

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, December 4, 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 was Clerk Pizzaia. Mr. Benbrook was not present.

**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

No one signed up to speak tonight.

**MINUTES**

November 13, 2013 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the November 13<sup>th</sup> minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>1 – R.2013 – 120</b> | Authorization to Pay Bills                                    |
| <b>2 – R.2013 – 121</b> | Authorization to Transfer Funds                               |
| <b>3 – R.2013 – 122</b> | Authorization to Refund COAH Payment                          |
| <b>4 – R.2013 – 123</b> | Authorization to Cancel Unexpended 2013 Budget Appropriations |
| <b>5 – R.2013 – 124</b> | Reappointment of Tax Collector                                |
| <b>6 – R.2013 – 125</b> | Authorization to Refund 2013 Overpayment, B2103, L2.15        |
| <b>7 – R.2013 – 126</b> | Authorization to Refund 2013 Overpayment, B1802, L13.06       |
| <b>8 – R.2013 – 127</b> | Appointment of Risk Management Consultant for 2014            |

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

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

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Clerk – November Report  
Finance – November Finance and Fuel Reports  
Fire Department – November Report  
Police Department – November Report  
Tax Collector – November Report  
Municipal Court of North Warren – October Report  
Warren County Health Department – November 8, 2013

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

Mayor Mach requested that service be extended up Mt. Hermon Road and on Frontage Road. The township is waiting for a response.

## **COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action**

- 1 – from Jessica Griglak, NJ Trout in the Classroom Program Coordinator, regarding Application for a Fish Stocking Permit

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign this application, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

- 2 – from Barbara Moscatello, Artist View Lane Homeowners Association, regarding snow plowing reimbursement

Mr. Anderson explained that Artist View Lane is already a level 4 road, which allows for a 200% reimbursement. Artist View Lane receives the maximum amount that can be received by township ordinance. Mr. Anderson said that the township's methodology has been upheld in court. After discussion, the Committee agreed that Mr. Benbrook will respond to Mrs. Moscatello's letter explaining why Artist View Lane cannot be reimbursed at a higher rate.

## **GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)**

With regard to correspondence from the NJLM about the Affordable Health Care Act, Mayor Mach said that he spoke to someone at the recent League Conference who said that volunteers may count as a percentage of the total count of employees. If this is true, Blairstown may fall under the Affordable Care Act. Mr. Shoemaker said that he has heard information to the contrary. Since a great deal of this Act is still not understood, Mayor Mach advised the Committee to stay informed on this subject.

Mayor Mach reminded the Committee about a Department of Transportation meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup> from 6pm to 8pm regarding pre-construction information on the proposed improvements to two sections of Route 94.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

The Rabies Clinic will be held on December 7<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 12pm at the DPW garage.

The Clerk said it was a pleasure working with Mayor Mach over the past 10 years and that he would be missed.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

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

Mr. Anderson recognized Mayor Mach for his many years of service to Blairstown. He thanked him for his nine years on the Township Committee, four of which he served as Mayor. Mr. Anderson presented Mayor Mach with a plaque commemorating his dedicated service to Blairstown.

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the work at the Walnut Valley field is underway.

The American Legion building has been progressing well. All of the plumbing is in and the work is approximately two-thirds complete.

The Seniors Christmas party will be held this Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon.

The DPW Foreman has compiled a list of water customers not being billed because of multiple units being connect to one meter. This will be discussed with Mr. Benbrook to decide how to proceed in order to make the appropriate collections.

Mr. Avery has continued with his open door policy. Turnout has not been what he expected but he will continue for several months to see if attendance improves.

The Environmental Commission is in the process of planning their trip to the site of the Finesville Dam.

Mr. Avery said that it has been a pleasure working with Mayor Mach this past year.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

With regard to the budget, Mr. Lance informed the Committee that the 2014 CAP increase set by the State is one-half of one percent. This won't pertain to Blairstown because the budget is decreased every year. The hope this year is to be able lower the budget again by a small amount. The health insurance costs are up by 6.6 percent. This cost, however, is outside the CAP.

The Historic Preservation Committee continues to work on the signs that will be placed throughout the township.

Mr. Lance suggested that the Committee consider combining committees into a Parks Committee. This new committee would consist of the Recreation Committee and Open Space Committee.

Mr. Lance also wished to thank Mayor Mach for his many years of service and said he would miss him.

#### COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

Mr. Shoemaker wished to thank Mayor Mach for his many years of service to the township and said he has learned a great deal from him.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the Main Street Christmas function will be held at 5pm on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be a tree lighting ceremony and he invited Mayor Mach to light the tree. There will be activities at the event.

Mr. Shoemaker summarized the November Fire Department report.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the power line project being completed by PAR Electric has required the installation of temporary access roads. The roads are paved with gravel and PAR is required to remove the gravel upon completion of the project. The DPW Foreman suggested that PAR be asked if the township could have this gravel to stockpile for future use.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the contract for the Mohican Road Fire Hall renovations has been prepared by Mr. Benbrook. Mayor Mach made the motion to authorize him to sign the contract, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

Mr. Shoemaker said that he is recommending John Zukowski, a current part-time employee, to be hired as a permanent DPW employee upon the retirement of Victor Freeman. Mr. Shoemaker outlined the candidate's qualifications and requested that he be hired as a full-time permanent employee with a rate of \$18.50 per hour, effective January 1, 2014.

There was a lengthy conversation regarding the hiring of a new employee at this time. There were concerns about the 2014 budget. Mr. Anderson would like to see a rationale for having twice the number of DPW employees than surrounding municipalities. Mr. Lance and Mr. Anderson both agreed that if a new employee were hired, they would like assurances from the DPW that part-time seasonal help would no longer be requested. Mayor Mach suggested that the Committee consider hiring Mr. Zukowski as a permanent part-time employee. The Committee agreed to hold off on this decision until the above stated considerations are addressed.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the Hose Company is looking at a 1980 Mack ladder truck for sale by the Budd Lake Fire Department. It was up for auction but did not sell. The vehicle was recertified in 2012 and is for sale for \$10,000. The truck will be at the Stillwater Fire House on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Mr. Shoemaker invited the Committee members to look at the truck at that time.

#### MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach said that Blairstown has been volunteered to participate in the Vegetation Management Program. JCP&L will be organizing another meeting on this matter.

The North Warren Garden Club has put flowers in the planters on Main Street and has worked on the triangle in front of the Municipal Building. He thanked them for their work.

Mayor Mach reported that Blair Academy said that they would finance the construction of the new parking area on Main Street. This will increase parking by 10 to 12 spaces. Mayor Mach asked the

Committee for authorization to inform Blair Academy that they are in favor of this project. Mr. Avery made this motion, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson, with all members voting in favor.

Mayor Mach thanked the Committee for their assistance throughout his tenure as Committee Member and as Mayor. The experience has been interesting, challenging, and rewarding, as well as frustrating at times.

He thanked Mr. Anderson for his work with the Police Department and the snow plowing issue. He thanked Mr. Lance for his firm leadership with regard to the township budgets and for the reorganization of the water department. He thanked Mr. Shoemaker for his liaison work with the DPW. He also thanked him for being a lead for the MOM's Club and Dog Park Committee. He thanked Mr. Avery for his liaison with the Seniors Advisory Club and the Environmental Commission.

Mayor Mach also wished to acknowledge Mr. Benbrook's outstanding legal work throughout the years. He said that Mr. Benbrook has served Blairstown well and that the township is fortunate to have him.

#### **FROM THE PUBLIC**

Robert Gara, Police Director, said that it has been a pleasure working with Mayor Mach over the past several years and that he will be missed.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no further comments, Mayor Mach made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk