
Minutes

Call to Order: Mr. Porco

Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Heller

Roll Call:

Mr. Belmonte	Yes	Mr. Porco	Yes
Mr. Karas	Yes	Mayor Heller	Yes
Ms. Katchmar	Yes	Janet Sullivan, Tax Collector	Yes
Ms. Liscio	Yes	Blaine Lucas, Solicitor	Yes
Mr. O'Malley	Yes	Paul Gaus, Engineer	Yes
Mr. Tomasic	Yes	Steven Morus, Manager	Yes

President's Report: Mr. Porco

Mr. Porco reported:

- The tree burning will be held this Friday evening at 7:30 PM, postponed from last Friday.
- Noted that a new President of the United States was sworn in yesterday and discussed the proposed stimulus package for infrastructure. We have asked for consideration for a portion of these funds through Rep. Doyle. Suggests that we try to put together a package of projects that could be ready to go in a few months. He asked public works committee to consider.
- Discussed the "air of responsibility" noted by President Obama and encouraged all to share in that spirit.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Heller

Mayor Heller reported:

- Further information on the tree burning and suggested adding a Steeler rally to the agenda.
- Also noted the new President and made comments on the state of the economy and the current business climate. He expressed concern about layoffs and the need for support for neighbors. He urged all to make 2009 as positive as possible and encouraged all to help borough citizens.

- Catholic Schools Week begins on Sunday and he noted St. Maurice's involvement. Monday, 9 AM mass will include Bishop Zubik. Mayor Heller will attend. He will also attend the ice cream social later in the week and will issue a proclamation recognizing the event and St. Maurice School.

Tax Collector's Report:

Ms. Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan presented her monthly report.

Police Chief's Report:

Chief Fabrizi

Chief Fabrizi presented his monthly report and reported on the smooth operator program.

Other items reported: monitoring the dump trucks on Greensburg Pike – Federal law on November 2007 mandated compliant traffic vests be worn – the department now has those vests – 7 auxiliary police will be at the tree burning to direct traffic and parking – thanks council for promoting the new sergeant – impressed with his positive ideas for the department.

Fire Chief's Report:

Chief Heller

No report.

Woodland Hills EMS Report:

Adam Knight

No report.

Solicitor's Report:

Blaine Lucas

Mr. Lucas noted:

New right to know policy resolution has been adopted. He has worked with borough staff to ensure we are in compliance.

Asked if council wanted a solicitor in attendance on the 3rd or the 5th of February. Suggestion made to switch to the opposite night for February. Mr. Porco noted we will discuss it under new business.

Wilkesburg Penn Joint Water Authority Report:

Ms. Broz

No report.

Public Comment

Chief Fabrizi added compliments for the public works crew for doing such a great job taking care of the streets this winter.

Committee Reports:

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr. Belmonte

General Report:

1. The committee discussed the status of a list of items that are pending or outstanding as did each of the other council committees.
2. The manager suggested that members keep abreast of a proposed stimulus package proposed by the incoming Obama administration that would provide funding for infrastructure projects around the country. The borough could benefit from funding assistance for sewer projects and paving projects among others should such funding filter down to municipalities.
3. The committee is reviewing a list of streets for the 2009 paving program. Due to costs and other factors it is likely that the borough will do less street segments this year compared to 2008. A list of all streets has been provided to the committee and a copy went to all members of council and the mayor for review.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Tomasic

Motion: Move to approve payment of bills for the month of December in the following amounts:

General Fund Budget:	\$143,911.23
Capital Improvements Plan:	\$ 1,222.99
Corrective Action Budget:	\$171,170.04
Liquid Fuels:	\$ 21,697.50
Road Improvement Fund:	\$ 102.44
2007 Bond Issue:	\$ 17,160.00

Moved: Mr. Tomasic
Second: Ms. Liscio

Roll Call Vote:	Mr. Belmonte	Yes
	Mr. Karas	Yes
	Ms. Katchmar	Yes
	Ms. Liscio	Yes

Mr. O'Malley	Yes
Mr. Tomasic	Yes
Mr. Porco	Yes

Detail of non general Fund Items:

Capital Improvements Plan:	Ball field renovations through grant; borough building repairs
Corrective Action Budget:	Sanitary sewer consent order work and related engineering expenses; service for sewer vector truck
Liquid Fuels:	Salt purchases
Road Improvement:	Miscellaneous supplies
2007 Bond Issue:	Westinghouse Roof Replacement

Motion: Move to approve an ordinance that increases the salary of the real estate tax collector to \$10,000 beginning January 1, 2010 while maintaining all other benefits as agreed upon in the current ordinance. (will be numbered Ord. 984)

Moved: Mr. Tomasic
Second: Mr. O'Malley

Ordinance Title reads as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF FOREST HILLS,
ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, SETTING THE
COMPENSATION AND COSTS AND EXPENSES PAID BY
THE BOROUGH FOR THE BOROUGH TAX COLLECTOR.

Mr. Porco asked if the public had any comment. No comments.

Roll Call Vote:	Mr. Belmonte	Yes
	Mr. Karas	Yes
	Ms. Katchmar	Yes
	Ms. Liscio	Yes
	Mr. O'Malley	Yes
	Mr. Tomasic	Yes
	Mr. Porco	Yes

General Report:

1. The manager reviewed the budget process to clear up confusion as to how it should operate. It is a policy he developed 8 years ago that begins the process

in August of each year through each department and is reviewed and discussed by council in public meetings until a final budget is approved.

2. The manager presented draft language for the corrective action ordinance which will specify that all funds received from the sewer fee is dedicated solely to sewer projects and related costs. The ordinance will be advertised then considered for approval once the manager determines if changes to the delinquency language should be included.

Mr. Tomasic – can we contact W.P.J.W.A. and or Alcosan to come out and have a meeting for local input regarding the sewer fees?

Mr. Morus – will contact Vivian Broz to see if a meeting can be arranged with the water authority. Will try to contact someone from Alcosan as well.

Mr. Tomasic – one of the main questions residents have is why are the sewage fees so high.

Mr. Porco – would this be a question/answer type of session?

Mr. Tomasic – yes, explaining why the fees are so high.

Mr. Porco – for the record we are mandated to do infrastructure and repairs and to provide the people with information.

3. In 2009, the borough will bill sewer fees and trash fees quarterly on the same bill although each fee will be shown separately on the billing card. Further information will be sent to each rate payer soon. The borough's software provider, SSI (Software Systems) will assist office staff with preparing bills for mailing at a cost of a few cents per bill which will be incorporated and will save time and money in the long run.
4. Several members of council along with representatives from the police association and the non uniform bargaining unit met with several firms who responded to the borough's pension request for proposals to discuss their offers.

BOROUGH PROPERTY

Mr. Karas

General Report:

1. Committee members reviewed a memo from arborist Ted Gilbert regarding trees that screen the public works storage area from the rear of homes along Atlantic Avenue. The committee asked that Ted's recommendation to plant 5 additional trees to increase screening potential be implemented this year with funds to come from the tree budget.

2. Cindy Simm reported that we have not received enough applications to staff Fun in the Park this summer. While we will continue to pursue staff for this activity it is possible that it will be cancelled this year.
3. Members agreed with the manager that a replacement should be hired for Don Gerken who is resigning as pool maintenance operator in May. The alternative would require that the crew take on these additional duties. The job description for the position will be updated and an ad placed in the next few weeks.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. O'Malley

General Report:

1. The committee reviewed draft language prepared by the Chief of Police with input from the manager on a policy for the new crime alert system. A final policy will be presented for council consideration in the next few months.
2. Members asked that the manager ensure that the existing property maintenance ordinance covering house numbers is enforced by the code officer. The house number section states:

304.3 Premises identification. Buildings shall have approved address numbers placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Address numbers shall be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches (102 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch (12.7 mm).

House numbering is important for several reasons including use by fire and EMS crews. The committee asked that the code officer inform people who are in violation and provide a friendly reminder first before actually issuing a violation notice.

3. Committee members reviewed the purchase of a new police car with the chief and asked for further information on alternatives including the purchase of a Ford Crown Victoria vs. a Chevy Impala.
4. The committee approved removing a street light on Greensburg Pike across from Garden Terrace because it believes that it duplicates a light on either side and is an unnecessary expense. They ask that other members of council discuss the proposal tonight.

Ms. Liscio – in her opinion there is more than a few feet between each light – the cost is \$71 a year – it is costing more to figure out whether or not we need the light.

Mr. Tomasic – believes it is \$174 a year for the street light – need to try and cut costs when you can – this would be a savings each year – the chief was asked so we could have another opinion.

Mayor – suggests sending a letter to the surrounding residents letting them know what we are proposing to do. The police secretary can pick out 3 to 4 houses each way and send out the letters with the proposal to remove the street light.

OPERATIONS & POLICY

Ms. Liscio

Motion: Move to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2008 council meeting.

Moved: Ms. Liscio
Second: Mr. Karas

Voice Vote – all in favor

Motion: Move to approve ordinance number 983 reducing the maximum allowed height of grass, weeds and other plant growth from 10 inches to 6 inches.

Moved: Ms. Liscio
Second: Ms. Katchmar

Ordinance Title reads as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF FOREST HILLS, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 5 OF THE FOREST HILLS BOROUGH CODE OF ORDINANCES, PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE, TO REDUCE THE MAXIMUM LEGAL HEIGHT OF WEED AND PLANT GROWTH FROM 10 INCHES TO 6 INCHES.

Voice Vote – all in favor

General Report:

1. The committee continues to seek volunteers for possible openings on various boards and committees. Interested residents are urged to contact the office as soon as possible for further information.
2. The committee recommends that several changes occur in the council committee system including that all committees be scheduled for a strict time limit for their meetings and that the order of meetings be varied from month to month rather than always allow the public works and public safety committees to meet first on their respective nights. This change will begin in February without objection.

Mr. Tomasic suggests that finance committee go first and be kept to 25 minutes.

Mr. Porco suggests bringing a timer.

Mayor thinks it is a good idea to hold each committee to 25 minutes and if further consideration is necessary move it to the end of the meeting.

PLANNING & ZONING

Ms. Katchmar

General Report:

1. The committee discussed several potential buyers for the old research center property as provided to us by CBS/Westinghouse. CBS appears willing to work with the borough to insure that the best use is found for this property.
2. Letters will be sent to all landlords this month indicating that the borough will begin enforcing the portion of the property maintenance code that requires rental property inspections.

Old Business:

Mr. Porco – in agreement to have the solicitor attend one committee night.

Mr. Tomasic – the second night would be good because if there was an issue that came up on Tuesday we could bring it to the committee table on Thursday for the solicitor's opinion.

Mr. Lucas – comments that he is available on Thursdays.

Mr. Karas – committee discussions are open but suggests having a format to leading the meeting.

Mayor Heller – comments that the committee Chair leads the meeting.

New Business:

None.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn or adjourn by acclamation

Moved: Mr. Tomasic
Second: Mr. Belmonte

Voice Vote – all in favor

- Next Scheduled Council Meeting: February 18, 2009
- Next Scheduled Committee Meetings (order to be determined): Tuesday, February 3, 2009 (Borough Property, Public Works, & Planning & Zoning) and Thursday, February 5, 2009 (Finance, Operations & Policy, & Public Safety).