

# MINUTES – MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021

## FOREST CITY BOROUGH

### SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING

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President Cost called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All present stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **ROLL CALL:**

Present: President Nick Cost, councilmembers Bernie Scalzo, Chris Degonzague, Joann Matarese, Bob Lesjack, Amy Bean, Tracey Lazier, Mayor Chris Ginton, and Secretary/Treasurer Vannan.

Absent: Solicitor McAndrew.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

President Cost opens the floor for public comment. Nothing was offered.

#### **COUNCIL INPUT ON INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL:**

All Council members had reviewed and prepared requests for funding specific to their areas.

Councilwoman Matarese covered general administrative funding, providing several worksheets with respect to General expenses and non-uniform wage increases. Worksheets and notes were provided. In a separate request, Councilwoman asked that \$5,000 be budgeted for equipment at the Babe Ruth Dog Park. Because the Dog Park helps satisfy MS4 Permit guidelines, the money would be considered environmental and be covered by Impact Fees, and as an outdoor recreational area it also may fall under the COVID fund guidelines.

Councilman Scalzo requested funding for the replacement of stairs at the Center Street Park area and continues to seek bids. Asked for funding for guiderail replacement on Welsch Road and several other areas in the borough that will require paving due to excessive rain and water erosion, particularly on North Main Street and Upper North Main Street.

Councilman DeGonzague, concerned with the borough's ability to serve the community in an emergency, asked that money be budgeted for a generator for the building to give the police the ability to continue to operate even with a loss of electrical power. He, President Cost & Councilman Scalzo had just attended the Hazard Mitigation meetings in Montrose and will be completing project sheets to submit to the County Emergency Management people to find out if the Borough qualifies for any PEMA or FEMA grants to help cover the cost of damages to roads and storm drains over the last few months of unusually heavy rains. The cost of the generator may also qualify for funding.

Councilman Lesjack covered buildings & grounds proposing that funding be considered for some potentially major repairs to the roof and the elevator. The roof temporarily repaired in 2021 is now leaking in another area and because replacing the whole roof was found to be too costly, the borough council will have to do what they can as repairs become necessary. The elevator also may require work this year as it is necessary to maintain it for continued handicap access to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors.

Councilwoman Bean reports that she continues to work with Main Street Coordinator Paul Daugevelo and they are working to procure funding for local businesses from the COVID ARP funds to help them to offset some of their losses during the pandemic. Mr. Daugevelo will follow-up with a plan for disbursing these funds, based on several requirements. It is yet to be determined what specific qualifications will be required and whether it will be paid out in full, a percentage or a capped amount. But this will become part of the revised proposed budget and will help to enhance the Main Street.

Councilwoman Lazier is seeking bids for the bathrooms at Kennedy Park, but funds will also be available for this project. Both Impact Fees and COVID Relief ARP funds can be used for Environmental improvements and outdoor recreation.

Mayor Ginton reported that additional money is needed for part-time police who will be necessary to cover for the retiring Chief who will continue to be in a paid status, using up his accrued personal/sick and vacation time. This will temporarily inflate the cost of salaries. The new police car will probably not be delivered until after the first of the year, so that needs to be reflected in the 2022 Capital Projects. A grant for vests has been approved that will cover approx. ½ the cost, so \$1,650 will be need to match the grant. OIC Assistant Chief Foley

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is working on a grant for electronic Finger-printing Live Scan equipment which will be needed to replace the obsolete version of inking that may not be accepted by other agencies in the future. Mayor Glinton also asked for funding to purchase a Restraint Bench and desks for the police department which will come in at around \$1,000. The cost of gas, the cost of ammunition and its availability will also increase the budget.

At the advice of auditors, Ms. Vannan has moved the line items for Impact Fee Expenses into the appropriate departments. Also, a Capital Budget with a narrative will be supplied with the 2022 Proposed Budget. All of the department requests will be incorporated into the 2022 Proposed Budget which will be ready for a final review at the November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. If there are not any additional changes, Council may vote to advertise the budget on November 1<sup>st</sup> and a final vote to adopt will occur at the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Two other major projects that have been funded by Grant money are the East Main Street Sidewalk project and the Browndale Sidewalk Project, both to begin in 2022. Grants, Capital Reserves, Impact Fees and COVID Relief funding will cover most of the 2022 Capital Budget Expenses so no tax increase is anticipated for 2022.

#### **SOLICITOR REPORT – (Marissa McAndrew, Esq.)**

Solicitor McAndrew was unavailable for this meeting

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

President Cost presented a bid for Emergency paving work to be done on Delaware Street where the street was sinking due to water issues in the area. Nick's Excavating offered a price of \$8,540 for a 20'x51' section of the road to be saw-cut, hauled away and replaced with a base of modified stone, compacted, blacktopped with 3" of binder, the 2" of top coat. No other bids were received. Impact Fees to be used. Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to approve the paving. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. All voted yes in a roll-call vote, seven to zero. The motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS or QUESTIONS: (President Cost)**

Some discussion among council and John Kameen followed, but public attendance was very low.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS: (President Cost)**

The next Regular Council Meeting will be held on Monday, November 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** President Cost requests motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Lazier offered a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Bean seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. The meeting ended at 7:50 p.m.