

**BOROUGH OF FOUNTAIN HILL
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

January 22, 2020

7:00 PM

Council members present were: Ms. Jordan, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Rufe, Mr. Trotter, Mr. Atkinson, Mayor Gifford, Mr. Trabel, and Ms. Halleman. Also, in attendance were Anthony Branco (Borough Manager), Cordula Voges (Finance Director), Tom Wargo (Zoning Officer), and guests.

Council President Atkinson called the meeting to order and asked for everyone to rise for the Pledge to the Flag.

The documents listed below were provided to Council for the January 22, 2020 Council meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes of January 6, 2020 Council Meeting
- Memo 1/15/2020 from the Borough Manager to Borough Council RE: Planning/Zoning Solicitor
- Broughal Middle School request for softball field

MINUTES

Council President Atkinson asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of January 6, 2020.

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan	x		x			
Wilbert Rufe			x			
Jamie Johnson			x			
Doug Trotter		x	x			
Philip Trabel			x			
Helen Halleman			x			
Leo Atkinson			x			
Mayor Gifford						

PRESENTATION(S) - none.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – none.

RESOLUTIONS – none.

ORDINANCES- none.

MOTIONS – none.

OLD BUSINESS

- Resolution 2020-7 Planning/Zoning Solicitor – no action taken on 1/6/2020

In reference to his January 15, 2020 to Borough Council, Mr. Branco stated that according to the Municipal Planning Code (MPC) the Zoning Board selects its solicitor. Mr. Branco will relate this information to the Zoning Board and ask them to select a new solicitor.

- Zoning Officer – Rental Fees

Mr. Wargo, the Zoning Officer, reported that after 19 years of not enforcing landlords to register residential rentals the number of registered rental units has increased from 350 (three hundred fifty) to 1,050 (one thousand fifty) in a total number of 1,800 (one thousand eight hundred) dwellings in the Borough. When asked, he explained to the Mayor that this discrepancy resulted from multiple rental units not counted for Lehigh Housing and others on Delaware Avenue. Mr. Wargo also stated that rental fees in arrears will not be collected. He estimated that approximately 40 (forty)% of landlords have responded and paid the rental/rental inspection fees. Mr. Rufe asked what procedures are followed to have landlords adhere to the rental registration requirement. Reminder letters including listing of repercussions were mailed. Mr. Wargo mentioned that landlords were also notified of the items that will be inspected (i.e. Protocol of Inspections). A Rental Inspection is done every other year and as such is different from the Business Privilege Tax licensing requirement (referring to the right to do business).

No rental inspection will be done when a tenant changes. A tenant change is only necessary for updating census data and school district purposes.

Council President Atkinson asked if census takers were made aware of the increased number of rental units to ensure the complete collection of census data for 2020. Mr. Branco will follow up with the State Representative and the local census takers.

Mr. Wargo will take over the fire inspections for commercial businesses that were initiated by KeyCodes, the third-party inspector for Fire inspections. Upon the Mayor's concerns, Mr. Wargo explained that the fire inspections serve to ensure that buildings are safe to do business in- not to deter business activity.

Mr. Spencer on 1035 Jeter Avenue remarked that business owners must follow the proper procedures to register their businesses, pay license fees and pay related business taxes.

Council President Atkinson added that the "Planned Matching Grant Program" might offer assistance to businesses to be in compliance with the building codes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS (NEW BUSINESS)

- Broughal Middle School – request for use of softball field from 3/2 to 5/8 – all documents received – fees to be waived.

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan	x		x			
Wilbert Rufe			x			
Jamie Johnson			x			
Doug Trotter		x	x			
Philip Trabel			x			
Helen Halleman			x			
Leo Atkinson			x			
Mayor Gifford						

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – Discussion on Non - Agenda Items

Mr. Stewart McCandless on 1011 Pawnee Street asked why the Borough does not spread a brining solution on its roads during winter weather. Mr. Branco explained that a special, fairly pricey equipment is required for brining the roads. Currently, the City of Bethlehem helps out brining roads around the hospital.

Council Member Wilbert Rufe reminded to have a one-time “State of the Union Address” scheduled before the Budget process starts. Council President Atkinson suggested to confirm a date at the next Council Meeting.

Council Member Halleman asked the Ms. Johnson and Mr. Rufe, the newly elected Council Members, to comment on the RE Tax increase of .5 Mill. in light of Borough residents’ critics of it. Both members accepted Council’s vote on the tax increase after considering the information available to them. Council President Atkinson emphasized that the tax increase was voted for to finance extensive infrastructure projects and set funds aside for long-term (up to 10 years) capital projects.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – as needed – none.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:40 pm Council President Atkinson asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Trabel made the motion, seconded by Ms. Johnson and unanimously approved.

**BOROUGH OF FOUNTAIN HILL
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

By: _____
Leo Atkinson - President of Council

SUBMITTED BY

By: _____
Cordula Voges, Finance Director

ATTEST:

By: _____
Anthony Branco, Borough Manager

Next Ordinance -- 857
Next Resolution -- 2020-23