

**FOUNTAIN HILL BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES
January 4, 2021
7:00 P.M.**

Due to Governor Tom Wolf's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency Disaster Declaration on March 6, 2020, a virtual/remote public Council Meeting was held via phone/zoom. The remote participation option for residents was provided on the Borough's website www.fountainhill.org. Remotely participating Council members were: Ms. Jordan, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Trotter, Mr. Blatt, Mr. Rufe, Mr. Trabel, Ms. Halleman and Mayor Gifford. Also remotely participating were Anthony Branco (Borough Manager), Cordula Voges (Finance Director), Pete Lehr (Solicitor), Chief Bachert, Jason Quarry (PW Supervisor), and guests.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Blatt called the meeting to order and asked everyone to pledge allegiance to the Flag.

MINUTES

- Motion to approve the December 7, 2020 Minutes

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan	x		x			
Jamie Johnson			x			
Wilbert Rufe			x			
Doug Trotter		x	x			
Philip Trabel			x			
Helen Halleman			x			
Norman E. Blatt Jr.			x			
Mayor Gifford						

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Gifford thanked all Borough residents who had participated in the Christmas Decorating Contest. Chief Bachert and Mayor Gifford judged many wonderful Christmas displays and prizes will be mailed to the winners.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

The sanitary sewer televising project will start within the next two weeks.

The second and final disbursement of the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) state grant for the Public Works building in the amount of \$18,750 is scheduled to be paid via check on 1/4/2021.

Motion to approve a resident's request for a temporary (90 days) Loading Zone

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan		x	x			
Jamie Johnson			x			
Wilbert Rufe			x			
Doug Trotter	x		x			
Philip Trabel			x			
Helen Halleman			x			
Norman E. Blatt Jr.			x			
Mayor Gifford						

NEW BUSINESS

- Motion to approve the request of Maria Negron, 512 N. Bishopthorpe St. for a handicap space for 12 months and also waive the stated application fee of \$25 – all documents received and approved by staff.

Based on the given arguments and the nominal amount of the stated application fee of only \$25, Mr. Branco recommended not to waive the application fee. Mr. Rufe and Mayor Gifford agreed to supplement the application fee of \$25.

Ms. Halleman asked for details regarding the request. The Borough Manager explained that because of privacy issues Council had adopted a procedural flow of documentation being received in the office, reviewed by the Police Chief and Public Works Supervisor and finally presented to Council for approval at the beginning of 2020. Mr. Lehr confirmed the process.

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan			x			
Jamie Johnson		x	x			
Wilbert Rufe	x		x			
Doug Trotter			x			
Philip Trabel			x			
Helen Halleman			x			
Norman E. Blatt Jr.			x			
Mayor Gifford						

RESOLUTIONS

Motion to approve the below presented Resolutions 2021 1 – 5

- Resolution 2021 – 1 Holidays
- Resolution 2021 – 2 Voting Delegates NCTCC
- Resolution 2021 – 3 Meeting Schedule for 2021

- Resolution 2021– 4 Committee Appointments
- Resolution 2021– 5 Fee Schedule

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan			x			
Jamie Johnson		x	x			
Wilbert Rufe			x			
Doug Trotter			x			
Philip Trabel	x		x			
Helen Halleman			x			
Norman E. Blatt Jr.			x			
Mayor Gifford						

ORDINANCES

Mr. Lehr noted that Ordinance No. 858 reflects the standing definition of a fire protection unit used for the Borough. The Fountain Hill Volunteer Fire Co. was created to fight fires in the Borough and all assets purchased and used for this purpose are considered assets of the Borough.

ORDINANCE NO. 858

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF FOUNTAIN HILL, CHAPTER 7, FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE PROTECTION, PART 1, FIRE DEPARTMENT, BY CONFIRMING DESIGNATION OF FOUNTAIN HILL VOLUNTEER FIRE CO., INC. AS THE OFFICIAL FIRE PROTECTION UNIT FOR THE BOROUGH, IDENTIFYING AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES, REPEALING PROVISION ON COMPOSITION OF DEPARTMENT, REPEALING DESCRIPTIONS OF FIRE CHIEF, FIRE MARSHAL, CAPTAIN, LIEUTENANT, AMENDING PROVISIONS RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF FIRE APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT, PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY OF PARTS OF THIS ORDINANCE DEEMED TO BE INVALID; REPEALING ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, OR PARTS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Motion to approve Ordinance No. 858 -

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan			x			
Jamie Johnson			x			

Wilbert Rufe
 Doug Trotter
 Philip Trabel
 Helen Halleman
 Norman E. Blatt Jr.
 Mayor Gifford

		x			
	x	x			
x		x			
		x			
		x			

MOTIONS – None.

OLD BUSINESS

Council President Blatt tabled the discussion about the draft Lateral Ordinance to a future Council Meeting.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Council President acknowledged a resident’s gift of the “Rules of Order” book to be displayed in the Borough’s lobby.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance (Trotter, Blatt, Jordan)

Mr. Trotter read the list of checks disbursed in December 2020. The disbursements were pre-approved at the December 7, 2020 meeting.

B. Public Works (Jordan, Trotter, Rufe)

Ms. Jordan reported that the Public Works Committee members, Council President Blatt, the Borough Manager and Mr. Quarry (Public Works Supervisor) had interviewed several candidates for the vacancies in the Public Works department and selected two candidates for hiring.

Ms. Halleman sat in during the interview sessions as well. She asked to consider full Council hiring interviews in the future. Council President Blatt acknowledged her suggestion and submitted for further consideration.

Upon the Public Works Committee’s recommendation, Mr. Blatt asked for a motion to offer employment to the selected candidates conditional to their passing of background, physical and drug tests.

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

Norman E. Blatt Jr.
Mayor Gifford

		x			

C. Police (Blatt, Trotter, Johnson)

Regarding the purchase of body cameras for the police, Chief Bachert noted that grant funding is no longer available. Mayor Gifford suggested to postpone the discussion purchase of body cameras due to its high cost.

D. House & Ordinances (Rufe, Halleman, Jordan) – None.

E. Fire (Trabel, Halleman, Rufe)

Mr. Trabel reported that the Fire Department’s Santa Run was well received. The Christmas tree sale was a huge success.

F. Recreation (Johnson, Rufe, Trabel)

Ms. Johnson asked to schedule a zoom meeting for the upcoming scheduled Recreation Committee meeting and asked to invite the Bethlehem Area YMCA to participate as well.

G. Health & Sanitation (Halleman, Johnson, Trabel)

Ms. Halleman read the December Sewer/Garbage collection reports.

As discussed at a previous Council Meeting, Council President Blatt asked the Borough Manager to invite the Portnoff Law Associates representative to introduce their collection practices to Council.

H. Personnel (Trotter, Blatt, Jordan) – None.

SPECIAL OR SELECT COMMITTEES

Ms. Jordan reported that library services are still limited to online service.

Chief Bachert is looking for additional Borough families to distribute collections from the recent Police Department’s “Farm to Table” food drive.

Mr. Wargo, the Zoning Officer, noted that Ordinance No 637 of 2020 does allow pre-sale home inspections and that he will be following up on that ordinance and focusing on curb and sidewalk, down-spout runoff, sump pump elimination inspections among others.

Mr. Wargo also asked to introduce a second third-party home inspection company to Council. Council consented.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – Discussion on Non - Agenda Items

Mr. Mike Spencer at 1035 Jeter Avenue reminded Council that Ms. Connie Skelly Potts has resigned from the Zoning Hearing Board and the vacancy needs to be filled. He also asked to schedule a zoom meeting for January 18, 2021 for the Zoning Board members to meet and re-organize. Mr. Branco stated that a re-organization is only required in even years after an election though.

The Solicitor addressed Council to formally accept Ms. Potts's resignation. Ms. Halleman praised the value that Ms. Potts has contributed to the Zoning Board. Council President Blatt asked for a motion to accept Ms. Potts's resignation.

	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Annamarie Jordan			x			
Jamie Johnson		x	x			
Wilbert Rufe			x			
Doug Trotter	x		x			
Philip Trabel			x			
Helen Halleman					x	
Norman E. Blatt Jr.			x			
Mayor Gifford						

Ms. Johnson inquired about the process to apply for the Zoning Board's membership.

Mr. Mike Spencer (see above) welcomed the clarification of the Fire Department's relationship with the Fountain Hill Voluntary Fire Co. However, he questioned Council disregarding and ordinance because of time limits. Council President Blatt explained that Council fulfilled its legal obligation to listen to the recent appeal but chose not to further act on it.

Mr. Rich Rolen questioned the legal status of the Fountain Hill Voluntary Fire Co. He then reported that the Deputy Fire Chief was involved in a vehicle crash. He finally inquired about future road construction projects on Ostrum Street and Broadway. The Borough Manager reported that the Borough has no immediate road construction scheduled for either street, especially considering that Broadway is a state road and PennDot's responsibility. Mr. Branco noted that St. Luke's Hospital is reviewing funding for the reconstruction of Ostrum Street.

Mr. Jeffrey Painton at 1218 Graham Street inquired about the status of an official Borough social media site. Ms. Johnson noted that Council had approved a Social Media Policy but never set up an official social media page. Council President Blatt took note of it for further discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed) – None.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:58 PM Council President Blatt asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Johnson made the motion, seconded by Ms. Jordan and unanimously approved.

Next Resolution 2021-21
Next ordinance 860