

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Borough Council Reorganization Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
January 2, 2024

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Welsh called the meeting to order at 6:00 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: Councilman Joseph Carty (via phone), Councilman Peter J. Coccoziello, Jr. (via phone),  
Council President David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh

Absent, as Excused: Councilwoman Mary Chimenti

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Albert Cruz

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**OATH OF OFFICE**

Ms. Hicks administered the Oath of Office to Charles P. Schwester as member of the Borough Council for a three-year-term expiring December 31, 2026.

Mr. Cruz advised that another Roll Call should be administered.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty (via phone), Councilman Peter J. Coccoziello, Jr. (via phone),  
Council President David P. Karner, Councilman Rick Rinzler, Councilman Charles P.  
Schwester, Mayor Kevin P. Welsh

Absent, as Excused: Councilwoman Mary Chimenti

Absent:

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Albert Cruz

**NOMINATION OF BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Councilman Schwester to nominate Councilman Karner as Council President for a one-year term expiring December 31, 2024.

There were no other nominations.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Coccoziello, Rinzler, Schwester

Nay:

Abstain: Karner

Motion Carried.

**NOMINATION OF PLANNING BOARD – CLASS III MEMBER**

Motion by Councilman Rinzler, seconded by Councilman Schwester to nominate Councilman Coccoziello as the Class III Member of the Planning Board for a one-year term expiring December 31, 2024.

There were no other nominations.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Schwester

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

## **MAYOR'S ADDRESS**

Dear Members of the Borough Council, Distinguished Guests, Friends, and Neighbors:

I am deeply honored, and it has been my privilege to serve as Mayor of Far Hills for 2023. It has been a busy year and one I am proud to have led.

I would like to take a moment to thank my beautiful wife, Ashley, of 18 years. I would also like to thank my 3 girls for their support as well. My family has supported me from the beginning, and I thank them for their continued support.

I would also like to thank our Borough Council for their many hours of dedicated service to our community. Their hard work and support is incredibly inspiring and appreciated.

2023 has been busy for our infrastructure and roads department. We have been working hard to put together a 5-year road and infrastructure improvement plan. We, as your Mayor and Council, recognize the need for this 5-year plan. We will continue to leverage grant opportunities from the NJDOT and beyond. Last year, we finished the lower section of Pennbrook Road. We received a grant for the upper section. We anticipate completing Pennbrook in 2024. In 2023, we paved the back section of Lake Road from the lake to the split. We received a grant from the NJDOT for the front section of Lake Road. We anticipate that section to be paved with drainage improvements in 2025. We also have in the queue paving and drainage improvements for Dumont Road and DeMun Place. This work should be completed in early 2024. A NJDOT grant is leveraged for this project as well. I want to thank Councilman Coccoziello for his hard work on these projects in 2023.

Pedestrian safety has been at the forefront of my mind since I took office. We have worked with Somerset County and NJDOT for a grant opportunity to improve the walkability and safety of Peapack Road. We received a grant to install crosswalk improvements at two intersections, Dumont Rd and Railroad Ave. This will consist of push-to-cross blinking signs. We anticipate the installation of these improvements shortly. We are working with vendors to perform the work as we speak.

I would like to thank our Council for their diligence earlier this year when we took a hard look at the final agreement for the Errico Acres site. We took the builder back to the table and removed the 6.9-million-dollar contribution for the age restriction set by the prior administration. This move protected the town from long-term debt, and I thank the Council for their tireless work to get to the finish line on this deal. As an inclusionary affordable housing development, we will find practical solutions as we

work through the installation of this development while protecting our neighbors during the process and holding the builder to our high standard.

On the topic of affordable housing, we have our next round just around the corner, our 2025 round is coming up, and will be active over the upcoming year as we work towards our solutions to meet our obligations to fair share. There still are a lot of unanswered questions as to the number of affordable housing units we will need to provide. This is a fluid issue, and an update will follow over this year.

This past Fall, the Atlantic Visiting Nurse rummage sale held its 100<sup>th</sup> year sale. Such a remarkable event which brings excellent bargains to those who shop the event and raises money for servicing communities in our area. The Borough is happy to partner with the AVN as we continue this tradition. I have always believed in bringing the community together. Over the past year, we promoted several community events. This past year, the Far Hills Recreation Committee has put together three events. Two movie nights at the park and the Holiday Tree lighting event. I would like to thank the Recreation Committee, the volunteers, and local sponsors who supported these events. All said and done, hundreds of residents enjoyed time together as a community, and I am very proud to have witnessed these extraordinary events take shape. Small-town living, small-town values.

In the years ahead, we will face many obstacles, such as finishing the third round of affordable housing with the fourth round of affordable housing just around the corner in 2025, the US Route 202 bridge replacement projected for the summer of 2025, infrastructure and road projects, PBA contract, increasing costs across the board and many other unknowns that may turn up over the years. I am confident our Borough Council is up to the challenges we will face as we look forward into 2024.

I would like to invite residents to join us at our next Council meeting on January 22, 2024 at 7:00 pm. Please join us as we review last year's challenges and successes. We are open to public input on how we can better serve our community in 2024. I am calling this the "Community Check-in Meeting." Topics such as our 5-year infrastructure plan, improvements to the Fairgrounds, community events, etc. I want all of us to feel comfortable expressing our thoughts heading into 2024 and work together to reach our common goals.

We are all in a partnership as we move into 2024. We have a great team. A great Borough Council, Planning Board, Board of Health, Board Professionals, our competent Borough Clerk Dorothy Hicks, incredible CFO Debra Stern, and our great Municipal Court. We are all ready to do the job. I once again thank you for the opportunity to lead our community as Mayor.

God bless Far Hills, and God bless America.

Kevin Welsh  
Mayor of Far Hills 2024

There was a round of applause from Borough Council and members of the public.

## **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 24-001 – Establishing Rules and Procedures for the Conduct of Business  
at Borough Council Meetings
2. Resolution 24-002 – Establishing 2024 Borough Council Meeting Dates
3. Resolution 24-003 – Establishing Fee for Public Meeting Notice
4. Resolution 24-004 – Designation of Official Newspapers
5. Resolution 24-005 – Temporary Appropriations for Operating Purposes
6. Resolution 24-006 – Tax Grace & Interest on Delinquent Taxes
7. Resolution 24-007 – Designation of Depositories for Borough Funds
8. Resolution 24-008 – Designation of Signatories for Borough Accounts
9. Resolution 24-009 – Authorization of Payroll Signatures
10. Resolution 24-010 – Authorizing Opening of Petty Cash Account
11. Resolution 24-011 – Authorizing a Cash Management Plan
12. Resolution 24-012 – Authorizing Mileage Reimbursement
13. Resolution 24-013 – Authorizing Municipal Attorney to File Corrective Appeals to the  
Somerset County Board of Taxation
14. Resolution 24-014 – Adopting a Civil Rights Policy
15. Resolution 24-015 – Authorizing Mileage Stipend
16. Resolution 24-016 – Authorizing the CFO to Approve Payment of Bills
17. Resolution 24-017 – Authorizing Tax Collector to Cancel Tax Payments/Refunds
18. Resolution 24-018 – Appointment – Personnel
19. Resolution 24-019 – Appointment – Boards, Committees and Commissions
20. Resolution 24-020 – Professional Services Contract, Bond Counsel  
Hawkins Delafield & Wood, LLP
21. Resolution 24-021 – Professional Services Contract, Borough Attorney  
DiFrancesco, Bateman, Kunzman, Davis, Lehrer & Flaum, PC
22. Resolution 24-022 – Professional Services Contract, Borough Engineer  
Boswell Engineering, Inc.
23. Resolution 24-023 – Professional Services Contract, Borough Labor Counsel  
Trimboli & Prusinowski, LLC
24. Resolution 24-024 – Professional Services Contract, Borough Planner  
Banisch Associates, Inc.
25. Resolution 24-025 – Professional Services Contract, Certified Recycling Professional  
Kevin Murray
26. Resolution 24-026 – Professional Services Contract, Environmental Engineer  
Applied Water Management dba Natural Systems Utilities LLC
27. Resolution 24-027 – Professional Services Contract, Human Resource Consultant  
People Management, Inc.
28. Resolution 24-028 – Professional Services Contract, Municipal Accountant/Auditor  
Nisivoccia, LLP
29. Resolution 24-029 – Professional Services Contract, Municipal Prosecutor  
DiFrancesco, Bateman, Kunzman, Davis, Lehrer & Flaum, PC
30. Resolution 24-030 – Appointment, Alternate Municipal Prosecutor  
DiFrancesco, Bateman, Kunzman, Davis, Lehrer & Flaum, PC
31. Resolution 24-031 – Professional Services Contract, Municipal Public Defender

Mitzner & Mitzner, PC

32. Resolution 24-032 – Professional Services Contract, Alternate Municipal Public Defender - Kuchinsky and Rotunno, PC
33. Resolution 24-033 – Professional Services Contract, Reassessment Service Program Reassessment Services, LLC
34. Resolution 24-034 – Appointment and Award of Contract, Risk Management Consultant RSC Insurance Brokerage, Inc. fka Meeker, Sharkey & Hurley
35. Resolution 24-035 – Professional Services Contract, Special Counsel – Affordable Housing Surenian, Edwards, Buzak & Nolan LLC
36. Resolution 24-036 – Professional Services Contract, Stormwater Management Stormwater Compliance Solutions, LLC
37. Resolution 24-037 – Authorizing Shared Services Agreement – Recycling - Somerset County
38. Resolution 24-038 – Authorizing Health Benefits Waiver Program New Jersey State Health Benefits Plan
39. Resolution 24-039 – Authorizing Financial Incentive Program New Jersey State Health Benefits Plan

Councilman Rinzler commented that he would like additional time to review a few of the contracts and suggested that the following resolutions be tabled until the next Borough Council meeting. Resolutions 24-021; 24-022; 24-023; 24-024, 24-030 and 24-036.

Council President Karner reviewed each of the contracts. A brief discussion ensued regarding the respective contracts and in order to provide a continuum of services to the Borough, there was a general consensus to award these six (6) contracts through January 31, 2024 only and to further review them at the January 22, 2024 meeting.

Councilman Schwester added that Resolution 24-004 should also be tabled until the next meeting as he had a conflict with the Bernardsville News.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the removal of the Bernardsville News as one of the official newspapers for the Borough with a general consensus to further review the official newspapers at the January 22, 2024 meeting.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 24-001, 24-002, 24-003 and 24-005 through 24-039 be approved with the following resolutions 24-021; 24-022; 24-023; 24-024, 24-030 and 24-036 tabled until the next Borough Council meeting on January 22, 2024.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Schwester

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolution 24-004 be approved as amended to remove the Bernardsville News as one of the three official newspapers for the Borough. It was noted that the Courier News and the Daily Record would remain as the two official newspapers for the Borough.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Cocoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Schwester

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

## **DISCUSSION**

Mayoral Board and Committee Appointments – 2024

Mayor Welsh reviewed the Mayoral Board and Committee Appointments.

The following are the Mayoral Appointments effective January 1, 2024.

### **Clarence Dillon Public Library Board of Trustees**

Linda Surks Far Hills Citizen's Representative – 5 year term expiring 12/31/2028

Ellie McLean Far Hills Citizen's Representative – 5 year term expiring 12/31/2028

### **Municipal Alliance for Prevention of Substance Abuse/Youth Service Commission**

Kevin P. Welsh (Mayor) 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

Michael DeCarolus (Police) 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

### **Planning Board**

Sheila Tweedie CL-IV – 4 year term expiring 12/31/2027

Robert Lewis CL-IV – 4 year term expiring 12/31/2027

### **Ravine Lake/Borough of Far Hills Liaison**

Charles P. Schwester 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

### **Sanitary Transmission Advisory Board**

Mary Chimenti 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

### **Somerset County Community Development Committee**

Dorothy S. Hicks 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

### **Somerset County Solid Waste Advisory Council – Mayor or his/her designee**

*To be confirmed by the Somerset County Board of Commissioners*

Sheila Tweedie 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

### **Somerset County Wastewater Management Planning Committee**

Mary Chimenti 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

Borough Engineer – Paul Ferriero 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

Borough Planner – David Banisch 1 year term expiring 12/31/2024

The following are the Mayoral Committee appointments effective January 1, 2024

## **FINANCE/INSURANCE**

Chair: RICK RINZLER

Vice-Chair: JOSEPH CARTY

## **FIRE, WATER, LIGHT, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

Chair: PETER J. COCOZIELLO, JR.

Vice-Chair: CHARLES P. SCHWESTER

## **HEALTH/SANITATION**

Chair: MARY CHIMENTI

Vice-Chair: DAVID P. KARNER

## **LAWS & ORDINANCES**

Chair: DAVID P. KARNER

Vice-Chair: MARY CHIMENTI

## **POLICE**

Chair: JOSEPH CARTY

Vice-Chair: RICK RINZLER

## **ROADS**

Chair: CHARLES P. SCHWESTER

Vice-Chair: PETER J. COCOZIELLO, JR

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Mayor: KEVIN P. WELSH

Councilwoman: MARY CHIMENTI

Council President: DAVID P. KARNER

Personnel Officer: MAGDA MIRANDA – PEOPLE MANAGEMENT, INC.

Councilman Schwester objected to the appointment of Sheila Tweedie to the Planning Board as a Class IV member for a four-year term. Councilmen Carty and Rinzler also supported a change in this appointment and expressed a need for new members on the Planning Board.

Mayor Welsh and Council President Karner supported the appointment of Sheila Tweedie to the Planning Board due to her vast experience and years of service to the Borough.

A brief discussion ensued with Mr. Cruz referencing the Municipal Land Use Law which provides for the Mayoral appointment of Class IV members of the Planning Board without the advice or consent of the Borough Council.

Mr. Cruz further advised that in order to provide a continuum of professional services for the Borough that the contracts that were previously pulled from the Consent Agenda and tabled until the January 22, 2024 Borough Council meeting should be reconsidered for approval and awarded for a contract period through January 31, 2024 only.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler that Resolutions 24-021; 24-022; 24-023; 24-024, 24-030 and 24-036 be approved as amended to award the contract for a period through January 31, 2024.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Coccoziello, Karner, Rinzler, Schwester

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 for public comment.

Johanna McCarten, 38 Peapack Road, Far Hills stated that she had recently overheard several members of the Borough Council discussing who they would like to remove from the Borough Council and found the behavior disturbing and sad for our community.

George Mellendick, 260 Lake Road, Far Hills commented that people in the community may become more involved in serving if they were apprised of the opportunity.

Sohail Khan, 3 Fox Hunt Court, Far Hills commented that the way the Planning Board handled their responsibilities over the last several years, specifically regarding the Errico Acres (Pulte Homes/Kimbolton) development that none of them deserve to remain on the board. He also felt that there was a lack of transparency and notices to the public. Mr. Khan noted that several trees were removed on the site as well as in the buffer areas. Lastly, he commented upon the acceleration of the construction and cautioned against the Borough's ability to stop the project and to rectify any violations if construction was permitted to continue at this pace.

There were no further comments from the public.

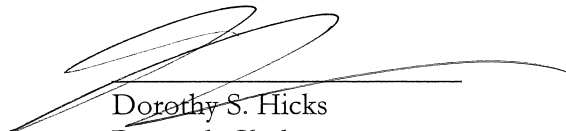
Mayor Welsh closed the meeting for public comment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT TO REGULAR MEETING**

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Rinzler and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED – 1-22-2024

  
Dorothy S. Hicks  
Borough Clerk