

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
May 10, 2021
VIA REMOTE MEETING ACCESS ONLY

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Vallone called the remote meeting to order at 7:01 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, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Councilman Kevin Welsh, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo, CFO Debra Stern, Borough Auditor Kathryn Mantell

REPORTS

Councilman Kevin Welsh – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

Councilman Welsh reported the municipal building grounds were in good shape for the upcoming 100th Anniversary event on May 15th. He noted that he would be reviewing the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds and baseball field for remediation and potential improvements.

Lastly, he reported the pennants for the fairground buildings were expected to arrive this week and would hopefully be installed prior to May 15th.

Councilman McLean inquired if a Pickle Ball court could be considered for an addition to the fairgrounds.

Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie – Health/Sanitation

No report.

Councilman Ted McLean – Roads

No report.

Councilman Joseph Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Mary Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances, & Elections

No report.

Council President David Karner – Police

Council President Karner reviewed several aspects of the 100th Anniversary event to be held on May 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Far Hills Municipal Building. He noted plans for the Country Picnic celebration were underway and would be scheduled at a future date as restrictions for outdoor gatherings continue to be lifted.

Council President Karner expressed his appreciation to the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department for reinstalling the banner which had recently come down due to heavy winds.

Lastly, he noted that there would be a DUI police enforcement detail over the Memorial Day holiday.

Mayor Vellone

Mayor Vellone reported he spoke with Mr. Dan Powell; CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association and the rummage sale would be occurring in October 2021. Mayor Vellone reported the Far Hills Race Meeting would be held on October 16, 2021 and noted the Essex Horse Trials would be held July 17 and 18, 2021. Lastly, he informed the Council the Memorial Day Parade, organized by the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department, would be held on Monday, May 31, 2021 beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Mayor Vellone stated the number of Covid cases in Far Hills has declined from thirteen to seven.

REGULAR AGENDA APPROVAL OF MINUTES

04/26/21 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2021-08 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$101,769.00 FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty 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 Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to close the public hearing.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2021-08 be adopted.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

BUDGET 2021 – Mayor’s Statement

Mayor Vallone provided an overview of the 2021 Budget and expressed his appreciation to everyone who worked so conscientiously to develop a budget that not only serves our residents but is also fiscally responsible. Mayor Vallone stated that the Borough of Far Hills is one of only a few municipalities that is debt free. He stated that the 2021 municipal tax rate would increase by 1.13% and commented the Borough of Far Hills municipal tax rate remains one of the lowest in the state of NJ. Mayor Vallone also reported property value assessments were slightly decreased this year by 0.34%. Lastly, he stated that due to the inability to hold many large events in 2020, the Borough sustained a loss of approximately \$100,000.00 in revenue.

Borough Auditor, Kathryn Mantell of Nisivoccia, LLC concurred with the budget statements made by Mayor Vallone. She also acknowledged the proactive efforts made by both Mayor Vallone and CFO Debra Stern regarding the development of the 2021 budget. She briefly reviewed her projections for this year’s current fund, anticipated surplus and the sewer utility budget and commented that the increase in this year’s municipal tax rate was very modest.

Council President Karner inquired as to the decrease in the property value assessments. Ms. Mantell stated assessments were typically under the purview of the Borough Tax Assessor but opined that the decrease in assessments was likely due to the economy.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 21-082 – Budget by Title

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty that Resolution 21-082 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

Resolution 21-083 – Public Hearing and Adoption of 2021 Budget

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

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills commented upon the impact of local taxes due to the potential increase in public school aged children at the affordable housing development.

There were no additional comments from the public regarding the 2021 Budget.

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

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Council President Karner that Resolution 21-083 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:
Abstain:
Recused:
Motion Carried.

Mss. Stern and Mantell left the meeting at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 21-084 – Authorizing Waiver Temporary Sign Permit – Bedminster Township
2. Resolution 21-085 – Authorizing Purchase of Police Vehicle
3. Resolution 21-086 – Authorizing Purchase of Police Mobile Data Terminals
4. Resolution 21-087 – Payment of Bill List

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman McLean that Resolutions 21-084 through 21-087 be approved.

Roll Call:
Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Karner, McLean, Tweedie, Welsh
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion Carried.

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.*

Ms. Hicks informed members of the public that the Borough Council would be adhering to the five-minute time limit for public comment. Members of the public would be advised when one minute remained; and again when thirty seconds remained.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman McLean, was unanimously carried to open the meeting to public comment.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills commented upon the price point and the quality of construction for the market rate for-sale units at the Residences at Overleigh (Errico Acres) development.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills concurred with the comments made by Mr. Schwester. Dr. Mellendick also inquired about the permitting requirements for realtor signs.

There were no further comments from the public.

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

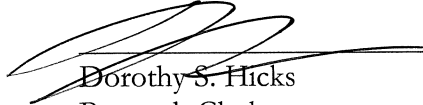
Council President Karner suggested that Mr. Sordillo send a letter to the attorney representing the Residences at Overleigh to confirm the expected price point for the market rate for-sale units.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Council President Karner, was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED – 05-24-21



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk