

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Borough Council Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
September 25, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:06 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, Attorney Albert Cruz

**REPORTS**

**Councilman Coccoziello – Roads**

Councilman Coccoziello reported the Pennbrook Road project phase 1 has been completed and the work was to be reviewed and deemed acceptable by the Borough Engineer prior to final sign off. The second phase of the project will entail the upper section from the Borough line to the top of the phase 1 work. This work will be completed in the next phase. He provided an update on the Lake Road Improvements project indicating that grant applications had been submitted to the NJDOT and award notifications were still pending from the state for the resurfacings of the entire roadway in two separate sections. Alternatively the Borough is looking into joining other municipalities in the Morris County Co-op to perform resurfacing and maintenance projects in the most cost-effective way for the Borough. He continued by stating bids were received on September 13, 2023 for the DeMun Place and Dumont Road Improvement project and the contract was anticipated to be awarded next month.

Councilwoman Tweedie commented that during the last rainstorm, the recent improvements to the drainage on Pennbrook Road were effective.

Mayor Welsh added that he and Councilman Coccoziello attended a site visit on Lake Road on September 19, 2023 with representatives from Ferriero Engineering and the Somerset County DPW for recommendations on remedial actions to address roadway maintenance. Subsequently, Unfortunately, the scope of the project was outside the capabilities of the County's equipment and the Borough would be actively seeking alternate repair options to immediately address the roadway maintenance.

**Councilman Carty – Finance & Insurance**

Councilman Carty reported he would be reviewing the 2023 Budget with CFO, Debra Stern.

### **Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation**

Councilwoman Tweedie reported that the Borough's sewer lines were planned to be jetted as a routine annual maintenance.

### **Council President Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances**

Council President Chimenti presented an overview of the case load at the September 12, 2023 Court Session. She noted that while the majority of cases were being held via Zoom, the court appearances remain low. She stated she held the semi-annual meeting with Judge Wong-Taylor today and the Far Hills Municipal Court continues to run smoothly.

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

Councilman Karner reported that due to the recent heavy rains, cars were prohibited from parking on the fields at the fairgrounds during the collections of donations for the upcoming AVN Rummage Sale.

The movie night held on September 16, 2023 was a successful event with approximately 165 people enjoying the classic blockbuster film "E.T." He expressed appreciation to everyone who worked tirelessly to make the event possible.

Councilman Karner provided an update regarding the improvements to the basketball court indicating the required documentation from several vendors was still pending. With regard to the new HVAC system at the municipal building, one proposal was received and he would be reviewing alternative systems as suggested by Councilman Coccoziello. Improvements to the playground facilities are pending a review of the NJDEP requirements.

Mayor Welsh also expressed his appreciation to the Recreation Committee and the many volunteers who made the movie night possible and many enjoyed this wonderful community event.

### **Councilman Rinzler – Police**

Councilman Rinzler reported the Police Committee met recently with PBA representatives, Officers Mulch and Spender and another meeting was planned for October 12, 2023 to continue the contract negotiations.

He noted that the fields at the fairgrounds were recently damaged purportedly caused by one of the volunteers working at the rummage sale. Councilman Karner added that the AVN would be responsible for making the appropriate repairs and recommended obtaining a police report..

Councilman Rinzler reported Chief DeCarolis has met with the representatives from the Far Hills Race Meeting to review police coverage for the October 21, 2023 event. He noted that there would be online betting again this year.

Councilman Rinzler presented the tragic news of a vehicular accident along Route 202 in Bedminster, which occurred on September 23, 2023 at 6:10 p.m. and resulted in the death of 18-year-old Bedminster resident, Mr. William Richardson who was walking on the sidewalk.

### **Mayor Welsh**

On behalf of the Borough Council, Mayor Welsh expressed condolences to the Richardson family.

He provided an update regarding the pedestrian safety signage project indicating that plan approvals were pending from the NJDOT and Somerset County. A grant was received in the amount of \$55,000.00 for the pedestrian safety signage to be installed at the crosswalks at Dumont Road and Railroad Avenue. Speed limit and alert signage will also be installed throughout the Village area.

Mayor Welsh stated Douglas Road would be closed from September 27 through September 29, 2023 due to tree trimming work being conducted by Bernards Township. As needed alternative safe travel methods will be posted.

Mayor Welsh acknowledged Attorney Mr. Albert Cruz who was filling in for Mr. Joseph Sordillo this evening.

He apprised the public that this year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rummage Sale being held in Far Hills, and he would be presenting a commemorative plaque during the volunteer luncheon on October 10, 2023. The AVN has assisted the Borough in the rehabilitation and beautification of the fairgrounds and I will be representing the Borough in thanking the AVN and their volunteers for their dedication and partnership with the Borough.

Lastly, he reminded the public that the next Borough Council meeting would be held on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 due to the Columbus Day holiday.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Resolution 23-158 – Accepting Resignation and Confirming Appointment – Planning Board**

Mayor Welsh commended Councilwoman Tweedie for her many years of service on the Planning Board.

There was a round of applause to recognize Councilwoman Tweedie commitment to the Borough of Far Hills.

Mayor Welsh asked for a nomination for Planning Board liaison.

Motion by Councilman Karner to appoint Mary Chimenti to the Planning Board, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that Resolution 23-158 be approved.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Council Appointments**

Council President Chimenti stated that as she would now be serving on the Planning Board for the remainder of the term vacated by Councilwoman Tweedie, she would be resigning from her position as Council President.

Mayor Welsh expressed his appreciation to Councilwoman Chimenti and asked for a nomination for Council President.

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to nominate Councilman Karner as Council President for the unexpired term, expiring December 31, 2023.

There were no other nominations.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Coccoziello, Rinzler, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain: Karner

Motion Carried.

Council President Karner expressed his appreciation to the Borough Council for the nomination.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **9/11/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

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

### **9/11/2023 – Executive Session Minutes**

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**ORDINANCE 2023-15 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS' ACCEPTANCE OF TWO (2) RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS (DEMUN PLACE) IN CONNECTION WITH THE PLANNING BOARD'S GRANT OF SUBDIVISION APPROVAL FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 11 DEMUN PLACE**

Mayor Welsh provided an overview of the ordinance and the routine acceptance of right-of-way easements upon approval by the Planning Board of a land use application.

Mayor Welsh opened the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-15.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-15.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Ordinance 2023-15 be adopted.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ORDINANCES - INTRODUCTION**

**ORDINANCE 2023-16 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$292,000.00 FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS TO DEMUN PLACE AND DUMONT ROAD**

Mayor Welsh recused himself and stepped down from the dais.

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Coccoziello that Ordinance 2023-16 be introduced.

Roll Call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

**ORDINANCE 2023-17 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$11,000.00 FOR FIRE COMPANY EQUIPMENT**

It was noted that the cost share percentage for expenditures for the Far Hills Bedminster Fire Department is 20% Far Hills and 80% Bedminster.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Ordinance 2023-17 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 23-159 – Authorizing Change Order - Not-To-Exceed  
Trimboli & Prusinowski, LLC
2. Resolution 23-160 – Authorizing Agreement for Membership  
Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council
3. Resolution 23-161 – Payment of Bill List

Councilman Rinzler inquired as to the contract period for the membership in the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council (MCCPC).

Ms. Hicks provided clarification as the contract period was determined by the MCCPC's authorization through the State of NJ and Borough was applying for membership for the remainder of MCCPC's current contract.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 23-159 through 23-161 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Cocoziello, 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.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the meeting to public comment.

Councilman Carty inquired if the agenda could be distributed to the Borough Council prior to being posted to the website.

A brief discussion ensued resulting in general consensus that the draft agenda would be provided to the Borough Council on Thursday with a deadline of Noon on Friday for any comments or revisions.

Councilman Cocoziello asked if the Planning Board Agenda can be circulated to the Council to know what is on their agenda.

Ms. Hicks stated the agendas for the Borough Council, Planning Board and Board of Health are posted to the Borough website by close of business on the Friday before the Monday meetings.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **Resolution 23-162**

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

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Council President Chimenti and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 23-162.

Mr. Cruz advised, as indicated in Resolution 23-162, the Borough Council may take further action upon returning to open session.

## **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

### **Resolution 23-163** – Authorizing the Settlement of Pending Litigation

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Cocoziello that Resolution 23-163 be approved.

Roll Call:

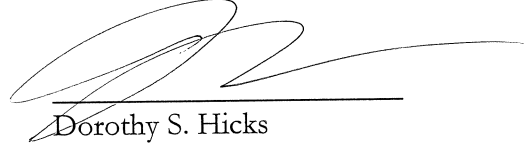
Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Cocoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Tweedie

Nay:  
Abstain:  
Motion Carried.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dorothy S. Hicks', written over a horizontal line.

Dorothy S. Hicks  
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 10-10-2023