

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN  
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
Wednesday, June 12, 2013 6:00 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. Avery, Mr. Lance, Mr. Shoemaker and Mayor Mach. Also present were Attorney Benbrook and Clerk Pizzaia. Mr. Anderson was absent.

**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 – Personnel/Municipal Housing Liaison; Personnel/CFO; Possible Contract Negotiations/Open Space**

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

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

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 subjects 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: June 12, 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. Avery.

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

Mayor Mach informed the audience that the Committee discussed the matters as listed in closed session but that there are no results to announce at this time.

## PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Rebecca Seamon, Jacksonburg Road, thanked the Committee for allowing the construction of the dog park in Sycamore Park. She invited the Committee to the grand opening of the dog park, which is being held on June 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10am to 12 noon. Mayor Mach agreed to cut the ribbon at the ceremony.

Julia Wulf, Laurel Wood Drive, said that she would like a *No Dogs Allowed* Sign placed at the MOM's children's playground. She also asked if there was an age limit for the people bringing dogs to the dog park. Mrs. Seamon said that the rules state that no one under eight years of age can be unaccompanied by an adult. Ms. Wulf had many concerns regarding the safety of children with respect to the dog park. Mr. Benbrook said that the dog park committee has comprehensive rules that he has reviewed and he feels that the issues Ms. Wulf is concerned about will not be a problem.

## MINUTES

May 8, 2013 –Regular and Closed Session Meeting Minutes

Mr. Avery made a motion to approve the May 8<sup>th</sup> minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

## CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2013 – 072**      Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013 – 073**      Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-16
- 3 – R.2013 – 074**      Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-24
- 4 – R.2013 – 075**      Authorization to Void Reimbursement and Apply to Taxes
- 5 – R.2013 – 076**      Authorization of Special Item of Revenue – Clean Communities Grant
- 6 – R.2013 – 077**      Authorization of Special Item of Revenue – NJDOT Grant, Sand Hill Road
- 7 – R.2013 – 078**      Approval of Liquor License Renewals
- 8 – Application for Blue Light Permit** – Brian Walsh, Blirstown Ambulance Corps

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

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

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Clerk – May Report  
Finance – May Finance and Fuel Reports  
Fire Department – April Report  
Police Department – May Report  
Tax Collector – May Report  
Municipal Court of North Warren – April 2013 Report  
Warren County Health Department – May 10<sup>th</sup> Report

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

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

No action taken.

- 2 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement

Mr. Avery will address this in his Committee Report.

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

- 1 – from Michael J. Eckert, re: Letter of Resignation – Blirstown Historical Committee

Mr. Lance said that Mr. Eckert has been an asset to the Committee and will be missed. Mr. Lance made a motion to accept Mr. Eckert's resignation with regrets, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

- 2 – from Barbara J. Emery, re: Letter of Resignation as Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Avery made a motion to accept Mrs. Emery's resignation with regrets. Mr. Lance seconded the motion. The entire Committee expressed their appreciation for the fine job Mrs. Emery did during her tenure as CFO.

- 3 – from Theresa Tamburro, MHL, re: COAH Update – May 2013

Mayor Mach summarized this report, which basically indicates that Blirstown is up to date with its spending and that the township is not in danger of having monies confiscated by the state. Mayor Mach credited Theresa Tamburro, MHL, for the wonderful job she has done on behalf of the township.

4 – from Patricia Sagan, Recreation Director, re: Sign Request

Mrs. Sagan is requesting the placement of a sign advertising a pilates program at Footbridge Park. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

5 – from Jennifer Gruener, Warren County Mosquito Control Commission, regarding Right of Entry to remove fallen trees and debris from a portion of the Paulins Kill River

Mayor Mach said that it is advantageous for the township to allow this since the debris that the Mosquito Control Commission removes would add to the flooding problem. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)**

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

**DISCUSSION OF GIVENS BELET BUILDING – American Legion Members**

Richard Ohl, Commander of American Legion #258 of Blirstown, and Al Carazone, American Legion member and Hardwick Committeeman, were in attendance to represent the American Legion. Commander Ohl began by stating that the Legion building was turned over to the Township in 1979 for \$100.00, with the understanding that the township would maintain the building and allow the legion to use the building as necessary. He said that the building has deteriorated through the years and there is now a mold problem. Commander Ohl said that he is asking the Committee for assistance in making the necessary repairs to the Givens Belet building.

Mayor Mach said that a list of the necessary refurbishing and repairs was compiled by Mr. Shoemaker and the total cost for these items was approximately \$67,000.00. This price did not include the cost of a new septic system. The cost of mold removal or the upgrading of the kitchen is also not included in the price.

Mayor Mach stated that he believes that the township has an obligation to the American Legion to refurbish this building and to maintain it properly. Commander Ohl indicated that Legion members are willing to assist in the labor towards refurbishing the building.

It was suggested by Mr. Avery that all repairs be itemized and an estimate of the costs be obtained. Mayor Mach suggested giving the Historic Preservation Committee space in the building and to make Givens Belet a combined use of meeting space and a Historic Preservation museum.

Mayor Mach suggested that American Legion members and a subcommittee of Township Committee members meet to list the necessary repairs and to come up with a dollar amount for the

repairs. The Legion agreed to form a committee to meet with Mr. Avery and Mr. Shoemaker to work on this project.

**DISCUSSION OF WALNUT VALLEY FIRE HOUSE REMEDIATION – Mike Russo, Whitman Company**

Mr. Russo distributed a map of the Walnut Valley Fire House project that delineates the necessary remediation due to two leaking oil tanks on the property. He said that the remediation work mostly involves township property, but there is a potential for required remediation on adjacent property as well. A draft report has been prepared outlining the results of the investigation. At this point, a plan of action needs to be decided upon.

Mr. Russo also provided the Committee with a cost estimate for what he considers to be the most effective remediation in the least amount of time. This estimate totals \$305,000.00. He said that spreading the cost over a period of time is another option. Mr. Russo said that a small amount of work may be necessary on an adjacent property. He has been in contact with the owner, who has been very cooperative. Mr. Benbrook requested that Mr. Russo contact the owner to see if he has a survey of his property.

Mr. Russo explained that natural attenuation is an option which involves wells that are monitored over a longer period of time. This method would be less effective and less expensive. He is estimating that four wells would be involved at this site.

When the Committee decides on a method of remediation, Whitman Company will have it approved by a licensed professional, and then the report will be submitted to the state.

After discussion, it was decided that Mr. Russo would return at the August meeting to provide the Committee with a cost analysis for a natural attenuation plan.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY**

Mr. Benbrook had nothing to report.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK**

The Clerk had nothing to report.

**FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

**COMMITTEEMAN AVERY**

With regard to the Land Use Board, the board will be addressing an amendment to the land use ordinance concerning the parking of large vehicles in residential areas. Also, the Blair Academy building plan was deemed complete.

The Environmental Commission did not have a quorum this month. The Environmental Commission submitted an article to Mr. Avery that the members would like to have published. The Committee has reviewed this article and has no objections to its publication.

The Seniors Advisory Committee is having a sign-up this Thursday for their third trip of this year.

Many recreation programs are available at this time, and the summer programs are in full force. With regards to the reimbursement from other townships for participate in our recreation programs, Mr. Avery and the Recreation Director will be meeting in the fall to decide on a plan. Mr. Avery asked the Committee members for suggestions on payment amounts. Mayor Mach told Mr. Avery to ask Mrs. Sagan for this, as she had a formula for billing other townships for their participation in the past.

The Fourth of July Celebration is progressing nicely. Mayor Mach has agreed to speak at the event.

#### COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

With regard to the Water Department, Carl Stoddart, DPW Foreman, has agreed to take a water treatment course towards becoming a licensed water operator. It is a 60 session course in Flemington at a cost of \$1,320.00. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Carl Stoddart's attendance at this course at a cost of \$1,320.00, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

The Historic Preservation Committee is working on a project that includes placing 20 signs throughout the village area with smart phone capabilities. This will be paid for out of the federal grant they received. They are also in the process of purchasing a sign for the front of the Municipal Building.

The Historic Preservation Committee members found audio tapes recorded by the Rotary Club. These tapes are about 25 years old and they document interviews with older residents talking about Blairstown in the 1920's. They are planning on publishing this information in a booklet.

Mr. Lance made a motion to appoint Christine Beegle to the Historic Preservation Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

The MOM's Club will be holding a car show at Sycamore Park on June 22, 2013 from 10 am to 2 pm.

#### COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

The Department of Public Works employees have removed a large tree stump at Footbridge Park and replaced it with a sycamore tree.

Mr. Shoemaker said that he has been working on the possibility of the township leasing the bottom floor of the Mohican Road Fire Hall as a community center. He summarized a report he has submitted to the Committee outlining the benefits of using this building, which include a large parking lot and easy accessibility for the handicapped. It is a large area with a huge kitchen. The township would need to spend approximately \$30,000 to refurbish the bottom floor. Most improvements are cosmetic, with the exception of adding a chair lift for handicap access to upper level bathrooms and the purchase of a kitchen range.

Mr. Shoemaker is proposing that the township lease the bottom floor for \$1,000 per month, with no payments made for the first two years, as the township will be spending \$30,000 for the refurbishment. The initial lease period would be 10 years, with two 5-year options. Both parties would share the cost of utilities.

After discussion, the Committee authorized Mr. Benbrook to draft a lease document between the township and Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 for the use of the lower level of the Mohican Fire Hall. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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

Mr. Benbrook urged the Hose Company to have an attorney look at the contract on their behalf. Mr. Benbrook also questioned when the 2-year period of no payments would start, either immediately or after the completion of the refurbishing. It was agreed by both parties that the 2-year period would begin after completion of the work. It was also agreed that 90 days was a reasonable amount of time to complete the refurbishing. Mr. Benbrook will incorporate this into the agreement.

#### MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach made a motion to appoint Tom Dust to the Environmental Commission. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Mach reported that the township has met with the NJ DOT regarding the bridge over Jacksonburg Creek. The DOT will be completing the work in one phase. The work will begin in May of 2014.

The township also met with the NJDOT with regard to repair work to the Paulins Kill Bridge over Route 94. This will be a lengthy repair, commencing in September of 2013 and ending in December of 2015. The project will be extremely disruptive to the traffic pattern.

Mayor Mach brought up the idea of the County turning over Park Street to Blair Academy. This could be advantageous to the Township in an attempt to gain more parking spaces near the post office by blocking the end between Academy and Main Streets. Since both the County and Blair Academy are interested in the vacation of Park Street, Mayor Mach would like to know the feelings of the Committee on this matter. After discussion, the Committee was in favor of pursuing this. Mayor Mach asked Mr. Shoemaker to approach both the Hose Company and the Ambulance Corps for any comments or objections they may have.

With regard to Energy Tax restoration, Assembly Bill 2753, which is coming up for vote this month, would provide for a gradual payback of the tax receipts. However, this bill would provide for direct payment of the receipts from the utility company to the municipality after a 5-year period.

Mayor Mach and Township Engineer Ted Rodman will be meeting with Beth Barry, Executive Director of the Musconetcong Watershed Association. This group has taken out several dams and Mayor Mach and Mr. Rodman will be ascertaining exactly what would be involved in removing the Paulina Lake Dam. This meeting will take place on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Mach reported that the Garden Club put out flower pots on Main Street. Mr. Shoemaker agreed that it is a nice addition to the area.

The Committee had a discussion on hiring a new CFO and the salary to be offered. In order to make an offer to the candidate, Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to enter into Closed Session, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

WHEREAS, the Blirstown Township Committee needs to discuss matters relating to the hiring of a Chief Financial Officer; 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 Blirstown, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that it shall meet in Closed Session to discuss only this subject, the result of which may be made public immediately thereafter or at a later date.

Dated: June 12, 2013

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

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

#### RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to hire Christine Rolef as Chief Financial Officer with a commencement date of July 1, 2013 at a salary of \$75,000. Ms. Rolef has agreed to take the necessary steps towards becoming a Qualified Purchasing Agent. Mayor Mach seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Shoemaker explained that \$60,000 of the salary is for services performed as Blirstown's CFO, and \$15,000 is for the services as Knowlton Township's CFO, as per our interlocal agreement.

**FROM THE PUBLIC**

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, spoke in favor of the removal of the Paulina Lake Dam. Mrs. Murray also commented on the Township's plan to enter into an agreement with the Fire Company to lease the bottom floor of Mohican Fire Hall. She feels that joint use of the kitchen could cause problems between the two parties.

Susan Price, Alice Court, asked about the payment arrangement for the CFO. Mr. Lance explained that Blairstown Township receives payment from Knowlton, but the CFO receives her salary from Blairstown Township.

**ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion, with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC  
Municipal Clerk