

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 7, 2022, at 6:30 P.M.**

**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, Yoon, Suh, Sargenti, Kasofsky, Cervieri

**ALSO PRESENT:** Alfred Restaino, Borough Administrator  
Evelyn Rosario, Borough Clerk  
Nadine Drumgoole, Deputy Municipal Clerk  
Brian Chewcaskie, Borough Attorney

**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, the Jersey Journal and Star Ledger issues of November 12, 2021, and January 27, 2022. Said notice was also posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board and Borough website.

**RESOLUTION FOR CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS:**

**On motion by Councilman Sohmer seconded by Councilman Sargenti** 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. Department of Public Works
  - c. Health Department
  - d. Senior Center
  
2. **Legal:**
  - a. Tax Appeal: Victoria Place East
  - b. Affordable Housing

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 work session will resume upon completion of the closed portion.

The closed portion of the meeting ended at 7:02P.M. The open portion of the work session began at 7:14 P.M.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

### **2022 Municipal Budget**

Also Present: Steven Wielkotz, Borough Auditor

Mr. Wielkotz provided an overview of the 2022 Municipal Budget. Due to COVID-19 costs associated with health benefits, garbage collection and pension costs increased which resulted in the Borough utilizing roughly 1.5 million from American Rescue Plan funds to meet this shortfall. He indicated the average tax assessment will increase roughly \$114.06 for a house assessed at \$475,240.00. Of that annual increase, \$43.00 can be attributed to the towns overall ratable reduction.

The Borough of Fort Lee 2022 budget will be introduced as presented at the April 14, 2022, regular session meeting. Public Hearing scheduled for May 19<sup>th</sup> regular session meeting.

### **Temporary Capital Budget Resolution and Capital Improvement Program Ordinance**

A bond ordinance authorizing various capital improvements will be introduced at the April 14, 2022, regular session meeting. Public Hearing scheduled for May 19<sup>th</sup> regular session meeting.

### **Shared Services Between Various Municipalities for the Shared use of Fire Investigation Services**

It was the consensus of the Governing Body to enter into a Shared Services between the Boroughs of Fort Lee, Edgewater, Leonia, Cliffside Park and Fairview for the provision of shared fire investigation services.

An authorizing resolution will be placed on the April 14th proposed consent agenda.

### **Supporting the Nationwide Distracted Driving April 1 - 30, 2022**

On behalf of the Police Department, Administrator Restaino addressed the Governing Body seeking their support for the Distracted Driving 2022 Crackdown from April 1 - 30, 2022, which is designed to increase awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.

A resolution will be placed on the April 14<sup>th</sup> proposed consent agenda.

**Proposal from Professor Koszarski for the renewal of Consulting Services for the Barrymore Film Center**

Administrator Restaino reviewed the proposal as submitted by Professor Koszarski for the renewal of consulting services to expire in October 2022, for the Barrymore Film Center.

A resolution will be placed on the April 14 proposed consent agenda.

**Fort Lee PBA Local #245, 5K Walk/Run, June 18, 2022**

A resolution approving the 5K walk/run to travel through Fort Lee on June 18<sup>th</sup> will be placed on the April 14<sup>th</sup> proposed consent agenda.

**Proposal Fort Lee Ambulance Remount**

Councilman Sargenti addressed the Mayor and Council regarding remounting the ambulance truck for approximately 164-170k. The Ambulance Corp has expressed to the Council Liaisons that they would prefer a new ambulance truck as opposed to a remount. It was suggested by Councilman Sargenti to discuss this further at a future meeting.

**Fire Department Ladder Truck**

Councilman Sargenti addressed the Mayor and Council regarding the possibility of forming a search committee group to research and plan for a new ladder truck to be purchased in the near future. He gave a brief overview of the current ladder truck conditions that need to be corrected.

Councilman Sargenti and Councilman Sohmer agreed to allow the formed committee to do their research and address the council members with their findings.

**Bid Rejection: Purchase of Six Motorcycles for use by the Police Department**

Bergen County Harley Davidson is not and was unable to register as a federally approved vendor.

A resolution rejecting bids will be placed on the April 14<sup>th</sup> proposed consent agenda.

### **Bid Specifications and Advertisement for the Purchase of Motorcycles for use by the Police Department**

Administrator Restaino stated that Chief Hintze has requested to go out to bid for twelve (12) motorcycles. The Governing Body requested additional information regarding the current fleet. Further discussions will take place at the next work session meeting.

### **Saint Rocco 's Mutual Aid Society 9 3rd Annual Feast, August 3 - 7, 2022**

Representatives of the Mutual Aid Society came forward and requested permission to host its 93rd annual feast.

A resolution approving the request from the Saint Rocco's Mutual Aid Society of Fort Lee to host its 93rd annual feast on August 3rd through August 7th will be placed on the April 14th proposed consent agenda.

### **Youth Council of Fort Lee Revised Location for the Color Run Scheduled for April 23, 2022**

The Governing Body has approved the request from the Youth Council.

### **Various Amendments to Chapter 289 Parking**

Borough Clerk Rosario stated a section of the particular ordinance had been removed/eliminated during a codification process and will need to be re implemented.

An ordinance amending Chapter 289 Parking, Section 36 to reflect various changes as well as a rate increase will be introduced at the April 14, 2022, regular session meeting. Public Hearing scheduled for May 19th regular session meeting

### **Interlocal Agreement with the Board of Education for a Special Law Enforcement Officer**

It was the consensus of the Governing Body to enter into an interlocal agreement with the Board of Education for the assignment of a special police officer.

An authorizing resolution will be placed on the April 14th proposed consent agenda.

### **Updated Agreement from Jobs4Blue for a Rate Increase from 7% to 8%**

A resolution authorizing the rate increase as stated above will be placed on the April 14th proposed consent agenda.

### **Submission of a Bergen County Open Space Grant Application for Project Known as Whitey Lang Playground, \$129,572.50**

A resolution authorizing the submission of a Bergen County Open Space Grant Application for project known as Whitey Lang Playground will be placed on the April 14th proposed consent agenda

Mayor Sokolich mentioned he was approached to convert the current tennis court into a pickleball court. He will address the public that noise is of concern but, he will further look into it.

### **Award of Contract for Project Known as DPW Exhaust System**

Administrator Restaino stated that one bid regarding the above captioned project was received and opened on March 10, 2022.

The Borough Attorney and Borough Engineer has reviewed accordingly and recommends the contract be awarded to Clean Air Company.

### **Assignment of Contracts for Conflict Counsel and Tax Attorney from John L. Shahdanian, II, Esq. of McCusker Anselmi Rosen & Cervelli, P.C. to John L. Shahdanian, II, Esq. of Trenk Isabel Siddiqi & Shahdanian, P.C.**

Mr. Chewcaskie stated that John L. Shahdanian II, esq. will be reassigned to John L. Shahdanian, II, Esq. of Trenk Isabel Siddiqi & Shahdanian, P.C.

It was the consensus of the Governing Body to authorize the assignment of contract from McCusker Anselmi Rosen and Cervelli, P.C. to John L. Shahdanian II, Esq. of Trenk Isabel Siddiqi & Shahdanian, P.C.

Resolution's will be placed on the April 14<sup>th</sup> proposed agenda.

### **Person-to-Person and Place-to-Place Transfer of Liquor License No. 0219-33-025-006 From 2020 Central Road Liquor, LLC (Pocket) to Golflex Fort Lee, Inc., 1642 Schlosser Street, 2 Floor, Effective April 18, 2022**

Clerk Rosario stated that the applicant has met all the requirements for the transfer of the above captioned liquor license.

An authorizing resolution will be placed on the April 14th proposed consent agenda.

### **Barrymore Film Center 2022 Budget**

The Borough is predicting an opening date of October 2022, with a cost of roughly 325k. The Governing Body has expressed their interest to enter into an agreement with the Barrymore Film Center and Museum to be a nonprofit separate entity.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

There being no public discussion the meeting was adjourned on motion by Councilman Suh, seconded by Councilman Kasofsky, at 8:17 PM.

---

Evelyn Rosario, RMC, CMC  
Municipal Clerk

Prepared By:  
Nadine Drumgoole, RMC  
Deputy Municipal Clerk