

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, April 10, 2013 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 Mr. Anderson, Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mr. Shoemaker and Mayor Mach. 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 – COAH/Possible Contract Negotiation

Mr. Lance made a motion to enter into closed session, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

WHEREAS, the Blairstown 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 subject 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 subject mentioned above, the results of which may be made public immediately thereafter or at a later date.

Dated: April 10, 2013

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to come out of closed session, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mayor Mach informed the audience that the Committee discussed a COAH matter in closed session but that there are results to announce.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Charles Anderson, Alice Court, said that he met with Mr. Shoemaker and Mr. Avery at Sycamore Park to mark out the dog park location. Mr. Anderson said that there is some disagreement about the exact location and size of the proposed dog park. He distributed a drawing of the area. Mr. Anderson said that Pat Sagan told him that all involved parties will meet at the site to discuss this. Mr. Avery said that he has an issue with the vast size of the area. Mr. Anderson said that the Committee agreed that the dog park would be about 200 ft. by 250 ft. Mayor Mach agreed that the Committee committed to this size. Mr. Avery and Mr. Shoemaker will continue to work with the dog park group on this issue.

Robert Haberstadt, Main Street, thanked the Committee to continuing to work towards maintaining a zero tax rate in Blirstown.

Patricia Doell, Heller Hill Road, spoke on behalf of the Food Shed Alliance to request the use of the parking area on Stillwater Road for the Farmers Market. The market will run on Saturdays from June 1st through October 26th, 10am to 12 noon. All conditions will remain the same from the previous years.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, read a prepared statement regarding votes being taken on items not listed on the agenda. She particularly is concerned about the vote taken to transfer Open Space tax funds to a dedicated reserve account.

Joseph Dimock, Spring Valley Road, spoke about his desire to organize a food and arts festival in Blirstown to be held on Saturday, September 7th. He feels that this event will help local artists and musicians, as well as local vendors. He would like to include auxiliary events along Main Street run by the Main Street store owners, and have art exhibits and roaming musicians. After discussion, Mr. Dimock was directed to contact Mr. Shoemaker and Mr. Avery to discuss this event in more detail.

MINUTES

March 13, 2013 –Regular and Closed Session Meeting Minutes

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded Mr. Shoemaker.

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

ADOPTION OF 2013 BUDGET

R.2013-053 Resolution Authorizing Budget to be Read by Title Only

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Resolution 2013-053, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

PUBLIC HEARING – Copies of the budget have been made available to the public requesting same and a copy has been filed with the library as well as the Synopsis being published in the New Jersey Herald on March 28, 2013.

Mayor Mach opened the Public Hearing on the budget.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked about the appropriation for debt service. Mr. Lance explained that it is a combination of several items, including open space debt and water department debt. The figure is the 2013 amount owed for principal and interest. Mrs. Murray also objected to the reduction of the open space tax from \$.035 to \$.015.

As there were no further comments on the budget, Mayor Mach closed the public hearing.

R.2013-054 - FINAL ADOPTION OF 2013 BUDGET

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the 2013 budget on final reading, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

ORDINANCE 2013 – 01 AN AMENDED ORDINANCE FIXING THE SALARIES AND WAGES OF THE OFFICIALS, APPOINTEES AND EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY SALARY RANGE

First Reading, Introduction
Committee Discussion

Mr. Lance said that he is in favor of reducing the salary range of the CFO from \$53,000 - \$72,000 to \$40,000 - \$72,000. Mr. Lance made a motion to amend the salary ordinance to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2013 - 01, as amended, on first reading. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2013 – 055 Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013 – 056 CFO Salary for Interlocal Agreement with Knowlton Township
- 3 – R.2013 – 057 2012 Tonnage Grant Application
- 4 – R.2013 – 058 Authorization to Cancel Lien on Property
- 5 – R.2013 – 059 Part-time Office Assistant
- 6 – **Application for Social Affair Permit** – Givens Belet American Legion Post 258 for event at Footbridge Park on May 26, 2013

Mr. Shoemaker requested that R.2013 – 057 be removed from the Consent Agenda. Mr. Lance made a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Item No. 3, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

Mr. Shoemaker question Resolution No. 2013 – 057 and the date of 2012. Mayor Mach explained that the grant applications are for the previous year and the 2012 date is correct.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2013 – 057, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – March Report
- Finance March Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – February Report
- Police Department – March Report
- Tax Collector – March Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – February 2013 Report
- Warren County Health Department – March 8th Report

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Service Electric Cable TV –SECTV is preparing draft ordinance for franchise renewal
- 2 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement

There was no discussion on unfinished business items.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Tracey DePano, Director, Special Events Relay for Life, requesting police coverage for overnight event at North Warren Regional High School on June 8th and June 9th.

Mayor Mach said that this same request was approved last year. Mayor Mach directed Police Director Gara to contact Ms. DePano stating that police coverage during the daytime hours will be granted. Mr. Anderson also asked Mr. Gara to contact the State Police to inform them that this event will be taking place.

- 2 – from Jamie D. Oatley, MOMs Club, to David Diehl, Zoning Official, regarding required permits to hold car show fundraiser at Sycamore Park on June 15th and June 16th.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would waive all township fees except for the raffle license fee. Mayor Mach directed the Clerk to contact Ms. Oatley to inform her of this decision, and to also inform her to contact the Warren County Health Department regarding any food vendors at the event.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

Mr. Shoemaker pointed out the mayor's advisory that lists all of the resources provided by the NJLM. Mr. Avery said that there is a bulletin about a FEMA grant, and he thought that maybe Blairstown might be able to get grant monies to research the flooding problem. Mayor Mach said that he has forwarded this grant information to our OEM Coordinator.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Kevin Benbrook had no report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had no report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson said that two new police officers were appointed last month, one probationary officer and one special officer. Director Gara has reported that both officers are doing well. Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of March.

Mr. Anderson thanked Mr. Lance and all those responsible for developing this year's budget. He is proud to be a part of a Committee that is dedicated to serving its residents by keeping expenditures to a minimum.

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

Mr. Avery said that there will be a Land Use Board meeting on April 15th, at which time the board will discuss student housing that Blair Academy wants to build on-campus. They will also be addressing the issue of large vehicles on residential properties.

With regard to the Environmental Commission, Tanya McCabe has agreed to become acting chair of the Commission until a permanent chair is found. Mr. Avery discussed the Sustainable Blairstown issue with the Commission, and they are in agreement that the sustainable certification is too

difficult to attain. Mr. Avery made a motion to remove the township from the Sustainable Blirstown/ Sustainable New Jersey program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Avery and Tanya McCabe assisted Blair Langston, NJDEP Watershed Ambassador, in conducting the Jacksonburg River water assessment. Water samples are taken to assess the water quality. Results show that this water is very clean.

Mr. Avery will be submitting an application for a new member to the Environmental Commission for approval. There are two vacancies for the alternate positions.

The seniors are planning another trip on May 15th to the Brownstone in Paterson, NJ.

With regard to recreation, the spring programs are underway. Mr. Avery distributed pictures of the dugouts recently built by various sports volunteers. The Little League group is looking to replace the beam clay mound. They would like the township to purchase a safety mat system for \$835.00. This mat lasts up to 10 years. They are requesting that this be in place for next season.

With regard to the water department outage, Mr. Avery showed a picture of the hydrant that was apparently hit, which caused the problem. Mr. Avery commended Carl Stoddart, DPW Foreman and the DPW employees for an excellent job handling the crisis. Mayor Mach added that Nick Mohr, OEM Coordinator, was instrumental in the smooth handling of this situation.

Mr. Avery is in the process of looking at the Givens Belet building for possible renovations. Other buildings are also being looked at, but Mr. Avery would like to see the Givens Belet building renovated with the assistance of volunteers from the American Legion Post.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance acknowledged the death of a former long-time employee, George Black.

With regard to the budget, Mr. Lance said that this year's spending plan is \$3.9 million, which is approximately \$80,000 less than last year. When the Committee began its spending reduction in 2005, the budget was almost \$5.1 million. Mr. Lance feels that the Committee accomplished this with no reduction in services.

Mr. Lance attended a consolidation meeting with Senator Oroho. Mr. Lance asked what benefit shared services or consolidation with another municipality could have for Blirstown. It was suggested that a permanent energy tax money return to Blirstown could be offered. These ideas are only conceptual at this time.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

Mr. Shoemaker asked the Committee to approve the hiring of a part-time mower at \$15.00 for the summer months. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Shoemaker summarized the March activity report for Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 and the Blairstown Ambulance Corps.

Mr. Shoemaker talked about the dog park and the disagreement between the parties over space and location. The Committee suggested that Rebecca Seamon be present at the next meeting on this subject since she has spearheaded the park. Mr. Shoemaker said that the insurance coverage is also in the process of being settled. The input from the township attorney and township insurance representative has been forwarded to Ms. Seamon. With regard to the proposed agreement submitted by the dog park group to the township, Mr. Kevin Benbrook advised that the township not sign this agreement. He said that proof that the dog park group has a general liability policy and that the township is named as an additional insured is what he recommends.

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach said that he attended a meeting at the North Warren Regional High School for a presentation of their 2013-2014 budget. The new budget has an increase of \$152,000. This translates into an average increase in taxes of \$60 per year for Blairstown residents. Both schools will be giving a brief presentation at the May meeting.

The next 24th legislative district meeting with the legislators will be held on May 1st in Liberty Township.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Susan Price, Alice Court, said that Alice Anderson wrote a letter that was published in the newspaper, thanking the Committee for maintaining a zero tax rate and for reducing the open space tax.

Ms. Price also asked if a resolution was necessary to withdraw from the Sustainable Blairstown program. Since the township joined the program by resolution, it was felt that it would be appropriate to opt out by resolution. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked whether the budget was available to the public. Ms. Murray was told that the entire budget document is available in the Clerk's Office one week before public hearing and final adoption.

Mrs. Murray also asked what the difference is between independent contractors and part-time employees. Mr. Lance said that in general, the independent contractors are those individuals who perform professional services and do not have set hours in which to perform their duties. Contractors also supply their own insurance.

Mrs. Murray asked why the animal control officer receives medical benefits from the township. Mr. Anderson responded that this arrangement was made with the animal control officer long before the present Committee was elected. Mrs. Murray objected to the animal control officer receiving benefits as a part-time employee.

As there were no further comments from the public, Mayor Mach closed the meeting to the public.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Ted Rodman said that the testing is completed at the Walnut Valley Fire House. Whitman Company will supply the township with a map delineating the problem. It is certain that there is no contamination under the building. Whitman Company will be forwarding a draft report to Mr. Rodman in a week or so.

The annual inspection of the Paulina Dam was performed last week. French & Parrello is recommending that the QP be removed and the holes filled in.

The county will be resurfacing County Road 655 this year from the Hope Township line to County Road 616 in Blairstown, for a total of 3.58 miles.

The DOT will be meeting at the Municipal Building on April 25th regarding the remediation work on the Jacksonburg bridge. A public officials meeting will be held from 4 pm to 6 pm and a public hearing is scheduled for 6 pm to 8 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business to discuss, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion, with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk