

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH  
MINUTES  
TUESDAY – JANUARY 2, 2024**

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**FOREST CITY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REORGANIZATION MEETING**

**OATH OF OFFICE:**

Mayor, Christopher D. Glinton executed the Oath of Office to re-elected Council Members Joann Matarese, Nicholas Cost and Bernard Scalzo.

**CALL TO ORDER:** (Mayor Glinton, presiding).

Mayor Glinton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2024 and asked that all join in the “Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Council Members Bernie Scalzo, Chris DeGonzague, Joann Matarese, Nick Cost, Tracey Lazier, Amy Bean, Mayor Glinton, Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Vannan and Solicitor McAndrew. Joining by phone was former President Robert Lesjack.

**NOMINATION & ELECTION – COUNCIL PRESIDENT:**

Mayor Glinton asked for nominations for Council President. Nicholas Cost nominated Robert Lesjack, seconded by Joann Matarese. Amy Bean nominated Christopher DeGonzague, seconded by Tracey Lazier. The vote found four members for Councilman DeGonzague and three for Councilman Lesjack. Congratulations were offered to newly appointed President DeGonzague.

**Mayor Glinton presented the gavel to President DeGonzague who continued with the nominations:**

**Nominations for the Vice President** – Amy Bean nominated Tracey Lazier, seconded by President DeGonzague. Joann Matarese nominated Nicholas Cost, seconded by Bernard Scalzo. The vote found four in favor of Nicholas Cost and three for Tracey Lazier. Nicholas Cost will serve as Vice President.

**Nominations for the President Pro-Tem** – Robert Lesjack nominated Tracey Lazier, Amy Bean seconded the nomination. V.P. Cost nominated Bernard Scalzo, Joann Matarese seconded Mr. Scalzo’s nomination. Mr. Scalzo was favored four to three and so will hold the seat of President Pro-Tem.

**Preside DeGonzague asked for motions for the following re-appointments:**

**Vacancy Board Chair** - Mr. John Kameen – motion by V.P. Cost, seconded by Councilwoman Matarese – all were in favor;

**Borough Solicitor:** Marissa McAndrew, Esq. – motion by Councilwoman Matarese, seconded by Councilwoman Lazier – all were in favor;

**Borough Secretary/Treasurer:** Sharon M. Vannan – motion offered by V.P. Cost, seconded by Councilwoman Matarese – all in favor;

**Zoning Officer:** Lucinda Stone – motion made by V.P. Cost, seconded by Councilwoman Matarese – all in favor;

**Emergency Management Coordinator:** Paul Mihelc – motion made by Councilwoman Matarese, seconded by V.P. Cost – all responded in favor.

There was no opposition to any of these appointments.

**Appointment of Committee Members:** Council representatives for each Department will be announced at a later date. Continued participation of Committee Member volunteers will be announced at the next meeting.

President DeGonzague then addressed everyone, thanking them for their support and asking for their patience as he takes on the role of Council President.

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**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
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**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

President DeGonzague opened the floor for public comment.  
None offered.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**ADMINISTRATION: (Joann Matarese)**

Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to accept the Minutes from December 4<sup>th</sup> & Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>, seconded by V.P. Cost, all responded “aye”, none opposed.

Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for December 2023. Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to accept the December 2023 Treasurer’s Report and authorize disbursements of \$92,373.87. Total Receipts were \$83,903.98. V.P. Cost seconded the motion. All Council members voted yes in a roll-call vote, seven in favor, none opposed.

Financial Statement forms were distributed – all Borough elected officials and employees are required to complete the forms for 2023 and return them at the February meeting.

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

The Public Works report for December 2023 was offered. Councilman Scalzo read the following into the record: A sensor was replaced in the Christmas lights near the Borough building but a problem persists and they will be repaired when they come down for the season; the stop sign at Rt. #247 & Main, near Turkey Hill, was repaired; replaced fill around the storm drain at the bottom of Fell Street; filled pot holes on Welsh, Delaware, Susquehanna & Higgins Streets; sold two bucket loads of salt/cinder mix to Vandling on 12/7/23.

Councilman Scalzo reported that he has no updates on the stormwater drainage issues, but continues to work with JHA. He also reported that nothing has been started on the sink hole at Dollar General but that the agreement with PennDot for the Borough to cover \$18K is still the plan and that money will likely come from Impact Fees or possibly Liquid Fuels if approved.

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:**

Nothing to report for this meeting.

**PARKS & RECREATION:**

Nothing to report for this meeting.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT/SAFETY & HEALTH:**

Nothing to report for this meeting.

**COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

The floor was offered to Dr. Katie Zefran, representing the FCOT Action Team, reported that the LSA Grant was completed and submitted for \$249K and this will be used on the plans to connect Rails Trails to the Pocket Park via Center Street. Another grant request for \$4K was submitted to the Susq. Co. Travel & Tourism to be used toward the next sculpture planned for the Sculpture Trail. Dr. Zefran asked President DeGonzague if he had gotten any more information on PennDot setbacks for the plans to add bike racks to the Main Street at Frugal Living and Zazzera’s on the corner of Center Street. President DeGonzague replied that he is working on it. Bids will be sought in the spring for the work to be done. Dr. Zefran noted

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that the next Action Team meeting will be Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. here in the Borough building, but that the team is working on moving their meetings to the last Tuesday of the month and hope to be able to start this in March. These are public meetings and all are welcome.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

The December 2023 police report was distributed as well as the 2023 Annual Police Report. The Annual Fire/Emergency Report for 2023 will be available for the February meeting.

Mayor Glinton asked Council to approve new hire Glenn Mattos as a part-time patrol officer at a rate of \$18.25/hour effective 1/2/2024. Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to approve Mr. Mattos for the position. V.P. Cost seconded the motion. A roll call vote found five in favor, two opposed (Bean & DeGonzague). The motion carried.

Mayor Glinton requested council's approval for the use of Pentecost Hall for a Town Hall presentation entitled "No Hate in Our State", sponsored by the PA Human Rights Commission. Councilman DeGonzague reminded the Mayor that the hall has a 120-person capacity. Councilwoman Bean asked if they filled out an application and would they be paying the fee. Solicitor McAndrew responded that it was up to Council. Mayor Glinton added that the PA H R Commission is a state entity. Mayor Glinton also requested the use of the white board to post the event. Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to permit the use of Pentecost Hall and waive the fee, seconded by Councilman Scalzo. The roll call vote was five in favor, two opposed (Council members Bean and DeGonzague). Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to approve the use of the white board. (It was suggested that the post be pre-approved by the solicitor). Councilman Cost seconded the motion. Roll call vote – four in favor, three opposed (Members Bean, DeGonzague & Lesjack).

A request from the Mayor to ban smoking & vaping in and around the borough property was tabled. Councilman DeGonzague noted that smoking is already banned in the building. Mayor Glinton said that signs should be posted that ban both smoking & vaping, stating that he had received complaints about it from residents and had witnessed vaping in the building. Some discussion followed debating the difficulty of banning it from around the building. President DeGonzague said it would be looked into further.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:**

Solicitor McAndrew had nothing to report.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Jeffrey Jerome, P.E., representing the F.C. Regional School District asked Council to consider adding a relocated hydrant to the Borough's municipal hydrants. He explained that because the water supply to the existing hydrant was fed through pipes that ran under the school, the hydrant would be a very expensive project. The cost to the borough would be approx. \$20/month but would save the school district tens of thousands. Councilman Cost offered a motion to approve Mr. Jerome's request. Councilwoman Lazier seconded the motion. All voted in favor, seven to zero opposed and the motion carried.

Councilwoman Joann Matarese tendered her resignation from Council, reading it into the record citing the "stress created by verbal threats that have made it uncomfortable for her to attend meetings. She added that she does not see a bright future for this council and no longer wants to be a part of it. So due to personal and personnel issues, she is resigning effective this date." Councilwoman Lazier made a motion to accept Councilwoman Matarese's resignation, seconded by Councilman Robert Lesjack. Four members responded in favor of the motion, two members, V.P. Nick Cost and President DeGonzague responded no, the resignation was accepted with a four to two vote. Mayor Glinton addressed Council, recommending Jason

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Obelenus to fill the vacancy, however, Solicitor McAndrew reminded council that they have 30 days to fill the position and that it has to be advertised. V.P. Cost made a motion to advertise the vacancy and schedule a Special Meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. to fill the vacancy. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion and all responded “aye” to “All in favor?”, none opposed. The ad will be submitted to the Forest City News for publication and added to the website.

Councilwoman Bean made a motion to officially suspend the Main Street Coordinator position for 2024 due to budget constraints. Councilwoman Lazier seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken initially a three to three vote, however, President DeGonzague questioned Councilman Lesjack’s vote who was monitoring the meeting telephonically and voted “no”, but changed his vote to yes when the motion was repeated to him, saying that he had misunderstood it. So the motion carried with four in favor of suspending the position and two (V.P. Cost and Councilman Scalzo opposed).

**CONTINUED BUSINESS:**

The Audit Engagement letter from Brian Kelly, CPA & Associates was considered for the 2023 Audit. A favorable vote to engage Brad Murray, CPA at \$6,000 for the 2023 Audit was subsequently rescinded so that Mr. Kelly could be given an opportunity to reduce his bid from \$8,000 to \$6,500 following his conversation with Council Member Lazier. As explained by Solicitor McAndrew, Council could opt for the higher bid when it was for Professional Services. Councilwoman Bean made a motion to engage Mr. Kelly’s firm. Seconded by Councilwoman Lazier, a roll call vote found four in favor and two (V.P. Cost and Councilman Lesjack) opposed. Mr. Kelly was awarded the contract for his firm to perform the 2023 Audit.

**CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Glenn Mattos asked about Christmas tree collection. Ms. Vannan responded that she would contact GFL Environmental (now Casella Waste) to see if this qualified as a bulk pickup and when they would collect them.

Jason Obelenus addressed Council, specifically President DeGonzague, asking why he always voted against the police for everything from new hires to equipment purchases. Mr. Obelenus stated that Mr. DeGonzague should be speaking for the people who elected him, not voting based on his personal feelings. President DeGonzague said he voted for what he believed was correct and his votes reflect his opinions. Then added that he also votes based on what he hears from residents on the street.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

President DeGonzague reminded everyone that the garbage fee will be increasing by 50 cents per month. January service will be \$19/month per unit, which will be seen in the bills mailed out in February.

A special meeting will be held on Monday, January 29, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to select a person to fill the Council vacancy.

The next regularly scheduled Council meeting will be Monday, February 5, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

President DeGonzague asked for a motion to adjourn. V. P. Cost made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. All responded “aye”. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.