

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY DECEMBER 9th, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER: (President DeGonzague, presiding).

President DeGonzague called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He welcomed everyone. He then asked everyone to join in the “Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present: President DeGonzague, V.P. Bernie Scalzo, Robert Lesjack, Eileen Lynch, Tracey Lazier, Mayor Ginton, Secretary/Treasurer Dennise Yankauskas, Solicitor Marissa McAndrew. Council Members Amy Bean, Sarah Woody were absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (President DeGonzague)

President DeGonzague asked Councilwoman Lynch to once again to read the Forest City Borough’s Council’s Public Meeting Policy.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jason Obelenus of Railroad Street asked what the payment to Donald Karpovich on the Treasurer report was for. President DeGonzague stated it was the other solicitor, Nathan Favreau works for. Jason asked that is a second solicitor still needed for 2025, Secretary Stone stated that is why it is on agenda to see if it is still needed.

Paul Venditti once again asked Council to re-consider provisions of Ordinance 552 that one section of the law was intended to designate a route for deliveries on Higgins Street for Frugal Living, Zazzera’s and his business. He attended many meetings since this Ordinance went into effect and stated it is not working and his business is suffering with delivery problems and he may have to move his business out of town. He asked Council to get an expert from a consulting company for a solution and he didn’t hear anything from Council since the last meeting. He stated that the heavy snow storm caused additional problems from snow piles on corners on the truck route. He also asked for a public meeting for businesses and the community to see what is the best way to solve the problem.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION: (Robert Lesjack)

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to accept the Minutes from November 4th, 2024 seconded by V.P. Scalzo, all responded “Aye”, none opposed.

Councilman Lesjack made motion to accept the Special Meeting minutes from November 18th, 2024 seconded by V.P. Scalzo, all responded “Aye”, none opposed.

Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for November 2024. Councilman Lesjack offered a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report for November 2024, seconded by V.P. Scalzo. The roll call vote was five in favor, none opposed.

Councilman Lesjack made the motion to accept the 2025 General Fund Budget, seconded by President DeGonzague. Roll call vote 4 – 1, motion carried. Councilman Lesjack made the motion to accept the 2025 Sewer Budget, seconded by V.P. Scalzo, roll call vote 5 in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Lesjack made the motion to accept resolution #15-2024 procedures for the destruction of both public meeting audio tapes and audio-video tape recording, seconded by V.P. Scalzo, roll call vote was taken, 3 in favor, two opposed motion carried.

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to accept the need of a seconded solicitor at Solicitor McAndrew’s discretion. V.P. Scalzo asked what Solicitor McAndrew’s take on this was. Solicitor McAndrew said she had no problem with a seconded one due to the fact if she has a client and something was brought against them with codes that would be a conflict of interest on her end. She stated it was a good idea that the Borough had one and V.P. Scalzo

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made a motion that when and if needed that Solicitor McAndrew would make that decision. Seconded by Councilwoman Lazier, roll call vote was 4 in favor, one opposed.

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve resolution #16-2024 tax levy; no tax increase for 2025, seconded by V.P. Scalzo, roll call vote was made, all in favor, none opposed.

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve resolution #17-2024 amending sewer fees, seconded by V.P. Scalzo, roll call vote was made, all in favor, none opposed.

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve the forgiving of the Forest City Boroughs note & Mortgage for resident Mary Zigon, 700 Maple Street given back in 1997 in the amount of \$7,615 from The Greater Forest City Vision 2000 Homeownership Program and to authorize President DeGonzague to sign mortgage satisfaction for The Susquehanna County Recorder of Deeds, seconded by V.P. Scalzo, all in favor, none opposed. Solicitor McAndrew explained that this happened back when Sue Coleman was Secretary/Treasurer some years ago. Council voted to forgive the mortgage that was given out over twenty years ago and not much information was given.

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve the Christmas Greeting Tabloid for 2024, seconded by Councilwoman Lynch, all in favor none opposed.

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve Locktight Construction Landscaping for retaining wall at Borough building for \$9200. V.P. Scalzo asked if that was the only bid and President DeGonzague replied that they were the only one that wanted to bid on it and if you don't want it done then table it. Solicitor McAndrew replied that it was under \$10,000 so we didn't have to put a bid out. President DeGonzague said he called around and no one else wanted to bid on it. Secretary Stone said it was under the bidding threshold so it wasn't bid out but if President DeGonzague said he called around and that's all he got, then it up to you if you want to call around some more. Councilwoman Lazier asked the President who he called. President DeGonzague said he called a couple of places around here. President DeGonzague said he called the guy across the street and he was too busy he couldn't do it. Councilwoman Lazier asked for names and President DeGonzague said he couldn't remember names, Councilwoman Lazier said again, names, President DeGonzague said again he couldn't remember names, but he was the guy that did Trichilo, someone from the audience said Dave Calachino and that he sold his business and Stephen didn't want to do it. Solicitor McAndrew said Prince and President DeGonzague said no wasn't him, President DeGonzague said it was the guy that did the stone work and Secretary/Treasurer Yankauskas said I believe it was the guy that did your place, Solicitor McAndrew said Jack Daniels, and it was the same guy. President DeGonzague was asked when he can start, he said now and it wouldn't take more than a week. Councilwoman Lazier asked did you call Mikloiche, President DeGonzague lightly mumbled no, so it is up to you guys what you want to do. Councilwoman Lazier asked is it a project for the Spring, President DeGonzague said no because it is cinder blocks. Someone from the audience wanted to know what job this was and Secretary Stone explained where it was and how bad it was getting with the railroad ties. Someone again from the audience asked who bid it, Councilwoman Lazier said Locktight Construction. Then lots of mumbling and talking from the audience and council members. President DeGonzague decided to table the project, but then said scratch it to let the wall fall down, that's what we have insurance for.

Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve Brian T. Kelly 2024 audit for the General & Sewer Fund for \$6,500, seconded by Councilwoman Lynch, all in favor, none opposed.

PUBLIC WORKS: (Bernard Scalzo)

The Public Works report for November 2024 was offered. V.P. Scalzo read the following into record: fixed picnic table and bench at the dog park, put the lid on storm drain on lower main street and back filled one side, closed down Kennedy Park, put up two new light fixtures at borough garage, put signs up on South Street for one-way between Hudson &

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Delaware Streets, tested all Christmas lights for Main Street and helped put them up and Thanked NEP also for their help, closed down Maxey's Street, cleaned up broken trees on Higgins, Lackawanna, and Depot Street due to heavy snowfall, put signs back-up on Railroad at E.M.S building, also cleaned up Main Street due to heavy snowfall.

V.P. Scalzo reported recycling donations were \$164 for November 2024, and we sold a bucket of Salt/Cinders to Vandling for \$75.

Councilwoman Lazier added that if they tested all the lights, then why is the one in front of K&J's been out for a month and did anyone call PP&L about Center Street and Secretary Stone said that there is only one light and it works, that the smaller lights on the street are the boroughs and they don't work. Mayor Ginton just wanted Council to know that a truck bent a meter and the company will fix it in the Spring. The company's information is on file.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Sarah Woody)

No Updates

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Amy Bean)

Action Team Katie Zefran reported that they are waiting for the results from the Geo-Tech testing team.

PARKS & RECREATION:

President DeGonzague asked Chairperson Kathy Murphy if she had anything to report, she stated nothing at the present time.

COMMUNITY SAFETY & HEALTH: (Tracey Lazier)

Councilwoman Lazier reported that she had complaints from some residents as what council is doing about the snow removal due to the 20 plus inches that fell. She worked with Mayor Ginton to put in a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency to get the snow removed. She stated some residents had fallen on the ice.

CODE ENFORCEMENT (Robert Lesjack)

No Updates.

MAYOR'S REPORT: (Mayor Christopher Ginton)

The November 2024 police report was distributed for review. Mayor Ginton announced that meter parking would be free from December 9th, 2024 thru January 6th, 2025.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: (Solicitor McAndrew)

Solicitor McAndrew thanked council for signing the Zigon Mortgage forgiveness.

CONTINUED BUSINESS: (President DeGonzague)

President DeGonzague opened the only sealed snow removal bid for Main Street for the 2024/2025 season. Mikloiche Timber & Construction came in at \$7000. Councilwoman Lazier made the motion to approve the bid, seconded by V.P. Scalzo, 4 in favor and 1 opposed. Councilman Lesjack questioned as to who will make the decision when the snow is to be removed. Councilwoman Lazier stated that in the past Nick Cost would make the decision, Mayor Ginton spoke up and said, he would if Council could not make the decision but President DeGonzague stated that he cannot because he does not sign the checks. Solicitor McAndrew said to make the decision today. President DeGonzague said he would do it, but someone in the audience said "Bernie" should do it, he is the road master, Jason Oblenus also stated "Bernie" should do it. President DeGonzague stated as voted for by the people then Councilman Scalzo will delegate the snow removal for Main Street. Council members asked

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what the determination should be when to remove it. Secretary Stone said have a couple of people do it so people will agree. Secretary/Treasurer Yankauskas said to have a committee. Someone from the audience said 2 – 3 inches have the business owner shovel around the meters and maybe solve the problem. A little commotion in the audience, President DeGonzague smack the gravel, and it was decided that V.P. Scalzo will make the decision.

NEW BUSINESS: (President DeGonzague)

Councilwoman Lazier read her resignation aloud and the audience cheered from what she had to say. V.P. Scalzo made the motion to accept Councilwoman Lazier resignation, seconded by President DeGonzague, roll call vote was made, all in favor, none opposed. Councilwoman Lynch made the motion to advertise for the vacancy, seconded by V.P. Scalzo, roll call vote was taken, all in favor, none opposed.

CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENT:

Councilwoman Lynch mentioned about placing leans against delinquent sewer accounts to Solicitor McAndrew, and Secretary Stone said that there was a lot, so Solicitor McAndrew thought that we would start with the sewer bills over \$2000. Secretary Stone will get a list together and she also needs to contact G.H. Harris, they have some leans out there too.

Katie Zefran commented on meter parking in front of her business, that she spends a lot money in the meters to park in front of her business and she is suggesting a public lot or somewhere to park or a permit for business owners to park without meter use. President DeGonzague said that they will look into this. President DeGonzague also stated we could get rid of the meters, but you have a \$7000 snow removal bill to pay for with it. There were some chatters about permit parking on side streets for business owners, it was suggested to have a meeting about this topic.

Paul Venditti again suggested to have Penn Dot come to a meeting to suggest a truck route to clear up some issues. Council will look into it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (President DeGonzague)

The next regularly scheduled Council meeting will be, Monday February 3rd, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilwoman Lynch made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Lesjack, all in favor, none opposed. President DeGonzague adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.