

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
November 28, 2022
IN PERSON MEETING AT MUNICIPAL BUILDING

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Welsh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Council President Kevin Welsh
Absent, as excused: Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor David Karner
Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo

REPORTS

Councilman McLean – Roads

Councilman McLean reported the trimming of the overgrowth along each side of Lake Road was recently completed by the Bedminster DPW.

Council President Welsh added that the trimming was necessary for vehicular safety and would be maintained on a routine basis going forward.

Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance

No report.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances, & Elections

No report.

Councilman Rinzler - Police

Councilman Rinzler stated Chief DeCarolis was unable to attend tonight's meeting but reported a vehicle was stolen from Dumont Place and reminded everyone to lock their vehicles.

Council President Welsh – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

Council President Welsh invited everyone to attend the Holiday Event scheduled for Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. He acknowledged Butler's Pantry Trackside and the Far Hills Café for donating the refreshments; the Madrigals Chorus from Bernards High School for the holiday music; and the Far Hills Garden Club for their decorations throughout the Borough. He also expressed appreciation to former Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD and his wife, Janis for their generous donation of the holiday tree and the initial vision for this holiday event. Lastly, he acknowledged the efforts of the Recreation Committee, the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department, Borough staff and especially the extraordinary efforts from the many community volunteers.

Council President Welsh provided an update on the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Fiscal/Financial Impact Assessment for the Errico Acres/Residences at Overleigh affordable housing

development. He stated after the developer reviewed the RFP from the Otteau Group, they were concerned about certain issues and requested that the Borough also consider the firm, NW Financial based out of Hoboken, NJ. The Mayor and Council understand the tardiness of their request, but in good faith, are willing to entertain the second proposal. This exercise will not change the fact that the Mayor and Council will not be hurried in this process and will only agree to a full assessment/audit proposal that meets the approval of the Mayor and Borough Council. These findings will also be presented fully to the public upon completion and the Developer's Agreement will not be signed until the Mayor and Borough Council are all satisfied that the Borough is in good standing with this agreement.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

11/14/22 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Councilman Rinzler, was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content and release.

11/14/22 – Executive Session Minutes

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Councilman Rinzler, was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content only.

REGULAR AGENDA

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCE – PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2022-10 – AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A SUBLEASE AGREEMENT WITH DOUG SUTTON FOR THE CONTINUED USE, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE COMMERCIAL BUILDING AT THE FAR HILLS TRAIN STATION

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the sublease agreement particularly the assignment and termination of lease provisions.

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Councilman McLean to open the meeting to the public.

Peter Coccoziello, 460 Lake Road, Far Hills commented upon increasing the termination notice period for the sublease agreement.

A brief discussion ensued resulting in a consensus of the Borough Council to increase the termination notice period from 30 days to 120 days.

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.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Welsh, seconded by Councilman Carty to close the meeting to public comment.

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to adopt Ordinance 2022-10 contingent upon a review of a 120-day termination notice period instead of the 30-day notice.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, McLean, Rinzler, Welsh
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE - INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2022-11 - AN ORDINANCE TO FIX AND DETERMINE THE SALARIES, WAGES OR COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY.

Ms. Hicks provided a brief overview of the revisions to the salary ranges due to the recent personnel changes.

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Councilman Rinzler to introduce to Ordinance 2022-11.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, McLean, Rinzler, Welsh
Nay:
Abstain:
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; a copy placed on the table in the meeting room and is considered routine and will be enacted with one motion 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 22-156 – Accepting Resignation – Deputy Borough Clerk/Board of Health Secretary
2. Resolution 22-157 – Appointment – Board of Health Secretary
3. Resolution 22-158 – Appointment – Deputy Registrar & Safety Coordinator
4. Resolution 22-159 – Authorizing the Termination of Employment
Administrative Assistant Finance Department
5. Resolution 22-160 – Appointment – Finance Assistant
6. Resolution 22-161 – Awarding Contract – Snow Removal and Ice Control Services
7. Resolution 22-162 – Authorizing Sign Permit Waiver
Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House
8. Resolution 22-163 – Authorizing Payment of Bill List

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Councilman McLean that Resolutions 22-156 through 22-163 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, McLean, Rinzler, 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.*

Motion by Council President Welsh, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti to open the meeting to public comment.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills expressed concern regarding the RFP process for the financial impact study analysis, specifically in response to the developer's request of the Borough to consider another firm. He also inquired if there were any updates to the state's stormwater and water quality regulations.

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief review of the RFP process as well as the Borough's decision to act in good faith to consider a proposal from NW Financial in addition to the proposal submitted by the Otteau Group, LLC.

With regard to the stormwater and water quality regulations, Mr. Sordillo responded he was unaware of any updates from the state since September 2022.

Council President Welsh stated he was confident with the qualifications of the Otteau Group and in good faith, the Borough would consider a proposal from NW Financial but ultimately would make the decision that is in the best interest of the residents of Far Hills.

Dr. George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired if there was going to be an opportunity for the public to review the proposals and to have some input in the decision making. He also expressed concern regarding the recent trimming that occurred on Lake Road especially noting the debris and mulch that was left along the roadway.

Mr. Sordillo stated the proposals were public records and Ms. Hicks added that they could be requested via the submission of an OPRA request.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the trimming and condition of Lake Road.

Council President Welsh reiterated the road would be maintained on a more regular basis as it is narrow and heavily lined with trees.

Councilwoman Chimenti commented that the majority of the foliage that was trimmed back was the invasive species Japanese Bramble which would regrow very quickly and also noted that it was recommended by the state that this species be removed on a regular basis on both public and private property. She also stated the majority of the road was cleared of debris after the completion of the trimming and felt the foliage along the road needs to be maintained on a more regular schedule.

Councilman McLean concurred the trimming along Lake Road was necessary to improve vehicular safety.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills concurred with Dr. Mellendick's statements regarding the trimming project along Lake Road.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Councilman Rinzler to close the meeting to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 22-164

- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Affordable Housing

Motion by Councilman Carty, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti was unanimously carried to approve Resolution 22-164.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Rinzler was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 12/12/2022