

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY – JUNE 5, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER: (President Robert Lesjack).

President Lesjack called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., welcomed everyone and reminded everyone about the public meeting policy which will be strictly enforced. All stood for the “**Pledge of Allegiance**”.

ROLL CALL:

Present: President Lesjack, V.P. Nicholas Cost, Council Members Bernie Scalzo, Chris DeGonzague, Amy Bean, Joann Matarese, Tracey Lazier, Mayor Glinton, Solicitor McAndrew and Secretary/Treasurer S. Vannan.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jennifer Matarese, 412 Main Street, asked to speak about Councilwoman Bean’s statement, “which is on the agenda”. She was asked to keep it until after Councilwoman Bean had spoken, but went on to ask what Council was doing about Bean’s upcoming trial next month and how they would deal with it when she is convicted. “It’s public knowledge, has been in the Scranton Times, on the television news, etc.” Councilwoman Bean sat quietly and had no comment at that time. Ms. Matarese was asked to remember that in this country, we are “Innocent until proven guilty”. Ms. Matarese continued to speak for a few minutes, then was asked to be seated.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION: (Joann Matarese)

Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to accept the Minutes from May 1st and Special Meeting, May 11, 2023. Seconded by V.P. Nick Cost. Both were accepted with an “All in favor” response.

Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to accept the May, 2023 Treasurer’s Report with cash receipts totaling \$270,898.00 and Disbursements totaling \$114,035.33. V.P. Cost seconded the motion. Motion carried in a roll-call vote with six in favor and Councilwoman Bean opposed without comment.

PUBLIC WORKS: (Councilman Scalzo)

Councilman Scalzo provided the May 2023 Public Works Report: The crew cold patched several potholes; cleaned the storm drains on Center Street; delivered the F550 dump truck to TASCAs Ford for a recall issue; painted meter lines & handicap spots as well as parking spaces on Center & Depot Streets. Put up the flags on Main Street and hung the 2023 FCRHS Senior banners on Main. Councilman Scalzo noted that a meeting with PennDot to discuss options for repairs to the sinking roadway in front of the Dollar General entrance that is related to a creek that runs under that section of Rt. #171 is planned.

Yard Waste pickup is scheduled for Tuesday, June 20st and Thursday, June 22nd. Motion to advertise in the F. C. News offered by Councilman Scalzo and seconded by V.P. Cost – roll call vote found seven in favor, none opposed.

Two proposals from JHA to continue the engineering work on the Main Street Drainage issue for \$15,000 and Susquehanna Street Drainage for \$25,000 were considered by council. Councilman Scalzo made a motion to accept the first proposal for \$15,000, seconded by Councilwoman Matarese. Roll call vote – seven in favor, none opposed, motion carried. Councilman Scalzo made a motion to accept the second proposal for \$25,000, seconded by Councilwoman Lazier, the motion passed in a roll call vote with seven in favor, none opposed.

A third proposal is forthcoming for Upper North Main Street drainage issues and will be available for the July meeting.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Councilwoman Lazier)

The minutes from the Action Team’s May 2023 meeting and the agenda for June 2023 were distributed. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to approve the use of the Council Chambers for the Action Team beginning with the June 1st meeting. V.P. Cost seconded the motion, all voted yes in a roll call vote.

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY – JUNE 5, 2023**

The GFCBA sent Council a letter requesting the use of Pentecost Hall to hold a “Cash” Bingo on September 30, 2023 with proceeds benefiting the proposed improvements to the Center Street Pocket Park. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilwoman Matarese. A roll call vote found seven in favor, none opposed, the use of Pentecost Hall was approved.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Councilwoman Bean)

Councilwoman Bean shared an update on the Façade projects from Gus Fahey: Phil Hodges is working on two projects, Kate Cicilioni reports that work on 528 Main Street will begin in July and the 500 Main St. work will begin in August. An application was submitted to the Sheldon Family Foundation for a mural on the Center Street side of 528 Main consisting of eight 3’x6’ panels, with an historical theme – two other smaller murals will go over the 2nd & 3rd floor double-doors at the back of the building. Gus reports he will also be applying to Honesdale National Bank and the Sardoni Family Foundation for additional funding.

The DCED grant for Project #1 at the Center Street Pocket was finalized and submitted on May 31st for \$250K. The Endless Mountains Heritage Region Grant was approved for \$2,362 and will fund the Sculpture Trail & Archway. Dr. Zefran says the bike repair station that’s to be funded by Kost Tire is on hold until a location can be agreed on.

PARKS & RECREATION: (Vice President Cost)

V.P. Cost offered the Parks & Recreation Board Report: Kiddies’ Day and a Reptile show will be held at Kennedy Park on Sunday, June 25 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., hotdog lunch at noon for the kids, concession stand will be open for the adults. The beach is officially open, additional safety equipment is on order to comply with Dept. of Health guidelines, the buoys are going in this week, weather permitting. A state inspection of the beach was performed on Tuesday, May 30th renewing the state issued permit.

The vendor market will be Sunday, July 16, deadline for vendors is July 7th. No food vendors, gates open at 8:30 for vendor setup. There is a \$10 non-refundable donation for each space, applications are on the website www.forestcityborough.com, at the borough office or by emailing fcparcsrec@gmail.com.

The Chicken BBQ is Sunday, August 6th from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Drive-thru Take-out only. Tickets can be purchased for \$12 from Ros-Al Floral, DG’s Bar, Cube Auto, the Borough office or any Parks & Rec member. Usually a sell-out, so get your tickets soon.

Sadly, vandals have struck again at Kennedy Park, smashing the game camera, breaking a table and putting it on top of the BBQ grill and damaging the BBQ grill. Also, they’ve broken the locks on the basketball hoop and stripped the gears on the mechanism. Please, anyone with information is asked to report it to the police which may assist in prosecuting the perpetrators. V.P. Cost said, “A lot of time, money and volunteer’s efforts have gone into improving K.P., we don’t want to shut it down, but we will.” New cameras are needed for the park.

DOG PARK AT BABE RUTH: (Councilwoman Matarese)

Councilwoman Matarese reported that the F.C. Lions Club is paying for new signs at the Dog Park. She extended her thanks to the volunteers from F.C. High School Max Urbas, Hunter Langman and Johnathan Conlogue under the direction of Melanie Zevan, Forest City Regional School District, who raked 15 ton of stone at the dog park.

Councilwoman Matarese contacted the water company to find out if water could be routed to the Dog Park for the warm months, then turned off in the winter. Am Water called back to say that the existing water line doesn’t go far enough to connect at the park. “I’m looking into other options.” She added, “Anyone using the park should remember to bring their own water.”

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Council approved the appointment of Stephanie Sojka-Reisch to the Code Enforcement Officer position at a public meeting held May 11, 2023. Councilwoman Lazier offered Resolution #6-2023 appointing Ms. Sojka-Reisch as Code Enforcement Officer. The Resolution was seconded by Councilman DeGonzague. A roll-call vote

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY – JUNE 5, 2023**

was taken finding six in favor and one opposed (Councilwoman Matarese opposed). The Oath of Office was administered to CEO Sojka-Reisch by Solicitor McAndrew following the adoption of Resolution #6_2023.

CEO Sojka-Reisch wanted assurances that the police department would respond to her request for assistance if needed. Asst. Chief Dzanis assured her that the department would have no problem backing her up. Solicitor McAndrew added that the police would not be acting as Code Enforcement but will respond if the CEO needs assistance.

MAYOR’S REPORT: (Mayor Christopher Ginton)

The May 2023 Police Report was distributed. Mayor Ginton offered thanks to the Public Works crew for getting the High School Graduate banners up and for repainting the parking lines on Main Street as well as the corners of the intersections at Center & Depot Streets as requested by a few area businesses to keep vehicles from parking too close to the corners. Mayor Ginton also asked if Ms. Vannan could check into the availability of Direct Deposit for payroll and the cost.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Susquehanna County Commissioners Arnold & Hall issued a written response to borough Council regarding the recent meeting which Commissioner Herschel had attended representing Susquehanna County to discuss tourism and promotion of the County. The letter read, “Any opinions expressed by Commissioner Herschel in regard to the Community Center at that meeting were not a reflection of the County Commissioner’s office.”

NEW BUSINESS:

Councilwoman Bean offered a statement rebutting comments made earlier by a resident in the audience saying, “Those who have concerns about her personal situation should have come to her and asked her directly instead of attacking her at a public meeting.” She was interrupted momentarily by a resident, who was asked to give Councilwoman Bean the same courtesy she had been given when she spoke, Councilwoman Bean continued, “As a council member, elected by the people, for the people, I have tried over the last five years to do what I am supposed to do. Starting from the local level and moving upward, getting push-back from the school and now from certain Council members, that I have questioned. As for what’s going on in this town, address it, “see something, say something. But I will not discuss my personal business here, it has nothing to do with the borough.”

Councilwoman Lazier made a motion to authorize the publication of “Congratulations to the 2023 Graduates” in a 5”x5” ad at a cost of \$60. Councilman Cost seconded the motion. All voted yes, none opposed, the motion carried.

Review, approve and permit submission to Bobbi Jo Turner at Susq. Co. Housing & Redevelopment a grant application for CDBG funds to improve the road and sidewalks from Erie Street Trailhead to Main Street. A motion offered by Councilwoman Lazier and seconded by Councilwoman Matarese to approve the application for the grant. A roll-call vote found all in favor and the motion carried seven in favor, none opposed.

CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENTS & QUESTIONS:

Paul Daugevelo, 510 Main Street, asked for an update on the vault under the sidewalk in front of his business. V.P. Cost responded, “Bore hole samples have been taken indicating that the concrete is in excellent shape. KBA will be issuing a letter with their findings that should be available for the June meeting.

Ms. Catherine Singer, Delaware Street, again asked Council to remove the trees that hang over the sidewalks adjacent to her property. President Lesjack responded, “Property owners need to be contacted and may have to provide necessary maintenance, we will follow up on this.” Solicitor McAndrew offered an opinion, “If it’s a dangerous situation, the Borough may need to do the removal and send the bill to the property owners.” V.P. Cost said, “We will look into it again.”

Resident Glenn Matis, 901 Hudson Street, voiced his concerns over the ATV and Side-by-side activity on Borough streets. Mayor Ginton said he will have the police give citations and find out if they can be impounded.

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY – JUNE 5, 2023**

Discussion followed. Dr. Zefran suggested, “Concrete barriers or cables might resolve the problem.” Councilman DeGonzague noted, “They just move them.”

Jennifer Matarese again addressed Council, expressing her concerns and fears, again about Councilwoman Bean. She questioned borough council about the integrity and honesty of sitting council members and their responsibility to the borough residents. Asking if there any restrictions placed on this councilwoman to protect the residents and the other members of council. Solicitor McAndrew responded, “On behalf of the Borough, a decision was made not to address the personal issues faced by any council member and potential liability has been discussed in Executive Session.

Solicitor McAndrew went on to address the ATV concerns saying, “Tickets may not stop them, there may be other ways to deal with them like meeting with the ATV clubs and finding a solution that works for everyone.

Stephanie Sojka-Reisch, 609 Hudson Street, offered her support for Councilwoman Bean saying, “Everyone is innocent until proven guilty and deserves to be treated with respect. Trust that Solicitor McAndrew and the Council are aware and deal with it.” Council member Scalzo commented, “We do not have the authority to remove anyone from office who has been fairly elected by the people.”

Councilman DeGonzague offered a warning on another topic, “Last week a resident came to my house in the middle of the night, made threats, complained loudly about what is going on in the borough, threatening others. Following his arrest, he was released, with a hearing to follow. So, beware fellow Council members that this individual is out there.” Secondly, he addressed Jennifer Matarese saying, “This is not the place to attack someone about allegations that have been made that may or may not be true.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A Planning Commission Meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. and will be followed by a Public Hearing held by Council. Council will consider recommendations made by the Planning Commission with regards to a request to allow a two-family dwelling to convert to a multi-family dwelling located on Hudson Street.

The next regular monthly Council Meeting will be on Monday, July 3, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. The Borough office will be closed on Tuesday, July 4th, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to adjourn. Seconded by V. P. Cost, all responded in favor, none opposed. The meeting ended at 7:29 p.m.