

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, November 13, 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 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT – up to 5 speakers, 3 minutes each

No one signed up to speak tonight.

MINUTES

October 9, 2013 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the October 9th minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

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

November 8, 2013 – Special Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve the November 8th minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

PROCLAMATION – National American Indian Heritage Month

Mayor Mach read in full a proclamation proclaiming November as National American Indian Heritage Month.

The entire Committee congratulated Susan Price for her win in the November election as Committee Member.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2013 – 112** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013 – 113** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2013-008
- 3 – R.2013 – 114** Authorization to Submit Municipal Alliance Grant Application
- 4 – R.2013 – 115** Appointment of Theodore Padavano to Historic Preservation Committee
- 5 – R.2013 – 116** Authorization to Transfer Funds
- 6 – R.2013 – 117** Authorization to Enter into Agreement with Nixle
- 7 – R.2013 – 118** Authorization to Enter into Agreement with Verizon
- 8 – Approval of Membership Application** – John R. Allen and Michael Reed, Blairstown Hose Company No. 1
- 9 – Approval of Application for Blue Light Permit** – Dave Peck, Blairstown Hose Company No. 1

Mayor Mach made a motion to approve items No. 1 through No. 5, and Items No. 8 and 9. Mr. Shoemaker seconded the motion.

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

With regard to Items No. 6 and 7, Mayor Mach explained that they deal with the new 911 system that Nick Mohr, OEM Coordinator, is putting into place. Mr. Mohr was in attendance to answer any questions. Mayor Mach made a motion to approve Items No. 6 and 7, which was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker.

Mayor Mach said that the monies for the 911 system was put aside many years ago. The initial plan was to go to the county system. When the township experienced the recent storms with power outages, we could not get the county to give us reverse 911 privileges to notify our residents.

Mr. Mohr explained that these two resolutions to institute the 911 system afford the township the least expensive option for payment.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Clerk – October Report
- Finance – October Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – October Report
- Police Department – October Report
- Tax Collector – October Report
- Municipal Court of North Warren – September Report
- Warren County Health Department – October 4, 2013

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1 – Service Electric Cable TV –SECTV is preparing draft ordinance for franchise renewal; letter sent to SECTV requesting extension of service

Mr. Benbrook reported that he and Mayor Mach recently met with representatives from Service Electric Cable TV. SECTV has agreed to extend service up Westview Drive and Gwinnup Road. The township would like the service extended up Mt. Hermon Road. After discussions with the representatives, Mr. Benbrook said that he is hopeful that they will agree to extend cable on Mt. Hermon Road up to Route 80.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

1 – from James P. Fox, Morris, Downing & Sherred, LLP, re: Proposed Amendment to R-5 Zone

Dr. Fogelson, Superintendent of North Warren Regional High School, and Brian Lundquist, Esq., of Morris, Downing & Sherred, LLP came forward to answer any questions regarding this letter. Mr. Lundquist said that in lieu of having the school property rezoned, they are proposing an amendment to the R-5 zone to include the addition of public schools as a permitted conditional use in the R-5 zone. He said that this will eliminate the expensive requirement for the school to apply for a variance each time an improvement or project is being considered.

Mr. Benbrook said that it has been the policy of the Township Committee to have such matters heard before the Land Use Board first. The Land Use Board would then make a recommendation to the Township Committee. The Committee was in agreement that this procedure would be adhered to. Mayor Mach suggested that Mr. Lundquist contact the Land Use Board for inclusion in their next meeting. This correspondence will be forwarded to the Chair of the Land Use Board.

2 – from John Drastal, regarding the purchase of township property

Mayor Mach explained that Mr. Drastal has offered to purchase Block 801, Lots 2.02 and 2.03, which total approximately 30 acres. Mayor Mach said that he believes that this property has been dedicated to COAH. Mr. Drastal will be informed of this.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

There were no comments on the General Correspondence list.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook said that he has reviewed the draft of the agreement between the Township of Blairstown and the Warren County Health Department. This is a formal agreement for the County to continue to act as our health department. Mr. Avery made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign this agreement, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

Mr. Benbrook also reviewed and approved the 911 agreement with Verizon that was approved earlier this evening.

Mr. Benbrook explained that Paetec, a company that previously supplied telephone service to the township, has threatened litigation to collect approximately \$8,000, which is the amount that would have been owed to the end of their contract. The township terminated the contract when Paetec was unable to provide emergency phone service during Hurricane Sandy. In speaking with Paetec's

attorney, Mr. Benbrook believes that Paetec will be willing to accept \$2,500.00 as a settlement. Mr. Benbrook is recommending this course of action because court costs would probably exceed this amount. Mr. Anderson made a motion to authorize Mr. Benbrook to settle this matter with Paetec for \$2,500.00. Mr. Avery seconded the motion.

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The free rabies clinic will be held on December 7th from 9am to 12 noon. The clinic will be held at the DPW garage on Lambert Road.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson said that the person who committed a rash of burglaries a couple of months ago was caught due in part to investigative work by the Blairstown Police Department.

Mr. Anderson said that the State Division of Law is still in the process of reviewing a waiver for Officer Bisanzio. Officer Bisanzio completed a portion of the Police Academy program and the township is attempting to get him credit for the portion completed so he won't have to take the entire course.

Mr. Anderson said that he will be working with Mayor Perry of Hardwick regarding a possible shared services agreement for a zoning official.

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Environmental Commission will be visiting the Finesville Dam area, where the dam was recently removed. They are also investigating the facebook page for the Blairstown Environmental Commission, trying to determine the administrator of the page.

The Senior Citizens Advisory Committee has invited all committee members to their Annual Christmas Party on December 7th at 12 pm.

Mr. Avery represented the Committee at the last home game played at the Walnut Valley field. The sports organizations wished to thank the Committee for their support. Work on the refurbishing of the field will begin next week.

With regard to the Water Department, Carl Stoddart is compiling a list of multiple units being charged as a single unit. Rectifying this situation will greatly improve the finances of the water department.

The work at the American Legion building has begun.

Mr. Avery has begun his open door policy of being available to speak to residents on Saturdays. Several residents have come to speak to him on various topics. He hopes to do this twice a month.

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance said that the Committee held a Special Committee Meeting on November 8th to discuss the 2014 budget. The goal again this year is to maintain a zero percent tax rate. Ideas to reduce the budget were to audit vouchers and to look into employee health benefit costs.

With regard to problems we have been experiencing at the water department, Stothoffs examined the entire system and found that valve settings have been changed. Apparently, someone had access to the building and was causing the problem. The locks have since been changed and there have been no further problems. The Committee discussed the possibility of installing an alarm or camera at the water department.

Mr. Lance reported that North Warren Regional Marching Band won the national championship of Division 3A. They will participate in a Giants game half time.

The Historic Preservation Committee is continuing to put the walking tour signs up around the township. They hope to have the project completed by the end of the year.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

Mr. Shoemaker summarized the October report for Blairstown Hose Company No. 1. They had a spaghetti dinner at the Mohican Hall which turned out very well.

The Dog Park Committee people have requested that trees be planted at the park. Mr. Shoemaker and Mayor Mach met with Rebecca Seamon about this and she will be submitting a plan to the Committee in the near future.

The Village Green Park construction work has begun and it is approximately 90% completed. The stone benches are not in yet.

Mr. Shoemaker reported that a member of the DPW will be retiring at the end of the year, and Carl Stoddart would like to replace him with a part-time employee who worked with the department over the summer.

The Land Use Board has cancelled their November meeting. Darlene Green will attend the December meeting to discuss COAH issues.

Quotations have been received to perform the work at the Mohican Hall Community Center. Mr. Shoemaker will forward the quotations to Mr. Benbrook for review.

Mr. Shoemaker will be attending the Blairstown Elementary School Board of Education meeting tomorrow night.

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach reported that the MHL has requested that the township pay for half her mileage and badge for attendance at the NJ League of Municipalities. The other half will be paid by Knowlton. The Committee agreed to pay half of these costs.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Mary Flynn, Conrad Court, said that she has sold her home and will be moving in a month or so. She said that she will miss Blairstown and has enjoyed knowing the Committee members and the residents.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments from the public, Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Lance. The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk