

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER: (President DeGonzague, presiding).

President DeGonzague called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone and introduced the newly appointed council member Sarah Woody. Councilwoman Woody was selected at a Special Meeting held on January 29, 2024. She replaces Councilwoman Joann Matarese who resigned on January 2, 2024. President DeGonzague asked everyone to review the meeting rules. He then asked everyone to join in the “Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present: President DeGonzague, Council Members Bernie Scalzo, Nick Cost, Tracey Lazier, Amy Bean, Sarah Woody, Mayor Glinton, Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Vannan and Solicitor McAndrew. Joining by phone - Councilman Robert Lesjack.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

President DeGonzague opened the floor for public comment. Mayor Glinton expressed his disagreement with the Minutes from 1/2/2024, saying that the motion to suspend the Main Street Coordinator was a tie vote and that Mr. Lesjack should not have been able to change his vote. Solicitor McAndrew advised the Secretary to note Mayor Glinton’s opposition to the way that this was reflected in the 1/2/24 Minutes rather than making a change to the minutes that were reported as follows: *“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).”*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION: (Tracey Lazier)

Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to accept the Minutes from January 2nd, seconded by V.P. Cost, all responded in favor. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to approve the January 29th, Special Meeting. Seconded by Council Member Bean, all responded “Aye”, none opposed.

Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for January 2024. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report and authorize disbursements of \$125,620.62. Total Receipts were \$79,487.08. Councilwoman Bean seconded the motion. All Council members voted yes in a roll-call vote, seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilwoman Lazier announced the PA Dept. of Transportation confirmed that the Liquid Fuels account for 2022 is in compliance based on the audit performed on 9/25/2023.

Councilwoman Lazier made a motion to adopt Resolution #1-2024 Bank Signature changes for the HNB accounts, authorizing the addition of President DeGonzague as a signor and removing former Councilwoman Matarese. V.P. Cost seconded the motion. All voted yes in a roll call vote, seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilman Lazier offered a motion to adopt Resolution #2-2024 Bank Signature changes for FNB accounts, authorizing the addition of President DeGonzague as a signor and removing former Councilwoman Matarese. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion, all voted yes in a roll call vote, seven in favor, none opposed.

Councilman Lazier made a motion to adopt Resolution #3-2024 – Est. a segregated account with the balance of the ARPA (covid) funds for use by the FCOTAT as matching funds needed for upcoming projects. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Woody. The roll call vote was seven in favor, none opposed.

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Councilwoman Lazier announced that the CoStars Salt Contract for the 24/25 Winter season was completed and confirmed. Prices will be available in August 2024.

PUBLIC WORKS: (Bernard Scalzo)

The Public Works report for January 2024 was offered. Councilman Scalzo read the following into the record: The crew jettied a pipe on Hudson Street, replaced two hydraulic hoses and welded a metal bar on the plow frame on the F550 Dump truck, removed the Main Street Christmas decorations, the Christmas Trees across from the Borough Bldg. and Kennedy Park. Vandaling Borough purchased 9 bucket loads of salt/cinder mix for \$675. Recycling Donations netted \$267 in December and \$189 in January. Scrap metal taken to Archbald Wrecking brought in \$76.50.

Councilman Scalzo mentioned that volunteers are needed for the Recycling Center for Saturday morning drop-offs. If anyone is interested, please contact him.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Nick Cost/Sarah Woody)

V.P. Cost reported that PPL had submitted a bill for \$64,613 to provide electrical relocation services for the Borough's Roof Project. This is to de-energize the lines that feed the Borough Building and the First National Bank. Generators will be provided by PPL to provide power for the duration of the project. They will coordinate their efforts with the contractor, then restore service upon completion of the project. This brings the total cost of the room project up to \$550,580. V.P. Cost made a motion to approve payment to PPL for the \$64,613. Seconded by Councilman Scalzo, council members voted unanimously in a roll call vote to release payment, no one opposed.

V.P. Cost informed Council that additional information was needed to move forward with a resolution to approve a debt obligation for \$250,000 to finance part of the roof project.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Amy Bean)

The floor was offered to Dr. Katie Zefran, representing the FCOT Action Team, Dr. Zefran reported the Façade project at 423 Main Street was completed and a \$5000 check would be presented to Mrs. Greenleaf. Three other projects are still open, two have asked for extensions. She further reported that the DCED grant for \$212,462 was approved, but the Local Share (LSA) grant was still open. She asked that Council approve issuing a "Letter of Support" for future grants, i.e., T-Mobile, AARP, etc.) Information will be provided for each grant as a support letter is needed. Councilwoman Bean asked if there would be any fees or match. Dr. Zefran replied, "There is not for the grants we are looking at for now." Councilwoman Bean made a motion to provide a "Letter(s) of Support" for the grant application process and move forward with the applications. Councilwoman Lazier seconded the motion, all voted in favor, none opposed. The FCOTAT will be in touch when a letter is needed.

Resolution #6-2024 Jr. Committee member (FCOTAT) was presented. Councilwoman Bean offered a motion to approve Resolution #6-2024 to approve the creation of a Junior Committee Member spot with the FCOTAT. Councilwoman Lazier seconded. All responded "Aye", none opposed. Resolution #6-2024 was approved.

Councilwoman Bean added that the Façade Project check would be presented to Mrs. Greenleaf on Thursday at 1:00 p.m.

PARKS & RECREATION: (Nick Cost)

Councilman Cost announced that the 5th Annual Winterfest & Soup Cook-Off will be on Saturday, February 24, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Kennedy Park. Registration and setup starts at 10:00 a.m. A \$5 per person sampling fee will give participants the chance to sample all the soups and vote on their favorites. So far, there are 20 soups to be offered with

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left overs available for \$6 a pint at the end of the competition. Again, the Ice Fishing Derby is being cancelled due to the unpredictability of the weather.

CODE ENFORCEMENT/SAFETY & HEALTH: (President DeGonzague)

President DeGonzague presented Resolution #5-2024, Adoption of the 2023 County Hazard Mitigation Plan. He passed the gavel to V.P. Cost, then offered a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilman Scalzo, it was accepted by a roll call vote, seven in favor, none opposed.

An invitation to all elected officials was distributed. The training will be on Feb. 8, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the County Training room, in New Milford. President DeGonzague encouraged council members to attend. Those planning to attend: President DeGonzague, V.P. Cost and Councilman Scalzo. No others indicated they would attend at this time.

With the gavel still under the control of V. P. Cost, President DeGonzague offered a motion to adopt Resolution #4-2024 CEO appointment of Christopher DeGonzague. The District Magistrate requires that a formal appointment is made through resolution so that citations can be issued and the borough represented at the District Magistrate's Court. Seconded by Councilman Lesjack, the Resolution was adopted with a roll call vote of seven in favor, none opposed, the motion carried.

MAYOR'S REPORT: (Mayor Christopher Glinton)

The January 2024 police report was distributed as well as the 2023 Annual Fire Report.

Mayor Glinton asked Council to approve the request from the American Legion Post #524 to close Rte. #171, from the 900 block to the 300 block of Main Street for the Annual Memorial Day Parade to be held from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m., then the 300 Block of Main Street from South Street to Welsh Road for the Memorial Day Program from 11:00 to 11:45 a.m. They also asked the Forest City Police Department to lead the parade. A motion was offered by V.P. Cost to approve the road closure, seconded by Councilwoman Woody. All replied in favor, none were opposed. The approval was granted. A Road Closure request will be submitted to PennDot.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: (Solicitor McAndrew)

Solicitor McAndrew outlined the changes to Ordinance #522-Parking & Traffic that she and President DeGonzague had worked on and were now complete and ready for Council's approval to advertise. Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to advertise Ordinance #522, seconded by V.P. Cost, seven members voted yes, none were opposed. The ordinance will be advertised and ready for review at the borough office and on the website. Councilman Scalzo asked if those people affected will be directly notified. President DeGonzague noted that the changes were the direct result of complaints from residents along some of the streets where the problems exist. Councilman Scalzo added that letters should be sent to those residents directly affected by the parking/no parking rules. President DeGonzague noted that some of the changes won't take effect immediately. Directional & no parking Signs, truck routes, tickets, etc. will take time.

NEW BUSINESS:

V.P. Cost presented a quote for security cameras from A New Era Security. The total cost is \$4,807 for cameras both inside and on the exterior of the Borough Building. Councilwoman Lazier asked if we had gotten any other quotes. Councilman Cost replied that this was the company we used at Kennedy Park and the cameras would be compatible with those. Councilman DeGonzague made a motion to approve the quoted price, Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. Seven members voted yes, none opposed in a roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Ordinance #523-2024 & Ordinance #524-2024 Amendments to the Uniform & Non-Uniform Pension plans were both presented. Ms. Vannan explained that although an initial 5-yr audit in October found that our Pension Amendments were in compliance with Resolutions adopted in 2020, further review determined that these amendments must be adopted by Ordinance rather than Resolution. Thus the need to now advertise the Ordinances for adoption at the March meeting per the PA Auditor General's findings. At the time that these Resolutions were adopted, approval to amend by Resolution was approved the PA Municipal Retirement System (PMRS) since there were not material changes to the plans and to save the cost of Advertising. Unfortunately, the Auditor General did not agree with that decision. A motion was offered by Councilwoman Woody to advertise Ordinance #523, seconded by Councilwoman Lazier, a roll call vote found seven in favor, none opposed. A motion made by Councilman Scalzo to advertise Ordinance #524 and seconded by Councilman Lesjack also passed with seven in favor and none opposed. Both will be advertised in the Forest City News and available for review in the Borough office as well as on the Borough website, then presented for adoption at the March meeting.

Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to accept the Franchise Agreement renewal with no changes to the originally approved Agreement by Ordinance #420-2007 and authorize signatures. The motion was seconded by V.P. Cost. All replied "aye" in favor, none opposed, the motion carried.

Councilman Cost asked Council to consider approving the sale of the vintage Christmas garlands, bells & lanterns stored at the garage, "taking up space" and no longer used. The money could be used for the purchase of another new strand. They have been replaced with purchases made over the last few years and require repairs. Councilwoman Woody made a motion to approve seeking prices for the sale of the decorations, Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. All voted yes, none opposed in a roll vote. Councilman Scalzo asked if there was a minimum amount, V.P. Cost said he would get pictures and put them out to see if anyone was interested.

Approval was sought for Councilwoman Woody to participate in a two-day Zoom Council Boot Camp to be held on March 8th & 9th at a cost of \$150. Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve \$150 for Council Boot Camp. Councilwoman Lazier seconded the motion. All voted yes by roll-call, seven in favor, none opposed.

CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jason Obelenus had questions about the 2023 expenses vs. budget and noted that the borough came in well under budget on many items and then asked why the budget had to be cut. Asked what line item was for the Main Street Coordinator's wages. Ms. Vannan showed him where they were under Comm. & Econ. Development.

Linda Fitzsimmons, said that her husband, Tom, "could not be here tonight", but wanted to point out that at the Special Meeting only one nomination was taken for the Council seat and Council President DeGonzague failed to ask if there were any other nominations. She expressed her concerns that no one else was given an opportunity to nominate their choice.

Joann Matarese voiced her concerns about President DeGonzague's appointment to the CEO position. She had complained to him several years ago when he was acting CEO about a vacant property near her and nothing was ever done about it. Ms. Matarese also went on to say that she left the Council because she felt harassed and threatened by some of the other council members and she couldn't take it anymore. She questioned Councilwoman Bean about her guilty plea to fraud charges against her. Councilwoman Bean responded, "That is inaccurate." Ms. Matarese said, "That's what's on the Docket and also that your lawyer(s) have withdrawn and are no longer representing you." Again, Councilwoman Bean said that is inaccurate and anyone is welcome to come to the hearing. Ms. Matarese continued by asking Councilwoman

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Bean, "If you're found guilty, will anything you've done as a Council person be legal?" There was no further response.

President DeGonzague, moving on, asked if there was anyone else that had a question or comment. There were no further comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (President DeGonzague)

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 January bills that are mailed out in February.

The next regularly scheduled Council meeting will be Monday, March 4th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

President DeGonzague asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Lesjack offered a motion to adjourn, seconded by V.P. Cost, all responded "aye", none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.