



FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH

MINUTES

FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING HELD MAY 20, 2024

PRESENT: Andrew C. Bennett, Council President; Harrison S. Lauer, Vice-President; Frederick C. Leech, Sarah Hanna, Bradley D. Harrison, Betsy Monroe, Jonathan Colton, 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: Avery Litwin, Ethan Kolek, Junior Councilmember; Gino Mollica, Acting Chief for Foxwall EMS; Dr. Jen Swab, Foxwall EMS; 7 other members of Foxwall EMS; Eva Malecki, Thomas and Michelle Donahoe, Jim Ummer, Paula Casasent, Bob Heister, residents; 6 other attendees

VIA ZOOM: Michael Pohl, Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department; Margaret Pohl, resident; one other attendee

ABSENT: Jeanine A. Mancuso, Treasurer; Logan Dressman, Junior Council Person

Mr. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

MINUTES

Ms. Hanna moved that the April 15, 2024, meeting minutes be approved. Ms. Monroe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

Eva Malecki, 75 Woodland Farms Road, stated she believed the motion under the Public Safety Assistance Committee's Report on the agenda concerning Guidelines for Facilitating Emergency Response to Residences is inappropriate and unnecessary. She said the Police Department patrol cars are not equipped with best-in-class technology. She also said that if the Borough desires to provide emergency responders with additional confirmation of the correct emergency location, it should mandate, via ordinance, a uniform method for posting house numbers.

Jim Ummer, 200 Woodland Farms Road, stated he was opposed to any address changes.

Thomas Donahoe, 58 Woodland Farms Road, stated that if the Borough changes the official map or comprehensive plan, public notice should be given, a public meeting should be held, and then Council could vote on it.

Paula Casasent, 133 Woodland Farms Road, stated she does not want her address to be changed, and she agrees with her neighbors who previously spoke.

Michelle Donahoe, 58 Woodland Farms Road, stated the technology in the patrol vehicles is not state-of-the-art.

Bob Heister, 59 Woodland Farms Road, stated he was injured this past winter, and his Apple watch sent out an alert to emergency personnel with his geo-coordinates for his location.

PARK COMMISSION

Mr. Leech summarized the Park Commission meeting held on April 22, 2024.

Mr. Koehler said the Borough received notification from DEP stating that the permit for McCahill Park was imminent and should be received in the next two weeks.

Mayor Scott stated that student volunteers at Shady Side Academy have completed the connector trail between Scott Park and the Trillium Trail parking lot. A ceremonial recognition will be held in the coming weeks.

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CONTRACT AWARDS

Mr. Lauer moved to award the Base Bid for Contract No. 24-PW1, Public Works Operations Building Solar Panels, to the low bidder, Energy Independent Solutions, LLC (EIS), at a cost of \$70,700, subject to EIS obtaining the required insurance certificates, performance bond, and payment bond. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Borough received a Commonwealth Financing Authority Local Share Account—Statewide grant for the project in the amount of \$51,500. The remaining \$19,200 will come from the Public Works Capital Fund.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Stevens stated that Sergeant Craig Sorg was invited to attend the Blawnox Memorial Day Parade with the Community Relations vehicle. He also said the Fox Chapel Police Department will host a Bicycle Rodeo on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, from 5 – 7 p.m., at the Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church. Fox Chapel Day 2024 will be held on Saturday, June 15, 2024, at McCahill Park from noon to 4 p.m.

FIRE REPORT

Mike Pohl stated that with the continued discussions surrounding automatic and false fire alarms, three automatic fire alarms alerted the Fire Department to actual emergencies in April.

FOXWALL EMS REPORT

Chief Mollica said this week was National EMS Week. Borough Council and all those in attendance gave a round of applause to the members of Foxwall EMS. Chief Mollica recognized Dr. Jen Swab, who received the 2024 National Vanguard Award at the American Ambulance Association conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Swab received a round of applause for her accomplishment. Mr. Bennett congratulated Dr. Swab on behalf of Borough Council.

PUBLIC SAFETY ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE (PSAC) REPORT

Facilitating Emergency Response to Residence Guidelines

Ms. Monroe summarized the meeting from April 30, 2024. She said the PSAC is working on enhancing and communicating the Fox Chapel Alert System to get important information to residents. An article in the summer 2024 newsletter will be on Fox Chapel Alert and how to sign up.

Ms. Monroe said the PSAC is working on reducing the number of false fire alarms in the Borough. The Borough will continue using the fire sirens, but the PSAC wants to ensure they go off for true emergencies.

The PSAC is also working on improving wireless communication to reduce dead spots in the community.

Ms. Monroe stated that the main issue discussed at the April meeting was facilitating emergency response to residences. This had been a topic with the Borough for a few years, and it came up most recently in 2022. The Police Department and Public Works Department reviewed addresses in the Borough and identified about 250 addresses that did not comply with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) Standards (Guidelines that are widely followed by municipalities).

Ms. Monroe's recommendation was to review addresses and discrepancies and have a standard guiding decision on what changes are believed to be important for public safety and what changes within the NENA standards are acceptable within the community. The PSAC reviewed those discrepancies and the addresses in the Borough. As a result, they created the following four guiding recommendations:

1. Addresses must match access: driveway access will dictate the road for the address.
2. Address numbers will follow in sequence with odd and even numbers on opposite sides.
3. Shared driveways with two through four houses will have Fox Chapel number signage.
4. Private driveways with new road names will be created for shared driveways with more than four houses.

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Borough staff will make their best effort to identify solutions that solve public safety concerns with the minimum impact on homeowners.

Ms. Monroe stated that this is only one way to improve the Police Department and First Responders accessing addresses in an emergency. Moving forward, the Borough will purchase the best-in-class technology for police vehicles with the approval of Chief Stevens. The PSAC would like the Borough to purchase one system to outfit one police vehicle fully and complete a test case to ensure the technology resolves issues with dead spots and accomplishes what it is intended to do before making the purchase for the entire fleet.

Ms. Monroe also said that the PSAC would recommend that existing houses have uniform numbering that is visible from the street.

Chief Stevens stated that the Borough currently has top-notch technology in all vehicles. He is currently working with AT&T and ISP to obtain quotes for external antennas and routers for the vehicles. He also said that technology is not foolproof. He said the police radios are the number one way to get to a call and will always work.

Mr. Colton clarified that the motion regarding Facilitating Emergency Response to Residences was to approve the guidelines and not to change specific addresses. Mr. Colton suggested changing specific wording in the motion on the agenda, specifically replacing the word "will" with "should" and "when evaluating the public safety concerns for addresses" with "when identifying addresses that pose challenges to emergency response."

Mr. Colton made the following motion to adopt the Facilitating Emergency Response to Residences Guidelines for the Borough to follow when identifying addresses that pose challenges to emergency response in the Borough:

1. Addresses should match access: driveway access should dictate the road for the address.
2. Address numbers should follow in sequence with odd and even numbers on opposite sides.
3. Shared driveways with two through four houses should have Fox Chapel number signage.
4. Private drives with new road names should be created for shared driveways with more than four houses.

Borough staff will make their best effort to identify solutions that solve public safety concerns with the minimum impact on homeowners.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed unanimously.

REFUSE AND RECYCLING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lauer summarized the April 30, 2024, meeting. The subcommittee met with numerous haulers over the past few months and has created a survey they will send to Borough residents in the next few weeks to gain insight into whether they want to maintain the same refuse and recycling service they have now with a substantial incremental increase in their Borough real estate tax or switch to limited automated curbside service at a rate similar to what the Borough is currently paying. With the limited automated curbside collection, residents are also given the option to pay for an upgrade to garage door service or additional carts. Residents will be able to take the survey on the postcard that will be provided to them, or they can go online to take the survey.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Mr. Kurpakus said the PWD is finishing up with their stormwater improvements to prepare for paving. Youngblood Paving, Inc. will begin paving the Highland Road side of the Borough beginning the week of June 3, 2024.

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TREASURER REPORT

Mr. Lauer stated the money raised to date for Fox Chapel Day is \$16,100, which consists of \$5,600 from donations from vendors, including \$3,000 from Dollar Bank, \$5,000 which was transferred from the General Fund at the beginning of 2024, and \$5,500 that was carried over from last year.

Ratification of Payments – April 2024

Mr. Leech moved to ratify the payment of bills for April 2024 General Fund Vouchers 4763 - 4866 in the amount of \$1,008,941.43. Ms. Monroe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

SALE OF EQUIPMENT

Municibid – 2012 Ford F350 Super Duty Crew Cab

Ms. Monroe moved to award the sale of the 2012 Ford F350 Super Duty Crew Cab to the high bidder, Jason McMaster, in the amount of \$18,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lauer and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Foxwall EMS Request for Supplemental Funding

Mr. Lauer summarized Foxwall EMS's request for supplemental funding to Fox Chapel and Aspinwall Boroughs. This request included a \$100,000 increase to bolster salaries and employee retention, which will be on an annual continuing basis. The second request was for the purchase of a new ambulance in the amount of \$322,000, which is a one-time request for 2024.

The pro rata share for the Borough of Fox Chapel is 60%, and Aspinwall Borough is 40%.

Mr. Lauer moved to approve the request from Foxwall EMS for supplemental funding of \$60,000 to bolster salaries and employee retention, conditioned on Aspinwall's funding its 40% share of such supplemental funding, equal to \$40,000. This is also contingent upon the future responsibility and oversight for the accounts payable of Foxwall being assumed by Fox Chapel and Aspinwall Boroughs. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed with an abstention from Mr. Harrison due to a conflict of interest, as he serves on the Board for Foxwall EMS.

Mr. Lauer moved to approve the request to purchase a new ambulance with the Borough's contribution of \$193,200, conditioned on Aspinwall's funding its 40% share of such purchase, equal to \$128,800, as referenced in Resolution 692. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed with an abstention from Mr. Harrison due to a conflict of interest, as he serves on the Board for Foxwall EMS.

Resolution No. 692

Mr. Lauer moved to adopt Resolution No. 692, authorizing the Borough of Fox Chapel to enter into an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with the Borough of Aspinwall to contribute Borough funds to Foxwall Emergency Medical Service, Inc. for the purchase of a new ambulance and to establish the repayment terms for a \$64,400 loan to the Borough of Aspinwall by the Borough of Fox Chapel. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed with an abstention from Mr. Harrison due to a conflict of interest, as he serves on the Board for Foxwall EMS. Mr. Bennett stated that it should be noted that there is a 0% interest rate on this loan to Aspinwall Borough.

Ordinance 729 Amending Section 338.13A, Stop Sign Intersections Established, of the Code of the Borough

Mr. Harrison moved to enact Ordinance 729, amending Section 338.13A, Stop Intersections Established, of the Code of the Borough by adding a stop sign on Fox Chapel Road at Powers Run Road in the north direction. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed unanimously.

After receiving requests from residents, the Borough Manager requested a traffic study for this intersection by PennDOT and Allegheny County.

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Ordinance 730 Establishing the Sewer Rates for Allegheny Valley Joint Sewer Authority

Mr. Lauer moved to enact Ordinance No. 730, establishing the sewer rates for Allegheny County Joint Sewer Authority (AVJSA) and restating Borough, Harmar, and Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) rates. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leech and passed with a Nay vote from Mr. Harrison.

Investment Policy Statement for the Borough of Fox Chapel Non-Uniform and Police Pension Plans

Mr. Lauer summarized the changes made by Guyasuta Investors to the Investment Policy Statement under the Investment Philosophy Section- Diversification: Common Stocks and Fixed Income for the Borough of Fox Chapel Non-Uniform and Police Pension Plans.

Mr. Lauer moved to approve the modified Investment Policy Statement for the Borough of Fox Chapel Non-Uniform and Police Pension Plans. Mr. Leech seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

North Hills Council of Governments: Engagement to Perform Verizon Cable Franchise Renewal Services

Mr. Lauer moved to accept the engagement of services of The Cohen Law Group to assist in a franchise fee audit and cable franchise renewal negotiations with Verizon of Pennsylvania, Inc. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leech.

Mr. Leech asked Mr. Koehler if the scope of services touched on rates and other tangible items. Mr. Koehler stated that the scope of services touched all aspects. Mr. Leech suggested that The Cohen Group discuss the cleanup of abandoned wires and poles. Mr. Bowden asked if the Borough could suggest that the Cohen Group also discuss customer service calls. Mr. Koehler said he will ensure these items are addressed with The Cohen Group in their discussions with Verizon of Pennsylvania, Inc.

The motion passed unanimously.

At 8:01 p.m., Borough Council adjourned into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter. At 8:27 p.m., the meeting was reconvened.

With no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

SHAWN MARIE PETERSON
Borough Secretary