



FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH

MINUTES

FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING HELD OCTOBER 21, 2024

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Avery Litwin, Ethan Kolek, Kabeer Chopra, Junior Councilmembers; Ben Shopland, Chief for Foxwall EMS; Mike Pohl, Fox Chapel Volunteer Fire Department; Richard Berglund, Fran Muracca, Patrick and Cynthia Minogue, Nanette Bennett, Harper Bennett, Douglas Campbell, Jonathan Hosack, Residents

VIA ZOOM: Michael J. Stevens, Chief of Police; plus two others

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

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Mr. Lauer moved that the September 16, 2024, meeting minutes be approved. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

Richard Berglund, 444 Dorseyville Road, stated he and his wife were victims of a break-in at their home in June 2024. He stated the Borough needs cameras and a geo fence to protect the citizens.

Fran Muracca, 202 Staffordshire Place, stated he called the Police Department last week after a suspicious person was on his property when he was returning home. He said the description of the person on his property was similar to the description provided of the members of the burglary ring responsible for some of the break-ins that have occurred in the Borough. When the officer arrived, it was determined the young man was canvassing for a political organization. Mr. Muracca said that the community needs to know when there are canvassers in the Borough. He also wanted to know when there was an evaluation done regarding Police training. He said the Borough is forcing residents to spend thousands of dollars to purchase cameras for their homes due to the break-ins.

Mr. Bennett stated that during every general election, as a First Amendment right, canvassers are in the area and have a right to be, as long as there is not a 'No Trespassing' or 'Do Not Solicit' sign posted.

Cynthia Minogue, 440 Dorseyville Road, stated she didn't know a break-in occurred on her road until she received a text from her neighbor, Mr. Berglund. She stated that residents should be made aware of the existence of canvassers in the Borough.

Mr. Bowden stated that the Supreme Court grants permission to certain affiliations, such as religious and political canvassers, the right to canvass in neighborhoods without permits as part of their First Amendment rights. He said that in order for canvassers not to access a resident's property, 'No Trespassing' signs need to be posted on the property.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Stevens stated the Borough was aware of canvassers in the area last week, as Indiana Township alerted the Borough. He stated Indiana Township had already stopped and identified the canvassers when they were in their municipality and passed the information on to the Borough.

He stated that when solicitors want to sell products in the Borough, they must first provide their driver's licenses and a background check is done on each individual. For those individuals who pass the background check, a list of homes in

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the Borough that are on the 'Do Not Solicit' list is provided. Canvassers who are from political or religious organizations are not required to have a permit and, therefore, are not issued a list.

Mr. Bennett asked if a Fox Chapel Alert should be sent to residents when canvassers are known to be in the Borough to inform them.

Mr. Harrison asked if this matter should be discussed at the Public Safety Assistance Committee meeting. All agreed that the PSAC should discuss the issuing of a Fox Chapel Alert when canvassers are in the area and present recommendations to the Council on how best to handle the matter in the future.

Chief Stevens stated that the Police Department takes resident concerns and safety very seriously and is utilizing every resource available to ensure the safety of the residents regarding the break-ins.

Chief Stevens also stated that 12 license plate readers and cameras will be installed in Fox Chapel Borough, Indiana, and O'Hara Townships, courtesy of the District Attorney's office. He said the cameras have begun to be installed and should be completed within a month.

Chief Stevens said he understands the importance of police training for all officers. He said training is constant, and the department is absolutely committed to ensuring officers are trained on new equipment, tactics, and weapons. He said many officers are internal instructors for the department.

He also said that if any resident has a concern, please call or email him, as he is always available. Ms. Hanna asked for clarification on when a resident should call 911 instead of the non-emergency number. Chief Stevens stated that if a resident is ever in doubt of which number to call, call 911.

Resignation of Officer Painter

Chief Stevens said that Officer Adam Painter has submitted a letter of resignation effective November 27, 2024. He also publicly thanked Officer Painter for his four years of service to the Borough of Fox Chapel.

Ms. Monroe moved to accept Officer Adam Painter's resignation, effective November 27, 2024. Ms. Hanna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Lauer moved to approve the Civil Service Commission to proceed with the hiring process for a new patrol officer. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and passed unanimously.

Ms. Monroe moved to approve the advertisement for the Civil Service Examination. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harrison and passed unanimously.

Ms. Hanna moved to approve the designation of Police Consulting Services to administer the written examination for the patrol officer position. Ms. Monroe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 702

Before moving on to the Foxwall Report, Mayor Scott presented Mr. Bennett with an official proclamation, Resolution No. 702, recognizing Mr. Bennett's 25 years of service on Borough Council. Mayor Scott stated that Mr. Bennett has been dedicated to the Borough for the past 25 years, has served with integrity, and operated with respect to the residents, Borough staff, and fellow Council members.

After a round of applause, Mr. Bennett thanked Mayor Scott and stated that the three most important things Borough Council discusses are fire, police, and infrastructure.

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Mr. Lauer moved to approve Resolution No. 702, recognizing Andrew C. Bennett for his 25 years of dedicated service as a member of Borough Council. Mr. Leech seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

FIRE REPORT

Mr. Koehler stated that work has begun on the renovations of VFD Station No. 1. He said the area has been gutted, and new walls will be installed shortly. The work is projected to be completed by the end of 2024.

FOXWALL EMS REPORT

Mr. Shopland called attention to a new item in the report, which included a list of billable and non-billable calls Foxwall responded to last month.

Mr. Bennett asked if Mr. Shopland could provide the Profit and Loss Report as a monthly report and year-to-date. Mr. Shopland stated he would do this moving forward.

Mr. Lauer asked if Foxwall has an advanced budget available to share so the Borough Council could review it. Mr. Shopland stated he would share this information.

PUBLIC SAFETY ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

Ms. Monroe stated that the Committee has begun transitioning from addressing, and fire siren issues to focusing on traffic calming and traffic safety issues. The Committee is working on gathering information on traffic accidents in the Borough to establish guidelines for action and situations that need to be reviewed.

The Committee is also working with O'Hara Township on updating its Traffic Calming Resolution, which the Committee will recommend Borough Council adopt when completed. The Joint Comprehensive Plan with O'Hara Township states that the two municipalities may wish to pursue a multi-pronged approach for local roads, as it is typical for communities in similar situations to apply new policies, programs, and infrastructure for maximum effectiveness.

She also said the agenda for the October meeting will now include when Fox Chapel Alerts, informing residents about solicitors and canvassers in the Borough, should be sent out.

Mr. Lauer asked if O'Hara Township had adopted the Joint Comprehensive Plan at their October meeting. Mr. Koehler said that they had. Mr. Colton asked that if O'Hara Township made any amendments to the Plan, the amendments be forwarded to the Council for review. Mr. Koehler said that he would contact O'Hara Township and send this information to the Council.

Mr. Colton asked which roadway the Borough will focus on next regarding address changes. Mr. Koehler stated that Fairview Road is the next road to be completed. Mr. Koehler also said that the Borough would not start working with residents along Fairview Road until after the new year.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Mr. Kurpakus stated that the PWD has begun its leaf collection in the Borough. Because it is still slow-moving, the Department is able to finish the sanitary sewer and stormwater repairs. He also said that Youngblood Paving is back in the Borough this week working on utility patching, which will be completed in the next few weeks.

TREASURER REPORT

Ms. Mancuso stated that the 2025 budget is almost complete and will be sent to the Finance Committee for review. She also said EIT continues to be strong, and the pension plans continue to make gains.

Ratification of Payments – September 2024

Mr. Leech moved to ratify the payment of bills for September 2024 General Fund Vouchers 5211 - 5279 in the amount of \$1,135,759.27. Mr. Lauer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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NEW BUSINESS

Waiver for Meadow – 578 Dorseyville Road

Mr. Hosack briefly discussed the request for a meadow on his property. Mr. Lauer moved to approve a waiver for a meadow at 578 Dorseyville Road. Mr. Colton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Waiver for Meadow – 730 Fairview Road

Mr. Campbell briefly discussed the request for a meadow on his property. Ms. Hanna moved to approve a waiver for a meadow at 730 Fairview Road. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Hanna asked Mr. Campbell why he wanted to create a meadow. He answered that it would be nice to have some variation between the cut grass in his backyard and a meadow. He would like to see more birds, flowers, and creatures, and he said the site lends itself to it.

Mayor Scott stated that the Borough will also expand its meadow at the Welcome Garden on Fox Chapel Road and install a meadow near Beechwood Farms.

Resolution No. 703

Mr. Leech moved to adopt Resolution No. 703, authorizing the Borough of Fox Chapel to enter into a grant contract with Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED) through the Active Allegheny Grant Program to apply for funds in the amount of \$30,000 for the proposed O'Hara/Fox Chapel Community Connector. The Borough also allocates \$29,945 of matching funds to the project. This resolution also designated Gary J. Koehler, Borough Manager, as the official to execute all documents and agreements between Fox Chapel and ACED to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested grant.

Ms. Hanna seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 704

Ms. Hanna moved to approve Resolution No. 704, authorizing the Borough of Fox Chapel to request a \$650,000 Statewide Local Share Assessment grant from the Commonwealth Financing Authority for the Dorseyville Fire Station Improvements Project. This resolution also designates Gary J. Koehler, Borough Manager, and Andrew C. Bennett, Council President, as the officials to execute all documents and agreements between the Borough of Fox Chapel and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested grant.

Mr. Lauer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Bennett stated that Jeffrey Todd, who has served for 18 years on the Planning Commission, has resigned. Mr. Koehler stated that the fall newsletter contained an article requesting interested residents who wish to serve on the Commission submit their resumes to the Borough. The Borough website also contains this information.

Mr. Colton noted that six of the building permits for the month of September indicated waivers from Workers' Compensation requirements. Mr. Koehler stated he would review this with the Zoning Administrator and provide information to Council.

With no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

SHAWN MARIE PETERSON
Borough Secretary