

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, November 9, 2011, 7:30 PM**

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, Mr. Lascari, 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.

Mayor Mach congratulated Mr. Lance for being reelected. He also congratulated Mr. Shoemaker for being elected to the Township Committee commencing January 1, 2012.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Kimberly Bertholf, Heller Hill Road, Erinn Allison, Route 94, and Paul LoMonoco of the Recreation Committee, spoke to the Committee about organizing the Tree Lighting ceremony this year. They plan to solicit funds for this and to buy LCD lights for the tree. They are requesting that the front vestibule of the building be opened for this event. Mayor Mach and Mr. Lance said that there may be funds remaining in the celebrations line item of the budget to assist in the purchase. Mr. LoMonoco will check with the CFO to see if there are funds. Mr. Seal will check with the DPW to see if they will be able to help with the light stringing. The Committee was in favor of allowing Ms. Bertholf, Ms. Allison and Mr. LoMonoco to organize this event for this year.

Debra Waldron, Maple Lane, spoke about the recent problem of power outages. JCP&L have downsized the amount of trucks in our area and when there is a problem, the trucks come from out of state. She also said that JCP&L has not put any money into maintenance, which makes the problem worse. Ms. Waldron would like the Committee to send letters of complaint to the Governor and to First Energy, and to specifically ask for an annual maintenance plan for the Blairstown area. Mayor Mach asked Ms. Waldron to draft this letter and forward it to him, to be sent to the Governor and First Energy. Ms. Waldron agreed to do this.

Ms. Waldron would also like better communication in the event of emergencies and a system whereby senior citizens can be checked on in the case of power outages or other severe emergencies. Mr. Anderson said that the seniors group already has a list of seniors who have requested to be placed on such a list. Ms. Waldron would like a subcommittee formed to make sure a procedure is in place and is followed through.

Mrs. Waldron also spoke about the way in which JCP&L handles complaints during emergencies. She stated that confirmation numbers should be issued when someone calls in a power outage, but she called dozens of times for many people and did not once receive a confirmation number. Mayor Mach emphasized that it is important for individuals to call in, even if they know their neighbors have already done so, because JCP&L needs to have street locations so that they can determine the size of the outage.

Ms. Waldron also reported that JCP&L has not been removing the trees and branches from the roadways, which is a hazard. Mayor Mach said that the individual residents should call in such cases at their properties.

Ms. Waldron asked the Committee to look into the water quality issue along the Route 94 corridor. She said the Committee needs to approach the Warren County Health Department regarding this issue.

Lois Brod, Cedar Glen Drive, stated that there needs to be better communication between the municipal building and the residents during times of emergency. She would like a recording in place telling residents where they can go for shelter and heat during an emergency.

Mr. Lance commented that this was not a situation unique to Blairstown. Many towns in New Jersey as well as in other states were hit hard by the storm. Mr. Anderson added that Mayor Mach worked around the clock and was in constant communication with both the governor's office and JCP&L in an effort to have power restored to our residents. Mayor Mach said that it is incumbent upon individuals to be prepared for emergencies and to take responsibility for themselves.

MINUTES

October 12, 2011 – Regular Meeting

Mr. Lascari made a motion to approve the regular and closed session minutes of the October 12th meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2011 – 08 AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A NEW CHAPTER 143 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN ENTITLED "PEACE AND GOOD ORDER"

Adoption, Second Reading, Committee Discussion

Public Hearing

Mayor Mach opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 2011 – 08. As there were no comments from the public, the Public Hearing was closed.

Committee Discussion – Mr. Seal said that he does not feel that this ordinance addresses the issue of noisy neighbors. He said that residents have been complaining about neighbors with loud four-wheelers and having parties, and that an ordinance without a decibel reading will not be effective.

He also objects to Subsection 6 that allows noise up to midnight on weekends. He said that this might be alright on 5-acre zoning, but would be a problem in the village area.

Mr. Benbrook discussed the issue of a decibel reading and said that no local municipality has the capability of taking these readings. Mr. Seal said that it would not be very expensive to train the police officers, who he feels should be responsible for enforcement. Mr. Benbrook said that decibel summonses are constantly being thrown out by municipal court judges so he intentionally did not add this in the ordinance.

Mr. Anderson objected to item #7 regarding idling diesel engines. He would like the time limit taken out completely.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to have the wording changed as follows:

Section B (7) The warming up or idling of buses, trucks or tractors and the unnecessary or unreasonable or repeated idling, acceleration and deceleration or starting and stopping of automobiles and motorcycles within three hundred (350) feet of a residence.

Section C (6) Private parties. Celebrations and parties on private property: provided, however, that loud or offensive noises that continue past midnight shall be subject to the provisions of this Chapter.

Mr. Lance made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2011 – 08 on second reading with the above amendments, which was seconded by Mr. Lascari.

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

Public Comment on the Consent Agenda Items Only

There were no comments or questions from the public regarding the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2011-127** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2011-128** Refunding Overpayment of 2011 Taxes
- 3 – R.2011-129** Authorization to Transfer Funds
- 4 – R.2011-130** Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation
- 5 – Approval of Application for Blue Light Permit for Blairstown Ambulance Member – Lauren Dent**

Mr. Seal made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – October Report
- Finance – October Finance and Fuel Reports
- Police Department – October Report
- Tax Collector – October Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – September Report
- Warren County Health Department – October 7, 2011

Mr. Seal made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Route 94 traffic concerns – T. Rodman to check light
- 2 – JCP&L billing – list submitted to JCP&L – waiting for response
- 3 – Main Street concerns – road striping; sidewalks

Mr. Seal read the letter he sent to Barth Johnson, Warren County Road Dept., regarding the placement of signs on Main Street for alternate side of the street parking during snow emergencies. Mr. Seal will follow up with a telephone call to ascertain when the signs will be in place.

- 4 – Service Electric Cable TV – Mr. Lascari drafting letter to SECTV regarding extension of service

Mr. Lascari discussed the letter he drafted requesting continuation of service. He said that our franchise ends in 2013 and this letter is only a request. The response from the cable company will give the Committee an idea of what can be expected during negotiations.

- 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 James P. Fox, Morris, Downing & Sherred, LLP, re: North Warren Board of Education

This letter is to inform the Committee that the Board of Education will be coming before the Planning Board in connection with the site plan application for the approval of modular rooms. The Board of Education is requesting a waiver of all fees in connection with this application. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

Mr. Benbrook added that the Board of Education is only making a courtesy application, as the Planning Board has no jurisdiction over the Board of Education. He said that the Planning Board should be sure not to incur any professional review fees regarding this application.

- 2 – from Darlene Jay, Maser Consulting, re: Affordable Housing Trust Fund, July 17, 2012 Deadline

Mayor Mach explained that this letter states that our COAH trust fund needs to be spent by July of 2012. Mayor Mach has corresponded with our Municipal Housing Liaison to verify that we are in compliance and are not in jeopardy of losing any monies.

3 – from Sandhill Road residents, regarding condition of road

Mayor Mach explained that this letter is in reference to a pipe under the driveway of a property entrance. This letter has been forwarded to the Township Engineer, who is researching the property and will report his findings to the Committee at a future meeting.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook had nothing further to discuss.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Free Rabies Clinic will be held on November 19th between the hours of 9am and 12 noon at the DPW garage.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Mr. Anderson attended the Environmental Commission meeting on November 2nd. Richard Mailhot resigned at this meeting. Mr. Anderson was advised that Mr. Mailhot needs to submit a letter to the Township Committee, not the Environmental Commission. Mr. Anderson will speak to Mr. Doell about getting a written letter of resignation from Mr. Mailhot.

Mr. Anderson thanked the Police Department for doing a good job during the recent snow storm. He summarized the Police report for the month of October, 2011.

Mr. Anderson read a letter from the Senior Citizens Committee, announcing their annual holiday luncheon on Saturday, December 10th.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance said there will be a special meeting of the Committee on November 18th to discuss flood matters and the 2012 budget.

The DPW has done asphalt work on Vail Street, but the road still needs a lot of work.

Mr. Lance has two personnel matters he would like to discuss in closed session. The Committee agreed to hold a closed session after the public portion of tonight's meeting.

Mr. Lance congratulated Mr. Shoemaker for his election win as Committeeman.

COMMITTEEMAN LASCARI

Mr. Lascari said that the fire department worked non-stop during the recent snow storm and extensive power outages. He wished to thank all members for a good job.

Mr. Lascari said that there will be an Eagle Scout ceremony for Joshua Bryant on Saturday, November 26th. Mr. Lascari will be there representing the Knights of Columbus and Mayor Mach will be representing the Township Committee.

COMMITTEEMAN SEAL

Quotes have been received to put a new roof on the second half of the Walnut Valley Fire House. An award needs to be made in the very near future.

Mr. Seal reported that there is a lime kiln in the township's right of way on Amackassin Road. Mr. Seal said that it is historic and needs labor intensive repairs. He asked for the Committee's direction on this matter. Mr. Lance said that this could be a project for the Historic Preservation Committee.

There is a request to change the Delaware Road sign on the street. The request came from a Knowlton Road resident, where the road is known as Knowlton Road. The Committee was in agreement that the portion of the road located in Blairstown is, in fact, known as Delaware Road, and the Committee is not in favor of making a change.

MAYOR MACH

With regard to the flooding situation on Cedarville Road, Mayor Mach said that there was an offer from South Hackensack to donate fire hose to Blairstown. Mayor Mach would like someone from the DPW to view the hose to see if it is suitable for our purposes. Mr. Seal said that several members of the DPW are also members of the fire department, so they would be the right people to check the hose. Mr. Lance added that the pump used from the Forest Fire Service during the flooding on Cedarville Road may be donated to the township. Mr. Lance will work with the Clerk on a letter in request of the pump.

Mayor Mach made a motion to have a "no close" policy added to the employee personnel policy. As it stands now, a decision is made early in the morning on whether the building will be closed all day or will have a delayed opening. Mayor Mach said the current policy is causing overtime difficulties in another department. He is proposing an amendment to the policy, whereby the building will remain open regardless of weather conditions, and that individual employees will be responsible for deciding if they feel it is safe enough to come into work. Those employees to choose not to report to work will be charged the appropriate amount of time off. Mr. Lascari seconded the motion.

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

There will be a bid opening on December 9th for the Safe Routes to School project. Mayor Mach asked the school liaisons to ask the school officials if they have any projects in mind for the new cycle of Safe Routes to School grants.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Mayor Mach opened the meeting to the public.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked about the soil remediation work being performed at the Walnut Valley Fire House. Mayor Mach responded that Whitman Company has completed the

preliminary scope of work. Test borings have been performed and the results will be forwarded to the township in the near future.

As there were no further comments from the public, Mayor Mach announced that the Committee would be holding a Closed Session to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Seal made a motion to go into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Lance. The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 to conduct a Closed Session meeting.

CLOSED SESSION – Personnel

WHEREAS, the Blirstown Township Committee needs to discuss matters relating to the issue as listed above; and

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

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

Dated: November 9, 2011

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Mr. Lascari made a motion to adjourn Closed Session at 9:30 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lance. The regular meeting was recommenced at 9:30 pm.

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Lance made a motion to accept the resignation of Robert DePuy, Supervisor of Public Works, effective January 1, 2012, and to extend Mr. DePuy's single coverage medical benefits until he reaches the age 65. The motion was seconded by Mr. Seal.

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

All members of the Committee congratulated Mr. DePuy on his retirement and expressed their thanks for the fine job he has done for the township for many years.

Mr. Lance made a motion to increase the yearly salary of Sean Casey, Licensed Water Operator, from \$18,000 to \$30,000, effective November 1, 2011. Mr. Lance stated that the previous water operator's salary was \$66,000. Mayor Mach seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Seal spoke about the Sandhill Road pipe that was addressed earlier in the meeting. He has spoken to Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, and they both feel that responsibility for the maintenance of this pipe is in question due to the possibility of a right-of-way. Mr. Benbrook said that he will research this matter and have information available to the Committee before the December meeting.

Mr. Lascari made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Lance, with all members in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk