



FOX CHAPEL
BOROUGH

MINUTES

FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 20, 2023

PRESENT: Andrew C. Bennett, Council President; Thomas Karet, Frederick C. Leech, Sarah Hanna, Bradley D. Harrison, Councilmembers; Walter A. Scott, III, Mayor; A. Bruce Bowden, Solicitor; Michael J. Stevens, Chief of Police; Gary J. Koehler, Borough Manager; Jeanine A. Mancuso, Treasurer; Larry Kurpakus, Public Works Director; Shawn M. Peterson, Borough Secretary

ALSO

PRESENT: Logan Dressman, Avery Litwin, Ethan Kolek, Junior Councilmembers; Michael Pohl, John Badeer, Will Tippins, Bob Hyland, John Miclot, Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department; Nannette Bennett, Donald Newman, EAC Members; Gino Mollica, Jennifer Swab, Foxwall EMS; Margaret Pohl, Richard Berglund, Tracy Vinson, Residents, ten other attendees

VIA ZOOM: Elizabeth Monroe, Councilmember; Kento Ohmori, Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department; four other attendees

ABSENT: Harrison S. Lauer, Vice-President

Mr. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

RECOGNITION AND MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR FOXWALL EMS CHIEF TONY CUDÁ

Mr. Bennett read aloud Resolution No. 688 in recognition and appreciation of the invaluable service Tony Cuda generously rendered this community and the acknowledgment of his untimely death. After, all in attendance participated in a moment of silence for Chief Cuda.

Mr. Karet moved to adopt Resolution No. 688. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harrison and passed unanimously.

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Mr. Leech moved that the October 16, 2023, meeting minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hanna and passed by a unanimous vote.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

Richard Berglund, 444 Dorseyville Road, asked if Chief Stevens could provide an update on the recent string of burglaries in the Borough.

Chief Stevens stated there have been three burglaries in the Borough, two on October 28, 2023, and one on November 16, 2023. He said Allegheny County Police are investigating the burglaries and believe it is the same group of people committing the crimes.

Chief Stevens urged all residents to be vigilant. If something seems unusual, he asks that residents call 911 to report it. He recommends turning on home alarms, and any resident out of town should let the Police Department know so they can conduct vacation checks on the homes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Bennett requested the Fire Siren Task Force item on the agenda be discussed, as many Volunteer Fire Department members were in attendance.

Fire Siren Task Force

Mr. Harrison stated that several members could not be at the final Task Force meeting, but a discussion with those members occurred, and there were two additional recommendations. One recommendation was to change the siren

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duration to two cycles of sixty seconds each. The second recommendation was to align the siren hours with the current noise ordinance, turning the siren off from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Tracy Vinson, 615 Berkshire Drive, stated she opposed the siren cycling and changed hours. Her husband is a volunteer fireman, and she said he and the other volunteer fireman deserve as much assistance as possible when receiving notifications.

Margaret Pohl, 116 Wilmar Drive, stated that one of local government's core responsibilities is public safety. As a resident, she said she is very concerned with the changes proposed to the fire siren. She believes leaving the siren system as-is is within the Borough's best interest in regard to public safety.

Mike Pohl, Lieutenant and Secretary for the Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department, spoke on behalf of the Fire Department and Chief Dee Humes. He stated the Fire Department does not support the proposed changes due to the risk they pose to public safety to the community and surrounding areas through mutual aid.

Mr. Karet asked Mr. Pohl if the VFD had to choose one of the two recommendations, which one would the department be more comfortable with. Mr. Pohl said that he is not speaking on behalf of the department, but he did speak with some members on this subject, and maximizing the number of hours per day when the siren is activated was preferred. The reasoning behind this was that many members are involved in outside activities during the early morning and late evening hours and are not tethered to their electronic devices.

After further discussion, Ms. Monroe moved to change the siren duration to two cycles of sixty seconds each. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion. Ms. Monroe voted aye, while Mr. Bennett, Mr. Karet, Mr. Leech, Mr. Harrison, and Ms. Hanna voted nay. The motion did not pass.

Mr. Leech stated that the newly formed Public Safety Assistance Committee's first task should be the fire siren issue.

Mr. Bennett moved to table the second recommendation of aligning the siren hours with the current noise ordinance, turning the siren off from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hanna and passed unanimously.

On behalf of Council, Mayor Scott thanked the Volunteer Fire Department, and they appreciate all they do for the Borough.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Stevens stated that the newest hires for the department have been tasked with specific duties and are doing well. Officer Catanzaro is now in charge of evidence for the department, Officer Fedunok is the emergency vehicle trainer for the department, and Officer Luffy is working on completing the last training to become a crash reconstruction specialist.

Police Department New Hire

Mr. Bennett moved to approve the hiring of Nicholas Posa as recommended by Chief Stevens and the Civil Service Commission at \$83,465, which is 80% of this year's base wage for an officer. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leech and passed unanimously.

A discussion was held regarding the Chief sending Fox Chapel Alerts to residents to notify them of crimes in the Borough. The Chief stated he wants the residents to receive as much information as possible regarding activity in the Borough, so he will send out an alert when a crime occurs.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Mr. Kurpakus stated the Public Works Department will begin working on the Hardie Valley/Old Mill sewer replacement project in the first weeks of December. Hardie Valley Park will be closed when PWD works there during business hours.

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TREASURER REPORT

Ratification of Payments – October 2023

Ms. Hanna moved that the payment of bills for October 2023 (General Fund Vouchers 4220 - 4320, \$2,224,244.87) be ratified. The motion was seconded by Mr. Karet and passed unanimously. Ms. Mancuso noted that the higher amount paid in October 2023 was due to the Shields Paving invoice and the third quarter ALCOSAN bill.

CONTRACT AWARDS

Old Mill Road Sanitary Sewer Replacement

Mr. Leech moved to award the contract for manholes to the low bidder, Eagle Concrete Products, in the amount of \$12,372. The motion was seconded by Mr. Karet and passed unanimously.

Ms. Hanna moved to award the 12" x 14' SDR-35 PVC sewer pipe contract to the low bidder, Culverts, Inc., for \$52,626. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harrison and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

EAC Member Reappointments

Mr. Bennett moved to approve the reappointments of both Austin Henry and Jay Troutman to the EAC for three-year terms expiring on December 31, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Karet and passed unanimously.

Donald Newman, an EAC member, was in attendance to endorse Mr. Henry and Mr. Troutman and strongly supported Mr. Henry's reappointment as EAC Chair. Mr. Newman stated that Mr. Henry achieves a balance and finds a way to provide residents with guidance and help.

Zoning Hearing Board Position Advertisement

Mr. Leech moved to approve the advertisement for a new Zoning Hearing Board member on the Borough website, and Fox Chapel Alert as current member Kyra Tucker has decided to resign from her role on the ZHB when her term expires on December 31, 2023. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hanna and passed unanimously.

Advertising for the Placement of Two (2) Stop Signs

Mr. Harrison moved to approve the advertisement to amend Section 338.13A Stop Intersections Established of the Code of the Borough to allow the placement of two stop signs on Old Mill Road at Easton Road (north and southbound). The motion was seconded by Mr. Karet and passed by a unanimous vote.

Resolution No. 689 – Requesting a Statewide Local Share Assessment Grant

Mr. Leech moved to adopt Resolution No. 689, authorizing the request for a Statewide Local Share Assessment grant in the amount of \$650,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the Dorseyville Fire Station Improvements Project. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hanna and passed unanimously.

Before moving onto the budget item on the agenda, Mr. Bennett informed all in attendance that Duquesne Light Company Utility Forrester, Tiffany Thompson will present DLC plans for vegetation management along roads and DLC rights-of-way in specific areas of the Borough at the EAC meeting on January 8, 2024, at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in person and via Zoom. Interested residents are welcome to attend the meeting.

Budget Advertisement

Ms. Mancuso summarized the 2024 budget that was reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee.

Mr. Karet moved to approve the advertisement of the proposed 2024 Budget. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hanna and passed unanimously.

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Ms. Monroe moved to approve the advertisement of the sewer rate ordinance for the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) sewer rate increase. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed unanimously.

The proposed budget will be available for public viewing between December 4 and December 15, 2023, at the Borough Building from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Mr. Bennett thanked Ms. Mancuso for the budget preparation and stated it was very well done and well presented.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:24 PM, Borough Council adjourned into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. At 8:35 PM, the meeting was reconvened.

With no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

SHAWN MARIE PETERSON
Borough Secretary