

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, January 9, 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. Mach, Mr. Seal, Mr. Shoemaker and Mayor Mach. Also present were Township Attorney Robert 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 – Possible purchase of property

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to enter closed session, which was seconded by Mr. Lance, with all members in favor.

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

Dated: January 9, 2013

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Avery made a motion to come out of Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker, with all members voting in favor.

Mayor Mach stated that the Committee discussed authorizing Joel McGreen, Open Space Chair, to obtain an appraisal on a piece of property that abuts Mt. Hermon Road and extends into Knowlton Township. The appraisal is for a cost not to exceed \$600.00 and will be paid from Open Space funds. Mayor Mach made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

Roll call vote: AYE - Anderson, Avery, Shoemaker, Mach
 NAY - Lance

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Sylvia Zika, Four Corners Road, spoke about a zoning issue on Four Corners Road. She feels that the portion of the zoning ordinance that prohibits the parking of certain sized vehicles is not being enforced. She specifically referred to a bus being parked in the side yard of a residence on her street. She said that the issue is the definition of a large vehicle. Ms. Zika said that she feels that the bus does not qualify as a large vehicle as defined by the ordinance and she would like the Committee to pursue this matter through the Zoning Official.

Mayor Mach said that this issue cannot be resolved tonight. Mr. Benbrook will research this and speak with the Zoning Official. Mr. Benbrook will inform the Committee on his findings at the February meeting.

MINUTES

December 12, 2012 – Regular and Closed Session Meeting Minutes (Mr. Avery abstain)

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the regular and closed session minutes of the December 12th meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Roll call vote: AYE - Anderson, Lance, Shoemaker, Mach
 ABSTAIN - Avery

January 3, 2013 – Reorganization Meeting Minutes

Mr. Anderson made a motion to approved the January 3rd Reorganization Meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2013-017** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013-018** Authorization to Refund 2012 Overpayment on B2203, L6.16
- 3 – R.2013-019** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-15

- 4 – R.2013-020 Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-22
- 5 – R.2013-021 Authorizing Temporary Appropriations as Provided by N.J.S.A. 4:19
- 6 – R.2013-022 Authorization to Transfer Funds

Mr. Anderson 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 – December Report
- Finance – December Finance and Fuel Reports
- Police Department – December Report
- Tax Collector – December Report
- Animal Control Officer – 3rd Quarter Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – November Report
- Warren County Health Department – December 7th Report

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

Mayor Mach said that the status has not changed on this item. The Committee is waiting for SECTV to submit the draft ordinance.

- 2 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement

Mayor Mach suggested that this ordinance be reworked into a shared services agreement.

Mr. Avery, the new liaison to Recreation, said that he will research this.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Thomas Bodolsky, P.E., Pequest Engineering Company, re: Consent for Septic System at 196 Route 94

Mr. Lance asked if approval of this septic system would make the township liable for any future problems. Mr. Benbrook said that it would not. Mr. Anderson made a motion to authorize Mayor Mach to sign this consent, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

- 2 – from MOMs Club of Blirstown Area, requesting approval of playground design

Brianna Johnson, MOMs Club, discussed the design of the playground that was distributed to the Committee members. Mr. Lance asked about the number of children the park would accommodate. Mrs. Johnson said that she did not know, but the engineering firm hired to design the park took into account the population of Blirstown and the amount of students enrolled in the Elementary school. In response to Mr. Shoemaker's question about the cost, Mrs. Johnson said that the park will cost approximately \$125,000.00. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the layout of the proposed park at Sycamore Park, to be built at no expense to the township, and with the stipulation that the park and equipment would revert to the township in the event of abandonment. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

- 3 – from Raymond E. O'Brien, re: Blirstown Wrestling Group

Mr. O'Brien presented a layout of the proposed building. He said that the building itself is being donated and that the furnishings will be bought through donations. He indicated that the building would be used once or twice a week, solely for wrestling purposes. The proposed access to the future ambulance building would be used as access to the wrestling building.

Mr. O'Brien indicated that much of the plan is subject to approval of the Land Use Board's findings and recommendations. Mr. Anderson said that the location at the rear of the Municipal Building is based on the size of the building. He said that if the building were to be downsized, the location will probably revert to the original proposed site at Sycamore Park.

Mr. O'Brien said that he is looking for an approval of the concept from the Committee tonight, as well as approval of the location based on the currently proposed size. Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the concept of the building, as well as the location based on its currently proposed size, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

- 4 – from Melissa Bischoff, Project Self-Sufficiency, requesting Blirstown to participate in ENOUGH Campaign

Mayor Mach explained that this is a child abuse education campaign that the Committee has been requested to support. Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Mayor Mach to sign the release form, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker, with all members voting in favor.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that he has written a draft of a professional services agreement for a licensed water operator. Mr. Lance will present this to Michael Lata, Licensed Water Operator, for his approval. Mr. Benbrook said that it is a one year contract for \$30,000 with an additional \$1,250 for liability insurance. Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize Mayor Mach to sign the final professional services agreement with Michael Lata for a Licensed Water Operator, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk said that a decision needs to be made on town-wide cleanup dates because the Oxford facility books up very early. After discussion, the Committee decided on a two-day cleanup, preferably the week after the town-wide yard sale in the fall. The Clerk will attempt to reserve the Friday and Saturday in September the week after the yard sale.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

With regard to the Walnut Valley Fire House, Mr. Rodman reported that Whitman has tested all 11 wells and they all came up clean. The next phase of testing will be on the property soil and the soil of an adjacent property. After receiving the results of this testing, there will be a clearer view of the cost of the cleanup project.

The 1B Study of the Paulina Dam has been completed and the results have been sent to the DEP. Basically, no artifacts have been found at the site. French and Parrello will be applying for the necessary permits now that the 1B Study is complete.

Mr. Rodman questioned the consent for a septic system located at 196 Route 94, approved by the Committee earlier this evening. He said that the wastewater management plan may have to be amended because of such applications. He suggested that any approval should be contingent upon the applicant being responsible for any fees involved in amending our wastewater management plan. Mr. Shoemaker amended his motion to approve the consent for a septic system at 196 Route 94 to include that any costs incurred by the township to amend the wastewater management plan be the responsibility of the applicant. Mr. Lance amended his seconding of the motion as well.

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson asked Robert Gara, Police Director, for an update on the recent burglaries. Mr. Gara said that the perpetrators have been apprehended. He added that the excellent police work was aided by Blainstown residents who were observant of unusual behavior.

Mr. Anderson said that the police contract negotiations are nearing an end and a contract should soon be agreed upon. He also said that interviews are underway for the hiring of a police officer. Mr. Anderson summarized the highlights of the December, 2012 monthly police report.

Mr. Anderson reported that Pam Plemik has contacted him regarding a 36.9 acre parcel on Vail Road. She wanted to know if the township would be interested in purchasing the land for use as COAH housing. The parcel has five (5) houses which could be used as senior housing. After discussion, the Committee felt that the status of COAH at this point is unknown. The Committee is not interested in this purchase at this time.

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Land Use Board and the North Warren Regional High School came to a compromise regarding the timing of the digital sign, adding increments of 15 and 30 seconds to the message board. The Board is also moving forward with a solar power ordinance review.

The Environmental Commission did not meet in January. Their reorganization meeting will take place on February 6th.

The Senior Citizens Advisory Committee has apprised Mr. Avery of their goals for 2013. They have plans for trips already in the works for 2013.

Mr. Avery has spoken to Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, regarding the winter programs being offered to Blainstown residents. He will be meeting with Mrs. Sagan to discuss the condition of Walnut Valley field.

Mr. Avery will be meeting with Carl Stoddart, DPW Foreman, and will be getting a tour of the township water building.

Mr. Avery also reported that he plans to institute a twitter account in order to make official township business more accessible to the residents.

Mr. Avery reported that the first Fourth of July meeting has taken place. He reported that the Committee would like participation from the Township Committee this year, and he asked the members to consider this.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance said that the auditor is suggesting that the Committee pass an ordinance to increase the cap from 2% to 3.5% in order to bank the unspent appropriations. Mr. Lance said that he recommends against this because future committees could take advantage of this to increase the budget, undoing the steady budget decreases over the past several years.

The first budget meeting will be held on Friday, January 11th.

Mr. Lance said that the transition from the previous water operator to Mr. Lata, newly hired water operator, has gone well. Mr. Lata is doing a very good job and is responsive to our requests.

Mr. Lance reported that Senator Oroho has sent a letter in support of the Township's grant application for repairs to Sand Hill Road.

The Historic Preservation Committee members met on Monday and appear to be a very enthusiastic group. Their plans include developing a list of landmarks to be included in a historic walking tour. The Historic Preservation Committee also discussed moving the shed from the triangle along Route 94 and moving it to Footbridge Park. The group would like to install a talking exhibit in the structure. This is in the planning and discussion phase at this point.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

With regard to Givens Belet and the set-back thermostat discussed at the December meeting, Mr. Shoemaker has discovered that the only group meeting in the building is the American Legion, and they turn the thermostat down when the building is not in use.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the JCP&L bill still does not reflect the many streetlights that have been shut off. He will continue to pursue this.

The Foreman of the DPW was appointed last January as an acting foreman. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to appoint Carl Stoddart as Foreman of the Department of Public Works. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lance. Mayor Mach and the entire Committee expressed the fine job Mr. Stoddart has done during the past year, especially during Hurricane Sandy and its aftermath.

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

Mr. Shoemaker requested permission to hire a per diem snow plow operator at \$15.00 per hour. This part-time employee will be used on an as needed basis. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach reported that there is a \$87,000 spend-down of COAH funds required this year. Mayor Mach will be discussing this with the COAH liaison in the near future.

The NJ League of Municipalities is actively pursuing legislation to effectuate the return of energy tax monies to the municipalities. The key issue is to have this item included in the NJ State budget. If passed, this would probably be phased in during a five (5) year period.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Peter McKenna, Mohican Road, said that he would like the Committee to try to hire a police officer who resides in Blirstown. Mayor Mach said that he agrees, but qualified candidates have not applied for the position.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk