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bogota held on Thursday, June 29, 2017 in the Bogota Council Chambers at 7:00pm.

Salute to the Flag was led by Councilwoman Murphy.

Roll Call: Mayor Kelemen and Council members Fede, Gates-Ferris, Miranda, and Murphy were present. Councilman Napolitano arrived at 7:13pm. Councilman Macfarlane was absent. Other attendees included Borough Administrator Scarpa and Labor Attorney Brian Giblin. Substitute Borough Attorney Mark Peck arrived at 7:15pm.

The notice requirements for the Open Public Meetings Law have been satisfied as notice was sent to two newspapers and posted on the Borough Hall Bulletin Board on June 26, 2017.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Gates-Ferris, seconded by Councilman Miranda, to open the meeting to Citizen Remarks. Motion carried.

Valerie Goldstein requested an explanation as to why her sidewalk has not been repaired yet.

Connie Carpenter spoke about pension issues in 2014, and 2015. She asked about new plans for the former Hess site which were mentioned at the previous meeting by the Borough Attorney. She read an excerpt from the transcript when the Director of Local Government Services, Mr. Neff, spoke about the problems with Bogota's finances including police officers receiving steps even though there were CAP issues. She also questioned lack of signatures on Purchase Orders.

Motion was made by Councilman Miranda, seconded by Councilwoman Murphy, to close Citizen Remarks. Motion carried.

Administrator Scarpa said that he spoke to Sidewalk Safety about the sidewalk repair and was told that work would resume after the 4th of July. He said that in the report Ms. Carpenter read, Mr. Neff also spoke about the OEM SUV that the former mayor purchased. He said that the state was clearly unhappy with the financial conditions of Bogota which is why a resolution was voted on by the governing body. He also reported that he has never signed a Purchase Order. He signs requisitions only. Signatures by council members is a formality.
Councilwoman Murphy said she had no answer about the pension money which a number of employees questioned. She questioned Purchase Orders.
Mayor Kelemen said that the State was unhappy with Bogota's finances. Also, purchase orders in the past were stamped, not signed. He was not at the meeting with Mr. Neff. He did attend the next meeting when Mr. Cunningham spoke about the finance problems in Bogota. The Mayor said that things were out of control in Bogota with bills being pulled at meetings and not being paid. Council members came to meetings with bills highlighted to be pulled. Employees were receiving calls that bills were not being paid, and he found a large pile of signed checks that had not been mailed. Things have gotten much better and he thanks the finance department for getting things done.
Councilman Napolitano said that at his first meeting on Council, there were bills for coffee mugs and pens, 5 ipads, and a large screen tv by the mayor. An $8,000 bill for a conference was signed by one

person, not by any council members. That bill was not approved for payment. He said that a June 11, 2014 article in The Record said that "efforts of controlling costs appear to have been sorely lacking as evidenced by over-expenditures in prior years". He questioned how anyone could defend the finances of 2014.
Councilwoman Murphy said that her concern was with the finances of June 29, 2017, "not that this will make the minutes", she said. Councilman Napolitano said that she is offended by a 0% tax increase , and she said that only told half the truth and that "missed the minutes, too".

The following resolutions on the Consent Agenda were approved:
17-114 Hiring Summer DPW Help – Tarique Edwards
17-115 Refund for Pod Permit
17-116 Tax refund for block 40, Lot 1
17-117 Retirement of Patricia Browne as Senior Bus Driver
17-118 Appointing Carol Gleason as New Senior Bus Driver

The following Approval took place with Council members Fede, Miranda, and Napolitano voting "Yes" and Council members Gate-Ferris and Murphy voting "No":
Minutes 5/4/17 and 6/20/17

Mayor Kelemen wished everyone a Happy 4th of July.

Council members Gates-Ferris, Miranda, and Murphy had no report.

Councilwoman Fede – Environmental Commission: The Environmental Commission met last night. The sub-committee reported that the shed is up for the Community Garden. The sign is ready and will be posted soon. There will be a Garden Party Reception and a rededication ceremony on 8/5. A veggie swap will be advertised. A farmers' market is in discussion. Bogota Beautiful is sponsoring a movie night on July 22 and a Block Party on September 9. Second half of tree inventory will Hopefully be completed at $5,000 cost. She is concerned about Larch Avenue and West Fort Lee Road due to an increase in debris with no construction.

Mayor Kelemen addressed the code official about that area.

Councilman Napolitano – Buildings and Grounds: He reported that the Open Space Grant is being submitted by the grant writer for repairs to the basketball court and tennis courts. Support letters are going in for the grant on Leonia Avenue. The soccer field is coming along well. A landscaper did repairs. Athletic Director DiRupo is moving forward with benches etc. for the field. The DPW building is moving along well. Borough Attorney Bossong is creating a "zombie house" ordinance to help with abandoned property issues.

Borough Administrator Scarpa reported that he attended the Community Development Meeting. Bogota received $80,000 for the continuation of Palisade Avenue and $12,000 for Project Success and the Senior Bus Driver. The DPW building is still scheduled for completion in August. Safety fencing was installed on Main Street by Olsen Park to prevent children from running out in the street. The DPW did major cleaning of Olsen Park including weeding and cutting grass even by the bridge along the water front, and the parking lot is being restriped. The DPW is getting rid of the dumpster by the Recreation Center. Safety mulch will be installed.
The new ambulance will be auctioned. The Rescue Squad asked for the old ambulance.
Substitute Attorney Peck suggested putting together a list of items to auction on one date. There was concern about the ambulance being auctioned after being acquired through bonding, so that will be straightened out before voting for an auction.

Motion to go into Closed Session was made by Councilman Miranda, seconded by Councilwoman Fede. Motion carried and the governing body went to the conference room at 7:40pm for closed session. Resolution 17-118C was added to the agenda.

At 9:33pm, motion was made by Councilwoman Gates-Ferris, seconded by Councilman Napolitano, to reconvene the meeting. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilman Napolitano, seconded by Councilman Miranda, to introduce the following Ordinance. Motion carried.
#1500 An Ordinance Amending Chapter II Entitled "Administration" to create Subsection 17A – Entitled "Payroll and Financial Specialist"

Motion was made by Councilman Napolitano, seconded by Councilwoman Gates-Ferris, to advertise for the new part time position. Motion carried, and the following resolution was added to the agenda:
17-119 Authorize Administrator to Advertise for New Position on League of Municipalities website

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilwoman Gates-Ferris, seconded by Councilman Miranda. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Borough Clerk Jeanne Cook.