

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
April 13, 2020
VIA CONFERENCE CALL ONLY

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the conference call meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Vallone led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty (arrived 7:10 pm), Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Richard Hand, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Chief Michael DeCarolus, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo

Mayor Vallone asked for a moment of silence for Bedminster Police Sergeant ALTerek Patterson who passed away on April 12, 2020 from Covid-19 related complications.

REPORTS

Councilman Hand – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

No report.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman McLean – Roads

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances, & Elections

Councilwoman Chimenti reported the Municipal Court deposits for February 2020 totaled \$7,366.00.

Council President Karner - Police

Council President Karner reported there were 2 Covid-19 related cases in the Borough and noted that they were from the same residence. He also commented that the Fairgrounds have been closed, however, that the walking track would remain open for residents use but would be monitored by the Police Department to ensure appropriate social distancing requirements were being met.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis acknowledged the efforts of everyone in the Police Department and the Borough Administration during these difficult times. He noted that through the efforts of the County Office of Emergency Management, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) was obtained for the police officers. Lastly, he informed the Council that the Police Department was on a modified operations schedule.

Mayor Vallone

Mayor Vallone commended everyone for doing such a fabulous job during these challenging times. He stated that communications with the County and State occur on a daily basis and information would continue to be updated to the Borough website, sent out via Nixle and in the local newspapers to ensure that our residents were informed. He also encouraged the public to reach out to the appropriate authority for any assistance and especially, for the small business owners to apply for financial assistance.

Mayor Vallone expressed appreciation to the many first responders for their extraordinary efforts in providing continued service to our residents, and emphasized that the safety of our employees and residents was paramount.

REGULAR AGENDA**APPROVAL OF MINUTES****2/24/20 Regular Meeting**

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie, was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content and release.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report. Councilman Carty inquired about a paving truck that had been parked along Sherwood Farm Road since last week and, as a result of cars having to drive around this vehicle, damage was sustained to the roadway. Chief DeCarolis responded that an officer would review the situation. Mayor Vallone asked Councilman Carty to also provide the details to Councilman McLean.

2/24/20 Executive Session

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie, was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content only.

3/30/20 Special Meeting

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Council President Karner, was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content and release.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS**ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING & ADOPTION**

ORDINANCE 2020-02 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 97-6, REVISING AND UPDATING THE BOROUGH’S REGULATIONS ON PARKING DURING SPECIAL LARGE AND PUBLIC EVENTS IN THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the amendment to the Ordinance.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti and unanimously carried to open the public hearing.

There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Hicks advised that the notice of the public hearing was published in the newspaper of record, and that no communication, either written or verbal was received regarding the Ordinance.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Council President Karner and unanimously carried to close the public hearing.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that Ordinance 2020-02 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2020-03 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING THE LAND MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS TO ESTABLISH A NEIGHBORHOOD OFFICE MIXED-USE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY (NO-AHO) ZONE DISTRICT FOR THE PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED AS BLOCK 13, LOTS 2 & 3 IN THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS AND TO ESTABLISH USE, BULK AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR MUNICIPALLY-SPONSORED AFFORDABLE RENTAL APARTMENT DEVELOPMENT ADDRESSING A PORTION OF FAR HILLS BOROUGH'S THIRD ROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OBLIGATION

(The Public Hearing for Ordinance 2020-03 is carried to the April 27, 2020 Borough Council meeting)

Mr. Sordillo advised that the affordable housing agreement with Mr. Hotz had not yet been finalized and recommended that the public hearing and adoption of Ordinance 2020-03 be carried until the next Borough Council meeting on April 27, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2020-04 – AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2020

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the Ordinance.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that Ordinance 2020-04 be introduced.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:
Recused:
Motion Carried.

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Vallone stated that the 2020 Municipal Budget had to address many new challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting cancellation of large events routinely held in the Borough. Additionally, Mayor Vallone stated through conversations with the Borough Tax Assessor, Ed Kerwin it was determined that there has been an overall downward shift in the assessed values of larger homes throughout the State and which has significantly affected assessments in the Borough of Far Hills.

Mayor Vallone stated this year's Budget addresses the municipal expenditures and contract obligations while maintaining one of the most competitive and lowest municipal tax rates in the County. He expressed his appreciation to Councilman Carty and Council President Karner for their time and effort serving on the Budget Committee.

Resolution 20-062 – Self Examination of Budget

Mr. Sordillo briefly reviewed the self-examination process and stated the Borough's 2020 Budget is in compliance with all applicable laws and has also been reviewed by the Borough Auditor.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty that Resolution 20-062 be approved.

Roll Call:
Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie, Vallone
Nay:
Abstain:
Recused:
Motion Carried.

Resolution 20-063 – Introduction of Municipal Budget for Fiscal Year 2020

Mayor Vallone informed the public that a copy of the introduced Municipal Budget would be available on the Borough website. The public hearing and adoption of the budget was scheduled for the May 11, 2020 Borough Council meeting and which Borough Auditor, Kathryn Mantell of Nisivoccia, LLC and Borough CFO, Debra Stern would be in attendance to answer any questions

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Council President Karner that Resolution 20-063 be approved.

Roll Call:
Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie, Vallone
Nay:
Abstain:
Recused:
Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

The items listed within the consent agenda portion of the meeting have been referred to the Borough Council for reading and study and are considered routine and will be enacted with one motion of the Borough Council with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is required, the item may be removed from the agenda by Borough Council action and placed on the regular agenda under new business.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 20-064 – Authorizing Cancellation of Taxes and Issuance of a Refund
B8 L3 - 38 Peapack Road
2. Resolution 20-065 – Authorizing Contract – Human Resources Consultant
People Management, Inc.
3. Resolution 20-066 – Payment of Bill List

Ms. Hicks provided a brief overview of the selection process for the Human Resources Consultant and acknowledged the generosity of Ms. Jill Searing for providing support during the transition period.

Councilman Carty inquired if the rate for the new consultant was comparable to the compensation for Ms. Searing. Ms. Hicks replied that the same hourly rate was negotiated with the new consultant as was previously paid to Ms. Searing.

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Council President Karner that Resolutions 20-064 through 20-066 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

Comcast Corporation's Cable Franchise Renewal Application

Mr. Sordillo stated the public hearing was originally scheduled for the March 23, 2020 Borough Council meeting but, due to the cancellation of that meeting and a scheduling conflict with the Comcast representative, it was necessary to carry the public hearing to the April 27, 2020 Borough Council meeting. Mr. Sordillo briefly outlined the franchise renewal application process; submission for review by the Board of Public Utilities and the new FCC regulations regarding negotiations between the municipality and the cable provider.

PUBLIC COMMENT – *The Mayor and Council welcome comments from any member of the public. To help facilitate an orderly meeting and to permit the opportunity for anyone who wishes to be heard, speakers shall limit their comments to 5 minutes.*

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie and unanimously carried to open the meeting to public comment.

Rick Rinzler, 11 Hurlingham Club Road, Far Hills expressed his appreciation to the Far Hills Police Department for their continued patrol during the health crisis. He also commented about the power

outage that occurred this afternoon and noted that wires were down along Route 202 at the same location as a previous incident, inquiring if that specific location was potentially problematic.

Mayor Vallone responded that he would reach out to Ms. Carol Bianchi, the Borough's JCP&L representative.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie and unanimously carried to close the meeting to public comment.

Council President Karner commented he would like two issues addressed at the next Council meeting. The first being the need for an ordinance to prohibit unauthorized parking at the municipal building parking lot and the second, requesting verification of addresses of residences in Bernardsville that were utilizing a Far Hills mailing address.

Councilwoman Chimenti commented that during the annual review of the Municipal Court by the Vicinage it was noted that there was inadequate parking on Court days and that this ordinance would assist in addressing that concern.

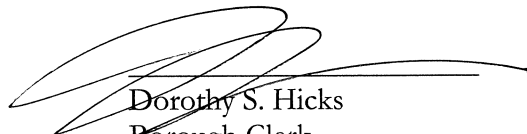
Mr. Sordillo responded that he has been working on the ordinance to address the parking at the municipal building lot and was currently reviewing several existing parking ordinances in order to provide a comprehensive update of the parking regulations in the Borough. He indicated that he would have the ordinance prepared for the next Borough Council meeting.

Mayor Vallone asked that Mr. Sordillo also reach out to the Borough Tax Assessor, Ed Kerwin to ascertain any address discrepancies between Bernardsville and Far Hills.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Council President Karner and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 4/27/20