

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 4 , 2021 at 6:30 P.M.

Due to the current situation involving the COVID-19 pandemic, the work session meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held remotely. This meeting can be accessed by telephone, by dialing one of the numbers listed below and entering the meeting ID number 995 1740 0060.

+1 646 558 8656 US

+1 301 715 8592 US

+1 669 900 9128 US

+1 312 626 6799 US

+1 346 248 7799 US

+1 253 215 8782 US

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Work Session of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Fort Lee was held on the above date in the Memorial Municipal Building, 309 Main Street, Fort Lee, New Jersey.

PRESENT: Mayor Sokolich, Council Members Sohmer, Suh, Sargenti, Kasofsky (Via Telephone Conference) Cervieri

ABSENT: Councilman Yoon

ALSO PRESENT: Alfred Restaino, Borough Administrator
Evelyn Rosario, Borough Clerk
J. Sheldon Cohen, Borough Attorney
Brian Chewcaskie, Esq. Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri,
Jacobs

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT

In accordance with Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 adequate notice informing the public of the time and place of this meeting was duly published in the Record issue of December 22, 2020 and the Jersey Journal and Star Ledger issues of December 24, 2020. Said notice was also posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board, on the outside door of Borough Hall and Borough website.

OATHS OF OFFICE:

AMBULANCE CORPS CHIEFS :

Steven J. Curry, Outgoing Ambulance Corps Chief came forward and stated the following: "Being Chief for the Fort Lee Ambulance Corps for the past two years has been a privilege and honor. 2020, although was a very difficult year for us all thanks to the terrible COVID-19 virus, I thank the amazing support of the Mayor and Council who provided us with all of the PPE along with Bryan Drumgoole Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator and incoming Fire Chief, our job could not have been done without your support. A leader is always as good as the men and women that he or she leads, I have been fortunate to have worked the best. Words cannot express the job that these men and woman have done this year,

jeopardizing their own health to help the people of Fort Lee, handling over 3600 calls for assistance, no shifts went uncovered. 2021 brings us a new Chief, Diran Jebejian who is more than qualified for the task, I will support him as the Deputy Chief in any way needed, I wish him the best of luck, again thank you all.”

Mayor Sokolich administered the Oaths of Office to the following Ambulance Corps Chiefs:

Steven J. Curry was sworn in as Deputy Chief of the Fort Lee Volunteer Ambulance Corps. Diran Jebejian held the Bible and pinned the badge.

Diran Jebejian was sworn in as Chief of the Fort Lee Volunteer Ambulance Corps. His nieces Noushig and Nanar held the Bible. Steven J. Curry pinned the badge.

Diran Jebejian, Ambulance Corps Chief came forward and stated “ I just want to thank the Mayor and Council, Borough Administrator Al Restaino, outgoing Chief Steve Curry all of the Department Heads in the town, the following Emergency Services: Police Chief Matt Hintze, Outgoing Fire Chief Don Sauvageot, Bryan Drumgoole incoming Fire Chief and OEM Director. Looking forward to a really great year, we pride ourselves at the Fort Lee Ambulance Corps.” He thanked outgoing Ambulance Corps Chief Curry for all his dedication.

FIRE CHIEFS'

Donald Sauvageot, Fire Chief came forward and stated “ Mayor Sokolich, members of the Council, members of the department, ladies and gentlemen. 2020 was a unique and challenging year for the Fort Lee Fire Department. The 131 volunteers handled 1371 calls, including 14 reported fires in residents and structures. In addition to alarms within the Borough, the department provided mutual aid assistance on 11 occasions to neighboring municipalities.

Unfortunately, fire department members are not immune to the COVID-19 pandemic. In spite of rigidly following guidelines from the CDC and the Borough Health Department, numerous members at times needed to quarantine. At these times of reduced staffing, and in the finest tradition of the fire service, members from all the companies pulled together to ensure that any and all requests for fire department services would receive a proper response, and that residents would always receive the services they have come to expect from their fire department.

While many of the department’s planned training exercises, classes, and functions needed to be cancelled, the Spring lockdown afforded the department a unique opportunity. Thanks to the coordinating efforts of Battalion Chief Peluso, and in conjunction with the Police, Ambulance, and Emergency Management, three birthday rides were conducted. Emergency services were able to provide over 200 children with a very special and personalized Happy Birthday.

Serving the department and municipality as chief of the fire department was both an honor and privilege. I thank my wife, Carol, for not only giving me the time to serve, but also for her constant support and encouragement, not just this past year as Chief, but through all my years serving as a fire department officer.

I especially wish to thank Mayor Sokolich, Liaisons Councilman Sargenti and Councilman Sohmer, the council an administration for their dedication to the fire department.

As a senior company officer, I was fortunate to have excellent junior officers under me. As chief of the department I could not have asked better, more dedicated, more motivated assistant chiefs than Chief Drumgoole and Chief Peluso. With their help a number of previously unfinished projects were finally completed, and I thank you all for all your efforts.

I sincerely wish to thank the Chief's Secretary Cindy Vida for keeping me on track and making certain that the necessary administrative functions got handled promptly and accurately.

To the company officers for 2020, thank you for your efforts and support. Lastly to the members of the department and especially Rescue Company #2, I truly thank you for affording me the time and opportunity to serve as chief of the department for 2020.

It is with the utmost confidence in his skills and leadership ability that I turn the department over to Chief Bryan Drumgoole. Chief, I look forward to serving as a firefighter under your command.”

Mayor Sokolich administered the Oaths of Office to the following Fire Chiefs:

Richard Onufrey was sworn in as Battalion Chief of the Fort Lee Volunteer Fire Department. The Bible was held by his daughter Katherine and grandson Lincoln. His wife Wendy pinned the badge.

Patrizio Peluso was sworn in as Deputy Fire Chief of the Fort Lee Volunteer Fire Department. The Bible was held by his father John, retired life member of Palisades Co. #4 and his mother Susan. His wife Dana pinned the badge.

Bryan Drumgoole was sworn in as Fire Chief of the Fort Lee Volunteer Fire Department. The Bible was held by his wife Nadine and his children Ivy and Eli. His wife Nadine pinned the badge. His parents Kevin and Nancy were present.

Fire Chief Drumgoole on behalf of the Volunteer Fire Department, Mayor Sokolich and the Governing Body presented outgoing Chief Donald Sauvageot with gifts and thanked him for his service and dedication to the Borough.

Bryan Drumgoole, Fire Chief came forward and stated “Good evening, thank you Mayor Sokolich, the entire Council, Borough Administrator Restaino, Borough Clerk Rosario for affording us this opportunity this evening. Chief Sauvageot as I mentioned earlier, 2020 was a year of no other, if you were to look up the word leadership, I am pretty sure I would find a picture of you. Chief, I do not remember a time in my career where one single Chief got so many things accomplished, even if it was 1000 miles a minute and you did not have a second to think. Without your dedication, without your support, we would not be standing here today.”

He continued and spoke of Chief Sauvageot's accomplishments in 2020 and thanked him for his dedicated service to the Fire Department and the Borough. In closing, he stated that he is looking forward to working with all of the Borough departments and is also looking forward to a year full of continued accomplishments. He congratulated all the incoming Fire Chiefs.

Mayor Sokolich thanked the Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Corps for their dedication and support to the Fort Lee community, he praised all their hard work and efforts.

At 7:03 P.M. a brief recess was taken. The meeting was reconvened at 7:15 P.M.

RESOLUTION FOR CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS:

On motion by Councilman Cervieri, seconded by Council man Sohmer and approved unanimously, the meeting moved into closed session.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Fort Lee that:

This body shall hereafter discuss in closed session, pursuant to Section 7B of the Open Public Meetings Act, certain items which may generally be described as follows:

1. **Personnel:**
 - a. Administration
 - b. Fire Prevention Bureau
 - c. Health Department
 - d. Police Department

2. **Litigation:**
 - a. Port Authority Agreement
 - b. COAH Declaratory Judgment

3. **Legal:**
 - a. Tax Appeal Settlement: 1166 Briar Way

The minutes of the discussion in closed session may be disclosed to the public when the Mayor and Council has determined that the need for confidentiality has been satisfied.

The open portion of the executive session will resume upon completion of the closed portion.

The closed portion of the meeting ended at 8:00 P.M. The open portion of the work session began at 8:00 P.M.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Budget Transfers

A resolution authorizing 2020 budget transfers will be placed on the February 18th proposed consent agenda.

North Jersey Friendship House Janitorial Maintenance Services Contract _____

Administrator Restaino reviewed the proposal submitted by the North Jersey Friendship House for Janitorial Services for the maintenance of various municipal buildings.

A resolution authorizing the award of a contract will be placed on the February 18th proposed consent agenda.

Sign and Façade Committee

A discussion was held regarding Sign and Façade committee members potential participation and appearance at the Planning Board meetings.

Gran Fondo 2021 - May 16, 2021

Administrator Restaino stated that he has reviewed with the Health and Police Departments a request from Gran Fondo New York (GFNY) to hold the annual GFNY race in 2021. They did not recommend that this event take place this year. The Governing Body supports the recommendation as presented and directed the Administrator to advise GFNY of same.

Person-to-Person Liquor License Transfer: # 0219-44-011-006 H & N Liquor LLC

No discussion held. Deferred to a future meeting.

Authorize Award of Contract to Boswell Engineering for the Provision of Construction Inspection Services for Project Known as Inwood Terrace Improvements (Section 2), Not to Exceed \$16,800.00

A resolution authorizing the award a contract as described above will be placed on the February 18th proposed consent agenda.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

On motion by Councilman Cervieri, seconded by Councilman Suh and carried unanimously, the meeting was opened to the public for discussion.

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Response</u>
----------------	--------------	-----------------

None.

There being no further discussions the meeting was adjourned on motion by Councilman Cervieri, seconded by Councilman Sargenti, at 8:15 PM.

Evelyn Rosario, RMC
Municipal Clerk