

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
June 26, 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 and Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo

REPORTS

Councilman Coccoziello – Roads

Councilman Coccoziello provided an update on the Pennbrook Road improvement project. He indicated a capital ordinance was on the agenda for introduction this evening pertaining to the engineering costs for the NJDOT FY2023 and FY2024 Local Aid grant submission projects for improvements to Lake Road.

Councilwoman Tweedie – Health & Sanitation

Councilwoman Tweedie reported that according to the report submitted by the Borough's Environmental Engineer, Natural Systems Utilities, the three-month rolling average indicated the Borough was utilizing only approximately 71% of the purchased sewer capacity. She noted that ongoing maintenance of the system has helped to keep the inflow and infiltration at a minimum.

Councilman Carty – Finance & Insurance

No report.

Council President Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances

No report.

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

Councilman Karner reported the installation of the new basketball court was delayed due to the depth of the existing pavement being more than originally anticipated. Councilman Karner indicated that he and Councilman Rinzler reviewed the fairgrounds and no parking signs have been installed at the fairgrounds adjacent to the Raritan River. He continued by providing an overview of the ongoing improvements at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds including the installation of the pennants on the buildings and additional split rail fencing, repairs to a damaged bench, additional signage and refurbishment of trash and recycling receptacles and the removal of the cricket pitch.

He noted the extra watering for the holiday tree has been beneficial and suggested that the tree be trimmed and shaped by a professional landscaper. Lastly, he stated he would be reaching out to Mr. Travis Holm of Atlantic Health again regarding the need for additional hay in the newly seeded areas of the fairgrounds.

Councilman Rinzler – Police

Councilman Rinzler reported a meeting was held this evening with the Police Committee and the review of the PBA contracts was progressing.

Mayor Welsh

Mayor Welsh apprised the Council that the NJDOT had recently installed a drain adjacent to Route 202 and the sidewalk by the Polo Club to remediate the drainage issue in that area. This was completed at no cost to the Borough.

He informed the Council that an Affordable Housing subcommittee would be formed and will initially consist of himself, Council President Chimenti and Councilman Coccoziello and could potentially also include the Planning Board Chair Thomas Rochat and Vice Chair Robert Lewis. The subcommittee will review and develop a proactive affordable housing plan in preparation for the fourth-round affordable housing obligation which commences in July 2025. A brief discussion ensued regarding the qualifications and experience of the members of the subcommittee.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6/12/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

6/12/2023 – 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

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-07 - AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$10,000.00 FOR POLICE EQUIPMENT

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-07.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-07.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-07 be adopted.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:
Abstain:
Motion Carried.

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-08 - 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

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-08.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Karner to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-08.

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Karner that Ordinance 2023-08 be adopted.

Roll Call:
Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Tweedie
Nay:
Abstain:
Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2023-09 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$80,000.00 FOR LAKE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS – SECTION 1 AND 2 – ENGINEERING

Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the engineering component of the project. A brief discussion ensued regarding the engineering fees resulting in a consensus to further review the fees as well as to possibly request proposals from additional engineering firms.

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Ordinance 2023-09 be introduced.

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 23-118 – Authorizing Vendor’s Agreement
Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)
2. Resolution 23-119 – Authorizing Grant Agreement
Lead Grant Assistance Program (LGAP)
3. Resolution 23-120 – Confirming Resignation – Assistant to the Borough Clerk
4. Resolution 23-121 – Authorizing Issuance of Towing License
Mike’s Towing & Recovery, Inc.
5. Resolution 23-122 – Authorizing Issuance of Towing License
Somerset Hills Towing, Inc.
6. Resolution 23-123 – Authorizing Issuance of Towing License
Tom Delucas Towing, Inc.
7. Resolution 23-124 – Payment of Bill List

Councilman Rinzler inquired as to the payments provided through the LIHWAP program. Mr. Sordillo responded that the program was state mandated and clarified that this would only pertain to the Borough’s sewer bills as billing for water was handled directly through New Jersey American Water (NJAW).

Councilman Carty inquired if the Bill List included the payments to the outstanding invoices for the Otteau Group and McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC.

Ms. Hicks responded that those invoices were not included in the Bill List but have been submitted to the Planning Board to be paid from the escrow account. A brief discussion ensued regarding the current negative balance of approximately \$45,000.00 in the Pulte escrow account.

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 23-118 through 23-124 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.*

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

Charles Schwester, 410 Lake Road, Far Hills inquired as to the escrow account for the affordable housing development and the funding of additional studies pertaining to the project as there was a considerable amount of water at the Errico Acres site following the recent storms.

Mr. Sordillo clarified there were two escrow accounts associated with this project; one pertained to expenses associated with the Planning Board application and compliance review and the other escrow account pertained to inspections during the construction of the project. Upon the satisfaction of any outstanding compliance review matters, the planning board escrow account would be closed, and any remaining funds would be returned to the applicant. The inspection escrow account, as detailed in the Developer's Agreement, would continue through the completion of the project. Mr. Sordillo provided a brief overview of the statutes governing the two escrow accounts and the provisions for replenishment and refunds.

A general discussion ensued regarding the payment of the invoices submitted by the Otteau Group and McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC from the applicant's Planning Board escrow account resulting in a consensus that a letter would be sent to the applicant indicating that unless the escrow account was fully funded prior to the next Borough Council meeting a stop work order would be implemented.

Johanna McCarten, 38 Peapack Road, Far Hills inquired if members of the public could be included on the Affordable Housing subcommittee and also requested that there be representation from all sections of the Borough on the committee.

Mayor Welsh responded that the subcommittee would be comprised of elected and appointed officials only, however, assured that all sections of the Borough would be appropriately represented.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti to close the meeting to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 23-125

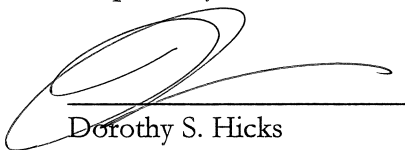
- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Far Hills in Crisis, Inc.
- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Peace and Quiet Farm, LLC
- Contract Negotiations – PBA Contract

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 23-125.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Karner and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 7-10-2023