

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Borough Council Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
April 10, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. at the Far Hills Municipal Building and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Welsh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty, Council President Mary Chimenti, Councilman Peter J. Coccoziello, Jr., Councilman David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh

Absent, as Excused:

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo, and Officer Curtis Mulch

**REPORTS**

**Councilman Coccoziello – Roads**

Councilman Coccoziello reported the Pennbrook Road project has been delayed due to the required relocation of the PSE&G gas main lines.

**Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation**

Councilwoman Tweedie reported the maintenance of the sewer system is ongoing.

**Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance**

No report.

**Council President Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances & Elections**

Council President Chimenti reported in an effort to streamline the court proceedings, sessions would alternate between in-person and remote.

**Councilman Karner – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds**

Councilman Karner reported donations were currently being collected in preparation for the Atlantic Visiting Nurse Rummage Sale scheduled to commence on May 5, 2023.

He provided an update on improvements to the fairgrounds indicating a proposal was received for repairs to the basketball court as well as installing a four-foot area asphalt around the cooking pavilion and gazebo to help remediate muddy conditions. He also reported that the Bedminster DPW have removed the dead tree adjacent to the river.

**Councilman Rinzler – Police**

Councilman Rinzler presented the March 2023 Police Report. He also informed the Council that an offer has been extended to a candidate for the police officer position.

## **Mayor Welsh**

Mayor Welsh reported the 72<sup>nd</sup> annual Easter Egg Hunt held on Saturday, April 8, 2023 at J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds was a success and featured over 2700 eggs. He acknowledged the efforts of the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department and the many volunteers who worked so diligently on this event.

He stated he and Councilman Coccoziello attended a meeting on March 28, 2023 with representatives from the NJDOT regarding the Route 202 over the Raritan River Bridge Replacement project. He noted that the Borough's concerns regarding the aesthetics of the bridge were discussed. The bridge would be replaced in three phases with work planned to commence in the summer of 2025. Plans were being discussed for the coordination of emergency services during the closure of the bridge phase. Mayor Welsh stated he also requested that the NJDOT hold a public meeting to provide residents an opportunity to ask any questions.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### **3/13/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

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

#### **3/13/2023 – Executive Session Minutes**

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION**

#### **ORDINANCE 2023-04 – AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2023**

Mayor Welsh opened the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-04.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-04.

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Ordinance 2023-04 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Resolution 23-073 – Introduction of Municipal Budget for 2023**

Mayor Welsh provided an overview of the 2023 Municipal Budget stating that the public hearing and adoption would take place at the May 8, 2023 Borough Council meeting where both the Borough Auditor, Kathryn Mantell, Nisivoccia and the Borough CFO, Debra Stern would be present.

Mayor Welsh stated the 2023 municipal tax rate of 0.520 would remain unchanged from 2022 and continues to be one of the lowest municipal tax rates in the state.

He indicated there was a 23% increase in the health insurance premiums imposed on the municipalities and their employees enrolled in the state health insurance plan, as opposed to only a 6% increase to for the state and its employees.

Mayor Welsh also noted that there was a 21% increase in police vehicle maintenance as well as overall increases in fuel and ammunition costs.

He expressed his appreciation to Borough CFO, Debra Stern for her hard work and dedication in the preparation of the 2023 budget.

Lastly, he and the Borough Council are proud to report that the Borough of Far Hills continues to be debt free.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President that Resolution 23-073 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Tweedie

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 23-074 – Self-Examination of Budget
2. Resolution 23-075 – Certification of Compliance with EEOC Enforcement Guidance
3. Resolution 23-076 – Dedication by Rider - Fairgrounds & Village Improvements Trust Fund
4. Resolution 23-077 – Appointment Deputy Borough Clerk
5. Resolution 23-078 – Authorizing Adjustment to Sewer Charges – Various Accounts
6. Resolution 23-079 – Authorizing Acceptance of Donation – Police Department  
Honor Respect Flag Apparel
7. Resolution 23-080 – Authorizing Submission of 2022 Recycling Tonnage Grant
8. Resolution 23-081 – Authorizing Large Event Permit Application - Essex Horse Trials
9. Resolution 23-082 – Payment of Bill List

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 23-074 through 23-082 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Tweedie

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.*

Mayor Welsh opened the meeting to public comment.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired when the budget would be available to the public. He also inquired as to the amount of excess sewer capacity currently available to the Borough and if there was an opportunity to purchase additional capacity from other municipalities.

Ms. Hicks responded that the budget would be posted on the Borough website tomorrow.

Karen Reilly, 7 Fox Hunt Court, Far Hills inquired as to why the police vehicles had to remain idling while in the municipal parking lot.

Councilman Karner responded due to the computer and specific safety equipment in the vehicles it was necessary to keep them running.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the meeting to public comment.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

#### **Resolution 23-082 - Attorney-Client Privilege – Litigation – Far Hills in Crisis, Inc.**

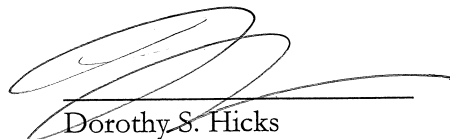
Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti, was unanimously carried to approve Resolution 23-082.

### **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT**

A brief discussion ensued regarding the police budget, the scheduling of shifts, and officer responsibilities resulting in a consensus that Mayor Welsh would meet with Chief DeCarolus. It was also noted that the PBA contract and the Memorandum of Agreement with the Chief each expire on December 31, 2023.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks  
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 4/24/2023