

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
TUESDAY – SEPTEMBER 5, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER: (President Robert Lesjack).

President Lesjack called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., adding that new microphones and a sound system had been purchased. Those addressing Council should stand at the podium to make use of the system. He thanked councilwoman Lazier for recommending the purchase. All stood for the “**Pledge of Allegiance**”.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: Councilwoman Lazier and Solicitor McAndrew

GUEST SPEAKER:

Mr. Mark Wheeler representing the Wayne County Amateur Radio Club asked Council to consider their support for his group to hold a Tri-County event on Commerce Drive the weekend of October 14-15. Mr. Wheeler explained that his group is part of a world-wide Ham Radio Organization. A contest will be held the second week of October and by setting up their equipment in the Vision 2000 Park, they would count as three counties for all those operators participating in this event. He explained that John Kameen (GFCI) had given permission to camp at the site, but they were asking Borough Council to sanction the event and provide some additional support with police coverage. The equipment is set up and offers students an opportunity to see how everything works. A question & answer period followed. Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to offer the group the Borough’s support, Vice-President Cost seconded the motion, all responded aye to “All in Favor?” and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION: (Joann Matarese)

Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to accept the Minutes from August 2023, seconded by Councilman Scalzo. Motion carried with approval from all, none opposed

Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to accept the August, 2023 Treasurer’s Report with cash receipts totaling \$135,747.78 and Disbursements totaling \$129,405.08. Councilman Scalzo seconded the motion. Motion carried in a roll-call vote with six in favor none opposed.

The 2024 Budget worksheets prepared by Treasurer Vannan were distributed for department input.

The 2024 UC Plan Rate notice indicated that the rate remains at 2.85% with no increase from 2023.

Distributed the MMO worksheets & memo prepared by Treasurer Vannan, CAO for the pension plan.

These worksheets calculate the Municipal Obligation for Pension contributions for 2024. Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to approve the Non-Uniform Pension MMO worksheets, seconded by Councilman Scalzo. Six members were in favor, none opposed. Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to approve the Uniform Pension MMO worksheets, seconded by Vice-President Cost, six members were in favor, none opposed. As required, both will be submitted to the PMRS.

PUBLIC WORKS: (Councilman Scalzo)

Councilman Scalzo provided the August 2023 Public Works Report: Public Works crew repaired the toilets in the existing library, removed a downed tree at K.P., repaired potholes on Center Street; accepted a \$20 donation from M. Potts for permission to dump trees at the garage; cleaned storm drains on Dundaff Street; fixed a hole on Rt #171 across from the Dollar General. Fixed the toilet on the first floor, (formerly the Senior Center, now the addition to the library); repaired Roxy Road washed out by heavy rains; and made a plate for storm water run-off on Upper No. Main Street. August Recycling donation - \$193.

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Two options given by PennDot regarding repairs to a section of Rt. #171 across from the Dollar General were discussed. The road is sinking due to stormwater run-off and Meredith Brook which runs under the road. Option #1 – the Borough pays PennDot to do the repairs **or** Option #2 – the Borough agrees to participate in an Agility Program Agreement with PennDot whereby the Borough would plow Hudson Street from Hudson to the Richmondale border and receive a \$6,000 credit per year for three years to cover the cost of PennDot making the repairs. Councilman Scalzo made a motion to accept Option #1, paying PennDot the \$18K out of Stormwater/Sewer funds. Councilman Cost seconded the motion. A roll-call vote found six members in favor, none opposed.

Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to approve the purchase of anti-skid from Prince Excavating, 100 ton @ \$23.50/ton - \$2,350. Councilwoman Matarese seconded the motion. A roll call vote found six in favor, none opposed.

Councilman Scalzo made a motion to a proposal for Professional Engineering Svcs. offered by JHA Engineering for the third project on Upper North Main Street at a cost of \$75,000 and issue a retainer to JHA for \$15,000 to proceed. V.P. Cost seconded the motion. A roll-call vote found six in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Councilwoman Lazier)

Councilwoman Lazier was unavailable, in her absence bids for the Borough roof were opened by President Lesjack. Two bids were received – C&D Waterproofing Corp. - \$487,850.00 and Dunmore Roofing & Supply Co., Inc. - \$496,400.00. Neither bid includes the cost of PPL involvement in the project, yet to be determined. Both bids will be reviewed by KBA Engineering and Solicitor McAndrew and a recommendation will be made for the October meeting.

Discussion about upgrading the sidewalk to curb area on Center Street side of the Borough building was tabled.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Councilwoman Bean)

Councilwoman Bean provided an update on the Façade projects - \$2,400 was presented to CPT in August. To date, \$17,657.39 has been paid out to business owners. And, \$734.49 paid to Valley in Motion for Administrative support.

Susie Atcavage reported that Bobbi Jo Turner has confirmed that the Commissioners have approved the application for DCBG funds and the application process will proceed. Updates on each of their projects were reported in the FCOTAT Minutes for August 3, which were distributed. The agenda for their September meeting was also distributed.

PARKS & RECREATION: (Vice President Cost)

V.P. Cost offered the Parks & Recreation Board Report, thanking everyone for their support for the 2023 F.C. Fishing Derby at K.P. 28 children participated, 102 fish caught. The largest, an 18 ½” perch by Michael Novak, and a 16” large mouth bass by Linda O’Brien, age 3. Hotdogs & drinks were served and prizes distributed. Thank you to Frugal Living for a donation of some of the prizes.

V.P. Cost made a motion to move the Fireworks display to Kennedy Park in 2024 on Friday and to hold the light parade and other activities on the following day, Saturday. Mayor Ginton expressed his opposition to the plan and discussion followed, but the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Matarese and all members were in favor, so the motion carried.

V.P. Cost asked Council to consider approving an additional \$2,000 for the purchase of cameras at K.P. Unfortunately, this was inadvertently left off the September agenda (my error), so could not be voted on. It will be added to the October Agenda to increase the previously approved \$1,000 to a total of \$3,000.

23 Baskets have been donated for the upcoming Vendor Market. Fifty vendors are expected.

The beach will remain open until September 10th, weather permitting.

COMMUNITY SAFETY & HEALTH: (Councilman Christopher DeGonzague)

Councilman DeGonzague reported that he will be attending an MS4 Training on September 11th and October 20th. Councilman DeGonzague had nothing else to report at this time.

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CODE ENFORCEMENT: (Councilwoman Lazier)

In Councilwoman Lazier’s absence, Code Enforcement Officer Sojka-Reisch read her August Report into the record. She confirmed that the yellow house on Center Street will be demolished, L&F Realty will be seeking a Demo Permit. Sent out several letters, took photos, the problem with internet connection for the CEO’s computer was solved with the addition of IP Addresses. Contacted the owner of 730 Delaware St, who indicated that it will be torn down. Submitted mileage reimbursement request for 14.9 miles; working with property owners to have their grass cut.

MAYOR’S REPORT: (Mayor Christopher Glinton)

Mayor Glinton presented the August 2023 Police Report.

Council was asked to approve the purchase of four (4) Goodyear tires from Kost Tire for the 21 Dodge Charger for \$631.41. The purchase was questioned by Councilwoman Bean, asking why tires were purchased recently. It was explained that the prior purchase was for the other vehicle. Councilwoman Bean asked that more detailed information be provided on the Treasurer’s Report. Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to approve the purchase, seconded by V. President Cost. The motion carried with a six to zero vote in favor.

Mayor Glinton requested approval for a road closure for the Halloween on Main Event to be held on Wednesday, October 25, 2023 from 4 to 7 p.m. for the 300, 400, 500 & 600 blocks of Main Street, for the safety of the children participating in the Trunk or Treat celebration. V.P. Cost offered a motion to approve the road closure, seconded by Councilwoman Matarese, all responded “aye”, none opposed, the motion carried. Ms. Vannan will submit the Road Closure Application to PennDot for approval.

Chief Foley had prepared an updated MOU that he hoped to submit to the F.C. School Superintendent for School Board consideration to increase the current \$100 per event coverage to \$125 per event. The current amount paid to officers is \$75. Chief Foley would like that to be increased to \$100. Council opted to table the request until they could get more information.

Mayor Glinton attempted to address his concerns about comments made by Councilwoman Bean at the August meeting when he was not present. He protested saying that they were untrue and brought several residents with him to dispute her claims. Gary Rotherforth, a resident, stood up saying he denied her accusation. She stated that these were not the residents she had referred to, but refused to identify anyone else. As it started to become heated, President Lesjack refused to allow the mayor to continue, saying it was not on the agenda and told him to continue this during Public Comment if he chose.

SOLICITOR:

Solicitor McAndrew was unavailable for this meeting.

NEW BUSINSS:

A contact sheet with information on how to obtain a Child Abuse Clearance was presented to council for consideration. Ms. Vannan said that as a result of recommendations from our liability insurance provider (Glatfelter), clearances for anyone working with or who have access to children in the community including volunteers (which may include council members), staff and police. Ms. Vannan justified the request saying that the Borough currently has no contact info on the volunteers who work on Committees/Boards sanctioned by the Borough Council. The information attached would allow each person to complete their own clearance then submit them to the Borough with their contact information. The clearance is available on-line and is free for volunteers. Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to approve and V.P. Cost seconded the motion. All voted yes in a roll-call vote, none opposed.

CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENTS & QUESTIONS:

Mayor Glinton addressed Council about the accusations made by Councilwoman Bean. He brought the residents with him who he thought Councilwoman Bean was referring to. He denied strongly her accusations that he had asked residents to falsify reports to the police. The mayor asked Councilwoman Bean to show some proof of her slanderous statements. She refused to comment further saying, “I’m not getting into this”.

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Duane Naugle, Executive Director, Susq. Co. Promotion & Tourism Agency addressed council saying that he is a “huge fan of the Façade Program, this program is definitely headed in the right direction.” He commented that he can see a lot of improvements already taking place. He also noted that the Trail Town Event is great and hopes the town continues to move in the right direction.

Ellen Linde, Grand Ave. commented that it’s unclear about a lot of what’s going on in the town and at these meetings. She asked for some explanation of the problems that have not been answered. President Lesjack responded, “There are just some things that we can’t discuss.”

Stephanie Sojka-Reisch, 609 Hudson Street, as CEO noted, “There has been some controversy over my ability to hold the CEO position while I am also an elected auditor for Susquehanna County. I hired a private attorney and paid him \$750 to provide me with his opinion on this, he is now handling my problems.”

Mayor Glinton presented photos of t-shirts that are being distributed in town that say “Defund the Police” and “Police are liars...” He asked if anyone on council had seen these. When asked directly Councilman DeGonzague denied having any knowledge of them as did Councilwoman Bean. President Lesjack asked, “Who would do this?” Mayor Glinton responded that his sources have identified the person(s).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Casella Waste Systems, Inc. notified the Borough that they would become our waste & recycling collection service provider due to their recent acquisition of several locations previously owned by GFL. They promise a smooth transition and no disruption to service.

The next regular monthly Council Meeting will be on Monday, October 2, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn, Councilman Scalzo, seconded by V.P. Cost, all replied “Aye”, meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.