



**FOX CHAPEL**  
BOROUGH

**MINUTES**

**FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING HELD OCTOBER 16, 2023**

PRESENT: Andrew C. Bennett, Council President; Harrison S. Lauer, Vice-President; Thomas Karet, Elizabeth Monroe, 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; Larry Kurpakus, Public Works Director; Shawn M. Peterson, Borough Secretary

ALSO

PRESENT: Logan Dressman, Avery Litwin, Ethan Kolek, Junior Councilmembers; Michael Pohl, Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department; Richard Wendell, Byron Falchetti, Residents

VIA ZOOM: Frederick C. Leech, Councilmember; Jeanine A. Mancuso, Treasurer; Mara Baginski, Resident; three other attendees

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

**MINUTES**

Mr. Harrison moved that the September 18, 2023, meeting minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Karet and passed with an abstention from Mr. Bennett due to his absence at the September meeting.

**RESIDENT COMMENTS**

Richard Wendell, 511 Old Mill Road, stated he wanted to share some perspectives and thoughts on the future of Fox Chapel. He said there are opportunities for improvement in the following areas: removing litter from roadways, including the clean up of logs in road right-of-ways from Duquesne Light Company cutting trees, and Public Works crews removing fallen trees from roadways, leaning poles, low hanging wires, and the speed of vehicles on the roadway.

Mr. Wendell asked if the Borough Tree Committee could monitor Duquesne Light Company's annual plans to cut/trim trees like Forest Hills Borough. He also asked for more police presence on roadways to monitor speed. He suggested reconstituting the Fox Chapel Road Committee to develop a strategy for the issues he brought before Council.

Mr. Bennett thanked Mr. Wendell, who is a forty-nine-year resident of the Borough, for discussing these issues with Council. He stated the Joint Municipal Comprehensive Plan Committee process that has been happening for over a year with O'Hara Township addresses a lot of the issues raised. As for the safety issues raised, Mr. Kurpakus and Chief Stevens want to be aware of them.

Mr. Koehler will contact Forest Hills to see how they work with Duquesne Light Company with the annual plans to cut/trim trees in the Borough.

Mara Baginski, 630 Foxhurst Road, stated she wanted to discuss a traffic issue at the intersection of Easton Road and West Chapel Ridge Road. She said drivers do not stop at the stop sign at this intersection or do a rolling stop. She also stated drivers do not obey the 25-mile-per-hour speed limit and speed through the intersection. She also said that a driver drove around a school bus with its flashing lights on while children were getting on the bus. Ms. Baginski reported the driver who passed the school bus to the Police Department.

Proposed changes that Ms. Baginski would like to see implemented are to change the speed limit in the neighborhood to 15 miles per hour, speed humps, cameras that lead to ticketing, and the creation of a safety committee.

Byron Falchetti, 1095 Fox Chapel Road, stated he agreed with Ms. Baginski and Mr. Wendell that speeding in the Borough is out of hand. He said he would like more police enforcement in the Borough.

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Chief Stevens stated the Police Department has been collecting data since February 2023 for Easton Road. He said the average speed for drivers was 26 miles per hour. He has a scheduled meeting at the Borough Building with another resident regarding speeding on Easton on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 11 AM and invited Ms. Baginski to attend.

Mr. Bennett told Ms. Baginski that this issue is incredibly important to all Council and the Police Department. They are already in the mode of trying to figure out a solution to better it, and any additional information or ideas she has, she can share with Chief Stevens.

Chief Stevens stated the Police Department keeps a warning list of motorists who have been pulled over in the Borough. Ms. Monroe asked if it is possible to share warning lists across municipalities. Chief Stevens said he did not believe other communities share these lists with one another, but he is more than willing to send hard copies of the Borough's list to other communities and speak with the local Chiefs of Police regarding the suggestion.

### **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Stevens stated the Touch-a-Truck event on Saturday, October 7, 2023, was well attended. The Paint Pumpkins with Police event is Saturday, October 21, 2023, from 11 AM – 2 PM.

### **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Mr. Kurpakus thanked Wesley Posvar, Jeff Cohen, Carrie Casey, and Shady Side Academy students who volunteered in Hardie Valley Park, planting about 250 trees. The Borough obtained 500 trees, so PWD will complete planting the additional trees.

He also stated Leaf Collection began Monday, October 16, 2023, and will continue through the end of November.

### **TREASURER REPORT**

Ms. Mancuso stated the budget process is going well. The Finance Committee will meet at the end of the month to review the budget.

### Ratification of Payments – September 2023

Mr. Lauer moved that the payment of bills for September 2023 (General Fund Vouchers 4140 - 4219, \$511,515.77) be ratified. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed unanimously.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### Fire Siren Task Force

Mr. Harrison summarized the work completed by the task force. He stated it was a very positive experience with the residents and Volunteer Fire Department contributing a lot to the group. He pointed out some of the great things to come from this committee, such as AT&T working with the Fox Chapel Area School District to place a cell antenna on the high school to improve service to the school and the areas surrounding the school; AT&T will also continue to work with the Borough to improve cell signal throughout the Borough, the number of false alarms has lowered since the creation of this committee due in part to the subcommittee which went to the institutions to discuss how best to avoid false alarms, and the introduction of FirstNet, for first responders to have priority cell service.

After the task force met numerous times, listening to the concerns of residents who live near the fire sirens while recognizing the need for an alerting system for the Volunteer Fire Department, the committee presented Council with three recommendations.

Mr. Harrison moved to approve the purchase of two new controllers for \$6,892.00. The new controllers will replace the current controllers and will be more reliable and have greater functionality. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed unanimously.

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Mr. Harrison moved to continue coordinating with cell service providers to boost signal strength and improve cell service across the Borough and the greater community. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed unanimously.

Mr. Harrison moved to approve the creation of a standing Public Safety Assistance Committee in Fox Chapel for the oversight and follow-up of action items and future projects relating to public safety with a creation date of December 1, 2023. The makeup of this committee would be one to three Council members, the Mayor, a member from Foxwall EMS, a member from the Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department, and one resident with a public safety background. Administrative support members of the committee would be the Chief of Police, who is also the Emergency Management Coordinator, and the Borough Manager. The committee will meet quarterly at mutually agreed-upon morning hours during the workweek. Mr. Harrison, Ms. Hanna, and Ms. Monroe are interested in being on the committee.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed unanimously.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### Ratify Recent Police Hire's Salaries

Mr. Bennett moved to ratify the salaries of Michael Catanzaro, Jr. at \$93,898, which is 90% of this year's base wage for an officer, Amanda Fedunok, at \$104,331, which is 100% of this year's base wage for an officer, and Zachary Luffy, at \$76,000, which is 73% of this year's base wage for an officer. The motion was seconded by Mr. Karet and passed unanimously.

#### Cooper-Siegel Community Library Electric Charging Stations

Mayor Scott stated the Cooper-Siegel Community Library is interested in obtaining at least two electric charging stations for their parking lot. After discussion, Council decided the concept of the electric charging stations was acceptable, and the library could begin obtaining more information.

Mayor Scott stated he hoped Council had seen the information regarding the new Volunteer Fire Department members. Mr. Bennett stated it is very impressive the people who have recently joined the VFD. They have five new members.

Logan Dressman, a Junior Council Person, stated the VFD could connect with the high school students at the Fox Chapel High School Career Fair each year to obtain junior firefighters.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:33 PM, Borough Council adjourned into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. At 8:55 PM, the meeting was reconvened.

With no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

SHAWN MARIE PETERSON  
Borough Secretary