

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
Wednesday, May 8, 2013 6:30 PM**

M I N U T E S

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.

CLOSED SESSION –Contract Negotiations/Police Department; Personnel/CFO

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

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: May 8, 2013

Attest:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Lance made a motion to come out of closed session, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

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

BLAIRSTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2013-14 BUDGET PRESENTATION by Mark Saalfield, Superintendent and Molly Petty, School Business Administrator

Molly Petty, Business Administrator, summarized the fund revenue for the 2013-14 school budget, which has a total fund budget of \$8,928,000. The average tax increase for Blairstown Township residents is \$20.00 per year.

The school's cost for the Ridge & Valley Charter School this year is \$393,000, which is a \$43,000 increase over last year. The sending area has approximately 25 students enrolled in the Ridge & Valley Charter School.

Mr. Saalfield spoke about the steady decline in school enrollment. Budgeted items include the after-school program, online subscription programs, professional development and summer curriculum programs. Mrs. Petty outlined the tuition and transportation costs, as well as technology expenditures, utilities and facility upkeep costs. (Presentation attached to minutes.)

Mayor Mach asked if the public had any questions. As there were none, Mayor Mach thanked Mr. Saalfield and Mrs. Petty for presenting an overview of the 2013-14 budget to the Committee.

NORTH WARREN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL 2013-14 BUDGET PRESENTATION by Dr. Brian Fogelson, Superintendent and Christina Sharkey, Administrator

Dr. Fogelson gave an overview of the 2013/2014 school budget. The budget goals include increasing academic achievement, maintaining existing program offerings and maintaining class size.

Other goals include seeking a "greener" footprint for the school and a reduction in energy usage.

Capital projects in the budget include continued payments on a technology upgrade lease and Phase 2 of the security cameras. There will also be security upgrades to the school entrance.

Anticipated revenues for this coming school budget total \$16,507,448.00, which is an increase of \$152,227.00 over last year, or a 0.9% increase.

Reductions have been made in various areas, which include reduced electrical costs, reduced transportation costs, and reduced administrative and departmental supplies.

The tax impact for Blairstown in this budget is a 2 cent increase, which equates to a \$60.65 annual increase on the average assessed property of \$296,108, or an increase of \$5.05 per month on the average assessed property.

Mayor Mach thanked Dr. Fogelson for attending tonight's meeting to present the 2013-14 budget to the Committee and the residents in attendance. (Dr. Fogelson's complete presentation is attached to the minutes.)

Dr. Fogelson presented the Committee with information regarding signage at the school. The school is requesting permission to place directional signs on school property that would direct the flow of student pick-up and drop-off traffic from Raub Road to Noe Road. Mayor Mach said that he spoke with David Diehl, Zoning Official, who said that he has no objections to approving this request. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers/3 minutes each

Lou Tommaso, Andover, NJ, and President of the Foodshed Alliance, spoke on behalf of the alliance. They are asking for permission to use the shed, bathrooms and power outlet at the market location. The Committee was in agreement that the shed is owned by the fire department. Mr. Shoemaker will contact the fire department to ascertain if the members will grant the alliance permission to use the bathrooms and electrical outlet of their firehouse and to use the shed.

Denise, Benedetto, Knowlton, NJ, spoke about a low frequency humming noise that she believes is coming from Yards Creek. Ms. Benedetto said that she spoke before the Knowlton Township Committee, who said that they would request an investigation of the matter by JCP&L. Ms. Benedetto would like the Blirstown Committee to rectify this since Yards Creek is situated in Blirstown.

Mayor Mach gave Ms. Benedetto the names of individuals at JCP&L to contact.

Rich Amon, Sandhill Road, read a prepared statement with regard to the proposed dog park. Mr. Amon objects to the proposed site as he feels that it would be a hazard because of the proximity of the airport. He feels that an area like Footbridge Park would be a more appropriate location.

Rebecca Seamon, Jacksonburg Road, said that the dog park committee has secured the insurance as requested by the township, as well as making the change in the contract page. Mr. Benbrook said that it is his recommendation that no agreement be signed between the two parties.

There was a discussion on the dog park location and the proximity to the airport. Mayor Mach asked Mrs. Seamon to stay for the public portion of the meeting since this discussion would take longer than three minutes.

Joe Dimeck, Spring Valley Road, reported to the Committee on the progress of the Food and Arts Festival he would like to hold in Blirstown. He said that there is a great deal of interest from vendors, but he cannot get any commitments until a date is confirmed by the Township Committee. With regard to serving or selling liquor, Mr. Dimeck was directed to speak with the Police Director.

Mr. Dimeck asked the Committee for approval to use Footbridge Park on September 7th for the Food and Arts Festival. He said that there would be a profit sharing percentage for the town in

exchange for police assistance. Mr. Dimeck was asked to stay until the end of the meeting to continue the discussion.

MINUTES

April 10, 2013 –Regular and Closed Session 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 – May 2013 Proclaimed as OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Mayor Mach read the proclamation in full, which proclaims the month of May as Older Americans Month. (A copy is attached to the minutes.)

Mr. Avery added that the Seniors group wishes to thank the Committee for all the support they have received through the years.

ORDINANCE 2013 – 01 AN AMENDED ORDINANCE FIXING THE SALARIES AND WAGES OF THE OFFICIALS, APPOINTEES AND EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN IN THE COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY SALARY RANGE

Second Reading, Adoption
Committee Discussion

After discussion, it was decided to amend the salary range for the Assistant Treasurer position. Mr. Lance made a motion to amend the salary range of the Assistant Treasurer from \$14.00 - \$18.00 to \$14.00 - \$22.00. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Public Hearing

Mach Mach opened the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2013 – 01. As there were no questions or comments from the public, Mach Mach closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve Ordinance 2013 -01 on second reading, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS

- 1 – R.2013 – 063** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013 – 064** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2011-02
- 3 – R.2013 – 065** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-01
- 4 – R.2013 – 066** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-12
- 5 – R.2013 – 067** Authorization of Special Item of Revenue
- 6 – R.2013 – 068** 2012 Audit Review
- 7 – R.2013 – 069** In Support of Application to Green Acres Program

8 – R.2013 – 070 Fixing the Salaries and Wages of Officials, Appointees and Employees of the Township of Blirstown

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 – April Report
- Finance April Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – March Report
- Police Department – April Report
- Tax Collector – April Report
- Animal Control Officer – 1st Quarter Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – March 2013 Report
- Warren County Health Department – April 5th Report

Mr. Avery made a motion to accept the Department Reports, which was seconded by Mayor Mach.

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 township is still waiting for SECTV to present the draft ordinance.

- 2 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement

Mr. Avery reported that he has spoken to the Recreation Director. They plan on meeting with the various sports organizations after the sports season in the fall to discuss options.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Robert Van Wattering, Blirstown Rotary, regarding July 4th Fireworks Celebration
Mr. Lance said that the monies being requested have already been appropriated in the budget, so the only request that needs to be approved is the police coverage. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

- 2 – from Tanya Quinn, regarding a fundraising walk starting at Sycamore Park on June 22nd
Mayor Mach explained that Ms. Quinn is organizing a walk for her brother Todd who is battling Lou Geurig’s Disease. Mayor Mach made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

- 3 – from Lisa Benzaia, Blairstown PTG, re: Paws to the Pavement Run/Walk

This is a 5K walk that will take place on Saturday, June 1st. The Blairstown PTG has received permission from the Warren County Board of Freeholders to close a portion of Route 521 on this date. Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

- 4 – from Jennifer Hoffman, Paralegal, Courter, Kobert & Cohen, regarding water service to proposed premises at Blair Academy

This letter is a request to verify in writing that the proposed premises at Blair Academy will be sufficiently covered by our township water department. The Licensed Water Operator has responded to this request.

- 5 – from Ardito & Co., LLP, 2012 Report of Audit

Mr. Lance reported that there were no recommendations for corrections or improvements on the audit.

- 6 – from Ardito & Co., LLP, 2012 North Warren Municipal Court Report

Mayor Mach commented that Hardwick has expressed an interest in joining the Court.

- 7 – from Committeeman Herman Shoemaker, re: Dog Park

Rebecca Seamon came forward to continue the discussion on the dog park. Mr. Shoemaker gave an overview of recent conversations and meetings with the interested parties.

There was a discussion on the airport safety zone and different options for parking of dog park patrons. Mr. Shoemaker said that an option could be putting the dog park further back along the recycling fence and using the parking lot at Sycamore Park. Ms. Seamon said that she realizes that some people will complain no matter where the park is situated, but she has no objection to that plan.

Denise Luque, Hoagland Road, objected to the dog park being situated at Sycamore Park. She feels that it will pose a health hazard to the children who play at Sycamore Park.

Mrs. Seamon said that she does not expect more than 10 people at the dog park at any one time. She said that the dog park users will have to follow park rules. Mrs. Luque said that she has no confidence that the dog park patrons will follow the rules, and she said that barking will be a problem. Mrs. Luque said that a request to have a basketball court in the park was rejected, but now it is okay to have a dog park.

Mr. Shoemaker said that Mrs. Luque needs to realize that Sycamore Park is not a sports park, and that other people with other interests have a right to utilize the property. In

response to Mrs. Luque's objection to township funds being used, the Committee told her that no township funds have been expended on the dog park and that all funds have been raised by volunteers.

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion that the Committee approve the construction of a dog park along the recycling fence, with the entrance at the east end of that fence, with dog park patrons utilizing the existing Sycamore Park parking lot. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

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

Mrs. Luque continued to object to the location of the dog park at Sycamore Park, stating that she will begin a legal fund to fight this decision.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook had nothing to report.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk reminded everyone that Primary Election Day is June 4th. All voting districts vote in the Municipal Building and the polls are open from 6am to 8pm.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson summarized the April report of the Police Department. Mr. Anderson said that he is concerned about the greater number of summonses that were issued this month. Mr. Gara said that this is due to several factors, but is mostly attributed to the two new officers being trained.

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

The Environmental Commission is sponsoring a Freecycle event that will be held in September.

Mr. Avery said that the Fourth of July Celebration committee would like official permission to hold the event in Footbridge Park. Mr. Lance made a motion to grant this approval, which was seconded by Mayor Mach. All members voted in favor.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that Raymond Davis, former Committeeman, has made another payment in his court ordered restitution in the amount of \$199.

The 2014 NJ State pension figures have been released. The township's PERS obligation will be reduced by approximately \$4,600 next year, and the PFRS figure will be increased by approximately \$3,400.

The State has awarded Blirstown Township a grant to refurbish Sand Hill Road in the amount of \$185,000.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

Mr. Shoemaker summarized the April report of the Blairstown Ambulance Corp.

Mr. Shoemaker attended the recent meeting of the Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 members. The members are working on repairs to the Walnut Valley Fire House. The company will also be having repair work done on a fire truck.

The fire company is planning on converting the upper level of the fire hall on Mohican Road into a banquet hall. They would like permission to renovate the sign on the corner of Route 94 and Mohican Road. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to grant permission to Blairstown Hose Company No. 1 to renovate the sign located on the corner of Route 94 and Mohican Road, contingent upon necessary approvals of the Zoning Official. Mr. Avery made a motion to second the motion, with all members voting in favor.

MAYOR MACH

A decision was rendered by the State that allows for COAH funds to be confiscated. Mayor Mach said that Blairstown is not in danger of losing any funds for the year 2012. He will be signing the certification letter that is prepared by our CFO and Municipal Housing Liaison.

Mayor Mach attended an Eagle Scout ceremony for Daniel Skuropacki.

Mayor Mach reminded everyone that the Memorial Day Parade will be held on Sunday, May 26th.

Joe Dimeck came forward again to continue the discussion about the Food and Arts Festival. Mr. Dimeck has spoken with the Police Director and will continue to keep him apprised of his plans. He especially needs the township's assistance with police coverage. At this point, Mr. Dimeck is requesting the formal approval of the Committee for the use of Footbridge Park on September 7th from 12 noon until 6pm. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to this effect, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

With regard to closing Main Street during the event, Mr. Dimeck was advised that he needs to go to the Warren County Board of Freeholders for this permission.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

Ted Rodman, Township Engineer, introduced Bob Canace of Ridge and Valley Conservancy. Mr. Canace explained the background on the property known as Block 1402, Lot 3, owned by the Kostenbader Estate. The owner will be applying to NJ State, Green Acres, to have this property preserved. Mr. Canace said that Ridge and Valley will assist the owner in making the application and will also utilize the resolution passed by the Committee tonight in support of the application. There is an issue with contamination, but this does not affect the township in any way.

Mr. Rodman said that the township received the grant in the amount of \$185,000 to refurbish Sand Hill Road, but the actual repairs will cost \$252,000.00. The grant award is \$67,000 short of what

was requested. The repair work applied for in the grant covered .7 of a mile. Mr. Rodman said that there are two (2) options. The township can reject the grant award, or can ask for an incidental modification of the scope of work. This modification would reduce the amount of roadway to be refurbished. Mr. Lance made a motion to ask the State for an incidental modification of the project scope of work on Sand Hill Road. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Rodman distributed a map submitted by Whitman Company regarding the excavation work needed at the Walnut Valley Fire House. Whitman is in the process of preparing the written report detailing the necessary work. Mr. Rodman said that after the report is received, the Committee will have to decide whether they will go out for bid for the cleanup work. Mayor Mach questioned the scope of excavation work, which seems excessive. Mr. Lance was in agreement with Mayor Mach's assessment. It was decided that Mr. Rodman would ask Michael Russo of Whitman Company to attend the June meeting to explain this.

FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk