

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, March 13, 2013 6:30 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 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; Potential Litigation; Contract Negotiations

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

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

Dated: March 13, 2013

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Anderson stated that there is an agreement between the PBA and the Committee on the Police Contract. Mr. Anderson made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the Memorandum of Agreement, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

Mr. Anderson thanked Art Thibault, the Labor Attorney hired by the Committee, who worked for many hours on this contract.

Mr. Lance made a motion that \$25,000.00 be appropriated out of the Open Space Trust Fund as Blairstown's share towards the purchase of Block 501, Lot 24.01, an 11.69 acre parcel of land on Walnut Valley Road. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Sylvia Zika, Four Corners Road, spoke about the situation on her street with regard to the school bus being parked in a neighbor's yard. She said that the bus is still being parked in the yard during the day. Ms. Zika has spoken to the Zoning Official and Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, about this situation. She said that Mr. Rodman asked her to submit a written statement on this issue for discussion by the Land Use Board at their next meeting to be held on April 15th.

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, wished to thank Mayor Mach, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Lance for their fiscal responsibility during the past several years, which resulted in less spending and maintaining a zero tax rate.

MINUTES

February 13, 2013 –Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the February 13, 2013 minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

INTRODUCTION OF 2013 BUDGET

R.2013 – 038 Special Items of Revenue – General Capital Fund Balance

R.2013 – 039 Special Items of Revenue – Grants

R.2013 – 040 Introduction of 2013 Budget

Mayor Mach said that the budget total for this year is \$3,939,022.00. Mr. Lance said that this total is approximately \$81,000.00 lower than the 2012 budget.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Resolutions 2013 – 038, 2013 – 039, and 2013 – 040. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2013 – 041** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013 – 042** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-17
- 3 – R.2013 – 043** Authorization to Enter into Interlocal Agreement with Knowlton Township for Chief Financial Officer Services
- 4 – R.2013 – 044** Consent for Submission of TWA Application Extension

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 – February Report
- Finance – February Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – August 2012 – January 2013 Reports
- Police Department – February Report
- Tax Collector – February Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – January 2013 Report
- Warren County Health Department – February 8th Report

Mr. Lance 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

Nothing new to report.

- 2 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement

Nothing new to report.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from French & Parrello, re: Proposal for Visual Dam Inspection, Paulina Lake Dam

The cost of the visual inspection of Paulina Lake Dam is \$1,950.00. Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign this agreement, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

- 2 – from Richard Myron, regarding school bus on Heller Hill Road and condition of roadway

Mr. Shoemaker said that he looked at the area and said that one place in particular is extremely narrow. He and Carl Stoddart, DPW Foreman, are talking about opening up the

area to make it wider. Mr. Stoddart and Mr. Shoemaker will get input from the Township Engineer before a decision is made. Mr. Myron was in the audience and stated that he was satisfied that the Committee is trying to rectify the problem and that a written response to his letter is not necessary.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

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 ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson thanked everyone who was involved in negotiating the new contract with the Police Department.

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

There was a long and exhaustive search for police officer candidates. Mr. Gara, Police Director, recommended candidates to the Committee, and after conducting interviews, two officers have been chosen for appointment.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to appoint Devin G. Gormley as a Probationary Officer in the Police Department. He has completed the Police Academy in Bergen County. Mayor Mach seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Anderson made a motion to appoint Jarret F. Bisanzio as a Special Law Enforcement Officer, Class II, at \$16.00 per hour. Mr. Bisanzio has graduated from the Police Academy and currently works as a Special Officer in Andover. Mr. Anderson explained that a Special Officer is needed to fill in during vacation time in order to keep overtime at a minimum. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

Mr. Avery said that the Land Use Board meeting in March has been cancelled. The next meeting will be in April.

With regard to the problem in the Land Use ordinance regarding the parking of large vehicles in residential areas, Mr. Avery asked for clarification on the procedure to amend the ordinance. Mayor Mach explained that the Committee requests a review and recommendation from the Land

Use Board, which is forwarded to the Committee for possible action. Mr. Benbrook added that the Land Use Board, if recommending a change, would present the Committee with the actual language of the amendment in written form, which the Committee would consider. The Committee does not have to make the change if the members feel it is not warranted. Mayor Mach made a motion to request the Land Use Board to review the section of the Land Use Ordinance dealing with the parking of oversized vehicles on residential property and provide recommendations to the governing body for changes. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

The Environmental Commission has postponed their reorganization, as none of the members are willing to chair the commission. The Earth Day event scheduled in April has been cancelled due to lack of time to prepare.

Mr. Avery said that he plans to discuss the subject of withdrawing from the Sustainable New Jersey program at the next Environmental Commission meeting. He will report back to the Township Committee on the wishes of the Environmental Commission.

Mrs. Ardia of the Seniors Advisory Committee reported to Mr. Avery that the last senior trip to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse was a huge success.

Mr. Avery said the spring recreation programs are in full swing. The Recreation Director has requested monies in the budget to run her summer program.

With regard to the renovation of Walnut Valley field, Mr. Avery has received two quotations, with the Fredco Group proposal being the lower by \$1,350. The company is willing to freeze the price until the work is proposed to begin in November. Mr. Avery made a motion to hire Fredco Group to perform this work at a price of \$27,900.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lance. Mayor Mach would like an addendum to the proposal that states the type of grass to be planted. Mr. Avery amended his motion to include Mayor Mach's suggestion. Mr. Lance amended his seconding of the motion.

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

Mr. Avery said that there is a piece of piping at the water company that is badly corroded. He is obtaining a quotation to have the pipe cleaned. The Committee asked Mr. Avery to get at least two quotes. Mr. Lance agreed that the condition of the pipe is really bad and needs work.

Mr. Avery also reported that the plans for the Fourth of July Celebration are moving along nicely.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance thanked everyone involved in the 2013 budget preparation.

Mr. Lance reported that two road projects are scheduled for this year. Work will be done on Mud Pond Road near the intersection on Route 521. Belcher Road needs work at the area where there is curbing. Mr. Lance said that there is \$23,000.00 budgeted to perform test borings. Different methods of repairing the roadways are being investigated at this time.

Mr. Lance made a motion to appoint Joel McGreen to the Agricultural Advisory Committee for a one year term expiring on December 31, 2013. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Lance summarized the status of the Open Space Trust Fund, stating that the current balance is \$984,942.00. After subtracting the debt service reserve, the unencumbered balance is \$568,471.00. Mr. Lance is proposing an additional reserve in the amount of \$325,213.00, which would leave a balance of \$243,258.00. Mr. Lance took into account the 2012 field maintenance costs, open space soft costs, recurring expenses, and the Paulina Dam repair costs, which will be spread over a five year period.

For the year 2012, \$251,869.00 was raised through the 3 1/2 cent open space tax. Each penny raises \$71,962.

Mr. Lance made a motion to appropriate \$325,258.00 from the trust fund balance, which will totally offset the current open space debt. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Taking into account the Paulina Dam expenses and recurring expenses, Mr. Lance is recommending reducing the open space tax, as he feels the amount of taxpayers' monies being held in the account is excessive. After discussion, it is the opinion of the members that it is appropriate to reduce this tax. Mr. Lance made a motion to reduce the open space tax from 3 ½ cents per 100 to 1 ½ cents per 100. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

Mr. Lance reported that the Historic Preservation Committee is working on placing signs around the township. The signs will have QR codes capable of connecting to smart phones, which will link to information about Blairstown. It is hoped that these will work in conjunction with a walking tour in the village area and at Blair Academy. The Committee was in agreement that this is a great idea.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

With regard to the dog park, Mr. Shoemaker distributed a handout of the proposed area at Sycamore Park. It will be just north of the recycling yard, and approximately 450 feet away from the soccer field. Mr. Shoemaker said that the dog park committee supplied the Township Committee with the rules and regulations as requested. Mr. Shoemaker said that the only issue now is with our insurance company. This is being worked on through Jim Gilmore, the Township's insurance representative.

Charles Anderson questioned the exact location. After discussion, it was decided that Charles Anderson, along with Mr. Shoemaker, Mr. Stoddart and possibly the Recreation Director, will make an on-site visit to determine the best location. Mr. Rodman will also be included for his input.

Mayor Mach questioned Rebecca Seamon of the dog park group regarding the payment of dues mentioned in their report. Mrs. Seamon said that a nominal fee will be required for upkeep of the park. Tags will be issued to indicate that dues have been paid.

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the construction of the dog park, contingent upon attorney review, township engineer review, and review by the insurance carrier. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

Richard Myron, Cobblewood Road, asked if membership to the dog park was going to be limited to Blirstown residents. Mrs. Seamon responded that membership is open to anyone who fills out the application and pays the dues.

Mr. Shoemaker summarized the January report of the Blirstown Ambulance Corps.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the DPW is in the process of getting a price on a sycamore tree to be planted at Footbridge Park.

Mr. Shoemaker reported that in response to a request from Mayor Perry of Hardwick, Blirstown Hose Company No. 1 has agreed to house a fully operational fire truck in Hardwick on a temporary basis until Hardwick is able to purchase one. Mr. Benbrook advised that no formal action is required on the part of the Township Committee.

Mr. Shoemaker asked the members of Blirstown Hose Company No. 1 about the possibility of selling the Mohican Fire Hall to the township. They might be interested in allowing the township to utilize the bottom floor for a township recreation location, but they are not interested in selling to the township.

With regard to the lights at the municipal building parking lot, Wire Electric looked at them and suggested that the shields be removed and a lower wattage bulb be installed. Another option would be to replace the lights with LED lights. This option would cost approximately \$10,000.00. Mayor Mach said that it had been discussed previously to replace the lights with LED lights as the old ones burn out. After discussion, it was decided that replacement as needed with LED would be the most economical option. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to replace the lights as needed with LED lighting, having the appropriate lumen power as determined by the Township Engineer. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Shoemaker discussed the sign to be placed on the triangle at Main Street and Route 94. The cost to put up the sign is \$1,675.00. The Blirstown Business Assoc. will pay \$500.00, Blair Academy will pay \$500.00, and the township's share would be \$675.00. There was a discussion on the look of the sign, which will be cream colored, similar to the municipal building sign, and it will be two-sided. Mr. Anderson made a motion to authorize the cost and installation of this sign, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach said that the MHL is working on three apartment units. \$80,000.00 of COAH Trust money needs to be encumbered, or there is a possibility that the State could take the money.

Mayor Mach wrote letters to Senators Oroho and Doherty, and Assemblymembers McHose, Petersen, Space and DiMaio regarding the return of energy tax monies to the municipalities.

Mayor Mach will be attending a meeting sponsored by the NJLM and the Emergency Management Preparedness Task Force to receive briefings on the latest developments in emergency management preparedness, planning and recovery. Mayor Mach is requesting that Police Director Gara and OEM Coordinator Nick Mohr attend with him.

Mayor Mach wrote a letter to Blair Academy thanking them for their generous grant of \$30,000.00 for school security and community preparedness.

Mayor Mach reported that JCP&L will be performing aerial trimming by helicopter near their power lines.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Mr. Rodman reported that water and soil testing has been completed by Whitman Company at the Walnut Valley Fire House. Soil and water samples on adjacent property have come back below standards, which means that there is contamination. The contamination, however, is completely delineated. Mr. Rodman has received an estimated budget for the clean-up, which is approximately \$305,000.00.

Mr. Rodman said that there is time to do the clean-up and it does not all have to be done immediately. This work can be bid and it is possible that the \$305,000 figure could be much lower.

He received an updated cost for the Paulina Dam repairs. This can be spread over several years. As far as grant monies are concerned, Mr. Rodman said that he filed a grant application, but he got word that we will not be awarded money in this round. This is a low interest loan from the DEP. Mr. Rodman said the DEP is not sure if a new round of grant monies will be offered.

Mr. Rodman reviewed the plans for the dugouts being built at Sycamore Park. The DCA reviewed the plans also and all of Mr. Rodman's concerns have been addressed.

Mr. Rodman reported that the County will be paving Route 655 from the Hope Township line to Route 616. This work will be done sometime in 2013.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Anita Ardia, Dry Road, asked when the budget would be introduced. Mr. Lance informed her that the budget was introduced at the beginning at the meeting tonight.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked for clarification on the Whitman Company estimates. Mr. Lance responded that the first Whitman estimate is for the remediation work at Walnut Valley Fire

House. The total is \$305,000.00. The other estimate is for the Paulina Dam repairs and that estimate total is \$475,000.00 over five years, but \$81,000.00 of that total will be paid for with grant monies from the County. Mrs. Murray asked how these amounts will be paid. Mr. Lance said the decision has not been made yet, but his recommendation for Walnut Valley would be to issue a note. The Paulina Dam is an historic structure so it can be financed by open space tax monies.

Mrs. Murray said that she believes the Committee made a mistake reducing the open space tax to 1 ½ cents tonight.

Mrs. Murray also questioned why the township is not listed on the deed of properties purchased with Open Space Tax funds.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further questions or comments from the public, Mr. Avery made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker. All members were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk