

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, August 14, 2013 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 Mr. Anderson, Mr. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mr. Shoemaker and Mayor Mach. Also present were Attorney 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Mary Lou Hawkins, Bingham Lane, spoke about a safety concern on Maple Lane. She said that yellow lines need to be painted on the road because it is difficult to see the road sometimes when driving at night. Mr. Shoemaker said that he spoke to the DPW Foreman about this and this project is on the list for striping.

Richard Ohl, Commander of the American Legion, asked if the township is planning on replacing the septic system at Givens Belet. He said that a recent estimate of \$32,000 to \$35,000 was given by a contractor for a septic system replacement. Mr. Shoemaker said that he met with legion members about repairs to Givens Belet. They are working on an estimate for the necessary renovation work. Mr. Avery said that an estimate has been received that itemizes the repair work, so between the township and the Legion, a list of the most necessary repairs can be pulled from the estimate. It was also discussed that the total figure will be lower since the Legion members have agreed to do some of the work themselves. Mr. Avery also hopes to involve the community and possibly secure donations to complete some of the work.

MINUTES

July 10, 2013 –Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the regular and closed session minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

PROCLAMATION – September is National Preparedness Month

Mayor Mach read the proclamation in full, proclaiming September as National Preparedness Month. Mayor Mach emphasized the importance of preparedness for the residents of Blairstown in light of recent flooding and hurricanes.

PRESENTATION – EMEX, Power Savings, Simplified

Mayor Mach introduced Mike Stoller, EMEX, explaining that his company is highly recommended by the NJ League of Municipalities and that over 100 municipalities have already signed on with the company.

Mr. Stoller of EMEX gave a presentation on the reverse auction that took place earlier today. He explained that EMEX is an energy market exchange. They are an approved DCA vendor which allows municipalities to by-pass the Request for Proposal process. In essence, EMEX performs the RFP requirement for the municipality through its auction process.

Mr. Stoller summarized the results of the auction, which are attached to the minutes. The winning rate came from ZOOM at a \$0.082/kWh. This will be an approximate savings of \$14,000.00 over a two year period. Mr. Lance asked for information on ZOOM. Mr. Stoller said that he is not familiar with details on the company as they are relatively new to the platform, but assured the Committee that the company is BPU approved. In answer to Mr. Shoemaker's question, Mr. Stoller said that EMEX will handle the transfer from Veridian after receiving a signed contract and resolution. The township does not need to do anything with regard to the switch. The contract is on a month-to-month basis.

Mayor Mach asked if the Committee was interested in going forward with accepting the auction results. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve a resolution authorizing Mayor Mach to sign a contract to transfer the township's energy vendor. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2013 – 088** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013 – 089** Appointment of Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator
- 3 – R.2013 – 090** Appointment of Additional Deputy Emergency Management Coordinators
- 4 – R.2013 – 091** Authorization to Increase Duties and Salary of Assistant Treasurer
- 5 – R.2013 – 092** Reappointment of Tax Assessor
- 6 – Application for Blue Light Permit** – Lorrie Schoemer, Blairstown Ambulance Corps

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Clerk – July Report
Finance – July Finance and Fuel Reports
Fire Department – June Report
Police Department – July Report
Tax Collector – July Report
Municipal Court of North Warren – June Report
Warren County Health Department – July 5, 2013

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mr. Lance, with all members in favor.

Mr. Lance commented on the length of time it is taking to make headway on the situation at 83 Union Brick Road. Mayor Mach said that the owner is not appearing in court and the date keeps getting set back.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Service Electric Cable TV –SECTV is preparing draft ordinance for franchise renewal

Mr. Benbrook spoke about recent communication from SECTV indicating that they will extend service to portions of Noe Road, Gwinnup Road, Lambert Road and Westview Drive. Mayor Mach said that he would like to attempt to have cable extended on Mount Hermon Road, at least to Centerville Road. Mayor Mach and Mr. Benbrook will meet to draft a letter to SECTV making this request.

- 2 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement
Mr. Avery is working on figures and will present them to the Township Committee in the near future.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Tanya McCabe, submitting resignation from Environmental Commission

Mr. Avery made a motion to accept Ms. McCabe's resignation with regrets, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

- 2 – from Devin Gormley, submitting resignation from Blairstown Police Department

Mr. Anderson made a motion to accept Officer Gormley's resignation with regrets, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

- 3 – from Roger Thomas, Land Use Board Attorney, re: Applications Pursuant to NJSA 40:55D-46.2, Collocation of Wireless Communication Equipment, sample ordinance; response from Robert Benbrook, Township Attorney

Mr. Shoemaker said that this ordinance amendment is required due to a change in State law. Mr. Benbrook explained that he believes that this ordinance is necessary, but he would like to combine it with the ordinance amendment regarding the size of large vehicles on residential properties. Mr. Shoemaker will bring this suggestion back to the Land Use Board.

Mayor Mach would also like Mr. Shoemaker to discuss a change in the section of the amendment that allows a 10 ft. extension with regard to collocation of wireless communication equipment.

- 4 – from Robert Benbrook, regarding response from SECTV in reference to extension of cable service

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

- 5 – from Robert Benbrook, re: Mohican Road Firehouse Lease

Mr. Benbrook explained that he made the changes requested by the attorney for Blirstown Hose Company No. 1. The only change not previously discussed is the metering for separate invoicing. The agreement now states that this will be divided evenly between the township and Blirstown Hose Company No. 1.

Mr. Shoemaker discussed a portion of Article III, *Tenant Fitup*, which included the installation of protective roofs over the two entrances of the building. Mr. Shoemaker said that this work was meant to be sometime in the future and not a part of the renovations included in the \$30,000.00 to be spent on the building by the township. After discussion, Mr. Benbrook said that he would eliminate this from the agreement.

With regard to Mr. Shoemaker's question about the completion of the installation of a split rail fence, Calvin Inscho of the Fire Company assured the Committee that this work would be completed in the near future.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement with Blirstown Hose Company No. 1, with the amendments as discussed. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no questions or comments on the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that he has received the final draft of the contract between the Township of Blairstown and the PBA. Mr. Benbrook has reviewed it from a legal standpoint and has no issues with it. Mr. Anderson will review it to make sure the items the township required have been properly addressed in the contract.

Mr. Benbrook said that the Township has received the tax appeal judgments and he believes that the Township won all of the appeals. He will review the judgments with the Tax Assessor.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson reported that he and Mr. Avery attended a meeting on August 7th at the Paulina Lake Dam. The meeting was about the possibility of removing the dam, possibly with grant monies. Those in attendance were Ruth Ehinger and Dave Bean of the NJDEP, Alan Barlow of Kay Environmental Center, Beth Barry and Chuck Gullage of the Musconetcong Watershed Association, Mark Eberle of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and Brian Cowden of Trout Unlimited. Those representing Blairstown Township were OEM Coordinator Nick Mohr and Township Engineer Ted Rodman.

The main issue in favor of dam removal is the environmental impact. Basically, the Paulins Kill is a cold water trout stream. Many species have either disappeared or have been inhibited by the dam throughout the years. The Army Corps of Engineers is anxious to know the Township's position on removing the dam. Mr. Anderson informed them that it is a matter of funding that the Committee needs to consider.

The Army Corps of Engineers placed this dam relatively high on its list of priorities. However, if a sediment study came out making dam removal more difficult, the dam would move down on the priority list. A sediment study is the next step toward deciding if the Township wishes to either remove the dam or continue plans for renovations.

After discussion, the Township Committee agreed to move forward with a sediment study for the Paulina Lake Dam. Without an estimate on this project, Mr. Benbrook recommended putting a limit on the amount to be spent on the study. Mr. Anderson made a motion to spend up to \$8,000.00 for a sediment analysis on the Paulina Lake Dam, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

Mr. Anderson said that there is now a police contract, which is retroactive from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2014. The Mayor has already been authorized to sign the agreement. The holdup on the agreement was over salary step increases and certain benefits.

Mr. Anderson asked Robert Gara, Police Director, to say a few words about the recent police function, National Night Out. Mr. Gara said the evening went well, with the ambulance and fire

organizations participating. There was food and activities, with approximately 150 people attending. Mr. Gara thanked those organizations that supported the event, as well as local businesses who gave donations.

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Report for the month of July.

With the resignation of Officer Gormley, Mr. Anderson would like the Committee's approval to send Special Officer Jarret Bisanzio to the Academy to become PTC certified as a probationary officer. Officer Bisanzio has proven himself as a capable officer and is well liked and respected by the department. The cost of his training will be approximately \$2,000.00. Mr. Anderson made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that with the resignation of Tanya McCabe, Harold Price is now the Chair of the Environmental Commission. There are openings for two alternate members of the Commission. The Commission will be spending the next several months deciding its focus and purpose.

Mr. Avery read the mid-year report submitted by the Seniors Advisory Committee. The report outlined its various events available for the seniors, and announced that the Christmas party this year will be held at the new Mohican Hall banquet room.

The Recreation summer camp went very well, and Pat Sagan received many compliments from parents on the program.

Mr. Avery attended a seminar with the DPW Foreman on water towers. It was very informative and he learned that water towers should be inspected at least every three to five years. Carl Stoddard is getting an estimate on having our tower inspected. Mr. Avery hopes to have a number to submit at next month's meeting.

Mr. Avery said that the Committee will have to consider rectifying a water billing issue, whereby several customers have multiple units and are being billed as one unit. This is costing the water company thousands of dollars each year.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance said that the CFO gave the Committee a list of capital ordinances that go back to 2003 that have balances. Mr. Lance asked the Committee members to go through the list and make recommendations on what to do with these monies. The amounts can be cancelled or made available to use now.

The Historic Preservation Committee will be holding a sign dedication for the walking tour sometime in September. At the last meeting of the Historic Preservation Committee, there was a discussion about the poor maintenance of certain properties along the walking tour. Mr. Lance asked the Township Committee for suggestions on how this might be handled, either through Zoning or another way.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

Mr. Shoemaker reported that the striping on Mohican Road at Cobblewood Road has been taken care of. There had been a complaint about the striping causing confusion and being potentially dangerous at the July meeting.

New overhead doors will be installed at the Walnut Valley Fire House in the near future.

Mr. Shoemaker said that a grant was awarded for the paving of Sand Hill Road. Mr. Rodman added that an incidental modification was submitted to the State. This was necessary due to the township only receiving a portion of the grant monies requested. Mr. Rodman amended the portion of roadway being paved and is waiting for a response from the State. Mr. Lance said that there is money available in the budget that was remaining from capital improvement repairs.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the DPW will be applying crack seal to River Run, Angus Road, Cedar Glen, Farm Meadows Road, Raub Road, East Avenue, and Scenic Hills Drive. This will cost approximately \$28,000.00. They will also be hiring a company to apply micro surfacing to Scenic Hills Drive, Farm Meadows Road and East Avenue for an approximate cost of \$55,000.00. There is money in the budget to cover these expenses.

The Recreation Department is waiting for a letter from the North Warren Little League, giving permission to move the storage shed they own, located at Alpine Field. The owner of Alpine Meats would like to take possession of the shed and relocate it off of township property.

MAYOR MACH

With regard to COAH, a certification letter was due on August 2nd, certifying that we have spent the required amount of money against the affordable housing program. Since we have overspent, we now have a credit going forward. Mayor Mach asked the members of the Committee on the Land Use Board to ask that Board to discuss where they believe the township should be headed with regard to COAH.

Mayor Mach said that Nick Mohr, OEM Coordinator would like to purchase a reverse 911 system. There is money in place for this purchase.

Mayor Mach and Nick Mohr are attempting to coordinate a meeting of local emergency management coordinators in order to discuss mitigation of water coming down through the watershed to stop the flooding.

Blairstown Township will be a part of a vegetation management pilot program organized by JCP&L. They will be trimming vegetation around high tension wires throughout the township.

Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, gave an update of the Walnut Valley remediation work. Mike Russo has been asked to give a detailed list of work performed so far. The final report being prepared by Whitman cannot be finalized until a decision is made on the course of remediation being followed. After discussion, the Committee decided that Mr. Russo will be requested to attend the September meeting to discuss the township's options.

With regard to the Paulina Lake Dam, Mr. Rodman said that he will contact Beth Barry of the Musconetcong Watershed Association in order to get prices on the sediment analysis. Mr. Rodman will arrange for the analysis as soon as possible. As far as dam remediation plans with the DEP, we do not appear to be under any time restrictions as long as progress is being made.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Richard Ohl, American Legion Commander, continued his discussion on the refurbishing of the Given Belet building. Mr. Shoemaker questioned the degree of use of the kitchen. Mr. Ohl said that no major cooking would be taking place, and that warming up food and microwave use would probably be the extent of kitchen use.

Mr. Ohl said that downsizing the kitchen was a possibility, but that installing handicap bathrooms was definitely needed. Mr. Ohl believes that the major project is the furnace that does not work properly due to lack of intake air. Mr. Ohl and the Committee agreed that much of this work could be performed by volunteers.

Mayor Mach asked why the septic could not just be pumped on a regular basis instead of installing a new system. It was also suggested that a closed system could be used. There was a question of whether or not this was allowed. Mr. Rodman will research the regulations with the health department. This issue will be revisited at the September meeting.

Susan Price, Alice Court, asked the Committee to carefully consider all aspects before making a decision on removing the Paulina Lake Dam. She is concerned about the motives of some of the groups around the country that are promoting dam removal. She is also concerned about strings that may be attached to grant monies.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments or questions from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson, with all members in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk