

**TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSTOWN
REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, September 11, 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. Mayor Mach asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of those who died on September 11, 2001, as well as the first responders who have been affected by this tragic event.

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

Fred Cotton, Bear Cave Road, spoke about the noise nuisance coming from the outdoor PA system being used by Tractor Supply. He said that the system is used seven days a week and the noise can be heard inside his house. Mr. Cotton spoke to the store manager to stop using the outdoor PA system to no avail. He asked the Committee to intervene. Mr. Shoemaker reported that he spoke to the assistant manager about this, but he was not willing to cease the use of the outdoor PA system.

Mayor Mach asked Mr. Benbrook what the Committee could do about this situation. Mr. Benbrook said that he will research the problem and report to Committee. Mr. Benbrook will also contact Mr. Cotton directly with his findings.

PSE&G – George Sous to speak about benefits of power line construction to Blairstown Township

Mr. Sous reported that PSE&G is now ready to begin the upgrade of the existing transmission line built in the late 1920's. The existing 230kv single circuit line will be replaced with a new 230 line, along with a 500kv line. This will improve regional reliability and will give added capacity for energy. The project will use the existing right-of-way that goes through Hardwick and across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

Although the project does not traverse through Blairstown, PSE&G has requested the support of Blairstown for the temporary storage of equipment.

Mayor Mach said that the electrical contractor hired by PSE&G has presented a lease agreement to store equipment on township property. This property is located at the former recycling center. Mr.

Benbrook has requested alterations to the lease and the Committee has the final lease in their packet for consideration tonight. The lease will begin on September 12th and will continue for approximately six months. PAR Electrical will pay Blaiirstown Township \$2,000.00 per month for the use of the property. Mr. Benbrook said that all environmental and liability issues have been addressed to his satisfaction.

Mayor Mach made a motion to approve this agreement and to authorize his signing said agreement, which was seconded by Mr. Lance.

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

MINUTES

August 14, 2013 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 14th meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Avery.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1 – R.2013 – 098** Authorization to Pay Bills
- 2 – R.2013 – 099** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2011-04
- 3 – R.2013 – 100** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2011-08
- 4 – R.2013 – 101** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2012-19
- 5 – R.2013 – 102** Redemption of Certification of Sale No. 2013-005
- 6 – R.2013 – 103** Appointment of Chief Financial Officer as Temporary Purchasing Agent
- 7 – R.2013 – 104** Authorization to Cancel Improvement Authorizations of the General Capital Fund
- 8 – Application for Blue Light Permit** – Deborah Jones, Blaiirstown Ambulance Corps; Scott Bedell, Patrick Ceres, Jim Chenard, Dominic Daleo, Brittany Diana, Christopher Graybill, Calvin Inscho, Stuart Kise, Sal Lascari, Dave Peck, Brian Rosemeier, Michael Pirrello, Joseph Sierant, Christopher Skomial, R. Mark Slater, Jerry Stoddart, Jeremy Stoddart, Mike Sullivan, Eric Usinowicz, David Weber and Jason Zatorski of Blaiirstown Hose Company No. 1
- 9 – Application for Red Light Permit** – Matthew Lambert and Darren Occhiuzzo of Blaiirstown Hose Company No. 1

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 – August Report
- Finance – August Finance and Fuel Reports
- Fire Department – July and August Reports
- Police Department – August Report
- Tax Collector – August 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 a letter has been sent to SECTV, requesting the extension of service down along Mt. Hermon Road out to Centerville Road. The Committee is waiting for a response.

- 2 – Review of Recreation Ordinance – Fair Share Reimbursement

Mr. Avery discussed a letter from Recreation Director Pat Sagan, advising the Committee to discontinue its efforts to receive monies from the various sports groups. These groups have used their own monies to upgrade fields, etc. and it is not appropriate at this time to attempt to collect fees from them. Mr. Avery is in agreement with Mrs. Sagan and requested that the Committee put the terms of this ordinance on hold for the time being. After discussion, the Township Committee was in agreement. Mr. Avery made a motion to discontinue efforts to collect fees in accordance with the ordinance, which was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

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

This item will be removed from the Unfinished Business list.

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE for information and possible action

- 1 – from Gina Trish, regarding final plan for Village Green Park

Gina Trish was present with Patty Doell and Mary Stone to present the final plan for the park to be constructed on the former Community Center property. Ms. Trish distributed estimates and a drawing of the design. Ms. Stone, the project designer, spoke about the proposals received for the park and the various aspects they would like to have included. They would like to have a split rail fence, decorative stone, and a rain garden that would help with a drainage problem on the property. Ms. Trish and Ms. Stone explained the three itemized bids for the project in detail.

Mr. Benbrook commented that by looking at these estimates, the project may well exceed the bid threshold and will have to be bid out according to law. There was a question on the bid threshold with a QPA. Christine Rolef, CFO, will be asked to advise on this. Mayor Mach suggested that Ms. Trish should look at the estimate to ascertain which items could be removed in order to make the final cost lower. It was the consensus of Committee opinion

that the itemized list be pared down to bring to total to \$25,000.00, which the Committee initially agreed could be spent on this park.

With regard to the rain garden idea, Mayor Mach expressed concern that this could be washed away with the next flood. Mr. Lance was concerned about the long term maintenance of the park. It was suggested that the North Warren Garden Club could be asked to perform this maintenance. The Committee also felt that fundraising would be a good way for this group to finance a portion of this project.

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that this project, as presented, far exceeds the proposed \$25,000.00 budget. The Committee suggested that the park group review the plans and decide which items could be cut. They should also look towards fundraising possibilities. Ms. Trish was advised to come before the Committee at a future meeting with an amended plan.

- 2 – from Deborah Berry-Toon, Project Self-Sufficiency, requesting permission to tie ribbons on Main Street as part of the *Tie A Ribbon* Campaign for October's Breast Cancer Awareness activities

Mr. Lance made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Avery, with all members voting in favor.

- 3 – Temporary Facility Lease between Blairstown Township and PAR Electrical Contractors, Inc.

This was addressed earlier in the meeting.

- 4 – Best Practices Worksheet CY2013

Mr. Lance explained that the township has a 90% score, which means that Blairstown will receive 100% of the State funding.

Mr. Lance made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the worksheet to be sent to the State. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker. All members voted in favor.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (See attached sheet)

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

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

- 1 – Mike Russo, Whitman Company, re: Update on Walnut Valley Fire House Remediation

Mr. Russo was present to give an update on the Walnut Valley Fire House remediation project. Mr. Russo has prepared the remedial investigation report/remedial action work plan. He will finalize it when the Committee decides on a course of remediation. This plan is due in March of 2017. The regulatory due date for remediation completion is March of 2022.

Mr. Russo presented two (2) options and cost estimates for the remediation work. Basically, Option 1 involves extensive soil removal and extensive ground water dewatering,

at an estimated cost of \$316,860. Option 2 involves reduced soil excavation and reduced ground water dewatering, at an estimated cost of \$176,200. Mr. Russo said that there is a risk in opting for Option 2 if natural attenuation for ground water is not successful. Mr. Russo also cautioned that once the remediation process is begun, there is a two-year time period for completion. He recommended allowing for a five year period before the March 2022 completion due date.

After discussion, the Committee decided to have bid specifications written for the remediation project. Mr. Russo suggested have specification written for both options, which would give the Committee greater latitude in making a final decision on the course of remediation. Mr. Russo will supply the necessary technical information and Mr. Rodman will write the bid specifications.

Mr. Russo said that if the Committee decides against remediation at this time, he will get a price on interim well installation and monitoring.

Mr. Rodman reported that the County will be removing a bridge on Station Road in Knowlton. The detour will go through Blirstown, but should not impact traffic.

With regard to the Paulina Lake Dam, Mr. Rodman is working on getting estimates for the sediment analysis.

Mr. Lance asked Mr. Rodman about the total cost of the Sand Hill Road project. Mr. Rodman said that specifications are being written for completion of the entire road, with capital monies from the township being added to the grant from the State. Mr. Rodman said that it will not go out for bid this year.

2 – Jim Frick, Blair Academy, re: Park Street

Mr. Frick was not in attendance.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

Mr. Benbrook reported that the township won all of its tax appeal cases.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP CLERK

The Clerk reported that the town-wide cleanup is scheduled for September 27th and 28th. Vouchers are available in the Municipal Building during regular hours.

FROM THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEEMAN ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson summarized the Police Department report for the month of August. Mr. Anderson said that he and Mayor Mach are continuing in their effort to get a waiver from the Police Academy for Officer Bisanzio to become a probationary officer on the police department.

COMMITTEEMAN AVERY

Mr. Avery reported that the Environmental Commission voted to suspend July and August meetings in the future due to difficulties in getting a quorum.

Members of the Commission will be attending the canoe outing on September 27th at 1:30 pm. They will be looking at what is upstream and possible ramifications of the dam removal.

The Senior Advisory Committee will be looking at the fire hall accommodations in preparation of their Christmas party.

The DPW Foreman is compiling a list of township water addresses not being fully charged. He estimates that the township is losing \$24,000.00 due to this undercharge.

Mr. Avery has been working on the plans to refurbish the American Legion building. Richard Ohl, Commander of the American Legion, was present to discuss this. Mr. Avery said that it was determined that regular pumping of the septic system in lieu of a new system would save \$32,000. Mr. Ohl said that he removed several items from the previous work estimate in order to lower the final price of the renovations. He reiterated that a great deal of the labor will be performed by legion members and other volunteers.

There are three (3) quotations for the necessary work. The lowest quote is for \$21,200.00. Mr. Shoemaker wanted it understood that the original quote for approximately \$60,000 was due to the greater scope of work that was involved. The scope of work has been greatly reduced which accounts for the much lower estimate.

Mr. Avery made a motion to accept the quotation of \$21,200.00 from Blue Mountain Log Company LLC, Frelinghuysen, NJ to perform renovation work to the Givens Belet building, contingent upon approval of the CFO. The monies will come from the Open Space Trust Account. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

COMMITTEEMAN LANCE

Mr. Lance reported that the Historic Preservation Committee is planning a sign dedication. The date has not been set. The sign at Footbridge Park has been installed and operational.

The DPW Foreman has begun classes to be a certified water operator. Mr. Lance said that the DPW Foreman is concerned about a pipe that runs underneath the Blairstown Elementary School. Mr. Rodman said that this has been an ongoing problem for years. The pipe is sinking and ownership of the pipe is unknown. Mr. Benbrook said that ownership should be determined before action is taken on the part of the township.

COMMITTEEMAN SHOEMAKER

Mr. Shoemaker reported that the township has been having ongoing problems with its email. Two (2) quotations were solicited for the providing of the establishment and maintenance of the township's email accounts. The lower quotation is from Nisivoccia Consulting LLC at a one-time setup price of \$900.00 and \$50.00 per year per email address. Mr. Shoemaker made a motion to accept the quote from Nisivoccia Consulting LLC. Mr. Lance seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Shoemaker summarized the August fire department report. The fire house doors at Walnut Valley Fire House have been installed.

Mr. Shoemaker plans on speaking to the administration at the Blairstown Elementary School regarding a speeding problem during school hours on East Avenue, as well as motorists failing to heed the crossing guard while students are crossing the road.

Mr. Shoemaker reported that the DPW Foreman has questioned the maintenance of roads owned by the County. As the Committee questioned whether some roads were township or county owned, Mr. Rodman suggested that the township meet with the county to decide who owns what and who is responsible for maintenance.

Mr. Shoemaker said that the year 2014 will be the 175th anniversary of Blairstown Township and the 125th anniversary for Blairstown Hose Company No. 1. After discussion, the Committee decided that it would be appropriate to celebrate these anniversaries in conjunction with the 2014 Fourth of July Celebration.

Mr. Shoemaker reported that the Mohican Road Fire Hall developed a mold problem over the extremely wet spring season. Contractors have been contacted for estimates to remove the mold. There was a question about the amount of money being put into the fire hall as opposed to building a new building for recreational purposes. Mr. Benbrook said that this is a structural issue which would be the responsibility of the landlord, which is the fire company. This will be discussed further when the source of the problem and the cost to remediate is determined.

MAYOR MACH

Mayor Mach said there will be a second meeting about the Paulina Lake Dam with the DEP on September 18th. Mr. Anderson will attend with Mayor Mach.

There will be a meeting regarding the Vegetation Management Pilot program next week. Mayor Mach and Mr. Shoemaker will attend.

Mayor Mach reported that he met with Mr. Shoemaker, Ted Rodman and Jim Frick of Blair Academy regarding Park Street. Park Street is a county road that Blair Academy would like to become a private road owned by Blair Academy. Blair Academy will need to go before the Warren County Board of Freeholders to request that the county vacate this road. If the Committee is in favor, the township would benefit by blocking off Park Street, which would afford additional parking spaces on Academy Street. The Committee has no objections to supporting Blair Academy's request.

FROM THE PUBLIC

Lorraine Meister, Briar Hill Lane, asked about possible renovations to the kitchen at Givens Belet. Mr. Avery said that the kitchen will not be upgraded, but a microwave and coffee pot can be utilized.

Susan Price, Alice Court, asked about the Village Green Park discussed earlier. She is concerned that the cost of the park will be guided by the bid limit as opposed to spending what is actually needed. She suggested constructing the park in phases as money is available for the project.

Rosalie Murray, Heller Hill Road, asked about where the money was coming from for the renovations to the Givens Belet building. Mayor Mach responded that it is a building used for recreational purposes so it will come from the Open Space Trust Account.

Mrs. Murray also said that she believes the Village Green Park will be an asset to the community and is in favor of it.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no further comments or questions from the public, Mr. Lance made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shoemaker with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 pm.

Submitted by:

Phyllis E. Pizzaia, RMC
Municipal Clerk