

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY, December 5, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER: (Robert Lesjack, President).

President Lesjack called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., welcomed everyone. All stood for the “**Pledge of Allegiance**”. He announced that an “Executive Session” was held at 5:30, prior to the regular meeting to review the proposed 3-yr police contract.

ROLL CALL:

Present: President Lesjack, Council Members Nick Cost, Bernie Scalzo, Chris DeGonzague, Tracey Lazier, Mayor Ginton, Solicitor McAndrew and Secretary/Treasurer S. Vannan.

Absent: Councilwomen Joann Matarese & Amy Bean.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Eric Burns, Delaware Street asked if exit interviews were being done and if one has been done with Rich Paulin. Chief responded that Officer Paulin was moving to Virginia but said he would be available to talk with council members by phone.

Fred Cicilioni, Susq.Co. Library Board member thanked Council for considering the F.C. Library expansion into the space vacated by the Senior Center. He shared numerous ideas about children’s programs. Librarian Lauren Canfield also shared some of their plans including the dedication of a Children’s room in honor of Librarian Diana Junior, who recently passed away. This additional space will provide ADA access and shelves can be spread out to accommodate a wheelchair. Mr. Jim O’Pecko, also a member of the Library Board asked Council to provide a lease for their review and indicated that they had budgeted for rent and electric service. If Council decides to offer the space to the Library, Solicitor McAndrew will prepare a lease for the January meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION: (Joann Matarese)

Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to accept the Minutes from 11/7/22, Councilman Cost seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to accept the November Treasurer’s Report with cash receipts totaling \$88,537.84 and General Fund Disbursements totaling \$97,754.25 Councilman Cost seconded the motion. All Council members voted yes in a roll-call vote, five in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Councilman Cost offered a motion to approve and adopt the 2023 Sewer Budget, seconded by Councilman Scalzo, roll-call vote five in favor, none opposed. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to approve and adopt the 2023 General Fund Budget. Seconded by Councilman Cost, it was accepted with five in favor, none opposed roll-call vote. Tax Millage remains at 16.8. There is no increase to the monthly sewer fee which remains at \$30/month per residential unit, however as announced previously there is an increase from \$17.50 to \$18.50 for garbage collection starting with the January collections which will be seen in the February bills.

Resolution #7_2022 – 2023 Tax Levy without an increase at 16.8 mils was approved & adopted with a five in favor, none opposed roll-call vote following a motion by Councilman DeGonzague and a second by Councilman Scalzo.

Resolution #8_2022 – R.E. Tax Waiver of additional charges as required by the PA General Assembly was approved and adopted with all in favor. A motion was offered by Councilman Scalzo and seconded by Councilwoman Lazier.

PUBLIC WORKS: (Councilman Scalzo)

Councilman Scalzo presented the Public Works November report. An umbrella water leak diverter was installed in the attic of the borough building, the hydraulic leak on the snowplow was repaired, check problems with some of the Holiday lights, closed Kennedy Park for the season and shut off the water supply. Additionally, the crew placed out the holiday lights at designated areas for NEP to install, decorated the gazebo at K.P. and erected the large Christmas tree across from the Borough building in preparation for the tree lighting ceremony.

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Councilman Scalzo presented three (3) proposals from JHA for phase 1 on three projects, the first on Upper Main Street for \$4,348.75, Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to accept the bid and sign the proposal to proceed, seconded by Councilman Cost, the motion carried five in favor, none opposed. The second project for Susquehanna Street drainage issues includes professional engineering services at a cost of \$9,585.50. A motion was made by Councilman Scalzo to proceed and seconded by Councilwoman Lazier. All voted in favor, none opposed in a roll-call vote, the motion carried. The third proposal for Main Street drainage issues for professional engineering services was \$3,400.75 and would include environmental survey, storm sewer research, Civil design services and topographic surveys. Councilman Scalzo made a motion to approve the third project with a second from Councilman Cost. Five voted in favor, none opposed in a roll-call vote. Councilman Scalzo will notify JHA to proceed. Councilman Scalzo noted that this is to evaluate the situation and advise the Borough what needs to be done. Some of the work may be done by borough public works.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Councilwoman Lazier)

Councilwoman Lazier was not ready to proceed with the fee schedule for the Pentecost Hall rental so this issue was tabled. Councilwoman Lazier will seek bids to paint and restore the Pentecost Hall sign over the stage. Tony Wilcox was suggested and Councilwoman Lazier said she would contact him.

Council discussed the use of the ground floor area recently vacated by the Area on Aging Senior Nutrition Center. President Lesjack noted that three potential uses were under consideration. Mayor Glinton had expressed interest in the space for the police department. It was also considered for the Borough business office, however the offer from the Susq. Co. Free Library to expand the space available to the Forest City Library and their offer to pay rent and cover the cost of electrical service seemed to be a better offer. The borough would recoup the loss of revenue from rent paid by the Area on Aging. Councilman DeGonzague made a motion to move toward working with Library to expand into the area. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Lazier and received a unanimous vote in favor of the F.C. Library. A roll-call vote found five in favor, none opposed. Solicitor McAndrew will prepare a lease for Susq. Co. Library to consider.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Councilwoman Bean)

The minutes from the Action Team's November 2022 meeting and the agenda for December 1st was distributed. An update on the Main Street Façade project was presented – three (3) projects completed and payments issued totaling \$9,191.15. Several other projects have been advised to proceed.

Action Team member, Deb McNamara reported that the Team continues to work on the Erie Street Trailhead Welcome Arch and Center Street Park Projects.

PARKS & RECREATION: (Councilman Cost)

Councilman Cost discussed the cost of reserving the pavilion at Kennedy Park. A rate of \$50 will be charged to reserve the pavilion. The option to rent the kitchen will not be available. A Resolution to amend the current Park Ordinance and Fee schedule will be prepared and adopted when it becomes available.

Work is still being done on the preparation of the specs for the Kennedy Park bathrooms and will be advertised for bids when they become available.

Thank you to everyone who made the 2022 season a success, especially Pleasant Mt. Welding, Zazzera's Market, Kartri Sales, Birchtown, the F.C. Lions Club, NEP Telephone and the F.C. Borough.

Reminder – The 2023 Winterfest & Soup Cook-off will be held on Saturday, February 11, 2023. Registration for Soup Cook-off is 10:00 a.m. with the doors open from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Weather permitting, an Ice-Fishing Derby will be held with registration at 8:30 a.m.

COMMUNITY SAFETY & HEALTH: (Councilman DeGonzague)

Councilman DeGonzague reported that he, President Lesjack, & Council members Scalzo & Bean participated in a recent virtual meeting for Hazard Mitigation Plan Revisions. Participation by all Susquehanna County municipalities in this project is required to qualify the borough for potential funding from FEMA & PEMA in the event of a disaster. Surveys are completed by each community and the plan is revised based on

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community input. Ultimately the Borough will adopt the newest version of the Hazard Mitigation Plan as it is completed by Susquehanna County Emergency Management. Councilman DeGonzague will complete the Hazard Identification and Risk Evaluation worksheets.

MAYOR'S REPORT: (Mayor Christopher Ginton)

The November Police Report was distributed for Council review.

Chief Foley asked Council to consider making a contribution to the Griffin Animal Shelter for their on-going assistance with animal cruelty investigations and accepting strays. Councilwoman Lazier made a motion to make a \$500 donation. Vice President Cost seconded the motion. Roll-call vote found five in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

The three-year Police Contract was presented for Council's approval. The only change was an increase in the annual hourly rate percentages. Council had met earlier in Executive Session to review the contract with the solicitor. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to approve and accept the new 3-yr contract. Vice President Cost seconded the motion. A roll-call vote found five in favor, none opposed. The contract becomes effective January 1, 2023 and runs through December 31, 2025.

A resignation was tendered by Richard Paulin who is moving out of the area. Vice President Cost offered a motion to accept his resignation. Councilwoman Lazier seconded the motion, thanking Officer Paulin for his many years of service. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Ginton announced that he had been in touch with Lisa Mazzarella from WVIA who wants to get back on track with the "Our Town" project to create a documentary film about Forest City. He will have more information in the future.

The mayor also reported that R.B. Fries is planning to install an EV Charging station.

Mayor Ginton suspended parking meters for the holidays beginning December 6 and running through January 5th, 2023, to support local businesses and wished everyone a very Merry Christmas!

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: (Marissa McAndrew, Esq.)

Solicitor McAndrew distributed a copy of the letter that she had prepared and submitted to the FCAES requesting annual reports of their expenditures and revenues for 2021 & 2022. Upon compliance with this request the Borough will consider engaging a consultant to review and audit their records.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion to post a 5"x5" Holiday Greetings ad in the Forest News combining the mayor, police dept., council members and employees of the borough for \$60 was made by Councilman DeGonzague, noting that it showed borough unity. It was seconded by Councilman Cost. Four members voted in favor, Councilwoman Lazier opposed. The motion carried.

CONTINUED BUSINESS:

Advertising for a Code Enforcement Officer was again discussed. President Lesjack expressed his desire to look into the Constable Program and thought the borough should hold off on seeking a CEO. Other members agreed and the CEO issue was tabled.

CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jason Obelenus asked if he could obtain Budget vs. Actual reports. He was told these records could be requested with a RTK form available on the website or in the Borough office.

Eric Burns noted problems with sidewalks and sinkholes on Delaware Street. Mr. Burns indicated that some of the problems seemed to be connected with the F.C. Nursing Home. Paul Kulasinsky, Lackawanna Street, added that years ago the Bureau of Mine Reclamation had sought easements to do work on his property. Strip mine hills were bulldozed to fill in pits, which may have created some of the problems. Councilman Scalzo noted that these are some of the problems that we are seeking to resolve beginning with input from JHA Engineers.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Lesjack offered a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all adding that due to the New Year's Day holiday on Monday Jan. 2, 2023, our next regularly scheduled Council Meeting will be Tuesday, January 3, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilwoman Lazier made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Cost seconded the motion. All responded "Aye" and the meeting ended at 7:20 p.m.