

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, December 14, 2011, 7PM**

MINUTES

Regular meeting begins at 7:30 pm or immediately following Closed Session, whichever comes last.

OPENING; ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mach. Those present were Mayor Mach, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lance, and Mr. Seal. Also present were Attorney Kevin Benbrook and Clerk Pizzaia.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was conducted.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Mayor Mach read the following statement: Notice of this meeting has been sent to two newspapers of general circulation in which notice was given of the date, time, place and general agenda in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

CLOSED SESSION – Possible Litigation/Vail Street and Walnut Valley Fire House Soil Remediation;

Mr. Lance made a motion to enter into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson, with all members voting in favor.

WHEREAS, the Blairstown Township Committee needs to discuss matters relating to the issues as listed above; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes it to be in the best interest of the public to discuss these matters in Closed Session;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Blairstown, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that it shall meet in Closed Session to discuss only the subjects mentioned above, the results of which may be made public immediately thereafter or at a later date.

Dated: December 14, 2011

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Lance made a motion to come out of Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Seal, with all members voting in favor.

Mayor Mach said that a representative from Whitman Company met with the Committee to discuss the results of test borings taken at the Walnut Valley Fire Company property. Two oil tanks were removed from this site to determine the amount, if any, of remediation work that will be required.

Preliminary testing indicates that remediation work will be necessary, and Whitman Company will be coming back to the Committee with a proposal for this work.

Mayor Mach announced that Ronald Wildrick Jr., a former resident of Blirstown, was killed in Afghanistan on December 11, 2011. He was a Specialist in the Army's 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment. He received the Army Commendation Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Army Service Ribbon and the Basic Parachutist Badge. His posthumous awards include a Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, NATO Medal and the Combat Infantry Badge.

Mayor Mach asked for a moment of silence for Ronald Wildrick, Jr., which was observed by all in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Jeanette O'Brien, East Avenue, said that Frank Hennion went to the site of the stone wall on the former horse farm property. Mr. Hennion wrote a report on his findings, which was sent to Steve Ellias. Mr. Hennion told Mrs. O'Brien to speak with the Land Use Regulation and Flood Hazard personnel, which she did. Mrs. O'Brien said that it is in their hands now and she will ask them to keep the Committee informed on any progress regarding removal of the wall.

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, spoke about the Cedar Lake property. She said that Mr. Hennion and Mr. Ellias are in favor of making the horse farm into a watershed property. Mr. Ellias also told Ms. Angelone that dredging the Paulins Kill is not necessary and would not alleviate the flooding problem. She also said that the personnel from the Land Use Regulation and Flood Hazard will be coming to Blirstown to research the flooding problem.

Kevin Doell, Heller Hill Road, Blirstown Environmental Commission, brought three names to the Committee for possible appointment to the Commission. They are Jennifeur Wilson, Laura Corio, and Elena Lavrushin. Mr. Doell submitted Citizen Leadership Applications for the three candidates.

Mr. Doell also said that the EC would like to hold another Earth Day on April 22, 2012. 22nd. The Environmental Commission is also trying to get experts in renewable energy to speak at future Environmental Commission meetings. This might be open to the general public as an informational seminar.

Robert Haberstadt, Blairstown Ambulance Corps, said that snow plowing on Main Street has been addressed, but snow removal is still an issue. Mr. Seal said that the Department of Public Works has been helping the County remove the snow by trucking it to Sycamore Park, but the first priority is getting the snow off the roads.

Mr. Benbrook asked Mr. Haberstadt, as a representative of the Ambulance Corp, if the squad members approved of the land deed he drafted for the conveyance of land to the corp. The Committee already voted to authorize the mayor and clerk to sign the deed, so the document will be signed and sent to Mr. Benbrook for recording.

MINUTES

November 9, 2011 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session

Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve the November 9th regular and closed session minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Seal.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

November 18, 2011 – Special Meeting

Mayor Mach made a motion to approve the November 18th special meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

Public Comment on the Consent Agenda Items Only

There were no comments on the consent agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2011-133** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2011-134** Cancellation of Grant Monies
- 3 – R.2011-135** Redemption of Certificate of Sale No. 2011-06
- 4 – R.2011-136** Authorization to Transfer Funds
- 5 – R.2011-137** Cancellation of Reserve Accounts and Unexpended 2011 Budget Appropriations

Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Seal.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – November Report
- Finance – November Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – November 1 through December 6
- Police Department – November Report
- Tax Collector – November Report

Mayor Mach made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari, with all members voting in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Route 94 traffic concerns – T. Rodman to check light
Mr. Lascari has spoken to Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, who feels there is nothing more to be done regarding the traffic light at Route 94 and Lambert Road.
- 2 – JCP&L billing – list submitted to JCP&L – waiting for response
This is ongoing by JCP&L.
- 3 – Main Street concerns – road striping; feral cats; sidewalks
Mr. Seal suggested removing this item, since road striping is a dead issue, the feral cats have not been a problem and the sidewalks in question have been repaired. The Committee agreed to have this item removed from Unfinished Business.
- 4 – Service Electric Cable TV – letter sent to SECTV regarding extension of service
Service Electric Cable TV has responded to the Committee's letter, saying that the matter of extension of service will be looked into.
- 5 – Hazardous Obstructions at Blairstown Airport – waiting for map from State
- 6 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, regarding septic at Walnut Valley Field
Mr. Seal said that the septic is a problem at this location. It has been pumped out, but the water table is high due to the extreme weather. The Committee feels that with little use over the winter, the water table will go down. Portable toilets can be used if necessary.
- 2 – from Joseph W. Zoltowski, Department of Agriculture, regarding gypsy moth egg mass survey
Mayor Mach said that the Department of Agriculture has investigated the area and have found no significant egg masses and therefore does not recommend spraying in the spring.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no comments on the General Correspondence.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook said that he reviewed the lowest bid for the Safe Routes to Schools Project and has found it to be compliant. The bidder is P.A. Contractors, Inc. Mr. Benbrook recommended accepting this bid at tonight's meeting. Mayor Mach said that this will be discussed by Mr. Rodman later this evening.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk has nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson announced that the Senior Citizens dinner took place on Sunday, December 11th and was a great success.

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of November.

Mr. Anderson thanked Mr. Lascari for his contributions to the Township Committee over the past six years. Mr. Seal also wished to express his thanks to Mr. Lascari at this time.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance said that a letter was received by the County Planning Incentive Grant Program for farmland preservation that any properties under 40 acres will be taken off the preservation list. He asked Joel McGreen, Open Space Committee Chair, to come forward and explain any implications this might have for Blairstown. Mr. McGreen said that he was told by the County that this would not affect the Race Farm preservation that is already underway. Mr. McGreen said that it will not affect the approximate 20% monetary contribution from the County for preservation of the Race farm.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Mr. McGreen to obtain two surveys from Laura Brill at a cost of \$9,000. The motion was seconded by Mayor Mach.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

Mr. Lance said it was a pleasure working with Mr. Lascari for the past six years and thanked him for all of his hard work.

COMMITTEEMAN LASCARI

The Ambulance Corp had a ground breaking on Sunday, December 11th. They are actively seeking contributions toward the construction of their new building.

Mr. Lascari has contacted Rob Ettinger, who works on websites, and has asked him to submit a quotation for the maintenance of the township's website.

Mr. Lascari summarized the recent activity report for Blairstown Hose Company No. 1.

Mr. Lascari said that he has enjoyed his time on the Committee, but is looking forward to moving on and trying new things.

COMMITTEEMAN SEAL

Mr. Seal said that he is recommending the hiring of an on-call driver to help during snow storms. With the retirement of the DPW Supervisor and no new hires, the DPW needs this extra help on the snow plows. No benefits are associated with this hire. Mr. Seal made a motion to hire an on-call snow plow operator, contingent upon proper CDL license and the passing of a drug test, and at an hourly rate in accordance with the salary ordinance. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

Mr. Seal reported that two catch basin grates were stolen on Stony Brook Road. They have been replaced. The theft was reported to the Police Department.

Mr. Seal said that Carl Stoddart, Assistant DPW Supervisor, is working on getting an estimate for the repairs needed at the Givens Belet building.

The county has agreed to install the snow removal signs on Main Street. They should be in place shortly.

The guardrails have been installed on Mud Pond Road.

Mayor Mach asked Mr. Rodman to discuss the Safe Routes to School bid. Mr. Rodman said that eight (8) bids were received. He distributed the bid summary sheet, which showed that the bids ranged in price from \$33,466.20 to \$80,976.00. Mr. Rodman said that the lowest bid was received by P.A. Contractors, Inc. Mr. Rodman has reviewed the bid and finds it to be compliant. He has called the references given by P.A. Contractors and has found no issues.

Mr. Lance made a motion to award the Safe Routes to School Project to P.A. Contractors, Inc. with a bid of \$33,466.20. Mr. Seal seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

Mr. Rodman gave a summary of the wastewater management plan that is required by all municipalities in New Jersey. Originally, the Department of Environmental Protection approved a grant for the development of a plan for Hope, Hardwick and Blairstown for a total of \$45,000, with each municipality allotted \$15,000.00. Cerenzio and Panara were working with the township and were to draw up the plans for \$45,000. In November, the DEP reduced the grant monies by \$20,000. Cerenzio and Panara would not complete the plan for the reduced amount.

Mr. Rodman was unable to find anyone to complete the plan for \$25,000. Mr. Rodman asked the DEP if the three municipalities could have the project started with the \$25,000, with the

understanding that the municipalities would not be obligated to fund the remainder. The DEP agreed to this.

Mr. Rodman said that both Hardwick and Hope have agreed to accept the grant monies to begin the wastewater management plan. Mr. Benbrook said that he remembers that the grant monies need to be officially accepted by the end of 2011, so he recommended taking action tonight to accept the grant, contingent upon the DEP's acceptance of the scope of work.

Mayor Mach made a motion to accept the NJDEP Grant in the amount of \$25,000 for Phase I of the Wastewater Management Plan for Blairstown, Hope and Hardwick Townships, contingent upon the approval of the scope of work. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

MAYOR MACH

With respect to COAH, Mayor Mach was concerned about the fees already collected and whether the State would confiscate any unspent monies. Mayor Mach asked about this at the League of Municipalities and did not get a clear answer. Theresa Tamburro, Municipal Housing Liaison, will be researching this and will be submitting a report to the Committee on the status of our current funds and any implications that new directives might have for the township. This will be ready for the January meeting.

Mayor Mach announced that this will be his last meeting as mayor. He thanked the Committee for their cooperation, and thanked Mr. Lascari for his years of service.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked about an item in the general correspondence regarding transmission lines. Mayor Mach explained that an environmental impact statement is available if she is interested in the details.

She also said that she hopes the Committee goes out for bids on the Walnut Valley Fire House soil remediation.

Mrs. Murray thanked Mr. Lascari for his many years of service on the Committee and in the community.

Arthur Duchek asked the Committee for permission to hold the circus again next year. He is offering to donate 20% of ticket sales to the first aid squad and fire company. He would like to hold the circus on June 16th and 17th in 2012. Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve the circus on June 16-17, 2012 at Sycamore Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE – Anderson, Lance, Lascari, Seal, Mach

Jeanette O'Brien, East Avenue, suggested that perhaps another grant might be available in the future to complete the wastewater management plan. Mrs. O'Brien thanked Mr. Lascari for his hard work on the Committee.

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, also thanked Mr. Lascari for his service to the community and wished him well in the future. She also wished him success in the fire company.

Herman Shoemaker, Bingham Lane, thanked Mr. Lascari and wished him well.

Paul Avery, Mohican Road, said he will miss Mr. Lascari and has been impressed with the work he has done for the community.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lascari made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson, with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk