

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, January 11, 2012, 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 Anderson. Those present were Mayor Anderson, Mr. Lance, Mr. Mach, Mr. Seal and Mr. Shoemaker. Also present were Township Attorney Kevin Benbrook and Clerk Pizzaia.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was conducted.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Mayor Anderson 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/ Walnut Valley Fire House Soil Remediation;
Personnel/DPW; Possible Contract /COAH Obligation**

Mayor Anderson made a motion to enter into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

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: January 11, 2012

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Mach made a motion to come out of Closed Session, which was seconded by Mayor Anderson.

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to appoint Carl Stoddart as Acting Supervisor of the Department of Public Works for a probationary period of one (1) year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker. Mayor Anderson explained that Mr. Stoddart was present in Closed Session to answer questions concerning a possible promotion. Mayor Anderson also said that Mr. Stoddart possesses the necessary certification as a Certified Public Works Manager. Mr. Lance added that Mr. Stoddart has earned this promotion, having come up through the ranks and having worked hard towards his certification.

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

Mayor Anderson said that the Walnut Valley Fire House soil remediation was also discussed in Closed Session. Mike Russo of Whitman Company is in attendance to summarize the findings at the site to this point and to answer any questions.

Mr. Russo explained that in February of 2009 two tanks were removed from the Walnut Valley site. Both tanks had holes in them and this was reported to the Department of Environmental Protection. Whitman was hired to conduct a soil and water investigation. It was found that soil and water has been contaminated above DEP standards. A proposal was prepared in accordance with mandatory deadlines. By March 1, 2012, a receptor evaluation must be submitted to the DEP. More testing will be performed to define the area impacted. After this phase is complete, which includes the receptor evaluation, further evaluation, and written reports, Mr. Russo said that the amount of work needed to be done should be apparent. At that time, the Committee could put the remediation work out for bid.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked Mr. Russo about the bidding process. Mr. Russo said that the work could be supervised under Whitman's license, and that Whitman's fees would depend upon the amount of remediation work needed.

Mr. Benbrook added that this case is different from the Community Center in that the Walnut Valley Fire House remediation work is not an emergent situation. He said that the Committee will be able to afford the time to accept bids on the remediation work.

Mr. Mach made a motion to accept the Whitman Proposal #29746, Continuation of Whitman's August 1, 2011 Proposal #28506, for investigative services to delineate the extent of contamination at the Walnut Valley Fire House in the amount of \$19,650.00. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Jeanette O'Brien, East Avenue, gave the Committee an update on the flooding situation in the village area. She spoke to Lou Cattuna from the Department of Environmental Protection, who is

asking for a letter from the Township Engineer stating that the township would like the stone wall on the Cedar Lake Horse Farm taken down.

Mr. Shoemaker said that he was told that the State came in to clear cut the flood plain in this area after the last great flood in the 1950's. He suggested that Mrs. O'Brien talk to Mr. Cattuna about this possibility.

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, said that she believes a culvert needs to be cut into this area to make it more flood-ready. She also believes that the seven (7) dams contribute to the flooding and that dredging would help.

Robert Haberstadt, Vice President of the Blairstown Ambulance Corps, summarized the ambulance calls for the year 2011. There were a total of 1,017 calls, with the vehicles travelling a combined total of over 28,000 miles. Squad members logged over 8,000 man hours.

The Committee thanked the squad members for their hard work and dedication.

MINUTES

December 14, 2011 – Regular Meeting and Closed Session

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the December 14th Regular Meeting and Closed Session minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Mach.

Roll call vote: AYE – Lance, Mach, Seal, Anderson
 ABSTAIN – Shoemaker

December 27, 2011 – Special Meeting

Mr. Mach made a motion to approve the December 27th Special Meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

Roll call vote: AYE – Lance, Mach, Seal, Anderson
 ABSTAIN – Shoemaker

January 4, 2012 – Reorganization Meeting

Mr. Mach made a motion to approve the January 4th Reorganization Meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

Public Comment on the Consent Agenda Items Only

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked about the resolution for Bond Counsel. Mr. Lance explained that bond counsel is appointed every year in case any bonding activity is needed.

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

1 – R.2012-020 Authorization to Pay Bills

- 2 – R.2012-021** Contracting for Professional Services without Competitive Bidding in Accordance with Local Public Contract Law – Bond Counsel
- 3 – R.2012-022** Reimbursement for Damaged Mailboxes
- 4 – R.2012-023** Authorization of the Transfer of Funds
- 5 – R.2012-024** Authorization to Enter into Agreement with Nisivoccia Consulting, LLC for Website Hosting and Maintenance
- 6 – Application for Blue Light Permit** – Ashley MacLean, Blairstown Ambulance Corps
- 7 – Application for Blue Light Permit** – Jennifer Gross, Blairstown Ambulance Corps
- 8 – Applications for membership in Blairstown Hose Company No. 1** – Calvin Inscho, Salvatore P. Lascari

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

Mayor Anderson read the names of people volunteering for the Fire and Ambulance Squads, and specifically thanked former Committeeman Lascari, who has a history of volunteering his time to the community.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – December Report
- Finance – December Finance and Fuel Reports
- Police Department – December Report
- Tax Collector – December Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – November Report
- Warren County Health Department – December 9, 2011

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Route 94 traffic concerns – T. Rodman to check light
- 2 – JCP&L billing – list submitted to JCP&L – waiting for response
Mr. Shoemaker indicated that he will send JCP&L a letter to ascertain the status of this item.
- 3 – Service Electric Cable TV – letter sent to SECTV; SECTV is investigating extension of service
- 4 – Hazardous Obstructions at Blairstown Airport – waiting for map from State
- 5 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement
Mr. Seal will work with Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, on this matter.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, regarding reimbursement to North Warren Midget Football and North Warren Little League for expenses incurred for renovation of Walnut Valley Field

Mayor Anderson explained that these two volunteer groups worked hard to get the field in good shape. They are asking for reimbursement of monies they spent on sod and top soil. Mayor Anderson made a motion to reimburse the North Warren Midget Football in the amount of \$968.80 and the North Warren Little League in the amount of \$800.00, to be paid out of the Open Space Trust Fund. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

- 2 – from Cherie LoPresti, Service Electric Cable, acknowledging the township’s request for extension of service

Mayor Anderson explained that this letter from Service Electric states that the township’s request for extension is under consideration. Mr. Mach said that the franchise will soon be up for renewal and that this may give the township more leverage towards getting the requested service extension.

Mr. Shoemaker explained that there has been a request from ARC for placement of a student currently attending the North Warren Regional High School at the Municipal Building. The student would work as a volunteer and she has previous experience in office work. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the student work program for up to three (3) hours per week, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no questions on the General Correspondence.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook said that the Ambulance Squad has requested that he record the deed for the property recently sold to them by the Township Committee. Mr. Benbrook asked the Committee if they would like the deed recorded at this time. After discussion, the Committee authorized Mr. Benbrook to record the deed.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk reminded the audience that January is dog licensing month. Dogs can be licensed during the entire month of January before late fees are charged.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that the first meeting of the budget subcommittee is scheduled for January 20th. The DPW and Police Department budgets will be discussed at that time.

Mr. Lance said that in August of 2011, the township negotiated an interlocal agreement with Oxford Township for shared CFO services. Oxford recently rescinded the agreement, but Knowlton Township is interested in having an interlocal agreement with Blirstown for shared CFO services. They have agreed to pay Blirstown \$20,000.00 per year for this agreement. Our CFO has agreed to serve as Knowlton's Chief Financial Officer for \$15,000.00 per year. Out of the remaining \$5,000.00, Blirstown Township will pay employee's social security, pension and dental insurance. Out of the \$20,000.00, the township's cost will be \$18,595.00. The township will make \$1,405.00 from the agreement with Knowlton. Mr. Benbrook added that this will be an additional point towards the Best Practices List adopted by the State. Mr. Lance said that the CFO's availability in Blirstown would not lessen, and may actually increase.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this agreement and to authorize Mr. Anderson to sign the agreement with Knowlton Township for shared services of a CFO. Mr. Mach seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance said that the salary ordinance needs to be amended to cover the CFO's salary for her employment relative to the interlocal agreement with Knowlton. Mr. Lance made a motion to introduce Ordinance 2012-01 by title only, titled "An Amended Ordinance Fixing Salaries and Wages of the Employees of the Township of Blirstown in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey by Salary Range." The Interlocal Services Agreement salary for the Chief Financial Officer will be added to this ordinance, with a salary range of \$15,000 to \$16,500 per year, payable semi-monthly. Mr. Mach seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance spoke about a water bill that has been estimated for over a year. The property owner, Adolfo Ultimo, has requested a reduction in his water bill. The actual meter reading for the fourth quarter of 2011 was \$369.22. He claims that part of this usage was on the old water rates. As there is no way to determine what percentage is at the old rate, Mr. Lance made a motion to reduce his bill by 10 percent, for a reduction of \$36.92 of his fourth quarter bill. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance spoke about Blue Acres, a change in the Open Space laws that allows a municipality to purchase floodplain properties with Open Space funds. Mr. Lance questioned whether this would require an ordinance change if, in fact, the township wanted to pursue this. Mr. Benbrook said that it would. To answer Mr. Seal's question on whether this would need a referendum vote, Mr. Benbrook felt that it would not, but will research it and report to the Committee.

The Committee directed Mr. Benbrook to draft an ordinance amendment to include Blue Acres language for the February meeting.

Mr. Lance said that John Kerkendall has requested to farm the Gorab property again this year. He is offering to pay \$2,500.00 to farm an approximate 46 tillable acres, which comes to \$54.35 per acre. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request and to authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement

with Mr. Kerkendall to farm the Gorab property for \$2,500.00. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance said that the Historic Preservation Committee will be meeting for the first time and will be looking at the caboose and the storage room being utilized by the Historic Preservation Committee.

COMMITTEEMAN MACH

Mr. Mach summarized the Police Department report for the month of December 2011. He said that the township is still in negotiations with the police for a new contract, and it appears that we are close to a settlement.

The Environmental Commission is planning an Earth Day Celebration on April 22nd. It will start at noon at Footbridge Park.

Mr. Mach has been attempting to get an answer regarding the spending of COAH funds and any possible jeopardy the funds may be in by not spending down. The answer from the DCA is that the monies collected in 2008 must be spent by 2012; the monies collected in 2009 must be spent four (4) years later, and so on. Our risk at this point is about \$60,000.00. The Municipal Housing Liaison has been active in attempting to get COAH units in place. Mr. Mach authorized her to advertise again for perspective COAH units.

With regards to the Paulina Dam, the Bureau of Dam Safety is requiring that a 1B Investigation be conducted, which basically is a search for any artifacts on site. After this is completed, permits can be obtained for the repair work.

COMMITTEEMAN SEAL

Mr. Seal said that he now is liaison to the Water Department. He is waiting to see what is available in the 2012 budget before he makes any decisions on priorities in the department.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

Mr. Shoemaker said he was glad to be on the Committee, and has been familiarizing himself with his new responsibilities.

Mr. Shoemaker asked about the snow signs that were put up on Main Street. Mr. Seal said that he believes that underground wiring limited the actual placement of the signs. Mr. Lance suggested that Mr. Shoemaker contact David Hicks at the County with questions about this.

Mr. Shoemaker said that Rotary Club has the opportunity to receive a \$1,000.00 grant from the international organization for use in the community. Mr. Shoemaker said that the holiday decorations on Main Street need to be replaced and he thought about applying for the grant for this purpose. The Committee was in agreement that this would be a good idea.

MAYOR ANDERSON

Mayor Anderson recapped the Reorganization for those who were unable to attend, listing the liaisons to the various departments and boards.

Mayor Anderson said that the Senior Citizens party was successful and Anita Ardia did a great job organizing the event. The entertainment and food were very good.

Mayor Anderson said that the DCA might be picking up more municipalities in the area and he will be encouraging them to make Blirstown the base, which will be a benefit to Blirstown residents.

He announced that Robert DePuy, Supervisor of the Department of Public Works, retired as of January 1st, and he thanked him for many years of service with the township.

Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, spoke about the joint Wastewater Management Plan agreed to between Blirstown, Hardwick and Hope. The Department of Environmental Protection wants a lead agency appointed for the project. A lead agency agreement, making Blirstown the lead, needs to be signed. Mr. Benbrook said that he will prepare the necessary document. He will work with Mr. Rodman on this.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Salvatore Lascari, Belcher Road, wished everyone a Happy New Year and apologized for not being able to attend the Reorganization Meeting.

Livia Angelone, Bridge Street, reiterated that she is requesting a letter from the Township Engineer stating that the township supports the removal of the stone wall on the Cedar Lake Horse Farm.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Mach. The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk