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**MINUTES**

Call to Order:

Mr. Porco

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mayor O'Malley

Roll Call:

	<u>Present</u>		<u>Present</u>
Mr. Belmonte	Yes	Mr. Porco	Yes
Mr. Burleigh	Yes	Mayor O'Malley	Yes
Mr. Erbdinger	Yes	Janet Sullivan, Tax Collector	Yes
Mr. Karas	Yes	Steve Korbel, Solicitor	Yes
Mr. Tomasic	Yes	Paul Gaus, Engineer	Yes
Ms. Wood	Yes	Steven Morus, Manager	Yes

President's Report:

Mr. Porco

Mr. Porco announced an Executive Session on Tuesday, July 6 and again tonight to discuss contract issues and pending litigation matters.

Council met on Thursday, July 15 to discuss a borough strategic plan.

Two council members met last night with Edgewood Borough concerning a possible regionalization study. Ms. Wood will report later.

Mr. Porco noted the success of Community Day on July 5 and thanked the Civic Association for a great program.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor O'Malley

Welcomed all in attendance and hoped that those in attendance will continue to participate.

Mayor O'Malley noted activities held in the last few weeks during which he represented the borough.

Tax Collector's Report:

Ms. Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan presented her monthly report of collections.

Chief of Police Report:

Chief Williams

Chief Williams presented a report on police activities and noted issues regarding possible break-ins. If you see something that looks unusual, please call 911. Don't think you're bothering someone. We'd rather come ten times for something if it's nothing rather than miss something.

Fire Chief's Report:

Chief Theilacker

No report.

Woodland Hills EMS Report:

Adam Knight

No report.

Solicitor's Report:

Steve Korbel

Mr. Korbel reported on:

Council questions during committee meetings to remove a traffic sign at Braddock and Ridge – the sign can be removed

The mosaic sign which doesn't qualify under the zoning ordinance but can be placed in certain locations

CDBG grant on demolition of two properties

Wilkesburg Penn Joint Water Authority Report:

Ms. Broz

Ms. Broz presented a report of authority activities and noted the potential for monthly (instead of quarterly) bills in the future. The water authority will be changing out collection meters. Wireless meters will be installed so they don't have to get out of the vehicle to check residences. If you're not home when they pass through to do the switch, they'll leave a door hanger on your door, and it will be your responsibility to get in touch with them.

Public Comment – Agenda Items

*At this time, citizens may address council on any issue appearing on today's agenda. Comments on non-agenda items will be taken at the end of tonight's meeting. Citizens are asked to use the microphone at the speaker's stand, clearly state their name and address for the record and keep comments brief and to the point (5 minutes or less). It would be helpful to spell the last name for the record.*

Committee Reports:

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

Mr. Belmonte

**Motion:** Move to approve the job description drafted by the manager for the position of part time public works laborer and pool operator.

Moved: Mr. Belmonte  
Second: Mr. Tomasic

Roll Call Vote:	Mr. Belmonte	Yes
	Mr. Burleigh	Yes
	Mr. Erbeldinger	Yes
	Mr. Karas	Yes
	Mr. Tomasic	Yes
	Ms. Wood	Yes
	Mr. Porco	Yes

*General Report:*

1. The manager reported that he submitted three preliminary applications for hazard mitigation funds that may be available from FEMA to address several issues that create problems during snow and rain storms. They include Bright Park, the Watt Lane walkway drainage area and the drainage from the pool parking lot to the main park.
2. After measuring and reviewing, the foreman and engineer reported that we only have enough funds to do portions of Filmore curbs and sidewalk and suggested that council may wish to revisit the decision to replace concrete curbs with an asphalt wedge curb since funds would be insufficient to do more than spot asphalt curbs (rather than a full length curb). The committee decided that the original asphalt wedge curb idea should continue even if we are unable to replace the full curb. The engineer is preparing specifications and advertising based on this discussion.
3. Committee members continued to discuss the flow problem in the sanitary sewer line that drains from Braddock Road, along Watt Lane to Filmore and Atlantic Avenue and to the main line along Ardmore.
4. The manager suggested that the committee and council continue to monitor the availability of corrective action funds, as increased work means that the fund is decreasing significantly.
5. The crew will begin work on curb replacement along streets included in this year's paving program as well as catch basin repair so that the contractor can begin the work by August.

6. Paul Gaus submitted a final draft of the construction standards plan for committee review. He recommends that they be provided to the full council for review and approval via resolution once the committee has completed its review.
7. The borough will receive reimbursement for work during the February snowstorm from FEMA soon. It is estimated to be around \$35,000 and the committee agrees with the recommendation of the foreman that the funds be used to reimburse the public works overtime line item and equipment line items in the budget, without objection from council.
8. In the Committee of the Whole, members reviewed the qualifications of three engineering firms: Senate, Glenn and Gateway.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Erbeldinger

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

General Fund Budget:	\$114,030.58
Capital Improvements Plan:	\$ 10,285.64
Corrective Action Budget:	\$250,772.01
Liquid Fuels:	\$ 1,867.04
Road Improvement:	\$ 1,600.92
2007 Bond Issue	\$ 5,000.00

Moved: Mr. Erbeldinger  
Second: Mr. Burleigh

Roll Call Vote:	Mr. Belmonte	Yes
	Mr. Burleigh	Yes
	Mr. Erbeldinger	Yes
	Mr. Karas	Yes
	Mr. Tomasic	Yes
	Ms. Wood	Yes
	Mr. Porco	Yes

Detail of non-general Fund Items:

Capital Improvements Plan:	Computer purchase (grant funded), Small Crane for PW garage (grant funded), baby pool controller.
Corrective Action Budget:	Sanitary Sewer consent decree work; maintenance to Vactor and Camera trucks
Liquid Fuels:	Traffic signals; hot patch
Road Improvement:	Engineering work on 2010 program
2007 Bond Issue:	Bryn Mawr Gateway Project

**Motion:** Move to accept the proposal of Case Sabatini for auditing the borough's finances for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 with an option for 2013 with the cost of the proposal in the amount of \$9,990 per year.

Moved: Mr. Erbeldinger  
Second: Mr. Tomasic

Roll Call Vote:	Mr. Belmonte	Yes
	Mr. Burleigh	Yes
	Mr. Erbeldinger	Yes
	Mr. Karas	Yes
	Mr. Tomasic	Yes
	Ms. Wood	Yes
	Mr. Porco	Yes

*General Report:*

1. The borough will begin development of the 2011 budget and capital improvements plan in August with each department asked to review spending and submit a spending plan by mid to late September.
2. During the July committee meeting, the manager provided an overview and guide for the use of bond funds for various projects. It is recommended that debt only be used on assets that will meet or exceed the life of the borrowing rather than on items that may be short lived.
3. The committee continues to review various scenarios for the implementation of a municipal services fee that would assist the borough in paying the lease for the new fire truck. Members also asked that representatives of the Volunteer Fire Department attend the next committee of the whole meeting to discuss the revenues and expenditures related to their fund raising efforts to provide a better understanding of their needs.
4. The committee agreed with the manager's suggestion that grants received for the smaller volunteer organizations that do not have staff to monitor spending simply keep the funds with the borough and draw down money by first submitting proposed spending plans and then receipts to us rather than receiving a lump sum to spend as they wish. That way, we can monitor whether their proposed spending is in line with the grant narrative and budget before money is spent and whether they have to submit a letter to the state asking for an adjustment in the grant project in advance of spending.

**BOROUGH PROPERTY**

Mr. Karas

*General Report:*

1. The committee reviewed a number of suggestions and recommendations from the Recreation Board regarding pool funding, the rates set for pool passes, and 2011 marketing ideas. The Recreation Board minutes detailing this information are available online at foresthillspa.org or you can attend the next Rec Board meeting to discuss these recommendations with the board. The Rec Board's recommendation of an annual fee for all borough households to defray the cost of the pool is under review by the solicitor.
2. The solicitor was asked to comment on legal issues related to fees charged for use of borough parks as well as enforcement of regulations governing behavior at all parks.
3. The engineer was asked to review possible funding opportunities for repairs to the wall at the main park.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mr. Tomasic

**Motion:** Motion to approve an ordinance establishing the speed limit on Fairfax at 15 MPH based on a traffic study conducted by Gateway Engineers.

Moved: Mr. Tomasic  
Second: Ms. Wood

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Belmonte	Yes
Mr. Burleigh	Yes
Mr. Erbedinger	Yes
Mr. Karas	Yes
Mr. Tomasic	Yes
Ms. Wood	Yes
Mr. Porco	Yes

**Motion:** Motion to authorize the solicitor to prepare and advertise an ordinance establishing a three-way stop intersection on Fairfax at Roxbury based on a traffic study conducted by Gateway Engineers.

Moved: Mr. Tomasic  
Second: Mr. Erbedinger

***Voice Vote – all in favor***

*General Report:*

1. The committee reviewed the proposals for the Route 30 traffic light synchronization study conducted by SPC. The committee indicated their preference for the optical emergency vehicle preemption system despite its added cost over the audible version. However, the decision to use one of these two systems depends on the preference of other communities along the Route 30 corridor between the Parkway East I-376 and Route 48 rather than the borough's alone. Due to the additional cost, others are requesting the use of the cheaper audible system instead.
2. Other aspects of the report were reviewed as well, including the timing of lights at various intersections, the installation of LED lights and the use of pedestrian crossing lights.
3. The Committee of the Whole reviewed the request of the FHVFD to consider a resolution supporting small games of chance. This will be discussed further with members of the department at the August Committee of the Whole.

**OPERATIONS & POLICY**

Ms. Wood

**Motion:** Move to approve the minutes from the June 16, 2010 council meeting.

Moved: Ms. Wood  
Second: Mr. Tomasic

***Voice Vote – all in favor***

**Motion:** Motion to approve the bid of Iron Mike's Tree Service for tree pruning work in the amount of \$5,300 as opened, reviewed and recommended by the Tree & Shrub Committee.

Moved: Ms. Wood  
Second: Mr. Burleigh

Bids received and opened by the Tree and Shrub Committee at their July 14, 2010 public meeting:

Carl's Tree Service	\$8,225
Emery Tree Service	\$5,889
Ray's Tree Service	\$7,470
Iron Mike's Tree Service	\$5,300
Krusper-Taylor Tree Service	\$7,800

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Roll Call Vote:      Mr. Belmonte      Yes  
                             Mr. Burleigh      Yes  
                             Mr. Erbeldinger      Yes  
                             Mr. Karas      Yes  
                             Mr. Tomasic      Yes  
                             Ms. Wood      Yes  
                             Mr. Porco      Yes

**Motion:**      Motion to place the artwork from the Woodland Hills Banner/Mosaic project at the following location in the borough – *against the wall at Yost and Ardmore Blvd. maximum of 4' x 8'* with specifications based on the borough's zoning requirements to be approved by the borough solicitor.

Moved:      Ms. Wood  
Second:      Mr. Tomasic

Roll Call Vote:      Mr. Belmonte      Yes  
                             Mr. Burleigh      Yes  
                             Mr. Erbeldinger      Yes  
                             Mr. Karas      Yes  
                             Mr. Tomasic      Yes  
                             Ms. Wood      Yes  
                             Mr. Porco      Yes

*General Report:*

1. The Marketing and Events Coordinator is reviewing options for the promotional map project with several companies and has been asked to select a company that will provide the best option for the borough.
2. Members are reviewing a suitable honor for the late Fire Chief Ray Heller Sr. with members of the Volunteer Fire Department. Further discussion will continue at future committee meetings. Ms. Wood outlined the plans for Sunday, October 3 at 2 PM.
3. Council held a strategic planning meeting on Thursday July 15, 2010 at the recreation center lodge. The next meeting remains unscheduled at this time.
4. Police Regionalization Study – we're in very preliminary meetings. Mr. Belmont and Ms. Wood attended a meeting with folks from Edgewood Borough to conduct just a study of what it might look like to work in cooperation with the Edgewood Borough. They recommended and we agreed that the next step would be to get our chief and their chief together to just sit down and talk about the pros and cons to see what could work and wouldn't work and just have some discussion. We'd like to have a meeting between the two of them on August 26.

**PLANNING & ZONING**

Mr. Burleigh

*General Report:*

1. The committee asked that all council members review the submission by Wilkesburg Borough of their draft comprehensive plan for any comment that may be offered.
2. Members met with Code Officer Ron Willard to discuss code enforcement activities and asked that he attend all future meetings of this committee.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Mr. Belmonte: – On Friday, 7/16, he attended the same conference that Mayor O'Malley and Borough Manager Steve Morus attended. The Institute of Politics at the University of Pittsburgh had many people from all levels of government tell him how dire our financial situation is. Two numbers jumped out at him that he stated we are sure not to forget. The state budget next year is projected to be a \$1.18 billion deficit.

The budget was balanced this year because stimulus money was used this year one time only. That's not going to be there next year. The second figure that jumped out at him was the number of pension plans in the Commonwealth. Auditor General, Jack Wagner, spoke and said we've got to do something about this. He said that of all of the pension plans municipally in the US, 25% exist in PA, and that's unsustainable. He wanted everyone to have a general idea as to the broader picture as to what we're dealing with.

Devon Wood (Trees): - She spoke regarding the Mayor's comment about attending the meeting with CDC about the trees. Those were trees planted in the median that, unfortunately, were just planted too low. They worked with our arborist and the engineer who worked on that project. They are now raised up, they should live, and they're doing fine.

Mr. Porco (Strategic Planning Session): – He stated that we need to schedule our next strategic planning session. We met in July so we should meet sometime in September. He asked all council members to look at their September agendas and to try and pick a time where everyone can convene, along with the Borough Manager. Once a date has been picked, it will be advertised, and it will be a public meeting. He encouraged any member of the public that would like to attend to attend. This is a long-term vision for the community. Public participation is welcome.

He noted National Night Out is Tuesday, August 3 and asked everyone to please put your porch lights on.

Public Comment – Other Items

*At this time citizens may address council on any issue. Citizens are asked to use the microphone at the speaker's stand, clearly state their name and address for the record and keep comments brief and to the point (5 minutes or less). It would be helpful to spell the last name for the record.*

Mr. Porco outlined the rules for speaking and encouraged all to keep to a few minutes so that all may be heard. He stressed that this is public comment session; not a question and answer period. After all members of the public have given their comments, the president of council will have a statement which will try and respond to all concerns which have been brought to our attention this evening.

Ed Bennick, 509 Windsor Ave: – He stated that he moved to this borough is because of our police and fire protection and the great schools for his kids. He said having our police not have another back up officer on duty with him is crazy and that we might as well shoot them ourselves. The criminal mind is going to figure out that Forest Hills is a sitting duck. He was also upset that we didn't take the \$100,000 grant because Borough Council said there were too many problems to deal with it. He stated that part-time police are not going to care about these residents like our guys do. He also stated that with only one person on duty in the winter time and hunting season people are going to take advantage of this and start hunting in our recreation centers. They know only 1 officer won't be able to handle all that.

Doug Doyle, 21 Hillcrest Road: – He asked council if anyone of them would like to be the only councilman sitting up there today and stated that they have each other's support. It isn't a life or death situation like the police are in. He mentioned the shooting where 2 people were killed is 1.7 miles from our border. He mentioned that the tax base has decreased and that if every house was decreased in value by \$2,000 because of crime, that dollar figure would dwarf the \$70,000. He said our police are the face of this community, and that his son couldn't name one council member, but he could name every police officer – Officer Lenny, Officer Cooley, the tattoo guy. He wanted to know if council has evaluated the risk.

Celeste Liscio, 108 Avenue L: – She stated that everyone who lives and works in this Borough deserves to feel safe and secure. She stated that she sat on council and knows the budgeting is not an easy process and wanted to know why we're cutting important things like Public Safety. What were you thinking when you used \$5,000 for a Gateway to Bryn Mawr? She said she has no problem giving money to Bryn Mawr if you're taking care of infrastructure, but you're paying for a mosaic flower pot – that's crazy. She wanted council to know that we're not here to tell them to raise our taxes but that we care. She also wanted council to know that residents are here to tell them to be more judicious and prioritize our money, spend it correctly, and use it for things that are not going to erode our tax base.

Faith Katchmar, 210 Kohnak Lane: – She was stunned and dismayed at the decision to have one officer on duty without a back-up officer. She couldn't understand how 6 of 7 council members made this decision. She stated that council has sent the officers the message that they are not valued and that their safety has been jeopardized, as well as her safety and the community's safety. The Borough Council must be cognizant that the growth, health and well-being of Forest Hills will deteriorate if we experience a rise in criminal activity. We are better served by full-time officers with living wages that are stable in their employment than by part-time officers who work in many towns filling shifts in and ill-equipped police departments that are struggling to cope with rising crime rates. She mentioned decreasing the legal fees to cut costs and asked that the vote be rescinded.

Paul Devito, 705 Cascade Road: – He stated that he grew up in the Rankin/Braddock area and saw what happened there. His father still lives there, and won't leave the house without a pistol. He said they have a part-time police force, and in case Forest Hills forgets, we are surrounded by areas that are declining. He also said that Forest Hills has maintained its status because of its police force and the community that we live in. Going to a part-time police force is going to allow the "element" to trickle in.

Tammy Kaylo, 708 Filmore Road: – She stated that the decision not to hire another full-time police officer will be a severe detriment to our community. Also stated neighboring officers don't know the area like our officers do and their response time may be slow. She is concerned that there won't be enough police and that what if 1 officer is injured or killed while on a call, and no back up has arrived from a neighboring area there will be no one to assist. She thanked the one council person who had the strength to vote for hiring another full-time officer.

Mr. Rodriguez, 1987 Centurion Drive: – He brought a petition from 48 people from his condo building. He stated that a few years ago, DC went through a similar situation with reducing the police force. Within a short time, they ended up spending more time and money in police work and a reduction of other services as a result of cutting the police force. He stated that crime is creeping into the surrounding areas – Wilksburg, Braddock, Penn Hills. We don't want to go that route. He stated he appreciated what the police do and offered his help.

Nina Stahlburg, 211 Washington Road: – She stated the money that council is budgeting comes from the citizens and that we need more citizens in our tax base to pay more money. She said we can't take away our safety – that is so important. She also stated that people are looking for places to live so they look in Forest Hills; nobody wants to live in Wilksburg or Penn Hills, the crime rate is too high. She stated if criminals find out that we've done away with some of our police department, the crime rate is going to go up, and new families aren't going to move into the area to supply those taxes that are needed to balance the budget. She gave council a gift (a test) used by CEOs, doctors, attorneys all over the world - a 4-way test to make decisions. 1) Is it the truth? 2) Is it fair to all concerned?, 3) Will it build goodwill and better friendship?, 4) Is it beneficial to all concerned?

Don Haché, 535 Ogden Avenue: – He commented on police officers' service and was concerned that there wasn't anything about our law enforcement on the website. He was also concerned about the one officer per shift and having the need for officers to often work 16-hour shifts. He asked what happens to the \$100,000 grant after 2 years. He also said the borough has made some decisions that are not good – the arches for example. He said we need to know that decisions are being made so that our money is being spent properly. He asked council to please give this a lot of thought.

Larry Sax, 253 Sharon Drive – Asst District Attorney in Allegheny County: Stated he's seen the results of part-time police work. Cases are difficult to win because they are not particularly well trained, oftentimes splitting their time between 3 or 4 different communities because pay is low and benefits are non-existent. Getting them to come to court is non-existent because of other obligations in other communities. He can't imagine what it would be like to patrol our streets with no back up. If there's a problem in Churchill and they need back up, they expect our 1 officer to respond. He noted that all surrounding communities are in similar situations and that if we need back up, they most likely won't be available. He suggested that council's priorities are a little twisted.

Ken Gormley, 228 Glasgow Road (Former Mayor): He stated that when he was Mayor they debated the same issue and reached the conclusion that public safety had to come first. He mentioned the very difficult times with officers being shot here and in adjoining boroughs; he shuttered to think what would have happened if we had not had a full complement of officers. He said everyone is having financial difficulty right now, but it's a matter of prioritizing. He said council has a difficult job, but they need to figure out how to get this done. He said to remember that when you were voted in, it was because you were going to listen to the citizens and do what was good for the borough and do the will of the citizens.

Frank Sabino, 409 Decatur Ave: – Reiterated what Ken Gormley stated. Frank agrees with him wholeheartedly, and agrees that very few things in this Borough are more important than the safety of the people and the safety of the policeman who look out for the safety of the people. It's absolutely necessary that we have a full-time policeman to serve on our department and do whatever is necessary to pull out whatever else needs to be taken out of the budget to cover the costs.

Lorie Melton, 216 Bevington Road: – Stated that we need to have full-time officers for their safety and their mental and emotional health.

Katie Whitlatch, 220 Bevington Road: – She mentioned benchmarking with neighboring communities - it's important to decide who has part-time, full-time, etc. She serves on the Neighborhood Crime Resistance Committee, and she said there comes a point where you say why bother having that committee when there are no police in the area to back it up? What do you do when you call 911 and nobody shows up? If police aren't there to back us up, what is the sense? When the police officers are concerned about being on duty by themselves and about having overworked part-time officers as part of their force, I think that's a major concern for me as a resident. I don't want our current police officers to feel compromised in any way, and that seems to be the feeling of the police force as it's been expressed in conversations that I've had.

Margaret Titus, 8 Hawthorne Road: – She stated that she's in favor of another full-time police officer and opposed to any part-time officers. Council is here representing our community and making decisions based on what our community wants. She didn't think she was alone in stating what our community wants.

Pat Aeillo, - 29 years FH crime Alert Program: – She told a story about a woman who fainted in church last week. Father asked that she call 911. When Officer Lenny arrived, he knew the resident and her husband - that's not going to happen with part-time officers. We have the turnout tonight because the residents are saying please – don't mess with our police force. We need the strength. If we don't have a full force, we are showing weakness and that brings in the bad elements, and I think Forest Hills shines when it comes to its police department and its officers. She put a plug in for our Public Works Dept. for snow removal. She can appreciate them when she leaves Forest Hills on a snowy morning and has to go to another borough. Also, she thanked whoever on council voted against a 1 man shift.

Becky Rocklan, 845 Maine Street: – She wanted to shed some light on the community things they do for us – especially officer Lenny. She's come down at least 4 or 5 times to have him install her child car seat. She's concerned that if we're down to part-time officers, we'll miss that community atmosphere that Forest Hills has if we go to part-time officers. She said if crime goes up, her husband and she will not live here.

Matthew Lead, 858 Maine Street: – He said he has 3 small kids and a wife at home. He couldn't believe that Forest Hills turned down money for a police officer. He finds that appalling and thanked the one council member who voted against part-time officers. We pay a lot of money in taxes, and we should be able to cover a full-time officer. He said this is a no brainer, and we need to take a long, hard look

Frank Zeppenfeld, (Penn Hills resident): He has relatives that live on Ave L, and he is concerned for their safety. He stated that the "element" came in (to Penn Hills) and officer Crawshaw was killed.

Dan Sharp, President of the FHPA: – Police believe the June 16 vote was made in haste. It did not allow the public an opportunity to debate the issue, and it was taken so quickly that we the officers didn't even know about the vote until days prior to the cause and had no chance to voice their opinions. These cuts had to be made known to the public that's why the pamphlets were made up by the association. It was not a scare tactic. It was simply trying to get our point across to the public that with one officer on duty, there will be certain circumstances where we're not going to be able to do our fullest to help. He reminded the public that public safety is 25% of that budget and that we are significantly low compared to other police departments. He said that they came to council in February with heavy concessions for a new police officer– to cut overtime, alleviate the officers having to work long shifts – those concessions were never taken. He noted that there would be a constant rotation of police officers due to training part-time officers, they'll just get to know the streets then they'll leave for a full-time job. Asked council to rescind their vote and allow two officers to be on duty.

Sr. Mathias Wemm, 16 Sumner Avenue: – She mentioned that her first graders wrote a letter to District Attorney Stephen Zappala as to why they want to keep Forest Hills safe; he gave them \$5,000 for our dog. The children, the parish and the people raised the other \$5,000. Safety has always been number 1 as far as she's concerned. She said many people in the room had scanners and as soon as criminals know what's going on – if they know there's an accident like at Speed-D mart, that's the place one officer is tied up – they'll commit other crimes. She begged council to rescind the vote that was taken in June.

Ellie Conley (Realtor), 600 Berlin Road: - Stated that police and safety are Forest Hills. We can't sell homes here if the tax base is eroded. Our tax base will be eroded if we don't have safety in this community. Do we want to go the way of other neighboring communities whose tax base and real estate values have depreciated to the point where homes can't be sold? She noted that she is vested in this community and that it's really important to us how unique we are as a community and we need to be heard now.

Debbie Jugen, Chalfant Borough, 947 Greensburg Pike: – She was present when officer Hinchey was shot, and was interviewed by County Homicide. She said that Officer Brian Armstrong loaded Officer Hinchey into the car. Billy Klines from Churchill was there taking charge of the situation so that Officer Armstrong could get Officer Hinchey to the hospital. There was not 30 seconds to spare; you don't know what you're giving up when you don't have police officers covering a shift adequately. She's an Assistant District Attorney also. She stated that she put a gang member in prison today, and that gang members have come to her home to kill her. She said that if there had not been a prompt response by Forest Hills police, she may not be here today. She said that her safety is in all of your hands. Please take that very seriously and try to find a budget cut somewhere else.

Cindy Crowley, 2404 Greensburg Pike, Churchill: – Mother of Sgt. Karl Probola. Her son was working 2 shifts all of last week by himself. She said she didn't sleep those nights, and that she was sure there are other family members who don't sleep when their son or husband is on duty by himself. She said she hopes that council can sleep with the decisions they've made. She pointed out that if an officer makes an arrest, he must stay with the person in the cell so that means that the streets have no coverage. You can't count on the other boroughs to provide coverage when you're not providing coverage. She also asked council to please rescind this decision. She thanked Mike (Belmont) for having the nerve to vote against it. She also said that if anything happens to her son, whether he's injured or killed while he's on duty by himself, she will hold each council member who voted for this personally responsible and accountable.

Tom Wile, Mayor of North Braddock: – He mentioned that he has nothing but part-time police officers. He noted that the part-time police officers also put their lives on the line every day. He mentioned that council all voted against having a full-time police officer at no cost to the borough, literally, and no obligations to that officer at the end of his contract. He wanted to know why we didn't take it. He stated that he communicates with his police officers daily and that they have 3 part-time officers on afternoon and

midnight shifts all throughout the weekend. He said he doesn't want to have to feel responsible for residents not having necessary protection on a road call.

Lillian Draskovich, 473 Geisler Drive: – She's lived here since 1957. Mentioned many instances where police came to her house when she was ill or her husband was seriously ill. She now lives alone, and she wants to stay in her house, but she doesn't want to be afraid to stay in her house.

Mary T. O'Donnell, 114 Lenox Avenue: – She couldn't say enough for the police, and said they've always been there. She was a school guard, and when she couldn't be there, the police would be there. She mentioned the new school in Braddock Hills (Propel) and that there will be a lot more traffic and that might be something to think about. She thanked the patrolmen for all that they've done for us and asked council to think about the safety of our lives.

Lenny Mesarchik, FHPD: – Stated his job is simple – to protect and serve you. When he's on duty, the people come first - their lives are important to him. He stated that this means he will lay down his life because someone is in danger. He's not sure that the level of service that we've been providing for the people, at least since he's been here, can be sustained if council's vote stands. He stated he can't be two places at once, and that he's constantly making decisions. He gave an example: There's a 2 car accident, the female passenger is bleeding. His attention is totally on that. He said he doesn't care about how bad the traffic is backing up. At the same time, Spee-D Mart is being robbed and he has to make that decision. He will not leave that person. He asked council not to put him in that position. He talked about mutual aid – he can go to Churchill, Braddock Hills, or Wilkins if they need help and act on their officers' behalf. He has to stay there until their officer arrives on the scene. He said they leave town all the time to help the other officers, but as soon as the call comes in here, our allegiance is here. He asked council – why don't we do the right thing?

Mr. Porco's Statement:

1. Introduction
  - A. Thanks to Members of public that came to speak and provide thoughts and express concerns
  - B. Thanks also to members of the FHPD who came to speak this evening and provide some insight to their line of thinking
  - C. How did we get here? Council has been facing a very difficult challenge: How do you keep providing the services, meet the financial obligations required to deliver those services and still manage to an operating budget?
  - D. What led to the policy decision to only schedule OT which was contractually obligated?
2. Financial Pressures which currently face Forest Hills Borough
  - A. The problem is not unique to Forest Hills Borough
    1. County's decision to keep assessments at 2002 valuations while very popular politically have made budgeting and planning for small municipalities extremely difficult
    2. In the last year, we have had towns unable to pay their police

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- departments a paycheck for several months
3. Exploration into regionalization study with several surrounding communities as a means of trying to search for a long term solution
  4. \$5.6 million dollars budget to run Forest Hills Borough, 1.5 sq. mile town
  5. Increases in the police costs every year: salary, benefits, insurance, vehicles & equipment. These costs are projected to continue in to the future as well.  
OT costs last several years and projected – list them
  6. Officers W-2 Salaries – our officers over the last two years have averaged \$87,000 + per year. This figure does not include medical benefits which are valued at approximately \$14,000 per officer per year, of which our officers contribute a little over \$100 per year. In addition the Borough has contributed \$24,201 over last four years to the Borough Pension Fund and we are projected to pay \$173,101 to the Borough's Pension Fund over the next two years.
  7. Difficult Challenge: How do you keep providing the services, meet the financial obligations required to deliver those services and still manage to a budget?
  8. Can the residents of this community absorb another millage rate increase? That is the concern of this council. Our millage rate is currently 8.35 mills, while our residents are accustomed to a high level of service, it is the highest of the surrounding communities. Some people think that other services could be cut back or eliminated, but it begs the question how? Do we close the pool? Sell some of our park land to developers? Revise our snow plowing practices?
3. An issue in the making/Communication Issues
- A. Over the past several years, council has communicated its concerns about the costs associated with running the day-to-day operations
    1. Steve Morus has quarterly staff meetings expressing the challenges associated with diminishing revenue streams and communicating to department heads the necessity to manage to the budget
    2. The last CBA negotiation sessions, (which are held every 3 – 4 years) three years ago, it was clearly communicated that costs need to be managed, and Forest Hills Borough would be looking for some relief from both Collective Bargaining Units in managing day to day operations. Ideas socialized by council at the time included the following
      - a. Greater contributions to Medical Benefits Package (currently a little more than \$100/year from every police officer.
      - b. Reduced guaranteed yearly raises
      - c. Increased contributions to their own pension funds
      - d. The need to modify the scheduling in order to reduce OT
    3. The only way for our community to address and resolve these issues is through a willingness to collaborate from our collective bargaining units.
4. Forest Hills Council has consistently reached out to the FHPD to communicate its concerns about finances, and identify a solution to these problems. Here is how the FHPD has responded:

- A. Arbitration, Grievances, Unfair Labor Practices, and Lawsuits
1. Grievance filed over Reader Program at the local magistrate to help reduce OT associated with court costs. This is a program which was instituted by our former magistrate to help the participating communities in Magistrate District alleviate OT costs. Every other community PD in the Magistrate District adopted this practice saving their communities thousands of dollars per year in OT except Forest Hills Police Dept. When council this year decided to adopt this best practice, FHPD responded by filing a grievance. Outcome: Still Pending.
  2. Unfair labor practice – Magistrate reader program. Outcome: This was denied by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board.
  3. Arbitration: During the last contract negotiations, both the FHPD and Borough Council Negotiation Team worked to put together a reasonable Collective Bargaining Agreement. Those talks eventually stalled and the FHPD instead opted to resolve things in an arbitration hearing, costing themselves and Borough Taxpayers additional moneys. Outcome: The independent arbiter awarded the FHPD the same terms and conditions which were offered by the Forest Hills Borough Council negotiation team at the last meeting with FHPD before their decision to go to arbitration. This arbitration hearing cost the taxpayers of Forest Hills over \$15,000 conservatively to take it to that arbitration process.
  4. We had a grievance filed when asked to contribute to their own pension funds. The FHPD had not made a contribution in years. Almost all of the current members of the FHPD had never contributed to their own pension fund. This would have significantly increased Forest Hills Borough's contribution to the police pension plan which would have cost taxpayers an additional \$40,000 per year in perpetuity, required diverting funding away from other programs and a possible millage increase. Outcome: The grievance was denied.
  5. Grievance filed over contractually obligated scheduling to help curtail projected OT budget deficit. Outcome: still pending.
  6. Federal Lawsuit – We are one of the only Borough in the entire Commonwealth who provide our officers a disability pension = 100% of their total salaries. The Commonwealth of PA requires a municipality to pay 50%. Upon reaching retirement age, our officers are then paid their normal pensions. Our officers felt they should be paid 100% of their salary even after they reach retirement age, until the time of their passing. This suit was filed twice. Once as an Age Discrimination Law Suit. Outcome: Withdrawn by the Police Union because they failed to file and process the complaint with the EEOC. They then filed the same Age Discrimination Law Suit a second time on the same grounds. Outcome: The court entered judgment in favor of the Borough of Forest Hills. By defending itself against this outrageous law suit, the Borough was able to save taxpayers approximately \$70,000 over the past several years and commencing 2012 \$65,000 per year.
  7. Total fees expended in last five years in defending the Borough and/or Borough uniform pension plan from financial claims by the

police in lawsuits, arbitration, unfair labor practices and grievances. While the Borough has prevailed on all of these claims, it has cost taxpayers over \$200,000 to defend over the last 5 years. The moneys spent in defending these claims is far less than the moneys that our neighbors and residents living in Forest Hills would have spent over the time had the Borough not prevailed.

1. BCCZ: \$125,000
  2. CDBPM: \$77,008
  8. These actions against the Borough has left council extremely perplexed and discouraged. By standing its ground against these outrageous demands, our residents, our neighbors have not had to face significant tax increases so far.
5. COPS Grant
- A. Council did turn down a \$100,000 grant which was to be distributed over two years approximately \$50,000 per year.
  - B. The grant would have required the borough to hire an 11<sup>th</sup> officer it had not budgeted for
  - C. The costs associated with this new hire the first year would be \$47,804 in salary + \$14,000 in medical benefits, + uniform allowance, + longevity pay + vacation, + sick time etc. In the second year \$54,852 in salary + \$14,000 in medical benefits, + uniform allowance, + longevity pay + vacation, + sick time, etc
  - D. Hiring an 11<sup>th</sup> officer does not guarantee a reduction in OT. FHPD operated at a full compliment of 11 officers over the last 4 years, and on average we have exceeded the OT budget.
  - E. Long term: It would have compromised the Borough by digging it into a deeper financial hole.
6. Use of Part-timers
- A. FH Council has only asked for a meeting to discuss the implementation of part timers. We are asking members of the FHPD to the table to give them a voice in crafting a policy in how part timers would be utilized in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. FHPD refuses to acknowledge the topic much less meet to discuss it.
  - B. The strategic utilization of part timers would help alleviate the OT and scheduling issues currently plaguing the FHPD and the FH Borough Budget.
  - C. Part timers are properly trained professionals.
  - D. Almost every current Forest Hills Police Officer was at one time a part-time Officer.
  - E. This is a proven model, it works and serves its communities well, 64 out of 106 Police Departments in Allegheny County alone, currently utilize this model including the following:
    1. Edgewood
    2. Sewickley
    3. Aspinwall
    4. Franklin Township
    5. Hampton Township
    6. Bethel Park
    7. North Fayette Township

8. Oakmont
  9. Rosslyn Farms
  10. West Deer Township
- F. No one on this council is interested in reducing the full-time headcount from where it stands at this point. We want to keep 10 full-time officers with part timers to supplement the schedule to fill in for sick time, vacation, etc.
7. Decision to only schedule OT that is contractually obligated
- A. Like any business, council takes a snapshot of budget line items quarterly. At the current run rate, coupled with the anticipated medical leave of one of our officers, we are forecasting a budget deficit for the OT budget.
  - B. The initial policy was to eliminate all OT across the board unless it was contractually obligated.
  - C. Council then instead opted to instead apply that to a limited number (4-5) of shifts per week.
  - D. Chief Williams then suggested that rather than apply the policy to entire shifts, to apply it to ½ of an 8 hour shifts to provide some additional cover on a shift. Council agreed to this suggestion
  - E. Other communities such as Churchill Borough utilize one officer on a shift and have done so for some time.
  - F. There is back up available to our officers from neighboring communities. The police officers from these mutual aid communities routinely assist each other on calls and are familiar with each other and have professional working relationships. Dating back to January of 2009, Forest Hills Police have responded to 340 documented mutual aid calls. Assuming the other communities only respond to Forest Hills 50% percent of times we respond to theirs that assumes 170 times they have provided MA responses to FH. Various members of council have been able to observe this mutual aid relationship first hand during ride along with the FHPD. I have witnessed it first hand where officers from other towns have backed up our officers during routine traffic stops, accidents, domestics etc.
  - G. Our officers are routinely sent to training and are trained to handle a variety of situations. A special emphasis has been placed on making training a top priority by this council.
8. Conclusion
- A. In closing, I would like to thank Chief Williams, whose leadership has been invaluable during this period. He is a true professional who has calmly and intelligently managed both the members of the police department and members of council. He has consistently tried to find compromise to the situation, and the Borough is very fortunate to have him as our Chief of Police.
  - B. I would also like to thank Steve Morus our Borough Manager, for constant and diligent budget review with council and our staff. It is his stewardship of this budget that keeps council aware of the constant financial challenges we must continue to provide services and operate under.
  - C. I would also like to thank this Council. The past several months have not been very easy for anyone sitting on this board. At times like these, when things are challenging, it would be very easy to just throw in the towel and quit, yet you keep showing up and doing your job. Your lunch pail work ethic is to be commended.
  - D. While we on council recognize this is a sensitive issue for a lot of people, but council must balance this against its fiduciary responsibility to provide services to

- its constituents while still managing to an operating budget.
- E. While it certainly is a complex issue with no easy solution, make no mistake, it is a problem that can be solved. It will require cooperation of all parties involved, a willingness to identify a solution, and a willingness to explore new ways of tackling tough problems. There is no problem that cannot be addressed – if we work together, whether it be an introduction of part timers, modifications in scheduling, or changes in scheduling practices.
  - F. To the police, I would say the door remains open to you so that we may sit down in a spirit of collaboration, and identify a solution to a problem that affects all of us. We thank you for continuing to do your jobs with professionalism while we try and identify a resolution to this matter.
  - G. In these extremely challenging economic times, Forest Hills Borough, like a lot of other communities in Southwestern PA and across this nation must embrace changes together that keep Forest Hills the strong, service-oriented community we are and the progressive forward thinking Borough we strive to be.

Dan Sharp Comments: – We’re talking about the cost of the Police Department. The public needs to know that you’ve reduced the size of the police department from 11 full-time officers to 10 full-time, that reduction has already taken place. You’ve removed the dispatch center. That saved the borough \$267,000. In 2008, the police office was short-handed because there were officers hurt and we worked 2,200 hours of overtime. In 2009, 3,000 hours of overtime were worked. Currently, we’re at 1,500 hours of overtime because we’re not properly staffed. You’ve chosen to reduce the size of the police department and cut out the overtime and you refuse to cover the shifts – you have to cover the shifts. You have to do one or the other. You’re either not going cover the shifts or you’re going to have to pay the overtime because you’ve reduced the size of the police department. We don’t understand. We’re not taking another vote here. We’re going to have officers working by themselves. I’ve heard a lot of comments, but I didn’t hear anything about the safety of the public or the safety of the police officers while you we’re talking about your budget. Are we going to work 1 man shifts? Is that what we’re going to do?

Mr. Porco: – If there’s a motion that comes from council, we’ll certainly entertain it.

Steve Karas: – I’ll skip the talk about how difficult a decision this was. This was made in conjunction with the Chief. We’re in a corner trying to cover this overtime in a financially responsible way to give these guys the shifts that they need. The overtime was still an issue even with that extra officer, so one of the things that we floated as council was bringing on an officer whose schedule we could control and assist with to decrease the amount of overtime. We came into this unified in trying to solve this problem. This is coming from me as one council member – not all of council. There is a solution available. It’s a solution that has to be agreed upon and discussed by both sides, so I guess as somebody on the Public Safety Committee and the council there is a compromise, and we’ve made several. There’s a solution and to try to back us into a corner without discussing that solution, I’d like to see us not do that.

Mr. Porco: – This isn’t “Are you going to do this or are you going to do that?” I think I made it crystal clear in my comments this evening. The door is open, and if there’s a way to solve this problem, I think it’s going to require collaboration from both sides.

All I'm saying is that we can sit down and have this discussion first before we go to an arbitrator. I don't think there's anything wrong with this. We're supposed to negotiate in good faith before we go that route.

Markus Erbedinger: – I'm new with this council, and I need to know more about the police. I think that you discuss openly and fairly that there are conditions of part-time officers both sides could be affected. We don't want to hire a mall cop for \$8 an hour. We want to pay out salaries, and we want to have fair conditions. But at the last negotiations, we had no open discussions. I think like Frank said - our doors are open. We are willing to discuss our options.

Don Haché: – I'm a temp worker; I've been a temp worker for 3 years. I'm competent and I care about what I do. You cannot ascribe character to personal circumstance or individual career choices.

Mr. Porco stopped Mr. Haché's conversation. He said we've taken comment from the public, we've heard from the police associations, and council has spoken, and my hopes are this evening, at a minimum, all 3 sides know where everyone is coming from. Again, we are perfectly willing to sit down with the police department again and try to come up with a solution.

Motion: Mike Belmonte – Move to rescind the vote and return to a two-man minimum shift.

Second: No second

Motion failed due to lack of second

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn or adjourn by acclamation

Moved: Mr. Karas  
Second: Ms. Wood

***Voice Vote – all in favor except Mike Belmonte***

- Next Scheduled Council Meeting: August 18, 2010
- Next Scheduled Committee Meetings (order to be determined): Thursday, Aug. 5, 2010 (Public Safety, Public Works, Borough Property, Operations & Policy) and Tuesday, Aug. 10, 2010 (Planning & Zoning, Finance, Committee of the Whole).