

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Borough Council Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
July 10, 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 Chief Michael DeCarolis

On behalf of the Borough Council, Mayor Welsh expressed condolences to the Schwester family and asked for a moment of silence in honor of Roberta Schwester who passed away on June 28, 2023.

**REPORTS**

**Councilman Coccoziello – Roads**

Councilman Coccoziello provided an update on the Pennbrook Road improvement project indicating the project was expected to be completed within the next few months. The development of the specifications and plans was underway in preparation for a bid notice for the Dumont Road and DeMun Place improvement project.

**Councilwoman Tweedie – Health & Sanitation**

No report.

**Councilman Carty – Finance & Insurance**

No report.

**Council President Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances**

Council President Chimenti stated there has been a steady increase in the number of cases being heard by the Court. Sessions were currently being held both in person and remotely, with the majority of cases being held via Zoom. She reported the municipal court receipts for the month of June were \$2,167.54.

**Councilman Rinzler – Police**

Councilman Rinzler reported he met with Chief DeCarolis, and plans were underway for the Far Hills Police Department to participate in the National Night Out event on August 1, 2023. Councilman Rinzler also presented the June 2023 Police Report. Lastly, he provided a brief update on the PBA contract review.

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

Councilman Karner reported the paving of the basketball court would be completed this week and quotes were being requested for the painting of the court lines. He stated the Recreation Committee was planning to host another movie night in September. Councilman Karner informed the Borough Council that the Bedminster DPW has been authorized to complete the following projects at the fairgrounds: installation of new split rail fencing; removal of the decommissioned cricket pitch; and repairs to one of the damaged benches. He indicated the project to install a partition around the Portojohns was on hold. He thanked Chief DeCarolis for installing “No Parking” signage along the river at the fairgrounds. Lastly, he stated he would be reviewing the trash and recycling receptacles for potential refurbishment.

Mayor Welsh expressed his appreciation to Councilman Karner for his efforts to ensure the holiday tree was adequately watered.

### **Chief DeCarolis**

No report.

### **Mayor Welsh**

Mayor Welsh informed the Borough Council he had been in contact with JCP&L representatives after the June 26, 2023 tornado in Bernardsville which caused numerous outages and fortunately, power was restored for Far Hills residents on June 28, 2023. Residents were kept apprised of the availability of water and ice during the outage through the Nixle alert system.

He reported the Pulte Group had remitted a check in the amount of \$81,895.17 to replenish the Planning Board escrow account. Some of the funds would be utilized to pay the outstanding invoices for both the Otteau Group and McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC totaling approximately \$47,000.00. He noted the Pulte Group had indicated that they were submitting the funds in protest in order to avoid any delays in the construction. It was noted that the Pulte Group has 45 days to dispute the payment of these invoices from the Planning Board escrow account funds.

Mayor Welsh reported the Borough received a grant in the amount of \$55,000.00 through the NJDOT Local Aid Fund for the improvement of pedestrian safety throughout the Borough, which has been a key initiative of the Council. Mayor Welsh explained the solar powered pedestrian alert signs would be installed at two crosswalks along Peapack Road providing residents safer access to the fairgrounds. The installation of speed limit and alert signage was planned throughout the Borough’s village area. Council President Chimenti acknowledged these efforts in securing the grant funding to achieve the goal for improved pedestrian safety throughout the Borough.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### **6/26/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

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

#### **6/26/2023 – Executive Session Minutes**

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION**

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

Mayor Welsh stated that an analysis of the Borough's engineering fees was conducted and were found to be consistent with similar projects in other municipalities. During the analysis, a miscalculation was found in determining the total appropriation for the Lake Road Improvements Project which required the tabling of Ordinance 2023-09. A new ordinance would be prepared and introduced at a subsequent Council meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Resolution 23-126 – Authorizing Approval of Architectural Design as a Condition of the Planning Board's Approval of the Development of Affordable Housing for 8 & 10 Peapack Road**

Mr. Bill Hotz, Raritan Valley Development Corporation presented the proposed color and material samples for the siding, soffit, trim, and awnings for the property located at 8 & 10 Peapack Road, as required by the Planning Board's condition of approval. A general discussion ensued regarding the solid color awning and siding color selection with Mr. Hotz indicating the property located at 46 Peapack Road was recently completed in the same color and material as presented this evening.

Mr. Hotz informed the Borough Council that he was ready to submit the building permits to the Construction office for 8 & 10 Peapack Road.

There was a general consensus to table Resolution 23-126 until the July 24, 2023 Borough Council meeting to provide the Council an opportunity to view the color and materials currently installed at both properties.

Mr. Sordillo advised that typically the architectural details are reviewed and approved solely by the Planning Board; however, as this development was part of an Affordable Housing Agreement the review by the Borough Council was added as a condition of the Planning Board's approval.

#### **Resolution 23-127 – Authorizing Appointment - Assistant to the Borough Clerk**

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Councilman Karner that Resolution 23-127 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

#### **Resolution 23-128 – Payment of Bill List**

Motion by Councilman Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti that Resolution 23-128 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

## DISCUSSION

### Use of the Fairgrounds

Mayor Welsh and Councilman Rinzler provided a brief overview of the permitted uses for the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds and noted there was some concern regarding a group of people who were recently found to be swimming in the Raritan River accessed from a trail adjacent to the fairgrounds. A general discussion ensued regarding the general permitting requirements for the use of the fairgrounds as well as additional regulations potentially imposed by the NJDEP/Fish and Wildlife for the use of this waterway. Mayor Welsh asked Councilman Karner to review the signage at the fairgrounds to ensure compliance with the Borough's ordinances.

**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 reaffirmed his intention to pursue the Borough Council candidacy in the November 2023 General Election.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the meeting to public comment.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### Resolution 23-129

- Attorney Client Privilege – Litigation – Affordable Housing
- 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 23-129.

## RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Karner and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dorothy S. Hicks  
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 7-24-2023