



FOX CHAPEL
BOROUGH

MINUTES
FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING HELD DECEMBER 19, 2022

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

ALSO
PRESENT: Logan Dressman, Bree Murphy Junior Council Members; Dee Humes, Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) Chief; Brian Zimmerman, Fox Chapel VFD Assistant Chief; Michael Pohl, Fox Chapel VFD 2nd Lieutenant, and six other attendees

VIA ZOOM: Wesley Posvar, Park Commission Chairperson; 5 attendees

ABSENT: Thomas Karet, Councilmember

Mr. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

OATH OF OFFICE

Borough Secretary Shawn Peterson administered the Oath of Office to Frederick C. Leech.

MINUTES

Mr. Lauer moved that the November 21, 2022, meeting minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Bennett informed those in attendance that the Fire Siren item on the agenda would be moved up to the beginning of the meeting after resident comments.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

Judy Grune, 117 Evergreen Road, attended to discuss the Fire Siren. She stated the siren, with its volume and tone, is a constant interruption to home, church, and library affairs. She asked Council and the Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department to evaluate other alternatives for emergency notification. Some questions she had regarding the fire siren were:

1. How far does the siren cover?
2. How many fire department members live within the boundaries of the siren's sound?
3. Is the siren necessary?
4. What modern technology do other first responders use?
5. What are other communities doing if they are not using a siren?

Denise Pampera, 131 Field Club Road, stated the sound of the siren is deafening inside and outside of the home. She noted the siren is an antiquated system of alert. She also said that other VFDs like Wexford, Marshall, and Churchill abolished the use of their siren. The Borough should find out what type(s) of alerting systems these other municipalities use.

Margaret Pohl, 116 Wilmar Drive, said she appreciates the siren as it assists her husband in knowing that he is needed, and it alerts her that her husband is answering a call if he is not home when the siren goes off. As a nurse, she said it can take hours to get a response from a doctor because they were in a cellular dead zone, which can be the same for the Fire Department. Therefore, she feels the siren is necessary.

Jessica Reseck, 400 Fox Chapel Road, said she would like the residents, Borough Council, and the Fire Department to find a way to meet in the middle and look at every possible alternative.

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Joseph Bartolacci, 125 Evergreen Road, asked if the Borough could reach out to companies with cell towers and ask them to place more throughout the Borough. This would help with cell reception for the Fire Department and residents.

Brian Zimmerman, 240 West Chapel Ridge Road, also the Assistant Fire Chief for the Fox Chapel Fire Department, said that the department met with Allegheny County's Emergency 9-1-1 in 2017 regarding dead zones. Allegheny County added to its service area but could not fix all of the dead zones in the Borough. Mr. Zimmerman also said that the Borough turns the siren off from 10 PM to 6 AM, but surrounding municipalities have their sirens run twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Following the Council member's discussion, Mr. Bennett suggested the creation of a task force comprised of Council members, Fire Department members, and affected residents to research and decide if any changes should be made to the alerting system. Ms. Hanna, Mr. Harrison, and Ms. Monroe will represent Borough Council. Mr. Humes will provide the names of VFD members to Mr. Koehler, and a spokesperson for the affected residents will contact Mr. Koehler with their representatives. The task force will meet early in the new year.

PARK COMMISSION

Borough Council decided that Ms. Monroe would become the new Council Liaison to the Park Commission as Mandy Steele was elected to the State Representative position for District 33.

Ms. Monroe motioned to approve the use of McCahill Park for the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy to have its Fire and Ice in the Park event on Saturday, January 28, 2023, from 4-9 PM with a rain date of Saturday, February 4, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lauer and passed unanimously.

Mr. Lauer motioned to approve the use of McCahill park for the third annual Fox Chapel Day event on Saturday, June 24, 2023, with an alternate date of Saturday, June 17, 2023.

Borough Council thanked Melinda Guinn, Carrie Casey, other volunteers, and the Public Works Department for their efforts and hard work in planting 500 trees this year.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Stevens stated Sergeant Sorg collected over 200 toys to donate to children in need this holiday season. He also said the Police Department will hold an Open House on Saturday, February 11, 2023, from 11 AM – 1 PM. Residents can come to the Police Department to meet with the officers and tour the station.

Chief Stevens informed Council that Sergeant Sorg purchased a 1970 Volkswagon Beetle that will be the Community Relations vehicle.

TREASURER REPORT

Ratification of Payments – November 2022

Ms. Monroe moved that the payment of bills for November 2022 (General Fund Vouchers 3233 - 3316, \$591,159.27) be ratified. Mr. Leech seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Leech abstaining from the LeechTichman invoices due to a potential conflict of interest.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 679

Mr. Lauer moved to adopt Resolution No. 679 authorizing the use of Borough staff, equipment, supplies, or space to support Borough-related entities at the Borough Manager's discretion. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed unanimously.

2023 Budget

Mr. Leech moved to approve the 2023 Budget. This budget was recommended by the Finance Committee, reviewed by Council, and advertised for available viewing by the public. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed by a unanimous vote.

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Ordinance No. 722

Mr. Lauer moved to approve Ordinance No. 722, establishing the sewer rates for Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) and restating Borough, Harmar, and AVJSA sewage rates. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leech and passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 680

Mr. Lauer moved to adopt Resolution No. 680, fixing the Real Estate Tax Rate for general revenue purposes at a sum of 2.95 mills on each dollar of market valuation for 2023. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed by a unanimous vote.

Zoning Hearing Board Appointment

It was moved by Mr. Lauer to reappoint Mr. Donald F. Smith, Jr. to the Zoning Hearing Board for a three-year term expiring on December 31, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed by a unanimous vote.

Environmental Advisory Council Appointment

It was moved by Mr. Lauer to reappoint Mr. Donald H. Newman to the Environmental Advisory Council for a three-year term expiring on December 31, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed by a unanimous vote.

There being no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 PM.

SHAWN MARIE PETERSON
Borough Secretary