

Minutes
BOROUGH COUNCIL
November 7, 2022
7 P.M.

The Council Meeting was held in-person at Borough Hall. Council members present were: Ms. Jordan, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Trotter, Mr. Blatt, Ms. Graham, Mr. Trabel, and Mayor Johnson. Mr. Rufe was initially absent but joined later. Also, in attendance were Eric Gratz (Borough Manager), Cordula Voges (Finance Director), and guests.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of October 19, 2022, as amended.

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

Approval of the minutes of October 26, 2022, as amended.

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

Approval of the minutes of November 2, 2022, as amended.

Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
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Annamarie Jordan			X			
Jamie Johnson	X		X			
Wilbert Rufe						X
Doug Trotter			X			
Philip Trabel		X	X			
Erica Graham			X			
Norman E. Blatt Jr.			X			
Mayor Johnson						

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR/ PRE-SCHEDULED

Council President Blatt welcomed the large group of residents to the Council Meeting who have an interest in the discussion of the future of the pool. He asked one spokesperson to speak on behalf of the group and invited additional speakers to add to the discussion any details the spokesperson did not address. Mr. Mike Zovko spoke on behalf of the Community Coalition.

Mr. Zovko updated Council of the current status of the discussions the coalition has had. The coalition recruited four adults to be trained as lifeguards for the upcoming pool season. The coalition is going to contact the school districts in order to recruit more lifeguards.

Regarding caulking of the deteriorating pool deck (cost estimate of \$25 to \$30k), members of the coalition had offered to volunteer to do the work. However, Mr. Gratz and Solicitor Berger excluded that option because of liability issues. As a result, the coalition suggested to become part-time Borough employees at a \$1/hour rate and work under the direction of the Public Works supervisor and with material approved by the Borough engineer to get the pool ready for the 2023 season. Mr. Zovko asked Council to deliberate on these suggestions and get back to him.

Mr. Zovko continued that a donor, whose identity cannot be released until January 2023, has been found to support the coalition’s efforts to open the pool in 2023. In this respect, Mr. Zovko stressed that the coalition is not limited to Fountain Hill boundaries; any interest in and contributions to its activities are welcome.

The coalition has also solicited programs that could happen at the pool on a weekly basis such as aqua fitness for 60 plus, boot camp, kids' fitness; circuit training; kickboxing; weekend swim lessons; all with subsequent approval of the recreation committee and Borough Council. Certified instructors would be used and will be available to the Borough to attract other people. He stressed that the health and livability in Fountain Hill are the coalition’s long-term focus.

To improve Borough appearance, Mr. Zovko mentioned that the coalition offers to remove graffiti from a visible property. Mr. Gratz noted that an enforcement process is under way and the Borough is working with the property owner to abate the issue. Mr. Zovko also wanted to raise awareness that some Borough owned properties (e.g. pool and above the pool) are under-utilized. Among other ideas, the coalition is suggesting a community garden. Lastly, Mr. Zovko mentioned the community’s general questions about the future of the police and the fire departments and suggested potentially hold future townhall meetings to answer any of these questions.

Council President Blatt thanked Mr. Zovko and the coalition for all their work and specifically for the recent Borough cleanup. He also cited past utilization plans for the property above the pool including a community building, a stormwater basin, a community garden – all of which have never been realized for various reasons. Mr. Zovko mentioned that the coalition is scheduled to meet again mid-December to organize a Christmas caroling celebration. Lastly, Council President Blatt raised concerns with workers' compensation insurance and general liability issues regarding coalition members volunteering/working temporarily. A legal review would be required.

Regarding the future of the fire department, Mr. Michael Langton of 1215 Broadway reported that 30 new volunteers recently signed up.

Ms. Damaris Rochel of 1024 Seneca Street promoted the opening of the pool and the police presence providing safety throughout the borough. Council President Blatt ensured that defunding of the police is not intended, and the officers are encouraged to patrol the pool.

Mr. Sean Zottarelli on 1201 Delaware commended the Borough's recent Halloween Trick or Treat. A pool would be a nice addition to the growing young population in the borough. He also welcomed the planned Christmas decorating contest to increase the sense of community.

Ms. Christina Cardinal of 916 Ostrum Street stressed the importance of a neighborhood pool because kids' transportation issues might prevent travel to neighboring pools. Therefore, closing of the pool would be a disservice to the community - especially for the kids.

MAYOR'S REPORT – None.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

- Broadway Projects Update

The Broadway Curb & Sidewalk project will start in November and the work will continue through the winter. PennDot's contractor will start mill and overlay in late spring or early summer to complete the Broadway road work.

- TASA Grant – Pedestrian Crossing at Broadway and Delaware

The new pedestrian blinking crossing signs are up and the old crossing signs will be removed. In addition, new neon green crossing signs for Broadway and Delaware Avenue will be installed. He also mentioned that these signs were ordered for Delaware and Clewell and also Delaware and Lynn.

- CDBG Grant 2022

The official grant agreement awarding \$237,000 was received funding the next section of Jeter Avenue. The recent resolution authorized both Mr. Blatt and Mr. Gratz to sign the agreement. It will be forwarded to the County to be fully executed by Executive Armstrong.

NEW BUSINESS

- Holiday Decorating Contest

Ms. Spadaccia had reached out to Mr. Gratz about a Christmas Decorating Contest. Mr. Gratz stated that funds are set aside for prizes. Ms. Johnson recommended the contest and Council consented. Mayor Johnson will be one of the judges.

RESOLUTIONS FOR FINAL PASSAGE

RESOLUTION NO. 2022- 28

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF FOUNTAIN HILL, LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, IMPLEMENTING ACT 57 OF 2022.

Mr. Rufe joined the meeting at 7:44 pm.

Resolution No. 2022-28, as drafted by the solicitor, was already reviewed at the 10/19/2022 Council Meeting with no suggested changes. Council President Blatt asked for its final passage.

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

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

ORDINANCE NO. 871

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF FOUNTAIN HILL, CHAPTER 15, PART 3, SECTION 302 (c)(3), TO DELETE/ADD CERTAIN HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES.

ADD:

STREET	SIDE	LOCATION
North Bergen St.	front	918

Due diligence was done, and the ordinance was properly advertised.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 872

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 729, STORMWATER ORDINANCE, IN ITS ENTIRETY AND ESTABLISHING A NEW STORMWATER ORDINANCE TO COMPLY WITH UPDATED DEP REGULATIONS.

This new Stormwater Ordinance, as drafted by the Borough engineer, repeals, and replaces the old one to comply with the updated EPA requirements. It was advertised and no comments were received. Council President Blatt asked for a final vote.

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

MOTIONS – None.

OLD BUSINESS

- Fountain Hill Pool

Council President Blatt summarized the late motions to close the pool. Since then, Council re-considered the issue and retracted the motion to close the pool. At this point, the Borough has the option to open the pool in 2023 or keep the status quo and get the pool ready to re-open in 2024.

Ms. Johnson favored to open the pool in 2023. She also offered to get re-certified as lifeguard and help staff on a part-time basis.

Mr. Trabel and Ms. Graham also favored the opening of the pool in 2023.

Mr. Trotter valued the coalition’s volunteerism to help with pool repairs.

Ms. Jordan commended the coalition on the work they have done so far, but also reminded to keep an eye on the practical cost of operating a pool and be willing to change the direction, if the pool operation is not sustainable.

Mr. Quarry corrected Mr. Zovko that only the initial caulking cost at the pool was quoted at \$30,000, but the total cost for caulking would range between \$60,000 and \$70,000.

Council President Blatt asked if someone will make the motion to open the pool in 2023 with the intention to sell pool passes and hiring lifeguards.

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

- Budget 2023

Council President stated that no tax and no Sewer/Garbage fee increases are contemplated.

Regarding the opening of the pool and its effects on the budget 2023, Mr. Gratz explained that because of the lengthy bidding process for any projects greater than \$25,000 the large-scale caulking project needs to be deferred to 2024 and beyond. Currently, \$50,000 were set aside for smaller maintenance/repair projects. Therefore, Mr. Gratz recommended to go with the best cost estimates on hand and not change any line items. Based on that, Mr. Gratz recommended and Council President Blatt entertained a motion to adopt the Preliminary Budget for 2023 as presented over the last two weeks and commence the advertisement and review period.

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

COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Council President thanked the firefighters and the Police for a successful Trick or Treat night. The Tree lighting will be held at 4 pm right across from fire house on Sunday December 4. Firefighters will be selling Christmas trees again at the pool beginning black Friday. Council President Blatt reminded of the upcoming November 8, 2022 election.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Berger updated Council on some delinquent taxpayers. He indicated that three accounts will be moving forward to sheriff’s sales. Mr. Berger reported that the zoning text amendment that Mr. Piperato had submitted is under review and will be presented to Council in the future.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Finance **(Trotter, Blatt, Jordan)**
 - Motion to pay the bills as presented

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

- Public Works **(Jordan, Trotter, Rufe)**

Mr. Quarry reported that Public Works is in full swing to pick up leaves.

- Police **(Blatt, Trotter, Johnson)**

Chief Bachert reported that forty pounds of drugs were taken back on National Drug Takeback Day.

- House & Ordinances **(Rufe, Graham, Jordan)** - None.
- Fire **(Trabel, Graham, Rufe)**

Mr. Trabel reported that the membership increased by thirty new members. The “Haunted House” was a great success.

- Recreation **(Johnson, Rufe, Trabel)**

The Christmas decorating contest judging date will be announced later. Ms. Johnson thanked the Fire Department and Police Department for a wonderful “Trunk or Treat” at Halloween.

- Health & Sanitation **(Graham, Johnson, Trabel)** – None.
- Personnel **(Trotter, Blatt, Jordan)** – None.

SPECIAL OR SELECT COMMITTEES – None.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – Discussion on Non - Agenda Items – None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Blatt reminded of the next Council Meeting on November 16, 2022 at 7 pm. At 8:10 pm Council President Blatt entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Johnson made the motion, seconded by Mr. Trabel and unanimously approved.

BOROUGH OF FOUNTAIN HILL
 LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
 By:

 Norman E Blatt - President of Council

SUBMITTED:

BY: _____
 Cordula Voges, Finance Director

ATTEST:

By: _____
 Eric Gratz, Borough Manager

Next Ordinance – 873
Next Resolution – 2022-29

APPROVED