

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Borough Council Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
October 13, 2020  
VIA CONFERENCE CALL ONLY

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Vallone called the conference call meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and read the open public meetings statement in accordance with the law.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Vallone led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilman Joseph Carty, Councilwoman Mary Chimenti, Councilman Richard Hand, Council President David Karner, Councilman Ted McLean, Councilwoman Sheila Tweedie, Mayor Paul J. Vallone, MD

Absent, as Excused:

Absent

Also Present: Borough Clerk Dorothy S. Hicks, Borough Attorney Joseph Sordillo, and Chief of Police Michael DeCarolis

**REPORTS**

**Councilman Richard Hand – Fire, Water, Light, Buildings & Grounds**

No report.

**Councilwoman Tweedie – Health/Sanitation**

No report.

**Councilman McLean – Roads**

No report.

**Councilman Carty – Finance/Insurance**

No report.

**Councilwoman Chimenti – Laws, Ordinances & Elections**

Councilwoman Chimenti reported Court deposits for August 2020 were \$3,528.53.

**Council President Karner – Police**

Council President Karner stated that a committee planning meeting for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event was scheduled for October 15, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. and encouraged residents to participate.

He noted that there were some concerns from residents regarding Halloween and possible pandemic restrictions.

Lastly, Council President Karner provided an update on the Dumont Road Drainage and Ludlow Avenue Improvements projects and stated that according to asphalt professionals, paving could continue through the end of November.

## **Mayor Vallone**

Mayor Vallone expressed his appreciation to Council President Karner for covering the September 28, 2020 Borough Council meeting in his absence.

Mayor Vallone indicated that the Borough is in a very strong financial position as recently reviewed through the Audit prepared by the Borough Auditor, Nisivoccia, LLC. Throughout his tenure, Mayor Vallone stated that through administering a thoughtful and prudent budget, the Borough has been able to steadily grow a financial surplus as well as maintaining one of the lowest municipal tax rates in the state.

Mayor Vallone stated that there were currently no Covid cases in Far Hills and the Borough has taken additional precautions to ensure the safety of its employees. He added through working with the CFO, Ms. Stern and Borough Clerk, Ms. Hicks, a grant application was currently being prepared to submit for reimbursement of Covid related expenses. He continued that due to the pandemic, several of the large events normally held in the Borough had to be cancelled but would hopefully return in 2021. He especially noted the Borough's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event planned to be held on May 15, 2021 at the J. Malcolm Belcher Fairgrounds.

Mayor Vallone apprised the Borough Council regarding the water usage rate hike proposed by New Jersey American Water (NJAW). The proposed increase would have raised residential rates by nearly 20%; and increasing NJAW's annual revenue by \$88 million. Through a consortium of the following municipalities: Bedminster, Bernardsville, Bridgewater, Far Hills, Peapack-Gladstone, Raritan Borough and Raritan Township legal counsel was retained to oppose the proposed rate. Through these collaborative efforts the rate increase was reduced from 20% to 4.4% and the implementation of the rate increase was deferred until September 2021.

He continued by providing an update on Mayors for Main Street, which is a group of 21 mayors that communicate directly with the Governor and State representatives to advocate support for small residential businesses.

He thanked the residents who inquired about Halloween celebrations and reviewed the 2020 guidance developed by the NJ Department of Health. Ms. Hicks was asked to post this information on the Borough website.

Mayor Vallone reported that Liberty Corner Road was recently milled and paved; the project was completely funded by Somerset County.

He indicated that he would be attending the Breast Cancer Awareness event to be held at the Somerset County Court House on Thursday, October 15, 2020. Chief DeCarolis would also be attending along with several other county law enforcement agencies.

Finally, Mayor Vallone stated he was preparing his letter to residents to be included in the fall 2020 newsletter.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

9/28/20 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content and release.

9/28/20 – Executive Session Minutes

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Hand was unanimously carried that these minutes be approved for content only.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Resolution 20-128 – Payment of the Bill List**

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilman Carty that Resolution 20-128 be approved.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:

Recused:

Motion Carried.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Moorland Farm Event**

Mr. Torsilieri provided an overview of a proposed event to be sponsored by American Express. A holiday event was tentatively scheduled to be held December 11-20, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. at Moorland Farm. The event would encompass a drive thru holiday themed path immersed in holiday scenes with accompanying music to be broadcasted through the FM radio. He added that the Far Hills Race Meeting Association would promote the event but indicated that the event would be a private, invitation only event exclusive to AMEX card members.

A general discussion ensued regarding potential issues with crowd control and traffic; lighting that could adversely affect the neighboring properties; the lack of specific event details; and an overall concern with the growing number of events proposed to be held at Moorland Farm.

Mayor Vallone commented that due to the unique circumstances as a result of the pandemic in 2020, additional events would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Council President inquired if a partnership with AMEX could also be considered for the Borough's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event.

Mr. Sordillo advised that a motion could be approved in concept only with a contingency that specific event details would be provided for approval by the Borough Council.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie that the December AMEX event is approved in concept only and contingent upon the submission of additional event details.

Roll Call:

Aye: Carty, Chimenti, Hand, Karner, McLean, Tweedie

Nay:

Abstain:  
Recused:  
Motion Carried.

**Best Practices Inventory – 2020**

Ms. Hicks informed the Borough Council that the Division of Local Government Services requires each municipality to annually complete the Best Practices Inventory. Responses are scored and determine the percentage of state aid to be received by the municipality. Ms. Hicks indicated that she and CFO, Debra Stern completed and certified the Best Practice Inventory and the Borough would be receiving 100% of its allotted state aid.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – *The Mayor and Council welcome comments from any member of the public. To help facilitate an orderly meeting and to permit the opportunity for anyone who wishes to be heard, speakers shall limit their comments to 5 minutes.*

Motion by Councilwoman Tweedie, seconded by Council President Karner to open the meeting for public comment.

Chief DeCarolis joined the meeting at this time. He expressed his appreciation to the Far Hills Race Meeting for sponsoring the pink Teflon wrapped vehicle in support of Breast Cancer Awareness. He added that the Police Department would again be participating in No Shave November in support of cancer awareness. Lastly, Chief DeCarolis indicated that the September 2020 police report was on file.

Karen Reilly, 5 Fox Hunt Court, Far Hills inquired if there were any additional expenses or revenues generated to the Borough with respect to the events held at Moorland Farm.

Mayor Vallone responded that the events held at Moorland Farm were private events and there was no expense to the Borough.

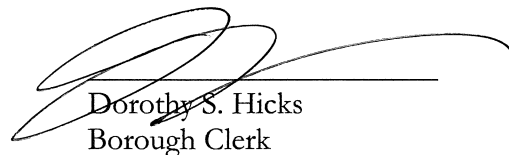
There were no further comments from the public.

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie to close the meeting for public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Council President Karner, seconded by Councilwoman Tweedie and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dorothy S. Hicks  
Borough Clerk

APPROVED – 10/26/20