

Community Ward Meeting for **Wards 3 & 5** was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, April 11, 2016. Mayor Koci called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Stan Koci, Paula Mizsak, Don Saunders, Greg Pozar, Marilyn Zolata. Absent: Sandy Spinks, Walter Genutis. Also Present: Clerk of Council Lorree Villers. Administration: City Manager Michael Mallis, Service Director Clint Bellar, Police Chief Kris Nietert, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Recreation Director Randy Lewis, Finance Director Frank Gambosi.

Mayor Koci welcomed all residents in attendance.

Mayor Koci explained since the closing of a few businesses, Council and the Administration work together to find ways to get new resources and funding into the City to keep the services that the residents were accustomed to. Examples of new funding that was being discussed was an income tax increase or a possible levy; however, these were not being implemented at this time but were being considered. Council and the Administration looked at absolutely everything and would choose the best path for the City to help achieve what was needed to keep the City going by not cutting services and personnel. As employees retire or leave their positions, the position was being re-evaluated to see if it could be eliminated and absorbed by another employee or reclassified as a part time position. Mayor Koci stated the Police and Fire Departments were back at maximum staffing; however, the Service Department continued to be down seven employees. Council and the Administration appreciated the understanding and support from the residents during difficult times. Everyone had to work together as a team and absorb the impact. The City recently started discussions/brainstorming with a real estate broker to keep the City moving in the right direction.

Mayor Koci met regularly with the Mayors of the school district and the Superintendent of the schools to discuss issues. Bedford worked with its neighbors/surrounding communities in a joint effort to support each other. The Walton Hills Ford plant would be torn down in 2017 which was a nice piece of property for development. The neighboring Mayors pledged to help Mayor Hurst/Walton Hills in securing a business for this parcel of property even though it didn't directly affect Bedford.

Mayor Koci and City Manager Mike Mallis said there was positive news regarding Meadowbrook. One of the parcels on Rockside Road was put up for auction. The City was working diligently trying to get a business for this location. Even though it didn't work out with Meadowbrook they did manage to get someone else to buy the property. The good news was the property would now be taken out of Meadowbrook's hands and be improved. The City would work with the new property owner and would work with them to get a viable business at this location.

Xellia Pharmaceuticals has moved into the old Ben Venue properties and they were in the process of moving in and ramping up for production. Xellia has impressed upon the City that they were here to stay and to grow. Additional good news was Xellia was moving their North American Distribution Center to Bedford. Xellia was owned by a foundation and not stockholders and their mission was to fight infectious diseases.

Other businesses that recently opened:

- Molding Dynamics relocated from Geauga County and moved to Industry Drive bringing 40 jobs.

- Data Basics was a computer company that moved into the old Doty Miller building on Broadway bringing 40 jobs.
- Cleveland Ballet moved into town on Broadway which brought a positive image for the City.

Mayor Koci mentioned several examples of communication: Code Red, the new electronic sign installed in front of City Hall, Facebook posts and the website. He urged the residents to read the Bedford Advantage flyer they received in their water bill and attend monthly meetings. Trash pickup was going well, the residents were getting use to the carts and the complaints had considerably decreased.

Councilwoman Zolata reported the following for Ward 3:

- Thanked all the departments for their hard work
- Thanked all the residents for their ongoing understanding and cooperation
- Stated the Service Department never ceased to amaze her when dealing with water line breaks
- Bragged about the new City Hall sign as a form of communication along with several other ways to research for information

Councilman Pozar reported the following for Ward 5:

- Stated this evening was an opportunity for the residents to be heard; suggestions and concerns were welcome
- Encouraged residents to attend the upcoming meetings for valuable information regarding the City and suggested the normal attendees bring a neighbor/friend to the meetings
- Explained the upcoming months would be dealt dealing with major challenges that would be before the Administration and Council addressing the day to day operations and the budget
- The Administration and Council would work together toward solutions that would make the City run like the business it was and this process would address measures of successes and failures
- Statements tonight from the Administration would be open, honest and might be somewhat disturbing but would be solved over the next 6-12 months balancing the books and maintain the safety, services and everything else.
- He had the utmost confidence in the Administration and Council to sort through the decisions that were necessary even though they might be unpopular

Mayor Koci informed the residents in January, Walmart unexpectedly announced its closing with a loss of 350 employees. The building was owned by Walmart and not by Meadowbrook which would accelerate the sale of the property. Also, the City was informed recently that Tim Lally and First Merit were closing, again, losing more jobs and tax dollars.

In addition to the loss from Ben Venue, Mr. Gambosi spoke of decisions made by the State of Ohio that cut revenue \$1.4 million which is 10 percent of our revenue. The inheritance tax and personal property tax were taken away but the State of Ohio did not replace these taxes or revenues. The State also reduced the local government fund. Real estate taxes dropped 15%. The City put a safety levy on the property taxes and then only to lose money as soon as we put the levy on. Other significant revenue losses were HB5 which would reduce income tax by \$200,000, Walmart \$140,000, Tim Lally Chevrolet \$80,000. Mr. Gambosi said there were positive signs, but how fast would these need to happen to counter these losses.

Mr. Mallis stated that decisions made by the Governor to balance the State's budget affected the cities and schools. The City was taking the steps to try to minimize the downward spiral such as implementing the

refuse fee. Mr. Mallis said that was probably not the end of it. Nothing will happen tomorrow, but discussions were taking place. The Administration and Council were discussing what can be cut and how to still deliver the most efficient services. Discussion would be held regarding levies, income tax increases, and possibly pulling the trash fee back if we pass any of these. Mr. Mallis urged everyone to attend the Council meetings over the next 6 to 12 months as these discussions will be taking place.

Mayor Koci introduced the Council members present and City Manager Mike Mallis introduced the City's Administration. Each department's staff was short-handed and have been for years due to budget constraints; however, the services we have grown accustomed to continue to be delivered.

Mr. Mallis showed a PowerPoint presentation. (See attached) Highlights of presentation are as follows:

2015 Year End: Year-end cash balance in the general fund was \$1.8 million. This was in addition to the \$5.8 million in reserve that was required to be maintained by City ordinance. This was a significant decline of about \$2 million from 2014. We anticipated this decline and the majority of the \$2 million loss stemmed from the decline in income tax collected.

General Fund Cash Balance Declining: The cash balance projection through 2019 is declining. This loss was solely based on the closing of Ben Venue and the loss of 1,300 jobs. The City did not feel the full effect of Ben Venue in 2014 due to severance packages being paid out. The reserve was built up to \$9.5 million in 2014 knowing we were going to feel the effect of the \$2 million loss.

Mr. Mallis stated Xellia Pharmaceuticals acquired most of the Westward facility. Xellia was committed to being in Bedford long term and they weren't producing yet but plan to in the future. Showing their commitment, they were transferring all United States and Canada shipping and packaging lines to Bedford. Xellia currently had 50 employees, were in the process of hiring and their goal by the end of May was 80 employees and by the end of 2017 they want to be at 200-250 employees.

Columbus Road Bridge: This was a Cuyahoga County project; not the City of Bedford. The bridge would close on May 24, 2016 through the end of July. Pedestrian traffic will be maintained and it would be open for the July 4th Parade. Being proactive the City included a water line replacement underneath the bridge while the County had the roadway opened. That water line was installed in the 1930's. The City decided to replace it because if the water line would rupture in the future, Bedford would be responsible to replace the roadway and decking on the bridge.

Willard Housing Development: A housing development behind St. Pius was moving forward. The houses would be listed starting at \$150,000 which would help increase property values.

Meadowbrook Development: Regarding the recent auction there, the City negotiated for about two weeks with the property owner. The goal was to have two new auto dealers there, but unfortunately it did not work out. The owner of that property is looking to sell. That auction was put on to gauge the interest and to see what the value is. If it goes well, our hope is he will continue to sell. That whole area needs a fresh start. It needs somebody with a good relationship and reputation. The City would be open minded regarding retail and mixed use development. We would decide how to zone the property such as to allow office and auto. The good news is that parcel was sold. It was not sold to the person we would have liked it to, but a doctor purchased it. We do not know what the end use is.

Deer Management Program: In 2016 we implemented a deer management program. The City looked at high accident areas, particularly Turney Road, certain areas on Broadway Avenue and Center Road. The program was done through the Police Department using a police sharpshooter. Other cities have spent \$60,000-\$200,000 to cull deer and the City was not spending that amount of money. The Administration would present its report to Council in the next couple of weeks and it will show the cost to the City was very minimal. The ODNR and ODOW issued a permit for 20 deer and the City focused culling in two areas. In addition, the deer culling program also was to educate the public. The City would have a representative from the Cleveland Metroparks who will give a presentation May 9, 2016 at 6 p.m. at City Hall which would educate the residents on what you can/should plant in your yard to deter deer and other helpful techniques to deal with the deer and coyote populations.

Adjustment in Services: We adjusted the sewer and chipper services last year and currently was in the process of discussing adjusting the senior van service. The sewer service was three days a week and the chipper service was the first week of the month. The Administration was reviewing how to continue to deliver the service of the senior van, whether to continue the service at 40 hours a week or possibly reducing the number of hours.

Sidewalk Program: The City did away with the sidewalk program years ago due to budgetary concerns which used to be budgeted at \$50,000 annually. The Administration understood the sidewalks were still in need of repair so the Service Department worked with Sirna Construction to secure a price for the residents. Any resident looking to replace any of their sidewalk must contact Sirna Construction directly by June 15, 2016. Sirna has agreed a minimum of 24 blocks would be priced at \$6.35 per square foot. The minimum of 40 blocks decreased the cost per square foot. The City's involvement was limited in trying to secure the lowest possible price for the residents but there was a cost savings for the residents.

Residential Water Meter Replacement: The water meters were over 15-20 years old and outdated. The City would go through the bidding process to purchase the meters for this project. All the residential water meters throughout the City would be replaced within the next two years.

Trash Collection: The new program has been a success. The implementation of the new carts has increased recycling over 50% which further reduces the overall cost for the City.

Maintaining our Neighborhoods: The City continued to enforce property maintenance. Maintaining the neighborhoods is important. The Water Department has identified the vacant homes with zero water usage and letters are now being sent advising them to maintain the property. If they do not maintain the property and because they have been given notice, the City can cut the grass immediately. The City handled the grass issue in the same manner last year and it made a difference in the neighborhoods.

Heritage Home Program: This program assisted those residents who were looking to make improvements to their home. It was a free resource and they will assist with estimates and offer professional expertise on any improvement with your home. The month of June would be deemed Free Permit Month. Any owner occupant looking to make improvements to the exterior of the home, i.e. driveways, decks, fence, siding, roof, the permit fee for these projects done by a homeowner would be waived.

Community Outreach: Getting the word out to the residents could be a challenge. Code Red was used to get the word out about the Ward meeting this evening. The City sent out monthly inserts in the water bill and postings on Facebook and Twitter. The City was working on a community app for smartphones and hope to release it this summer. The app would have a calendar of events and you would be able to take a

picture and email it to a department. This was another area where we can better communicate with the residents.

Mr. Mallis spoke about a recent survey where Bedford placed sixth out of 40 other cities that targeted young professionals. The City was in the process of obtaining a grant/funding for community Wi-Fi so if someone wanted to sit on the City square it would be available.

Land Acquisition and Development: The City acquired over 12 acres by Viaduct Park along with the Moonglow property. This was done with an overall plan to connect this property to the Bedford Reservation/Metroparks. The city was working with the Metroparks to finalize the Clean Ohio grant for a bridge. The plan was to establish a trail which connects to an existing trail, a bridge will go over Tinkers Creek and connect into Viaduct Park, and the trail continues down Willis and connects to downtown Bedford. The trail would be for bikers and walkers and was an approximate \$800,000 project. The City sent out information (RFQ) to developers for all the properties involved. At this time the City did not know what was going to be built on the property but it most likely would not be residential. The City hoped for a restaurant with some mixed use. This was a huge asset for Bedford and the feeling was there was going to be interest. The best part was the City acquired all the property for almost nothing. Other than acquiring the Moonglow property the City only had time involved in this project.

In closing, Mr. Mallis stated the City's number one priority was to deliver the services that everyone had grown accustomed to even being short staffed. If you have a question, the doors were always open. Please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone of the staff.

Mayor Koci opened the meeting to questions from citizens.

Dana Best-Mizsak, Executive Director of the Bedford Historical Society, announced upcoming events: Spring Open House on April 10th from 2:00 to 5:00, Northeast Ohio Local History Fair at Ellenwood Center on April 30th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the Strawberry Festival in June.

An Edgecliff resident wanted to know the status of the group home near him. Mr. Mallis said there had not been any activity. He had family living next door and there had been no action. He spoke about a recent situation regarding a different group home where the City prevailed.

A resident wanted to know the status of the old convent property on Broadway Avenue. Mayor Koci explained the Testa Company was in the process of obtaining a Historic Tax Credit for funding. This project would house 55+ year old residents; it was not for low income families. The City had several open meetings and discussions regarding this project to ensure it was a benefit for Bedford. The current percentage of green space would be maintained. The resident was not in favor of more apartment style living. Dot Schwende asked if the "group home moratorium" was lifted and was Bedford welcoming group homes with open arms. Mayor Koci explained the City would look at each group home applicant on a case by case basis.

A resident complimented the Police, Fire and Service Departments on their professional services. He questioned whether the Dispatch Center was a smooth transition. Mr. Mallis explained anytime regionalization occurred there were challenges; however, the employees needed to learn to do their jobs different and/or the same. The Dispatch Center was not being run as expected so the decision was made to hire a different manager who ended up to be the former Police Chief Greg Duber who was very qualified.

A resident pointed out the Service Department employees were nice guys. He was disgusted with the litter/tires along the railroad tracks at West Grace and Broadway Avenue; it was a health issue. The litter would be looked into to determine the action taken to resolve it and possibly call the railroad. Mr. Bellar encouraged the residents to report areas that had large amounts of litter; the Juvenile Diversion Program could be utilized to pick up litter.

A resident asked what the status was regarding the vacant Chanel property. The City had been working on filling the property but the involved party decided not move in. However, there was another interested party that would not be moving in themselves but "end users". The interested party was a developer.

A resident asked if there was a law/code that addressed the length tarps could be on roofs. It was determined there were no laws in place and the homes in question were rentals. However, projects needed to be addressed weather permitting and it was early in the season. It was noted that some of the homes had already been notified of exterior maintenance issues. Mr. Beverly asked the resident for specific addresses.

A resident stressed the importance of the senior van. It was very important to a lot of residents. The van was used daily for dialysis, doctor appointments and grocery shopping. If the City needed to make cuts or get creative with services the senior van would not be cut and this valuable service would continue. With the cost being so minimal the challenge was the residents were utilizing the service more instead of paying another transport service.

A resident was amazed with the recent FriDates concert she attended; she urged others to attend.

A resident wanted to remind the City that the alley on Charles Street needed patched. She said patching had been done "around it but not in the alley". Mr. Bellar explained the asphalt plants were not open yet, the City did patch areas in 2015; however, the City was not going to pave the alley. The resident understood and was okay with patching some areas.

A resident thought the Police, Fire and Service departments were wonderful. These departments were the visible direct contact for the residents.

A resident said some of the residents were bringing their rubbish cans to the street too early and leaving them too long after the rubbish was picked up.

Councilwoman Mizesak was pleased the Broadway Cyclery Shop owners were present this evening.

Mr. Mallis announced the upcoming 2016 shred day dates were May 21st and September 12th starting at 9:00 a.m. to noon at City Hall.

In closing, Councilwoman Zolata urged residents to recycle more, stop littering, take advantage of the discounted price from Sirna Construction for sidewalk replacement, attend the FriDates and Party's in the Park concerts/events, thanked the Bedford Garden Club for the new flower boxes on the Union Street Bridge, was appreciative of the Pinecrest project and asked for those to obey the laws when parking on the streets.

In closing, Councilman Pozar thanked the residents for the nice comments regarding the Police, Fire and Service Departments being the "face of the City". He stated the ladies working at the Building and Water Department window at City Hall probably got abused more than the rest of the employees. He appreciated

the professionalism of the employees on how they respectfully dealt with residents. He noticed there had been a change in the Administration in the last couple years. He complimented Mr. Mallis on how he addressed the employees during the day to day operations. The City Manager demanded the employees/department heads respect their position, performed their jobs accordingly and respect the residents professionally. The residents knew the employees/department heads were doing the best they could with the cards that were dealt. He asked if there was ever a time that an employee/department head was not doing their job and/or was being disrespectful to a resident he wanted to be made aware of the situation. He understood the residents didn't always have all the facts and information but business was being addressed. He thanked the employees/department heads for their professionalism and he was confident the employees/department heads would continue to perform accordingly and as expected.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.


Clerk of Council
Mayor – President of Council