

**FOREST CITY BOROUGH
MINUTES
MONDAY – DECEMBER 4, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER: President Orasin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLLCALL: Present: President Orasin, V.P. Bernie Scalzo, Council Members Joann Matarese, Nick Cost, Robert Lesjack, Chris DeGonzague, Ed Pearsall, Mayor Pauline Wilcox, Solicitor Paul Smith and Secr/Treasurer Sharon Vannan.

PUBLIC COMMENT: President Orasin opened the floor for public comment:

Mr. Jason Obelenus addressed the council with several questions about recycling grant revenues and several line items of the proposed 2018 Budget. The annual recycling grant application will still be submitted. County Waste will provide the borough with weight slips on recycling collected in the borough. He asked about the use of Impact fees and how their use is determined. These funds must be used for specific items as listed including public safety, roads, police, storm drains, buildings & grounds, environmental programs in the parks and a plan to use some as matching funds for roads and other partially grant funded projects. Structural work is planned for the borough building as well as gutters, emergency lighting, metal detectors all in the name of public safety.

Mr. Obelenus questioned the need for two full-time secretaries and the amounts budgeted for wages. President Orasin responded that some of these wages are expensed to the Sewer account to cover the costs related to the billing and collections of sewer fees. The office is busy and “yes” these two women are needed to keep things running. Councilwoman Matarese joined President Orasin in support of the clerical staff and the importance of this coverage.

President Orasin recognized Anthony Wilcox who extended his thanks to everyone and noted that this last meeting is “bittersweet”, noting that the borough is losing a few very committed people who have spent their time in office serving the community. Things are looking up on Main Street, there is a buzz, people are interested again and this is sometimes a hard thankless job, but all need to be commended for their dedication.

Jason Obelenus addressed council again asking about Rental Inspections. He noted that the buildings that burned on Main Street recently had tenants and no smoke detectors. “When were they last inspected?” President Orasin responded, “We do not always get cooperation from property owners who deny that they have tenants; some have been occupied for many years and grandfathered in. There are many reasons why this is difficult to enforce.”

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. ADMINISTRATION: (Joann Matarese)

Councilwoman Matarese asked if everyone had reviewed the minutes for the regular monthly meeting held November 6, 2017. No one offered any comment or corrections so Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to accept the minutes. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for November 2017. Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report and authorize total disbursements of \$94,508.82. Cash Receipts totaled \$107,485.66. Councilman Cost seconded the motion that carried with a roll call vote of 7 to 0 in favor of accepting the November Treasurer’s Report.

Councilwoman Matarese presented the 2018 General Fund and Sewer Budgets for approval. Both were advertised and available for review for the month of November. Councilman Pearsall seconded the motion. A roll call vote found seven members in favor and no one opposed. Both 2018 Budgets were adopted, 7 to 0.

The 2018 Tax Levy Ordinance presented for review with no tax increase for 2018. Councilwoman Matarese offered a motion to advertise. Councilman Scalzo seconded the motion. A roll call vote to advertise Tax Levy Ordinance #510 was taken. All members voted yes and the motion carried seven to 0 in favor.

The health insurance proposal increase is 11%, which is to be expected and in fact very close to what was budgeted. The broker who provided the rates compared them to other carriers and there was nothing

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else comparable for any less. If council chose to increase the current deductible from \$2,000 to \$7,000 (the next step), there would be no real savings and the cost of the premium saver plan (covers \$1,500 of the \$2,000) may be more expensive if available at all. Councilman Pearsall noted that he felt that 11% was not a bad increase; the cost of his premium had gone up 27%. Councilman Pearsall entered a motion to approve the renewal of the current Highmark coverage Councilwoman Matarese seconded the motion. A roll call vote found seven members in favor and none opposed. Council renewed the plan for 2018.

PUBLIC WORKS: (Bernie Scalzo)

Vice President Scalzo read the report for November 2017 citing the following items:

Worked with KBA, Rock Bottom & All American Rooter at CPT; turned in scrap metal, collected \$335; prepared the plows and the spreader for the winter season; lowered manholes in three locations to prevent damage to the snowplow blade; winterized Kennedy Park, shut off water and drained pipes; picked up seven Christmas trees for the Main Street light festival; collected \$180 in recycling donations; removed and scrapped all chairs & tables from Pentecost Hall; purchase six snow tires for the F550 dump/plow truck.

The water seals are leaking on the Sewer Jet Truck pump. Northeast Hydraulics provided a quote for \$1,703.81 plus shipping. Due to the age of the truck, additional parts and/or labor may be required, will not know until it is disassembled. Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to approve the repairs for the \$1,703 up to \$2,500 if needed. Councilman Cost seconded the motion. All voted aye in a roll call vote that passed seven to zero.

Councilman Scalzo reported that Prince Excavators repaired the storm drain and road surface at the Emergency Services on Railroad Street for \$1,186.50. The borough will attempt to recoup the cost of those repairs from the contractor (Pioneer). Councilman Scalzo asked council to consider accepting an estimate from Prince Excavating to repair the dip in the road on Susquehanna & Caryl Streets. The cost is \$3,295. Councilman Scalzo made a motion to approve the bid. Councilman Cost seconded the motion. All voted aye in a roll-call vote. The motion carried with a vote of seven to zero.

Councilman Scalzo moved on the next item – the gazebo at Kennedy Park. Upon inspection, it was determined that the support beams are failing and he planned to get bids on the restoration. Councilman Matarese offered to have her husband take a look at it, “he may be able to offer some ideas”.

Councilman Scalzo reported that one tree on Center Street was removed as previously approved and the second would be coming down soon. Both trees were leaning, one into the street, and the other into the building. Both needed to go.

Councilman Scalzo offered his thanks to everyone for their hard work and extended a “Merry Christmas” to all.

B. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: (Robert Lesjack)

Councilman Lesjack reported that he is making progress with his plans for the second floor bathrooms. They were not done as quickly as he had hoped but there were a few extenuating circumstances. I hope that everything will be completed by Christmas. As for upstairs, all the chairs, tables and everything that had to go have been removed. Purchased the chandeliers at a cost of \$1,600, but called Wayfair and got a refund of \$700 because of Black Friday sales. Rosengrant has not gotten back to us, but expect the floors to be done in January. He expected to spend \$6K on the floor and tables & chairs. Councilwoman Matarese made a motion to approve and Councilman Cost seconded it. Money has already been budgeted, so President Orasin asked for all those in favor. All responded aye and the motion carried.

Councilman Lesjack reported that Tony Wilcox ordered the paint for the ceiling and work would begin as soon as Tony got his equipment and the paint in the building.

C. PARKS & RECREATION: (Ed Pearsall)

Councilman Pearsall said, “With winter, not much to report and thanks to Bernie & Nick for covering my butt.” Tony Wilcox offered to paint the gazebo when it’s ready.

D. CODE ENFORCEMENT: (Chris DeGonzague)

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Councilman DeGonzague offered Stephanie Reisch's report for November. Most notably, the Maxie Street bar is scheduled for demolition. He deferred to Stephanie who added that she noticed that more people are taking the "Pooper Scooper" ordinance more seriously.

E. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: (Nick Cost)

Councilman Cost commented on the great turnout for the tree lighting ceremony on Saturday, "Great Job!" Thank you to everyone especially the Mayor who had a lot to do with its success. He thanked NEP, for getting everything up and lit. Ed & Steve Tourje as always contribute their share to the holidays, "Wishing everyone a wonderful Holiday Season and a very Happy New Year!"

Councilman Cost then asked Art McLain to add any information he had. Art reported that he had gotten a response from Dunkin Donuts; unfortunately, the population and traffic in F.C. did not justify the cost of bringing DD into town, as it requires a \$750K investment and a 20-year commitment and that would be the case with most of the chain type businesses. Art reported that he sent ARKHelps a thank you letter for their fund raising efforts. Art has been attending the GFCBA and Rail Trail meetings and reports that plans are being formulated for August 4, 2018, to hold three events in a four-day period.

CORRESPONDENCE: (President Bill Orasin)

President Orasin presented the following:

Glatfelter issued a check to cover the cost of the recent repairs to the boiler. They covered \$5,002 out of the \$5,502 leaving the \$500 deductible for the borough to cover.

MAYORS REPORT: (Mayor Pauline Wilcox)

Mayor Wilcox distributed the November 2017 police report and the Vandling Borough invoice for December patrols.

The Mayor reminded everyone that winter parking begins November 1 and runs through March 31. No parking on Main Street between 2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Parking Tickets will be issued.

Officers Crouse and Ramirez submitted resignations. Both had accepted full time jobs elsewhere. Councilman Cost offered a motion to accept both resignations. Councilman Lesjack seconded the motion. All voted aye and the resignations were accepted.

Mayor Wilcox asked council to approve Ms. Marissa Gillespie for an unpaid internship from January 22, 2018 to May 11, 2018. Ms. Gillespie is currently a student at Keystone College majoring in Criminal Justice. Mayor Wilcox assured council that she would do clerical work and would not be in the field. Mayor Wilcox spoke to Solicitor Smith who said that he could see no problems. He prepared a "Hold Harmless Waiver" and a confidentiality agreement for Ms. Gillespie. Councilman Cost made a motion to approve the internship. Councilwoman Matarese seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Wilcox asked council to approve a change to adopt salary changes for part-time officers beginning January 1 based on the previously approved rate schedule. Performance Evaluations were done on all officers, all were found to be satisfactory and rate changes approved for January 1 and annually on this date going forward. Councilman Cost proposed a motion to approve the Mayor's request approving all part-time officers for the proposed annual rate change effective January 1. Councilman Pearsall seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion in a roll call vote. The motion carried seven to zero.

Mayor Wilcox read her "2017 State of the Borough Address". A copy of her address is attached and available on the Borough website, www.forestcityborough.com. Local storeowner, Mary Ann Corey presented the Mayor with flowers.

SOLICITORS REPORT: (Paul E. Smith, Esq.)

Solicitor Smith reported that the signs for the "Young Lungs @ Play" were received and will be posted at Kennedy Park in the spring.

There are no changes to the Police Service Contract with Vandling Borough. Two patrols per day and call outs as needed for \$2,000 per month. Councilman Lesjack made a motion to approve the contract. Councilman Cost seconded the motion. All voted yes in a roll call vote – seven to zero, motion carried. The signed contract would be forwarded to Vandling for their approval at their monthly meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS:

President Orasin presented USDA Payment Request #60 for payment to All American Rooter for \$1,237.50. A roll call vote seven ayes, none opposed.

Ms. Vannan prepared the 2018 Meeting schedule for approval by council noting that the first meeting of 2018 would be a Re-organization meeting held on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 due to the New Year's Day holiday on Monday. Councilman Scalzo offered a motion to advertise. Councilman DeGonzague seconded the motion. All voted aye, the schedule will be advertised in the Forest City News and posted to the borough website.

CONTINUED BUSINESS:

There was some discussion about the new garbage system. Mayor Wilcox noted, "It seems to be a great system, I'm hearing a lot of positive comments." Councilman Cost agreed adding, "There are still a few issues to work through for the Main Street and the committee is working on resolving some of the problems with properties that do not need the services. The committee will be reviewing the requests that require a \$25 inspection fee and making a final determination on which cans are collected by County Waste based on exemption requests.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Orasin announced that due to the New Year's Day holiday, the first meeting of 2018 is on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

President Orasin offered Councilman Pearsall an opportunity to bid farewell. Councilman Pearsall offered the following, "I really wanted to get involved and did not realize how much time that really meant. I chose not to run again because I have too many other personal things going on with my daughter. Thank you to the people I've worked with for the past four years." He went on to thank Art McLain and Chief Johnson. He offered a special thanks to Bill Orasin and thanks to Cindy and Sharon for their work behind the scenes. He added, "Good luck to the new people getting involved" and asked people step up, "It's an under-appreciated job and council has to make the tough decisions, they are all here to make the town better.

President Orasin thanked Councilman Pearsall and closed with the following remarks, "I joined council in 2013, because I was dedicated to Forest City. I have always been in it for the greater good. I have a desire to hold onto the unique things about this town, things I grew up with and remember that were disappearing. Bringing back things like the siren and the Christmas lights were small but important goals. I began to come to these meetings five to seven years before I was on Council. Nobody spoke back then, now there is a lot more participation from Council and residents alike. A lot goes on that the public doesn't see or try to understand before making a comment or spreading misinformation. I've been most shocked by some of the selfishness displayed by residents and business owners who are interested only in their own ideas and self-centered agendas rather than joining in and working as part of a team. When you stand up against this, you only end up with enemies - people who turn their face when they see you. At some point, the negativity makes you ask 'Why do I do this?'. Well, we still do it because we care about the community as a whole. The community should support this group of dedicated people who serve the community and stand up against those people who display negativity. I can't say I'll never be back, but for now my job is in Wilkes-Barre and I'm out of town from around 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. You need and deserve someone who has more time to respond to all of the issues the borough faces, particularly during the day. It's a ton of work, but I've enjoyed it and I appreciate everyone who has helped me over the last few years." With that, everyone broke into applause and a standing ovation, to which President Orasin joined in and directed it back in support of the Mayor, Council members and staff.

Council Members Cost and Pearsall added their thanks and said that it has been a pleasure to serve with those officials whose terms are ending.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilman Scalzo moved to adjourn. Councilman Cost seconded the motion. All responded "aye" and the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.