

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
May 22, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 Borough Auditor Kathryn Mantell, Nisivoccia, LLP

REPORTS

Councilman Coccoziello – Roads

Councilman Coccoziello provided an update on the PSE&G work being conducted on Pennbrook Road. Pending the completion of this utility work, the Borough's project for the drainage and paving of Pennbrook Road would commence. He indicated the Borough was actively pursuing additional grant funding through the NJDOT for future road projects.

Councilman Coccoziello stated that once the paving projects were complete, there is a five-year moratorium on future road openings and encouraged residents to make any necessary utility connections prior to the commencement of paving.

Councilman Karner added that residents interested in having a utility connection would need to contact the respective utility company directly.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health & Sanitation

No report.

Councilman Carty – Finance & Insurance

No report.

Council President Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances

Council President Chimenti reported the Municipal Court receipts for April 2023 were \$4,793.00 with the municipal portion being \$2,217.00.

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

Councilman Karner reported the Bedminster DPW was working on preparing the fairgrounds in anticipation of the Memorial Day ceremony and parade to be held on Monday, May 29, 2023. He

continued noting additional flowers would be planted by the Borough's landscaper and the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department would be installing the new pennants.

Councilman Karner stated the Atlantic Visiting Nurse Association (AVN) would be making the necessary repairs to the field and track this week.

Lastly, he reported plans were underway for the removal of the cricket pitch as well as the installation of new split rail fencing and signage. He apprised the Council of the condition of the holiday tree that required deep watering which he and his wife, Deidre completed this weekend.

Councilman Rinzler – Police

Councilman Rinzler presented the April 2023 Police Report.

He reported Chief DeCarolis received a call from Ms. Giordano, Superintendent of the Bedminster Township School, regarding the noise from the Skeet Flurry event held on May 18, 2023 which was disruptive to students who were taking exams. Mayor Welsh added that this was an annual event; however, additional communications with the surrounding schools would be implemented next year.

Lastly, Councilman Rinzler stated that Special Officer, Brian Testa has resigned from the Far Hills Police Department.

Mayor Welsh

Mayor Welsh provided an overview of the upcoming events in the Borough consisting of the Memorial Day Parade to be held on Monday, May 29, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.; Miles for Matheny at the fairgrounds on Saturday, June 3, 2023; the Essex Horse Trials and Car Show at Moorland Farm on Sunday, June 4, 2023; and Far Hills Movie Night at the fairgrounds on Wednesday, June 10, 2023.

He noted there would be two presentations at the June 12, 2023 Borough Council meeting. Representatives from the Atlantic Visiting Nurse would be providing information regarding the rummage sale and Mr. William Hotz, of Raritan Valley Development Corporation would be providing an update on the two affordable housing developments along Peapack Road.

Mayor Welsh stated that at the May 8, 2023 Borough Council meeting there was a discussion regarding the payment of invoices submitted by the Otteau Group and McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC. The Borough Council determined that these invoices would be resubmitted through the Planning Board to be paid through the applicant's escrow account.

REGULAR AGENDA

PRESENTATION

Far Hills Bedminster First Aid Squad – Fundraiser Event – Sam Robinson

Mr. Robinson provided a brief overview of the Road Rally event scheduled to take place on June 24, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds; a rain date was scheduled for June 25, 2023. He indicated it was a scavenger hunt style event which involved a group of two to four people per vehicle traveling throughout the surrounding area gathering clues and returning to the fairgrounds for the awards ceremony and refreshments.

A brief discussion amongst the Borough Council ensued with Mr. Robinson responding that no alcohol would be permitted and the event was limited to 100 participants or approximately 25 vehicles

with an entry fee of \$25.00 per person. Mr. Robinson indicated there would be flyers available with further details on how to register for the event, which he would provide to Ms. Hicks.

On behalf of the Borough Council, Mayor Welsh expressed his appreciation to the volunteers of the Far Hills Bedminster First Aid Squad.

Mayor Welsh asked if any members of the public had questions regarding this event.

There being none, Mr. Robinson left the meeting at this time.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5/8/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

5/8/2023 – Executive Session Minutes

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-06 - AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$55,500.00 FOR POLICE SUV

Councilman Karner stated the Borough had established an annual budget plan for the replacement of police vehicles in the fleet.

Mayor Welsh informed the public the estimated cost for the vehicle was \$45,000.00, however, an additional \$10,000.00 was necessary to outfit the vehicle with the required police equipment.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-06.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the make and model of the vehicle.

Ms. Hicks responded it was a Chevy Tahoe.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-06.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-06 be adopted.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 23-096 – Amending Resolution 23-055 and Authorizing Change Order for the Not-To-Exceed Amount - McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC

tabled from the May 8, 2023 meeting

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolution 23-096 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

Resolution 23-100 – Memorializing Authorization of Waiver Temporary Sign Permit - Miles for Matheny Event

voice vote from May 8, 2023 meeting

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti that Resolution 23-100 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 23-101 – Certification of Audit

Borough Auditor Kathryn Mantell, Nisivoccia, LLP presented an overview of the 2022 Audit and indicated the finances in the Borough were solvent and in good order. Ms. Mantell commended Borough staff for their cooperation and professionalism during the annual audit process.

Ms. Mantell stated that the only recommendation in the 2022 Audit pertained to the segregation of duties which was reflected in the Corrective Action Plan. It was noted that due to the limited number of staff in the Borough, this recommendation had also occurred in prior year audits.

Councilman Rinzler inquired if the recurring recommendation regarding the segregation of duties could be a potential detriment to the Borough.

Ms. Mantell responded that the Audit ensures that the Borough is cognizant of the recommendation. Audits are also required to be submitted to the NJ Department of Community Affairs – Division of Local Government Services for their review and approval.

Councilman Coccoziello inquired as to allocation of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the Audit and how additional affordable housing expenses would be financed.

Ms. Mantell referenced Schedule B of the 2022 Audit and noted that there was a balance of approximately \$155,000.00 in the Developer's Fees – Housing Trust Account.

Mayor Welsh added that any anticipated expenses were always reviewed with the CFO and the Borough Clerk to ensure that appropriate funds were available.

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolution 23-101 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

Resolution 23-102 – Corrective Action Plan

Mayor Welsh stated the recommendation for segregation of duties was indicated in the Corrective Action Plan as previously discussed.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti that Resolution 23-102 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

Mayor Welsh stated that resolutions are not normally open for public comment, however, he asked if any member of the public had a question for Ms. Mantell regarding the 2022 Audit.

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the funding source for the invoices remitted by the Otteau Group and McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC.

Ms. Mantell responded that she did not review these particular invoices but opined that they would be paid from the appropriate general or trust fund account.

Mr. Coccoziello added that these invoices were submitted for payment from the Planning Board's escrow account established by the applicant.

A brief discussion ensued regarding payment from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, with Mr. Sordillo indicating that there were annual percentage limits for administrative fees paid from this fund and he would need to consult with the CFO and the Borough Planner as to the current status.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti to close this portion of the meeting to the public.

Ms. Mantell left the meeting at this time.

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 23-103 – Accepting Resignation – Special Class II Police Officer
2. Resolution 23-104 – Authorizing Appointment – Assistant to the Borough Clerk
3. Resolution 23-105 – Authorizing Waiver Temporary Sign Permit – Bedminster Township
4. Resolution 23-106 – Authorizing Waiver Temporary Sign Permit – Essex Horse Trials
5. Resolution 23-107 – Authorizing NJDOT Grant Application – Lake Road Improvements
6. Resolution 23-108 – Authorizing NJDOT Grant Application – Safety Improvements
Village Area
7. Resolution 23-109 – Authorizing Purchase of Police SUV
8. Resolution 23-110 – Authorizing Acceptance of Donation – Borough of Far Hills
Movie Licensure and Equipment Rental
9. Resolution 23-111 – Payment of Bill List

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 23-103 through 23-111 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION

Recreation Committee Movie Night at J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds - June 10, 2023

Mayor Welsh provided an overview of the Movie Night event which will begin at 8:15 p.m. and feature the DreamWorks movie "Turbo." He encouraged everyone to attend and enjoy the fairgrounds at this family friendly community event. He indicated a press release would be submitted to the newspapers as well as a banner and signage posted throughout Borough to advertise the event. Mayor Welsh expressed appreciation to a local Far Hills business, Hans Clothier, for their sponsorship of the event as well as to the Recreation Committee for their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Jack Koury suggested that an officer be available to assist with traffic and parking during the event. He also suggested that an invitation be extended to the residents at the Matheny Group Home to attend the Movie Night. Councilman Karner responded he would reach out to Matheny.

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 Councilman Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to open the meeting to public comment.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the status of existing home and relocation of the tenants at the Errico Acres site. He also expressed concern regarding the removal of several political signs in the Borough.

Councilman Karner responded that the inquiry regarding the tenants should be made to the property owner.

Mayor Welsh inquired of Dr. Mellendick if the police had been notified regarding the removal of the political signs. Mr. Schwester responded affirmatively. It was noted that political signs were considered free speech and they should not have been removed.

Johanna McCarten, 38 Peapack Road, Far Hills inquired as to the Borough's sign permit requirements for political signs on public property.

Mr. Sordillo responded that the Borough's sign ordinance only limits the size of the political sign and the periods of time for installation and removal. The installation of signage throughout the Borough was permitted on public property unless it created a potential safety hazard.

There were no further comments from the public.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 23-112

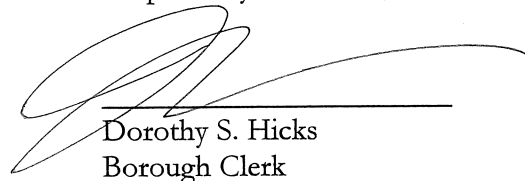
- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Far Hills in Crisis, Inc.
- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Peace and Quiet Farm, LLC
- Contract Negotiations – PBA Contract

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 23-112.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Karner and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 6-12-2023