

BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS
Borough Council Regular Meeting
MINUTES
October 23, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Welsh called the meeting to order at 7:00 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: Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Peter J. Coccoziello, Jr., Council President David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh
Absent, as Excused: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie
Absent:
Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Chief Michael DeCarolus, Borough Attorney Albert E. Cruz

REPORTS

Councilman Coccoziello – Roads

Councilman Coccoziello reported the NJDOT grant was received for the Pennbrook Road Improvements – Phase 2 project and the specifications were being finalized in preparation for going out to bid.

With regard to improvements to Lake Road a capital ordinance was being introduced this evening in preparation for awarding the contract through the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council (MCCPC) next month. The milling and paving project was anticipated to commence in early November 2023, weather dependent.

Lastly, Councilman Coccoziello reported that the contract was recently awarded for the Dumun Place and Dumont Road Improvements project, and the appropriate documentation was being secured from the contractor as well as scheduling the preconstruction meeting.

Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws & Ordinances

Councilwoman Chimenti reported for the month of September 2023 the Municipal Court receipts were \$3,112.59 with the Borough portion being \$1,725.60.

Council President Karner – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds

Council President Karner reported the 2023 Fall Rummage Sale and the Race Event were successful and commended the efforts of Chief DeCarolus and the Far Hills Police Department.

He indicated that he reviewed the fairgrounds with Mr. Mike Vitale of Atlantic Health (AH) and noted AH would be repairing several potholes as well as seeding the grass areas where the tents were installed. He also noted the removal of the tents was delayed this year.

Councilman Rinzler – Police

Councilman Rinzler reported he and Councilmen Carty and Karner were continuing with the PBA contract negotiations.

He also stated he attended the Far Hills Race Meeting event and provided a brief police report.

Chief DeCarolis

Chief DeCarolis stated he confirmed with Messrs. Kennedy and Torsilieri and there were approximately 20,000 in attendance at the 2023 Race Meeting event. He reported that there were no traffic concerns and only a few arrests were made at this year's event, acknowledging the collaborative partnership with the Race Event committee and Somerset County law enforcement.

Council President Karner inquired of Chief DeCarolis as to the status of the new parking signage and installation of the concrete bumpers in the municipal parking lot due to the relocation of the police vehicles and the handicapped parking spaces. Chief DeCarolis responded he was currently working with the Bedminster DPW to obtain estimates for the signage and bumpers.

Mayor Welsh

Mayor Welsh acknowledged the Far Hills Police Department as well as the support from our surrounding communities whose combined efforts made the 2023 Race Meeting a safe and successful event.

He informed the public that Somerset County continues to trim ash trees along Liberty Corner Road which have been adversely affected by the Emerald ash borer insect.

Mayor Welsh invited everyone to attend the Veterans Day service to be held on Saturday, November 11, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the memorial outside the Far Hills Municipal building. Details on the service will be posted on the Borough website as well as through the Nixle notification system.

Lastly, he reminded the public, the next Borough Council meeting was in three weeks, on November 13, 2023.

REGULAR AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

10/10/2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

ORDINANCE 2023-18 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$60,000.00 FOR VILLAGE SIGN PROJECT – SPEED LIMIT & COUNTY ROUTE CROSS-WALKS

Mayor Welsh provided an overview of the project indicating that the Borough received a \$55,000.00 grant from the NJDOT.

Mayor Welsh opened the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-18.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Welsh closed the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-18.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Ordinance 2023-18 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 2023-19 – AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS’ ACCEPTANCE OF A SIDEWALK EASEMENT AND TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT FROM THE PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS BLOCK 14, LOT 6 IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEMUN PLACE AND DUMONT ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Mayor Welsh recused himself and stepped down from the dais.

Council President Karner provided a brief overview of the Ordinance and the ADA requirements that necessitated these easements for the project.

Councilman Coccoziello inquired about the term of these easements.

Mr. Cruz responded the sidewalk easement would be permanent while the construction easement was temporary and would only be applicable through the completion of the project.

Council President Karner opened the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-19.

Don Hewitt, 23 Dumont Road, Far Hills inquired as to the ADA accessibility and any improvements to the sidewalks.

A brief discussion ensued and Ms. Hicks indicated the project plans were available to the public.

There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Rinzler to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-19.

Motion by Councilwoman Chimenti, seconded by Councilman Coccoziello that Ordinance 2023-19 be adopted.

Roll Call:

Aye: Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2023-20 – AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$85,000.00 FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO LAKE ROAD

Mayor Welsh provided a brief overview of improvements planned for Lake Road and acknowledged the efforts of Councilman Coccoziello in coordinating the project with the contractor, Schifano Construction Corporation through the Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council (MCCPC).

Mayor Welsh indicated that the Borough was denied an NJDOT grant for improvements of Lake Road - Section 1 spanning from Campbell Road to the one-way split. Another NJDOT grant application was submitted for Lake Road – Section 2 spanning from the one-way split to Route 202 and the award notification was still pending.

He continued by indicating the Borough had expedited an application to join the MCCPC in order to utilize the awarded contract for milling and paving at a substantial cost savings to the Borough. Mayor Welsh added that the Borough obtained an estimate of \$30,000.00 from Bedminster DPW which would provide only an overlay of the smaller section spanning from Hidden Valley Road to the start of the bridge. Additionally, through the reallocation of engineering capital improvement funds the section of Lake Road from Hidden Valley Road through the one-way split up and continuing to the beginning of the lake would be milled and paved this year.

Councilman Coccoziello echoed Mayor Welsh's comments indicating that choosing to fully mill and pave these sections could provide approximately 20 years of use as opposed to the overlay option.

Councilwoman Chimenti commented that the timing was optimal for these improvements to Lake Road as the roadway would likely be utilized as an alternate access when the Route 202 bridge is closed for the NJDOT bridge replacement project.

Council President Karner also acknowledged the efforts of Mayor Welsh and Councilman Coccoziello for their efforts in achieving a cost-effective approach for these much-needed improvements to the roadway.

Mayor Welsh agreed and reiterated the sections that would be milled and paved along Lake Road were from the intersection of Hidden Valley Road through the downhill portion and stopping right before the bridge. The paving would start again from the one-way split and continue through to the start of the lake. The roadway adjacent to the lake would not be addressed through this project.

Councilman Coccoziello added that several stormwater inlets on Lake Road, Sherwood Farm Road and Sunnybranch Road may need to be further reviewed for potential jetting prior to the winter season.

Mayor Welsh stated that in order to expedite these improvements, a Special Meeting via Zoom was planned for November 2, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. for the public hearing and adoption of Ordinance 2023-20. The agenda and meeting information would be posted on the Borough website.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Coccoziello to introduce Ordinance 2023-20.

Roll Call:

Aye: Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler

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 23-169 – Authorizing Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook
2. Resolution 23-170 – Authorizing Change Order – Not to Exceed Ferriero Engineering, Inc.
3. Resolution 23-171 – Authorizing the Cancellation of Capital Improvement Ordinance
4. Resolution 23-172 – Payment of Bill List

Councilman Rinzler inquired if the Personnel Manual and Employee Handbook (the Manual) was customized for Far Hills.

Ms. Hicks responded that Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund (MEL/JIF) requires a review of the Manual every two years and has provided a template to ensure compliance with current statutes and personnel policies. In addition, the Borough continues to receive a reduced deductible and co-insurance by adopting these model employment practices. Additionally, the Borough's Labor Counsel, Trimboli & Prusinowski reviewed the Manual for compliance as well as for any necessary modifications specific to the Borough.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti that Resolutions 23-169 through 23-172 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Chimenti, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION

2023 Best Practice Inventory

Ms. Hicks provided an overview of the 2023 Best Practice Inventory and indicated that the Borough would be receiving 100% of the allotted state aid.

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.

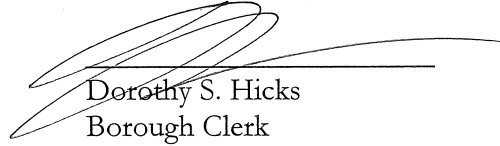
Mayor Welsh closed the meeting to public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Chimenti and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED – 11-13-2023



Dorothy S. Hicks
Borough Clerk